

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Holy Island Church of England First School	
Address	Lewins Lane, Holy Island, Berwick upon Tweed, TD15 2SQ
How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?	
Overall grade	Good
The impact of collective worship	Good
The effectiveness of religious education (RE)	Excellent

School's vision
<p style="text-align: center;">Journeying together</p> <p style="text-align: center;">'Be encouraged of heart and united in love...' Colossians 2</p>
Key findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Christian vision is embedded and known. It empowers adults and pupils in their daily lives. This leads to all growing in their understanding of each other and the wider world. However, formal evaluation of the school's Christian distinctiveness is underdeveloped. • An impressive range of curricular and extra-curricular opportunities broaden pupils' horizons. This enables them to be aspirational and to regularly experience moments of awe and wonder. • Inspired by the Christian vision, leaders make brave decisions that support pupils in their learning, and families in their wellbeing. Pupils reflect this courage in their acute sense of justice and ability to challenge for change. • Collective worship is a daily highlight. It creates opportunities throughout the day for prayer and reflection and contributes significantly to pupils' spirituality. However, pupils do not routinely plan or lead acts of worship. • Religious education (RE) is excellent. The deftly planned curriculum ensures pupils' deep knowledge, understanding and appreciation of Christianity and a range of world religions and worldviews.
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formalise how leaders, including governors, evaluate the school's Christian distinctiveness. This is so that the Christian vision has even greater impact. • Extend opportunities for pupils to plan and lead collective worship in order to develop further their appreciation of Christian worship.

Inspection findings

This is a good Church school where the biblically rooted Christian vision makes an impact. It is threaded through and evident in all policies, practices and decisions. Formally federated with the Church school at nearby Lowick, Holy Island First School enjoys energising, fruitful links with a network of small schools. Strong partnerships with the diocese and local churches encourages adults in their leadership and ambitions for the community they serve. Leaders, including governors, know the school well, although evaluation of its Christian distinctiveness is not formally established. Consistent with the intention of the Christian vision of journeying together, leaders support the development and welfare of adults and pupils practically and prayerfully. This leads to a proud, harmonious community where all receive encouragement to thrive.

Inspired by the Christian vision, leaders are relentlessly determined that pupils experience a full and enriching learning experience. This includes when they attend the school in Lowick. Adults pursue every opportunity to broaden pupils' horizons and prepare them for their futures. The curriculum builds knowledge and understanding in all key areas. An ambitious programme of additional opportunities encourages pupils in their talents, resilience and curiosity. Art, drama and a rich music provision captures their creativity and brings them joy. Forest school activities, gardening and the bug hotel inspire them in their stewardship of nature. Learning frequently induces moments of awe and wonderment that contribute to pupils' deep spirituality. Parents appreciate the school's loving, personalised and nurturing care of their children both when learning on Holy Island and in Lowick. They applaud the diligence of adults in appreciating the needs and concerns of their whole family and the unconditional welcome that pupils at Lowick and Holy Island afford each other. Holy Island is a school that lives by its Christian vision to be encouraged of heart and united in love.

Adults seek creative solutions to enabling pupils' resilience and character growth. For example, weekly Commando Joe sessions skilfully and joyfully enable them in their teamworking and problem solving. This leads to enhanced self-esteem, resilience and, through the range of experiences, increasing global awareness. Similarly, membership of the Global Schools Alliance brings an understanding of education and opportunity in a global context that impacts upon their experiences. All pupils can be school councillors and suggestion boxes enable them to determine experiences and opportunities to enjoy. They are unselfish in their requests recognising the impact of their voices upon others. This includes supporting local and national charities and joining campaigns that impact directly upon the wellbeing of their families and community. This they do through prayer and action. Closely linked to the values of friendship, kindness and helpfulness, the school's rewards system positively encourages pupils in their personal character development. It enables them to choose individual or group benefits, with them regularly opting to build the community by sharing their success.

Relationships are a strength of this small school community. Adults work together as a single, pupil-focused team. They know pupils as individuals. They engage with them over several years and have in place strong systems to promote their safety, including online. Behaviour is exemplary and pupils are taught how to form good relationships and identify the characteristics of bad ones. This results in them feeling nurtured, safe and happy. When mistakes are made or relationships are wobbly, pupils recognise the power of saying sorry, receiving forgiveness and starting afresh. One pupil explained this as being like Jesus letting people 'be new'. Social time and clubs, cement the wonderful friendships that exist between pupils within, and across, Lowick and Holy Island schools. Adults support the social, emotional and mental health of pupils and leaders ensure that all are supported in their




wellbeing. This care typifies the impact of the Christian vision of journeying together.

Holy Island School celebrates diversity and difference because each person knows the Christian teaching that everyone reflects the image of God. Individuality is strikingly normal in this accepting, supportive community. Relationships education, and adult and pupil role models, lead to an appreciation of difference as uniqueness. Acutely aware of the school's context, adults, through careful learning choices, ensure pupils explore Britain's history, diversity and rich cultural traditions. Pupils are encouraged to be outward looking and accepting of others. Through learning, they develop an appreciation of fairness and the right treatment of others. This flows from their understanding of dignity and respect and is preparing them well for their futures.

Collective worship is the palpable heartbeat of the school community. Meticulously planned, it invitationally celebrates the Christian seasons and the secular calendar. It is remarkable for its richness and creativity that enable worship in school, in church and outside. Threaded throughout the school day it offers adults and pupils moments of prayer and reflection, often upon the beauty of God's creation. Gathering the school together and, when at Lowick, including the children from the associated nursery, inspiring worship contributes to everyone's spirituality. Every adult and a very significant number of local ministers share in the leadership of worship. This enables the community to experience the breadth of the Anglican tradition. Adults ensure that worship is accessible to even the youngest pupils using music, drama, games and stillness to bring worship alive. Through passing a holding cross, prayer, lighting candles and explanations, pupils grow in their understanding of the Christian belief in the Trinity. Pupils participate in worship with relish but do not have sufficient, regular involvement in planning and leading worship.

RE is excellent. Using Understanding Christianity and diocesan recommended resources, the RE leader deftly plans exciting and challenging learning for pupils. Working in mixed-age groups, they learn about Christianity, an impressive number of world religions and consider non-religious world views. Visits and visitors enrich learning and bring it to life so that pupils readily speak of the impact of religion upon the lives of believers. RE makes a very significant contribution to their appreciation of the religious and cultural diversity of Great Britain. Teachers discuss pupils' work with them, making suggestions for improvements. Consequently, pupils flourish in their learning. They apply their knowledge and understanding, and older pupils produce extended pieces of writing. Both in oral and written work, pupils use religious vocabulary to enhance their work and demonstrate their understanding. They express complex theological and philosophical ideas carefully. They recall prior learning and make connections between the religious practices of followers of different faiths. Creative and thoughtful teaching means that pupils develop their knowledge and explore their spirituality. Irresistible RE is a powerful way in which this small, friendly and nurturing Church school is enabling pupils to flourish.



	The effectiveness of RE is		Excellent	
	<p>As a consequence of the carefully planned, balanced and sequential curriculum, teaching and learning in RE are excellent. Pupils are captivated by consistently challenging and engaging lessons. They retain their learning and use religious terms accurately and with confidence. Assessment is immediate, rigorous, and meaningful. Consequently, pupils know what they need to do to improve and make excellent progress.</p>			
Information				
School	Holy Island Church of England First School	Inspection date	17 May 2023	
URN	122294	VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary aided	
Diocese/District	Newcastle	Pupils on roll	4	
Headteacher	Rebecca Simpson			
Chair of Governors	Nikki Gamston			
Inspector	Fiona Ashton	No.	860	