

St James' Primary School

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ST JAMES'
PRIMARY SCHOOL



A Rainbow will always appear in the clouds

We use the rainbow to illustrate our commitment to our children and to each other. In the Bible, God sent Noah a rainbow as a sign of His promise. We believe that God loves each of us, and it is our promise that we will love, look after and care for our children in the best way possible. We ask our children to 'show the rainbow' by looking after and loving one another in the best way they can. Underpinning this are our Christian values: love, hope, peace, joy, forgiveness, compassion, honesty, patience, perseverance and koinonia (community).

Hello, and thank you for your interest in our vacancy!

St James' CEVA Primary School is a lovely small school which sits in the heart of Biddenham village. We have just over 190 children on roll, in 7 classes ranging from Reception to Year 6. Each class is supported by a teaching assistant. Our children achieve well because of the excellent work of our staff and the support given by our parents.

Prior to my appointment in April 2015, our school had experienced a turbulent few years with many staff changes. However, staffing is now much more settled and the issues which were experienced have been successfully addressed and resolved. We have completed our transition to become a full Primary School and are judged as 'good' by both Ofsted and SIAMS.

We are looking to strengthen our staff team with the appointment of a new Class Teacher, to work in our Reception class. You will be an innovative and creative practitioner, who enjoys working with others to provide enriching experiences for our children; you will embrace change, seeing the opportunities rather than the barriers; the children will be at the heart of all you do; you will actively support our Church School ethos, appreciating the distinctive yet inclusive nature of our school family; you are flexible in your approach, prepared to take risks and you reflect honestly on the impact you have on children's learning. Most importantly, you genuinely care about children and seek to provide a holistic school experience.

We have made excellent progress with our EYFS provision over the past few years, and are very highly regarded by our families. Increasingly we are becoming the first preference choice for families because of our growing reputation and the good outcomes our children achieve and currently have a waiting list for admissions. Our Reception class is extremely well resourced, with a substantial outdoor learning environment. Experienced support staff work closely with colleagues to ensure the best provision for children, and the EYFS team is very ably led by our Deputy Head, Sarah Morton, who has vast experience and expertise in the EYFS. The curriculum has been completely reviewed with the new reforms in mind. It is a beautiful environment in which children learn and play, and visits to the setting are highly recommended.

According to your experience and expertise, you will be asked to lead in a curriculum area across the school; this will be agreed upon appointment, but in our school most teachers lead a curriculum area, for which dedicated non contact time is provided. The exception to this is ECTTs. Currently, available curriculum areas include: DT, history, MFL, RE, computing, or managing Read Write Inc, our chosen phonics approach. During the past year, we have focussed on a full review of our whole school curriculum, which we hope will excite and enthuse both children and teachers – we're looking for people with creativity and innovation to make our curriculum even more exciting and inspiring. We are a Church Aided School; a personal commitment to the Christian faith is not expected, however a commitment to the ethos and values of our school is essential. This ethos is



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exemplified by the Rainbow and our special Promise – that we will love one another in the best way we are able, showing friendship, kindness, compassion and forgiveness.

We look after our staff here – teaching is a tough job and so much is asked of us all. To counter some of the stresses and strains, we talk about our well-being needs. We enjoy each other's company and try to socialise outside of work, we find time to eat together at lunchtime, we have a 'staff fund' so we can share in birthday celebrations, and our tea and coffee is paid for. Little things, maybe, but they show we are valued and valuable, and that's important to us. But we also spend our time focussing on things which actually impact on children's learning rather than slavishly follow the agendas of external organisations.

There is a strong culture of continuous professional development, and we work hard to secure the very best training we can – we only go on courses which we know are going to move our thinking and practice forward. Examples of recent training events include: Talk 4 Writing with Pie Corbett, Maths Mastery project with the Enigma Maths Hub, AFL (Shirley Clarke), Subject Leadership, Read Write Inc (phonics), Understanding Christianity, NACE Able Learners.

We were inspected by Ofsted in 2017, which confirmed that we continue to be a good school. We were also inspected under the SIAMS framework, which recognised our commitment to the well-being of all children, parents and staff. Please find the time to read our reports, we're very proud of them and they provide a fair, objective view of our school in 2017, however, we have moved on quite a bit since then! We were particularly thrilled by the comments of our parents, who are incredibly supportive of what we do here. They value the strong sense of family and recognise the hard work and commitment of all staff in ensuring that their children are well taught and well looked after. During the COVID Lockdowns, one of the things we have really appreciated have been all the messages of support and appreciation from our families, as well as their care and concern for our well-being; here's a few snippets: ***'St James always nurtures everyone as best it can. Staff and children mean everything.'*** ***'St James' is just a wonderful School, so much care and love for the children and each other'*** ***'We would like to put on record that the staff and school management have been brilliant throughout this time'*** ***'We wanted to say thank you to you and all your staff for the wonderful job that you are doing for the children'***

Our school has many strengths: our children are friendly, cheerful and really keen to learn and behaviour is excellent. Other strengths include a collective commitment from the staff team and a great sense of friendship and partnership. Our new colleague will enjoy excellent professional development opportunities, experience opportunity to plan, lead and implement innovative and creative ideas and projects, and will join a happy and ambitious school.

I'm very proud to be the Head Teacher here – I work with great colleagues who inspire me every day, I work with amazing children who make me laugh and spur me on on the toughest days! I am well supported by the Governors, who value and appreciate us all. And I am appreciated by the parents and local community. For me, St James' is a truly special place, full of people who just want to do the best they can, who make mistakes, but show grit and get back up again, supported by other members of the school family. We look after each other, and that is special.

Pre-application contact (either visit or telephone call) is strongly encouraged and is warmly welcomed. It's important to get a sense of our school ethos and vision ahead of making an application. Please be aware that applications will be considered and shortlisted upon receipt, and interviews conducted soon after, where appropriate. Therefore, an early response is recommended.

I hope to hear from you soon,

Very best wishes,

Maria Soulsby
Head Teacher

