



Lowick and Holy Island CE First Schools Headteacher Report to Governors Spring Term 2023

School Characteristics

- **School population**

Cohort	Nursery	Reception	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Overall
Gender (girls / boys)	8 / 5	0 / 2	1 / 3	5/2	1 / 1	1 / 2	16 / 15
Lowick / Holy Island	12 / 1*	2 / 0	4 / 1	6/1	2 / 0	2 / 1	27/ 4
Total	13	2	4	7	2	3	31

**Please note that Holy Island children attending nursery are officially counted as Lowick children until they start school and they move to the Holy Island SIMs system. This is because our nursery operates under Lowick school community powers. I include them under Holy Island numbers above so we can see the trend over time for Holy Island school.*

Since the previous report:

We have gained a pupil into nursery and lost a pupil out of year 1. We have a waiting list of 2 children to come into nursery. Stay and Play continues to be well attended.

- **Pupil characteristics (Special Educational Needs / Disability (SEND) / Pupil Premium (PP))**

Five children in Lowick are identified at having additional needs (SEND) at the level of 'school support'. One child is identified as SEND with an Education and Healthcare Plan (EHCP). No Holy Island children are identified as SEND.

We currently do not have any children in school who are Looked After (LAC) or who have previously been LAC. We have one child in receipt of free school meals (FSM). This child's family continues to receive support over the holidays through the online groceries voucher scheme funded by county. No children are currently identified as Ever 6 (receiving free school meals in the previous 6 years). No Holy Island children are identified as Pupil Premium.

- **Current staffing**

- Headteacher: Rebecca Simpson
- Class 1 teacher: Carolyn Strangeways
- Class teacher (based on Holy Island and sharing Class 2 in Lowick): Heather Stiansen
- Nursery teacher: Kayleigh Adams

- Teaching assistants: Steph Hay, Becca Armstrong (in nursery), Sara Morgan (for SEND support) and Karen Ward on Holy Island (also our caretaker there).
- Support staff: Becki Telfer is our Administrator. Lesley Bradbury and Karen Ward are our caretakers for Lowick and Holy Island respectively. Rachel Easton, Lyndsey Langley and Joanne Marshall are our lunchtime supervisors.
- Our school cook is Olive Fortune.
- Zoe Turner delivers active learning sessions across the school on Tuesdays.
- Susie Cochrane delivers music and French (to class 2) on Wednesday mornings

Adults in school other than staff (with DBS, but these adults are always supported by a member of staff).

- Victoria Graham is currently on a 6-week teacher training placement, working with KS2 children.
- Mr Graham is a sports coach who delivers our Commando Joe’s sessions on Thursday afternoons.
- We work with a range of sports coaches throughout the year through the Newcastle United Foundation.

● **Safeguarding overview**

Since my previous Headteacher Report for the autumn term:

Concern raised for school file.	Children’s services referrals	Early Help referrals	Child protection plan	Child in need	Referral to LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer)	Operation Encompass	Operation Endeavour
2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

We are using the CPOMS online system to record safeguarding concerns as well as tracking SEND pupils and parent / school communication.

Since the annual update in September, all staff have taken part in further safeguarding training including a questionnaire based on their knowledge of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022 to ensure that they are fully aware of their responsibilities and the latest information. We continue to use Safe to Learn bulletins to keep us regularly updated and aware of safeguarding issues and information. This is shared electronically and there is a hard copy on the safeguarding board in the Lowick school office.

Safer Internet Day on 7th February was an opportunity to continue to reinforce safety information in our curriculum and also to share with parents / carers via our newsletter and website. Since our last report we have also delivered the ‘Speak Out, Stay Safe’ assemblies and activities from the NSPCC to help children be able to recognise abuse and know what to do if they are worried.

It was reassuring to affirm in our safeguarding training this term that the staff are very aware that we need to be vigilant and assume that abuse is happening here (including sexual harassment and abuse) and act accordingly. We do not assume that as small schools we are exempt or that it couldn’t be on our own doorstep or setting.

As Designated Safeguarding Lead and headteacher, I have undertaken Safer Recruitment training as my previous training was a few years ago and it is recommended that this is updated at least every five years. Mrs Telfer in the office will also be undertaking this training. We have an available slot for a governor to also do this training online.

- **Premises**

In recent storms the wooden gate to the side of our yard in Lowick was damaged. We were able to get that and another damaged gate (in the fire field) replaced with a sturdy wooden gate that fits with the fencing.

Planned work for Holy Island includes playground markings for the yard, installing outdoor musical instruments, painting, replacing carpets, and putting in storage in the discovery room classroom. We are also getting the pellet stove and flue removed shortly. This should improve the use of the inside and outside facilities on Holy Island. This work is being organised by Mrs Telfer with support from Mrs Ward.

We have not yet agreed a date for the ash trees at the front of the school to be taken down due to ash die back. We have been advised that this is not urgent and we are awaiting our grounds maintenance team tree surgeon to be able to fit us in. Ideally we would like this done outside of term time to reduce risk.

Leadership and Management

The curriculum has been reviewed with reference to cultural capital and this was discussed at our curriculum committee meeting. We feel that this is a strength of the school in terms of the richness of our offer.

Further work has been done also to consider the spiritual development of children in line with our Vision and values. This has been shared with visiting clergy / governors and linked to Lowick church who have duplicated our display wording on their school display board. The Holy Island children were able to articulate the school vision and ethos well to our School Improvement Partner (SIP) this term. Being able to articulate our spiritual development work in school is a work in progress.

Staff are continuing to develop their middle leadership skills. Kayleigh Adams is working on leadership in Early Years as part of a rigorous NPQ (National Professional Qualifications) course. Heather Stiansen is working on ongoing leadership in English training through CLPE (Centre for Literacy in Primary Education) and the resources from this have been praised by the county school improvement team, especially in the context of explaining our planning and delivery to people outside of school.

During our SIP visit this term, subject leaders took the opportunity to present their subject to her and answer questions about progression, evaluation and so on. They had time to discuss English, science, computing, PSHE and PE. Staff reflected that this was a valuable exercise to allow them to practice talking about their work as leaders and to raise areas for thought or for celebration.

We are continuing our work to network with other small schools. As part of a small school working group led by NCC with links to the Newcastle Research School and the Education Endowment Fund (the EEF) – we have discussed staffing and leadership models and curriculum design. This has been a useful opportunity to share what we have accomplished, learn from other schools and discuss solutions to issues. Future meetings will be looking at timetabling and organisation of the school day. We have been identified on the county database as a school who can support others with our work, including a specialisation in learning outside the classroom.

We became aware of new leadership training for small schools NPQ (small) but with so much staff training already ongoing we have decided to not engage with this at the moment and consider for the future in the next academic year. Staff continuing professional development (CPD) continues to be greatly valued with a focus on

leadership and subject knowledge, as well as support for SEND and well-being – including strong provision for Early Years training in line with our development plan.

Staff training since the previous Headteacher Report:

Date	Training focus	Who	Outcome	Impact
Ongoing this year 2022 2023	Mastering Number (through the Great North Maths Hub)	CS & KA	Reception and year 1 and some children in year 2 are receiving extra intervention time focused on understanding number.	Children develop secure number knowledge and flexibility around number with clear progression from Reception upwards.
Ongoing all year	NPQEYL (National Professional Qualification in Early Years leadership)	KA	Increased understanding of leadership in Early Years and developing leadership skills.	So far, reviewed school development plan for Early Years linked to NPQ targets.
Ongoing all year	CLPE English subject leadership training	HS	Increased understanding of leadership in English including reading and early reading.	English leadership is strengthened and developed to support the subject across the school.
30 th Nov	Talk Boost for Key Stage 1	SM	To train a member of staff to deliver Talk Boost intervention to pupils who require it.	Talk Boost sessions help children to develop their understanding of vocabulary, grammar and sentences.
29 th Nov	PSHE leadership training	KA	To develop KA's role as lead of PSHE RSE.	Effective leadership of PSHE RSE across the school.
29 th Nov	Anxiety training	CS	To support pupil mental wellbeing through increased understanding of anxiety, how it manifests, and strategies to help manage it.	Pupil wellbeing is supported more effectively for children suffering from anxiety.
5 th December	ADHD awareness and strategies	SH, SM, HS & CS	To support pupil in school with ADHD traits.	Pupil is successfully supported to access the school offer. Pupil's wellbeing is maintained.
9 th January	Teacher training day updates: English /RWI and maths	Teachers and TAs.	To support quality of teaching and support for learning in English, RWi sessions and maths.	Curriculum quality is maintained.
11 th January	Makaton training	BA	To support increasing use of Makaton in nursery to help children with their SLCN.	Makaton being used on a day to day basis in nursery and children are responding to sign language signals as an additional / alternative means of communication.
14 th January	COSHH training	KW	Caretaker up to date with regulations and best practice	The site is safe for everyone.

Date	Training focus	Who	Outcome	Impact
	Hazard and risk control / Infection control		around control of substances hazardous to health.	
18 th & 25 th January	Makaton training	KA	To support increasing use of Makaton in nursery to help children with their SLCN.	Makaton being used on a day to day basis in nursery and children are responding to sign language signals as an additional / alternative means of communication.
18 th January	Computing lead training	KA	Computing lead is more aware of how to plan, deliver and assess computing across the school successfully.	Computing planning shows clear progression, children are learning well in computing. Computing lead able to present information to SIP about her subject successfully.
23 rd January	Emotional literacy and co-regulation in EY	KA	Support for children in nursery in emotional literacy.	Early Years children supported to be able to express their emotions, understand them and to co-regulate.
24 th January	NCC Senior leaders briefing	RS	Leadership kept up to date in key areas: HR, school organisation ,attendance support and so on.	School is well run. HT is supported to make good decisions around policies.
1 st February	Safer recruitment training	RS	Leadership aware of safer recruitment requirements.	HT refreshed knowledge to ensure recruitment procedures are rigorous, particularly regarding safeguarding.

Planned staff training coming up:

Date	Training focus	Who	Outcome	Impact
13 th & 16 th February	Sensory diet SEND training	SM	Increased understanding of how to support children with SEND (ASD/ADHD) with sensory needs.	Sm able to put in place strategies and resources in school to support children with SEND sensory needs to feel more comfortable in school and able to learn better as a result.
6 th March	Attendance support	RS	RS to review attendance targets and strategies and put in place necessary improvements.	Good attendance is supported, strategies in place to support attendance issues.
14 th March	Senior Mental Health Leader training	RS	DfE funded training to support role of senior mental health lead and put in place effective plan to support mental health and well-being in school.	Mental health is supported for both pupils and staff in school. Well-being is promoted in systematic and effective way.

Date	Training focus	Who	Outcome	Impact
29 th March	Early Years – 2 year old training	CS	To ensure expertise across school to support our 2 year old offer in nursery.	2 year olds flourish in our nursery environment.
31 st March	Thrive practitioner CPD – working with parents	RS	Essential CPD to maintain Thrive practitioner licence. Increased understanding of how to use Thrive approach to support parents as well as children.	School is able to work more effectively with parents where Thrive approach is useful to support emotional and behavioural needs.
24 th April & 22 nd May	Thrive practitioner CPD – managing emotional dysregulation in early years	CS	To support Thrive approach in younger early years children (Reception and nursery)	EY children more supported with effective strategies in place to help with dysregulation and ‘meltdowns’
4 sessions monthly starting 26 th April	Maths subject knowledge and skills for TAs – bespoke training as requested, delivered by the Great North Maths Hub.	SH & SM	Increase TA’s confidence and skills in maths by boosting their understanding of maths mastery, necessary subject knowledge, vocabulary and skills.	TAs more confident and skilled in supporting maths learning.

Quality of Education

Our current learning theme is about Greece. The children are benefiting from a layered learning approach across different subjects. Links are made where they are appropriate but not forced where they are not the best choice for the children’s learning.

In English the younger children are doing work around The Sweetest Song from the Story Tree. This is an African American traditional tale and the children are making links to traditional tales they are already familiar with such as Little Red Riding Hood. The older children (years 2-4) are working on ‘Leo and the Gorgon’s Curse’ and KS2 are also doing additional work linked to Greek myths.

To encourage a love of reading we continue to have our small reading group sessions first thing in the morning where we listen to children read. We have tweaked this to add on 5 minutes where adults read a ‘big book’ to the children so that they regularly get to listen to adults reading exciting stories or reference books. This gives us a chance to model good reading, ask questions as we go along and to ensure that the children are exposed to a wide range of texts.

After the reading group and Big Book time, we then have our Read Write Inc (RWI) phonics sessions for children in Reception and year 1. All year 2 children and older have now ‘graduated’ from the Read Write Inc phonics programme and are fluent readers. The Read Write Inc half termly assessments continue to show strong progress. All children (including those graduated from RWI) have guided reading sessions with Heather Stiansen to ensure that we continue to help them improve their reading beyond or in addition to phonics – this includes comprehension skills and again being aware of a wider range of book types, styles and genres.

The children who are not doing RWI, work with me in ‘morning club’. They have a range of challenges in this time. This group have: written their own books (free choice of book type and subject) which involved them

carrying out research, writing and illustrating their books; worked on learning their times tables; carried out e-safety challenges and they have done some simple programming and/or developed their typing skills.

In maths, we continue to use the White Rose resources to support our planning, taking into account the ready to progress information through the NCETM (national centre for excellence in teaching maths). Mastering number sessions are supporting our younger children (Reception and year 1) to ensure they have a strong foundation in understanding and working with number. The year 2s and older children are doing a reasoning intervention (through Oxford University materials) to help them manipulate and reason with number.

Currently year 2 are being taught as a separate group in English and maths to support their learning before KS1 SATs in May. Two children who cannot access their own year group's maths curriculum are working through Mastering Number in a 1:2 group which is helping them build up a foundation in maths skills to support them in the future.

The homework booklets for the children in year 1 to year 4 mentioned in my previous report are being used well and the children are generally engaged with this form of homework. We recently joined a Sumdog Northumberland Maths Competition and class 2 won the first day of the week long competition and came in second overall – we were very pleased with their results.

The children are very interested in finding out about Greece and Greek culture. Olive created a 'Greek feast' and the children have been learning about Greek music and dancing as well. We find that the children are very curious to learn more, ask good questions and are developing strong reasoning skills. In art they have been investigated Ancient Greek pottery styles as well as traditional Greek patterns and fabric designs. This is inspiring excellent clay and printing work. We are looking forward to a forest school afternoon on the theme of labyrinths.

The children are also enjoying the current science topics around animals and humans. We will be visiting the Great North: Hancock museum in Newcastle in March to find out more about animals and whilst we are there we will also look at their Ancient Greek collection and the dinosaur exhibition.

After Easter, our learning theme will be 'People dedicated to Service' for the first half term and 'The Maya' for the last half term of the year. In Summer 1 we will be looking at Grace Darling and the history of the RNLI with the younger children and Sir Robert Peel, John Kent and the history of the police with the older children. In Summer 2 we will be thinking about Mayan agriculture and chocolate in particular. In geography we will be finding out more about Mexico and Guatemala and Forest school art will also follow that theme.

The children are keen to have a careers afternoon and we plan to integrate that with 'People dedicated to Service' and invite people from different careers who help people. We also have a set of mini scrubs tops with different job titles on, which will be useful for thinking about a range of careers in the NHS. We have an RE afternoon planned for this term about Global Christianity and a STEM day planned linked to forces exploring cause and effect machines (Rube Goldberg machines).

Behaviour and attitudes

The school continues to have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Our school vision of 'Journeying Together' and the golden rule to treat other people as you would like to be treated underpin our ethos. We have very few minor incidents – we have had no major incidents, no exclusions or prejudicial / racist incidents or bullying incidents since the previous report.

In PSHE this term we have been thinking about living in the wider world – being safe online, our strengths and interests, possible careers and the value of rules, responsibilities and freedoms. We have also marked Safer Internet Day on 7th February by thinking about e-safety and taken part in NSPCC ‘Speak Out, Stay Safe’ assemblies.

- **Attendance**

Lowick

- In the first half term of this year Lowick’s overall attendance was at 98.8%.
- In the first term overall Lowick’s attendance was at 96.5%
- Attendance groups for the autumn term: Pupil premium 97.1% / FSM 97.1% and SEND 96%
- Overall attendance from the beginning of January to 8th February is 96.5%. Pupil premium / FSM is 100% and SEND is 98.8%. This suggests attendance figures are maintaining or improving.

Holy Island

- In the first half term of this year Holy Island’s overall attendance was at 99% with two out of the three pupils at 100%.
- Two out of the three Holy Island children then went on holiday for 2.5 weeks and the overall attendance for the autumn term dropped to 87.3%. This absence was unauthorised.
- Overall attendance from the beginning of January to 8th February is 96.8% with no further unauthorised absence - showing a marked improvement.

We have reviewed and agreed an updated Attendance Policy this term and I am attending briefings and advice around attendance. The advice I have had is to keep communicating with parents as we have been doing and to recognise that the holiday taken by the Holy Island children was the first one they have had in 5 years with otherwise excellent attendance (several years at 100% until Covid). We continue to ensure our schools are a positive and welcoming environment so that children are keen to come to school.

(There is a time lag in terms of getting Government statistics for attendance from the DfE. Their figures for autumn 2021 indicate an average attendance of 91.5% and for autumn and spring term last academic year combined it was 92.6%).

Personal Development

We pride ourselves on our attention and care in terms of personal development of the children at our schools. We have been supporting the children as they consider matters of justice and fairness. They have suggested fundraising and raising awareness with regard to homelessness and the struggle in Ukraine for some families to manage due to the war.

We have facilitated numerous opportunities for teamwork and co-operation in school, including during Commando Joe’s sessions every Thursday. This is also a very popular club after school.

The school council has made several requests – showing democracy in action – including the return of the ‘ambassador’s table’ and integrated all the nursery children onto the mixed aged tables for break time and lunch time.

Regular ELSA (emotional literacy support) sessions are helping children develop resilience and have a ‘toolkit’ of coping strategies to manage situations which challenge their equilibrium. We also have quiet places in school and on the yard where children can sit and reflect or talk to the ‘talking tree’. We have a worry jar in school to help the children share any concerns they have. These are then promptly responded to by staff. Also, the children are able to articulate strategies to manage worries or help others who are worried or sad. We are clarifying our ‘spiritual development’ understanding, thinking about how we develop through kindness, curiosity, thoughtfulness, forgiveness and so on. The children have thought about how to ‘shine a light’ in school and this has been reinforced through collective worship with visiting clergy referencing the Sermon on the Mount as well as our lovely Candlemas service in February.

Clubs we offer after school:

Monday: art club

Tuesday: run club (open to families)

Wednesday: sports club (led by a sports coach) – currently football skills.

Thursday: Commando Joe’s club

Friday: eco-schools / environmental / forest school club

Enrichment opportunities since the last report

Date	Activity	Who	Outcomes
15 th November	Trip to Laing Gallery and St Nicholas Cathedral in Newcastle	Whole school	Opportunity for all children to visit a city. Links made to Lindisfarne Gospels, workshop at the City library as well as workshops about the history and significance of artwork and craft at the cathedral. We got to see the actual Lindisfarne Gospels and see art exhibition linked to them.
17 th November	Lindisfarne Gospels art workshop on Holy Island	Main school	Visitors from the Laing Gallery worked with our children on an art project linked to illumination of letters from the Lindisfarne Gospels.
18 th November	Children in Need	Whole school	Opportunity to consider and contribute to the charity work done by Children in Need for children elsewhere.
25 th November	Singing with local musician on Holy Island – Let Us Sail	Main school	Children had the chance to take part in courageous advocacy to support the sustainable fishing on Holy Island.
6 th December	School sport organising crew training	Years 3 & 4	Children joined with other local schools to learn about leading play and games on the playground for all.
15 th December	Trip to the Maltings to see pantomime.	Whole school	Opportunity for children to see a live performance in a theatre.
16 th and 19 th December	Our Christmas performance in the Village Hall at Lowick	Whole school	Opportunity for children to take part in drama, singing and movement in front of a live audience.
7 th February	Safer Internet Day	Whole school	Opportunity for children to think about being safe online and share ideas and advice.
7 th February	Greek feast and celebration	Whole school	Music, dancing and a special Greek feast menu made the day special and encouraged the children to enjoy and share their understanding of Greek culture and try new things.

Date	Activity	Who	Outcomes
14 th February	Trip to Holy Island – beach school and visit to Lindisfarne Priory.	Whole school	1) To take part in beach school activities creating a giant valentine to the environment on the beach. 2) To be the first school to try out English Heritage’s new handling kits for the Lindisfarne Priory. The children helped with ideas for the updated educational offer so have been invited to this afternoon before it officially opens on the 15 th .

Planned upcoming enrichment events

Date	Activity	Who	Outcomes
2 nd March	Trip to Great North Museum: Hancock in Newcastle	Whole school	Bespoke workshops have been agreed with the museum around classification of animals and also a story bag activity for Early Years around plastics in the environment. We will also see the Ancient Greece collection and the dinosaur exhibition during our visit.
3 rd March	World Book Day +1	Whole school	One of our parents is a published author of children’s books and she has agreed to come and work with the children. She is going to talk about her books and how she became a published author before leading a collective story writing activity. Afterwards, we will be inviting parents and family members in to school to share books with the children.
10 th March	Developing Experts live lessons – amphibians	Main school	There are two live lessons about animals and amphibians in particular for the two key stages.
17 th March	Red Nose Day	Whole school	An opportunity for fundraising and considering the importance of key charities to support those in need.

- **Collective Worship**

Since the last report, we have had our Christmas service at St John the Baptist church in Lowick and a Candlemas Service on 2nd February, also at Lowick. Both services were child friendly and the children got to take part – singing and sharing their prayers. This is the first time we have done Candlemas and it went very well with the children engaging well with the message about being the light in the world.

We plan on having our Easter service at St Mary’s church on Holy Island on 27th March. Rev Sarah is also going to work with the Holy Island children on the afternoon of 20th March for St Cuthbert’s Day.

In school we have daily collective worship, including a celebration themed worship on Fridays and a clergy led worship on Wednesdays. This has been a time to reflect, share and be together as well as to pray and respond to stories from the Bible or faith videos / music.

Charlotte discussed with the children the subject of blessings for houses and buildings and we would like Charlotte and Sarah to bless our school buildings in the near future.