

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Holy Island Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School First School

c/o Lowick C.E. First School
Main Street
Lowick,
Northumberland
TD15 2UA

Diocese:	Newcastle
Local Authority	Northumberland
Date of Inspection	23. 1. 2007
Date of last Inspection	December 2004
School's Unique Reference number	122294
Headteacher	Mrs Christine Thirlwell
Inspector	Mrs Jean Mulley 358

School context

This is a very small school situated on Holy Island. The school works closely with Lowick C.E. First School whose Headteacher is also acting head of Holy Island School. There are currently 7 pupils in this school. Tidal conditions permitting, the children attend Lowick school, accompanied by their own teacher. When this is impossible pupils are taught in one class. Socio-economic conditions are average overall.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Holy Island School as a Church of England school are outstanding

Christian values of love, tolerance, forgiveness and respect are embedded throughout the school. The natural beauty of this island together with its rich Christian heritage are used to form a basis to set the outstanding Christian character of this school.

Established strengths

- Enthusiastic and dedicated teachers who work well together as a team and set a very good role model for pupils
- The outstanding Christian ethos which pervades all areas of school life
- The very good relationships that exist between all members of the school community
- The outstanding pastoral care offered to pupils ensuring that individual needs are cared for.

Focus for development

- Pursue funding for the building proposals for a field study centre in order to enhance the current school building thus providing more opportunities to use the natural beauty / Christian heritage of the island to even further develop the Christian ethos of this school.

The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is outstanding at meeting the needs of all learners

The Christian ethos in this school is very strong and pervades all areas of school life, through documentation (the school SEF is an outstanding example of presenting the church aspects of school), displays and classroom practice. Christian values of love of neighbour, tolerance, forgiveness and respect are evident in all aspects of school life. A calm atmosphere exists in the school. Pupils state that they feel safe and happy in school. They are secure in the knowledge that their thoughts and beliefs are valued and respected. Great emphasis is placed on the unique individuality of each child. Children are confident and open to the needs of each other. Very good relationships are found between all members of the school community. Parents feel that the needs of their children are met, that the school is approachable and any concerns are dealt with quickly and sensitively.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding.

Daily worship is seen as important to the life of the school. Children have a very positive attitude to Worship. They are eager to participate and speak with great enthusiasm about special worship assemblies that have taken place. The parish priest is a frequent, welcome and supportive visitor to school. He conducts school worship on a regular basis. Acts of worship are well planned, recorded and evaluated by the worship co-ordinator and her colleagues. Themes are linked to the Churches calendar and have a strong Christian focus. A thoughtful ambience for worship is created by pupils sitting in a circle with a large candle on a stand in the centre. Pupils are encouraged to offer their own prayers which are linked together by the worship leader and there are opportunities for quiet reflection in a peaceful atmosphere. Opportunities for prayer are offered at other times of the day.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

R.E is well planned and executed and plays a major role in promoting the Christian ethos of this school. Effective and stimulating teaching ensures that children have a very positive attitude to R.E. Christian values are promoted through R.E. and pupils are encouraged to reflect and consider the needs and views of others. Small pupil numbers enable individual support so that children may achieve their full potential. Standards of learning are very high and children make very good progress. Outstanding assessment procedures are in place – detailed sheets which are then transferred onto individual profile sheets. This enables tracking of progress. Awareness of other faiths is built into the R.E. programme. This is evidenced by displays together with numerous photographs and videos.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is outstanding

The headteacher has a clear Christian vision for this school and is supported in this by staff, governors and parents. Staff work well together as a team and are totally committed to the life of the school. The mission statement, under the heading "Journeying Together " is prominently displayed around the school and totally expresses what this school is all about. The parish priest as chairman of governors is a frequent and supportive visitor to the school. He is extremely popular with both pupils and parents who feel that he is very approachable and understanding. Foundation governors are aware of the specific role they have in bringing Christian aspects into areas of governance. They know their school well. Parents are very appreciative of all the school has to offer. The organisation needed to ensure that Holy Island and Lowick schools function in the way they do for the benefit of pupils is outstanding. Holy Island school is very much part of the life and tradition of the island and communication between all stakeholders is outstanding.