



Lowick and Holy Island CE First Schools Headteacher Report to Governors Spring Term 2021

School Characteristics

- **School population**

Cohort	Nursery	Reception	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Overall
Gender (girls / boys)	3 / 6	5 / 1	1 / 3	3 / 3	4 / 2	2 / 4	18/19
Lowick / Holy Island	9 / 0	5 / 1	4 / 0	5 / 1	6 / 0	6 / 0	35/2
Total	9	6	4	6	6	6	37

School numbers have reduced from the previous report as children in foster care have been adopted and moved to another area. Nursery numbers remain encouraging, especially as we have not been able to have our usual stay and play sessions with a new starter this term.

Attending school: we are currently open for all nursery children and 6 out of 9 are attending regularly.

In the main school we are open for critical worker's children and vulnerable children. We have identified 6 children in the main school who are critical worker's children who need to attend school and 3 vulnerable children. The critical worker's children are not necessarily attending full time but only when required to enable their parent to attend work.

All other children are receiving remote education.

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

Three children across both schools are identified as having SEND at the level of 'school support'. One child is identified as SEND with an Education and Healthcare Plan (EHCP).

We no longer have children in school who are Looked After (LAC). Three children are in receipt of free school meals (FSM). The school is ensuring these children continue to receive free school meals during lockdown as they either are currently attending school or, if they are at home, through a groceries voucher scheme.

- **Current staffing**

- Headteacher: Rebecca Simpson
- Class 1 teacher: Carolyn Strangeways
- Class teacher (based on Holy Island and sharing Class 2 in Lowick): Heather Stiansen
- Class teacher: Katie Waddington (currently covering my teaching load to enable me to manage my workload and to enable smaller group work / year group work to catch up after lockdown)

- Teaching assistants: Julie Edmison, Steph Hay, Amelia Easten (in nursery) and Sara Morgan (for SEND support).
- Support staff: Linda Blenkinsop is our administrator. She would like to retire at Easter but is willing to stay on until May to help us with the difficulties of recruiting during a lockdown. Lesley Bradbury and Karen Ward are our caretakers for Lowick and Holy Island respectively. Rachel Easton and Joanne Marshall are our lunchtime supervisors.
- Margaret Smith is working from our school kitchen.
- Zoe Turner delivers active learning sessions across the school.

- **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	2	0	0	0	0	2	0

Lockdown is a tricky time for families and we continue to be vigilant in school to provide support as needed. Operation Encompass is still running during lockdown so that the school will receive a report if the police attend a home which has a school aged child in residence. Where there are issues we are in frequent contact with the families and offering support where we can.

We are more able to keep an eye on children seen as vulnerable by having them attend school full time and these children have been encouraged to do so. Pastoral phone calls to families and our use of Seesaw is also helping us to pick up on other problems which may be occurring behind the scenes.

Guidance on e-safety is also shared regularly with parents and carers as children at home are spending perhaps more time online than they would normally. We will continue to do this through our Facebook page, emails/letters home and through curriculum work in computing.

- **Premises**

Our trees have been inspected on both sites by county and no problems have been reported in terms of Health and Safety. Work previously done since their last report to make things safe has been acknowledged in this correspondence. Before lockdown we also moved and reattached the gate onto the Lowick yard as it was becoming too difficult for parents with nursery children to manage, especially if they have younger siblings as well.

Building projects are currently on hold during lockdown as we cannot have visitors on site unless they are essential. We still have had workmen on site to sort out a leaking boiler (in nursery), issues with the fuse board and the heaters in the gym and to ensure our outdoor lights are working properly on the timer. We are scheduling these workmen to come when children are not in school as much as possible.

We are continuing to have our water systems checked regularly by HSL with regard to risks from legionella's, and so on, as advised by county and in line with our risk assessment. We have also had our play equipment and outdoor play equipment inspected (the usual annual review).

Leadership and Management

Despite having to respond to very sudden changes with little to no notice, we are continuing to provide a broad and challenging curriculum for our children. More information on this is provided below in our Quality of Education section. However I am also monitoring staff workload levels and well-being as it is very difficult to plan for remote learning, work in school with a group aged 2-9 and then also to be under pressure to provide live sessions.

Staff have fed back to me on the school risk assessment as it has been updated as well as our in school procedures. They have also let me know they prefer the new staffing rota as it is easier for them to be in some days a week rather than a week on / week off system. We have identified that one of the biggest challenges to staff well-being is feeling isolated and then consequently overwhelmed with the tasks in front of us. We are therefore having virtual teacher catch ups / planning sessions twice a week to facilitate our change of curriculum with lockdown and to ensure everyone has support and someone to bounce ideas off.

Focused staff training to ensure improved pedagogy remains a priority and this is mainly being done virtually or in house.

Staff training since the previous Headteacher Report:

Date	Training focus	Who	Outcome	Impact
Ongoing	British Sign Language	CS	Enable staff to use sign language techniques for non-verbal communication.	We are using this to sign simple songs with the children. We did Silent Night at Christmas with Makaton and we are planning to do 'You've got a friend in me' using BSL.
	Makaton	KA & AE	Enable early years staff to use simple sign language techniques for non-verbal communication.	
5 th Nov & 26 th Nov twilight	Mental Health Leads conference (virtual)	RS	Wellbeing for Education Return project shared to be cascaded to staff. Including twilight on anxiety and low mood / staff wellbeing.	Training on mental health wellbeing for children and staff allows me to review our policies and work in school to ensure we are taking necessary action and delivering suitable curriculum content.
11 th Nov	Designated teacher (LAC) conference	RS	School practice for LAC is up to date.	School practice is up to date and we were able to support the adoption process in Nov/Dec. However, LAC children have now left the school.
12 th Nov	Great North Maths Hub – teacher research group (TRG) workshop	RS & CS	Our maths practice continues to improve based on principles of mastery and mixed age teaching.	Staff cascading information from the maths hub and in particular training done online has helped inform

	on maths mastery (virtual)			practice. However, it is hard to gauge the impact of this due to change of planning and delivery in lockdown.
17 th Nov	Thrive practitioner CPD on relate-rupture-repair cycle	RS & CS	Thrive practitioners in school remain up to date with best practice.	Thrive practitioners reviewed our positive behaviour policy to ensure it is in line with the relate-rupture-repair cycle.
23 rd Nov	Maths subject knowledge training	CS, HS & KW	Our maths practice continues to improve and staff become more knowledgeable and confident in building up stages of learning in maths.	Staff responded positively to how useful this session was and helped them to plan more effectively.
5 th January Teacher Training Day	Safeguarding refresher	All staff	All staff aware of the need to be vigilant regarding safeguarding.	Continuing awareness of all staff of any safeguarding issues.
	Recovery curriculum review and joint planning	All teachers	Support staff in developing a new curriculum to support pupils.	Our curriculum was reviewed and new plans were agreed to tackle issues. However, this was not put into place as planned due to Lockdown being announced that evening.
15 th Jan (beginning of 1 year programme)	NASENCo (national SEND co-ordinators award) begun	RS	Online course (equivalent to masters level) based on improving SEND practice	
18 th Jan	Webinar on primary testing (LFT)	RS	RS to learn about how primary testing could work for staff in school.	Lateral flow tests are now available for staff in school on an optional basis.
20 th Jan	Online early years maths training	RS & CS	CS as main attendee and RS as Headteacher support for this session. Based on increasing knowledge and range of strategies for effective maths in early years.	Introductory session so far (3 further sessions and project to be completed by CS and cascaded to other early years staff)
27 th Jan	Music webinar on Charanga	RS & CS	Exploring the option to deliver music more effectively and in-house using the Charanga scheme and website to support.	

Quality of Education

Our recovery curriculum in the autumn term had been progressing well, especially in catch up work on phonics and reading. We tested all the children now in year 2 who did not take their year 1 phonics due to the first lockdown and they all passed well. Children who did not pass in year 1 and missed the year 2 checker were also tested and passed with excellent scores. Our Read Write Inc small group work showed strong progress

across all groups of children. We were able to deliver an exciting curriculum and we were able to produce a nativity production with drama and singing despite not being able to do our usual show in the village hall. This was well received across the community and beyond.

This term we adapted very quickly to set remote learning for all children by 9am the first morning of lockdown. As we had already been using the Seesaw app with parents as a virtual reading log they were able to access this promptly. We continue to use the Seesaw app to set work and to view work, photos and comments uploaded by the children or their parents. Any lost log in information or other issues getting onto the websites we are using were resolved in the first week of lockdown through email, telephone calls and IT videos we made to address more widely experienced issues. All children have access to a device and the internet, although in some cases devices are shared with other family members.

We are setting maths and English (grammar and spelling) work through the Classroom Secrets Kids website which allows for tutorial slides, videos and interactive quizzes. This allows staff to track pupil's responses. We are augmenting this with English work from the book 'The Storm Whale' to ensure children are also challenged and stimulated with their reading and writing.

We are making good use of the National Oak Academy video lessons to enable us to offer a range of subjects – science, music, PE (adapted for home learning) and we are also setting a range of art and design projects. We changed our RE focus to 'People who follow God' and we are using classic bible stories such as Noah and the Ark and Jonah and the Whale/Big Fish to explore this topic.

As the group of children attending school varies each day and includes children aged from 2 to 9, we are using the remote education work with the older children in school. This enables those attending part time to continue seamlessly with what they are working on across home and school. We are using Seesaw to communicate this with parents.

In addition, some parents asked us to provide a stronger connection between home and school as their child would like to 'see their teachers'. We have responded to this request through staff recording several stories which we are sharing with the children as an optional activity. This includes a range of books for younger children and a daily chapter from Robin Hood for older children. We have had positive feedback from this so far. Sarah and Sam (Quilty) are kindly leading our Wednesday collective worship live on zoom and have co-ordinated this with our RE curriculum this half term. We are currently exploring more live sessions such as a book club or to come together to 'sign' a song.

Behaviour and attitudes

The school continues to have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Incidents are dealt with promptly and staff are confident in maintaining our expectations and responding to issues arising. The children currently attending school are happy to be here and are a pleasure to work with. Since the previous Headteacher report there have been no major behaviour incidents, no exclusions or prejudicial/racist incidents.

- **Attendance**

Attendance was an area for improvement in our Ofsted report. I am pleased to report that attendance for the autumn term was 100% for Holy Island and 97.98% for Lowick, this means we are consistently seeing attendance above the national average of 96%.

Personal Development

We were very happy with our progress over the autumn term with respect to pupils' personal development. We were conscious that they had been through a challenging time and ensured there were numerous opportunities for mindfulness and building up their resilience and confidence.

The Commando Joe's programme, which is about character education, works very well in school and we had a lot of positive feedback from parents and children. The values it promotes are RESPECT (resilience, empathy, self-awareness, positivity, excellence, communication and team work). We were able to re-evaluate the children against this framework at the end of the term and confirm the positive impact on the children from the 'missions' they have done so far. We are currently exploring whether we can use the Commando Joe's parents portal to continue this work remotely.

We also stepped up our Thrive approach in school with in-house training for all staff around using group profiles and action plans / strategies and activities tailored for each year group. Carolyn and myself are both trained practitioners and we have accessed practitioner training on the relate – rupture – repair cycle to promote children's wellbeing. We continue to promote the PLACE ethos (we are playful, loving, accepting, curious and empathetic). We are continuing to use this with the children in school and across some of the activities we are sending home.

We were able to offer four after school clubs in the autumn term: skipping, ball skills/games, eco-club and Commando Joe's. We had a very good take up on these clubs – including by disadvantaged children. For a small school we feel a strong commitment to provide a good and varied offer in terms of our extra-curricular activities. This is currently paused due to current guidelines for lockdown. We are still offering before and after school child care.

School trips / enrichment opportunities since the previous Headteacher Report

We are unable to offer school trips due to the restrictions in place. However, we were able to do various things in the second half of the autumn term to enrich our offer. We created a joint collage of a Christmas scene using natural materials which was used by Lowick parish council for a Christmas card for the local area. We watched a virtual pantomime from the West Midlands Theatre Company and we filmed 'A Bundle of Joy' (a musical nativity) mainly outdoors. The children enjoyed being part of a production and we feel it helped us to connect to the community as we couldn't put on a production as we usually would. We also added extra forest school afternoons to our offer in the second half of the autumn term to respond to children's mental health needs and to continue to deliver a broad curriculum in a more practical way.

Our planned spring term visit from 'Teach Rex' with their virtual dragon – linked to story telling and promoting writing skills – has been postponed. However, we are still making use of our lovely grounds with the children in school and we are accessing live events such as lessons from the National Aquarium to add excitement to our offer. We have also received a delivery of an 'orchard of trees' (a mix of fruit trees and hedgerow plants) which we will need to plant soon with the children attending school.