



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Holy Island Voluntary Aided First School

Lewins Lane, Holy Island

Berwick upon Tweed

TD15 2SQ

Previous SIAMS grade: Outstanding

Current inspection grade: Good

Diocese: Newcastle

Local authority: Northumberland

Dates of inspection: 12th & 13th January 2016

Date of last inspection: 16th & 17th September 2010

School's unique reference number: 122294

Headteacher: Christine Vanson

Inspector's name and number: Carole Snelling NS 519

School context

Holy Island voluntary aided first school has four pupils and one residential teacher serving the local community on the island. Tides permitting children spend part of their time at Lowick voluntary controlled first school on the mainland. On the island the children are taught as one group with appropriately differentiated work. At Lowick the children join the appropriate age or stage group. The schools have worked together in a soft federation for 25 years and they share a head teacher. Children make more than expected progress and attainment, however as the numbers are small fluctuations in outcomes are inevitable.

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

- The enthusiasm and determination of the head, her team and governing body to ensure that Holy Island and Lowick schools work in federation has provided opportunities for children to learn through a stimulating curriculum. As a result children are rounded individuals, who are happy, achieving and flourishing.
- The ambition and aspiration for each child to fulfil their God given potential results in children making above expected progress and achievement.
- The teaching of Jesus "to treat your neighbour as yourself" is evident in the excellent behaviour and caring, supportive relationships.

- Very good curriculum opportunities for social, moral, spiritual and cultural (SMSC) development have ensured that children develop an understanding and tolerance of faiths, cultures and traditions beyond their own communities.

Areas to improve

- Use the SIAMS schedule documentation to help formalise and structure the evaluation and celebration of progress and to review the effectiveness and impact of Religious Education (RE) and collective worship.
- Enhance the development of collective worship by ensuring that there is formal mechanism to allow children and governors to carry out monitoring and evaluation.
- As cited in the Federation Improvement Plan, invest in high quality training for governors and in on-going support for staff delivering religious education and worship in order to enhance the learning experience for pupils.
- Work with stakeholders to enable them to more clearly articulate the school's Christian values that are implicit in the life of the school.

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

The school's aim to provide a happy, caring, family environment where children feel inspired to learn within the Christian context of love and forgiveness is fulfilled. The school is fully inclusive and children receive nurturing and individualised learning. When working at Lowick children are part of a larger Christian family; they make new friends and enjoy their learning. Working with children from Lowick through mixed-age and stage teaching creates opportunities for children to support each other. This is evident in peer mentoring for reading, tutor time "Welcome" greetings and caring for younger children at break and lunchtime. In doing so they demonstrate their love of neighbour. The caring relationships are informed by Christian values of love, truth, justice, forgiveness and service. The imaginative and stimulating curriculum ensures that children develop the skills of independent learning and it makes a major contribution to SMCS development. Pupils are confident, articulate and adept at listening carefully and asking questions. They challenge others' views and accept criticism and so consequently learning moves on quickly. They know that they are special and cared for and as a result their behaviour and relationships are excellent. Pupils say they feel happy, safe and know how well they are doing in their learning. Progress of all groups of pupils is good or better. Challenging targets encourage each to aspire. Vibrant and exciting displays of artefacts and children's work values pupils' achievements and scaffold and support learning. Very good opportunities are provided for SMSC, e.g. curriculum visits to York to study the Victorians, to Edinburgh to visit a mosque and European Christmas Market, after school clubs and community involvement. In RE and worship the teaching of world faiths, Christianity and festivals contribute to an awareness of the multi-faith and multicultural world. The impact of this is the development of tolerance, cultural awareness and a contribution to social cohesion. Learners are beginning to understand that Christianity is a multicultural worldwide faith. Children learn the importance of good stewardship of God's world; this is seen in their regular beach cleans, community lunches at Harvest and Christmas time and charitable

fundraising. Pupils are well prepared for the transition to the next phase of their education.

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

Worship plays an important part in the life of the school and pupils participate willingly and thoughtfully. The coordinator has produced a schedule of themes for worship. These are based around the Anglican calendar, Bible stories, Christian values and festivals from world religions. Links are often made between curriculum themes, RE topics and worship e.g. the children looked at Psalm 139 and then reflected upon what made them special during an RE lesson. Worship takes place daily and contributes to the SMCS development of children by allowing them time to reflect on what they have heard and encouraging them to ask questions. Children volunteer to prepare and lead worship; they do this with confidence, enjoyment and pride. Celebration Friday worship is enjoyed by the children and provides an opportunity for them to praise others in a constructive and caring way. The teacher keeps a record of worship however there is no formal mechanism of evaluation. It would enhance the development of worship if regular reviews and evaluation were initiated by all stakeholders. A governor has recently taken on the role of link governor for RE and collective worship. The Federation Improvement Plan identifies enhancement of these areas by providing training for staff and support for governors. At Christmas and Easter the children produce a performance that tells the story behind the festivals. The Christmas Nativity production takes place at St Mary's church on Holy Island and is enjoyed by parents and pupils. The special Christian heritage of the island contributes to the opportunities for worship and developing a sense of awe and wonder. The governors say that worship is about matters of faith, life and living and being friends and disciples of Jesus. Children worked with an artist to contribute to the Fishermen's altar display in church and attended the Sunday service of dedication. The island teacher and vicar work together to provide worship that is relevant and meaningful to the lives of the children. The vicar is a regular visitor to school and conducts collective worship there and in St Mary's church. The theme of Baptism was greatly enjoyed by the children. Children read the story of Jesus baptism, a demonstration baptism took place and a child said an extemporary prayer and led the Lord's prayer. It was a profound and spiritual experience. This delivery of worship was outstanding and taught the children about the Trinity and nature of Jesus. Children attend the church creating excellent family links between church and school and support for their spiritual journey.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good.

The school has adopted units from the agreed Newcastle and Durham Diocesan Syllabus. Christianity, Islam and Judaism are taught and the subject makes a major contribution to children's multi-faith and multicultural awareness in this largely mono-cultural setting.

An experienced RE coordinator from Lowick takes responsibility for planning and assessment. The teaching is jointly shared with the island teacher. External evaluation by the school improvement partner judges teaching over time to be good. RE is taught as a discrete subject and as an integral part of wider curriculum themes. Children are enjoying investigating Light and Celebrations. This affords good opportunity to compare and contrast festivals in all three religions studied and the impact they have

on people of faith. Children have good knowledge recall and subject vocabulary and were able to illustrate similarities by comparing the call to prayer in Islam with church bells in Christianity as a means of bringing people to worship. Displays, artefacts and visits to places of worship all enhance children's understanding and enthusiasm. RE links with worship themes and values which contribute to SMCS and understanding something of the nature of Christian teachings. Assessment is under development reflecting the national move from levels to stages of development. Formative assessment is recorded and end of topic summative assessment is planned. Learners make good progress from their differing starting points. Marking is by comment; however there is no feedback or advice for children as how to improve their learning. Annotating work with next steps for learning would bring RE in line with current practice in other curriculum areas and improve attainment. RE is strategically planned and forms part of the Federation improvement plan. The subject is well resourced.

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

The head, her team and governors of both Holy Island and Lowick schools are fully committed to providing the highest standard of education. Working together they have produced a tightly focused joint federation improvement plan "Journeying Together" The governors at Holy Island see the partnership as one school on two sites, sharing policies, vision and values. An experienced designated coordinator from Lowick has responsibility for RE and worship. The improvement plan sets out the intention to further improve RE and worship by sourcing professional development training for teachers and governors. The head has identified the need for governor training on the use of the SIAMS evaluation framework. There is a determination that every child should have access to the same educational opportunities and experiences and that rural isolation should not be a disadvantage. By attending for part of the week at Lowick the island children experience a larger school family. The drive for excellence is to ensure that each child aspires and achieves. From variable starting points it is usual for children to make more than expected progress. Children thrive supported by caring adults in a loving atmosphere underpinned by Christian values. Celebration of achievement and praise are freely given and contribute to pupils' feelings of self worth. Parents and governors are regular visitors to school. They say that children have a great educational start because the school fosters confidence and children know that they will be listened to. Each child knows that they are special, they are happy and content. By external evaluation, professional development and partnership with other schools locally, the head is fully informed of local and national developments in education. The head and governors have succeeded in training future leaders by devolved leadership opportunities and involvement in the National College for School Leadership. A previous teacher has secured headship of a church school. RE and collective worship play an important part in the school's curriculum and contribute to SMCS. The links with the local church on the island are excellent. The children are very much part of community life in this sometimes isolated island and contribute to the newsletter "Holy Island Times" The journeying together of staff, governors and children is proving to be a fruitful one in this happy and caring Christian school. Arrangements for RE and collective worship meet statutory requirements.

