St Mary's Church of England Primary School

# Early Years Practitioner

## Candidate Information Pack

**Job start date:** April 2026

## Opportunities to join St Mary's are rare.

Our staff stay with us because they believe in the work we do and the community we serve. When a role does become available, it is because we are looking for someone exceptional to join a team that is deeply committed to improving the life chances of the children of Southampton.

The mantra: ***"Every child deserves a champion: an adult who never gives up on them, understands the power of connection and insists they become the best they can be."***

St Mary's sits in the heart of Southampton's city centre and has served the community for over 180 years. Today our mission remains clear: to accelerate the life chances of the children of Southampton.

In our most recent inspection, Ofsted judged the school Outstanding in every category. But our purpose goes far beyond inspection outcomes. We believe every child should leave St Mary's as the best version of themselves, confident and ready to shape the world around them.

## About our Nursery

Our nursery is a 60-place provision offering 30 morning and 30 afternoon places for pre-school children. Demand for places is consistently high and the setting r emains at full capacity.

The nursery forms a vital part of the school community and lays the foundations for children's learning, communication and social development. Children experience a carefully planned environment that blends structured teaching with purposeful play, ensuring strong early development in language, early mathematics, creativity and personal independence.

## The Role

We are seeking a passionate and committed **Early Years Practitioner** who believes deeply in the potential of every child.

You will work as part of a highly supportive Early Years team to provide a nurturing, stimulating and safe environment where children can explore, learn and develop confidence. The role involves supporting children's learning through purposeful play, modelling language and interaction, and contributing to the assessment and development of each child.

You will play an important role in building positive relationships with children, families and colleagues, ensuring that every child feels safe, valued and inspired to learn.

## Considering an Application

If you share our belief that every child deserves a champion, we would love to meet you.

We strongly encourage visits to the school so you can see our community and classrooms in action. Please contact us via recruitment@stmaryspri.org.uk to arrange a tour.

To make interviews as fair as possible, shortlisted candidates receive the interview questions in advance so they can prepare and bring notes with them.

Please note that applicants must have the right to work in the UK. St Mary's follows safer recruitment practices in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education.

## Investing in Our Staff

Great schools are built by great teams. Leaders at St Mary's are visible, supportive and committed to developing staff.

Early Years practitioners benefit from:

- High quality professional development
- Opportunities to progress within the St Mary's Partnership of Schools
- Support from experienced Early Years leaders
- Training that strengthens practice in language development, early literacy and child development

# St Mary's Church of England Primary School – POST DEFINITION

## JOB DESCRIPTION: Early Years Practitioner Range

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| GRADE: | Level 2 or 3 |
| CONTRACTURAL ARRANGEMENTS: | Permanent |
| START DATE: | April 2026 |

### CORE DUTIES

To provide high quality care and education for children within the nursery in line with the **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework**.

The practitioner will support children's learning, development and wellbeing through purposeful play, strong adult interaction and carefully planned learning environments.

The Early Years Practitioner will work as part of a team to ensure all children feel safe, valued and supported, enabling them to develop the confidence, language, independence and curiosity required for future learning.

## A: Planning, teaching and pupil management

### Teaching and Supporting Learning

• Support the delivery of high quality early years provision in line with the **EYFS framework**.
• Provide stimulating learning experiences through play, exploration and structured adult led activities.
• Promote children's language development through meaningful interaction, modelling vocabulary and sustained shared thinking.
• Support children's development across the **seven areas of learning**, with particular focus on communication and language, personal development and early mathematics.
• Create an inclusive learning environment where all children can participate and succeed.

### Observation, Assessment and Planning

• Observe children's learning and development regularly in order to understand their interests, strengths and next steps.
• Contribute to the assessment of children's progress using recognised early years assessment approaches.
• Work with colleagues to plan learning experiences that build on children's development and prior learning.
• Maintain accurate and meaningful records of children's development in line with school expectations.
• Identify children who may require additional support and work with senior staff to ensure appropriate intervention.

### The Key Person Role

• Act as a **key person** for a group of children, building secure relationships with them and their families.
• Monitor the wellbeing, development and progress of key children.
• Share information with parents and carers about children's development and learning.
• Support smooth transitions into nursery and from nursery into Reception

### Creating an Enabling Environment

• Contribute to the organisation of a stimulating, safe and well resourced learning environment.
• Ensure resources promote curiosity, creativity and independence.
• Maintain high expectations for behaviour and encourage positive social interactions.
• Promote children's independence, self care and confidence.

### Safeguarding and Welfare

• Ensure children's **health, safety and wellbeing** are prioritised at all times.
• Follow all safeguarding procedures in line with **Keeping Children Safe in Education** and school policy.
• Maintain high standards of supervision and risk awareness.
• Promote children's physical wellbeing through safe routines, hygiene and outdoor learning opportunities.

## B: Key Outcomes of an Effective Early Years Practitioner

### Children who:

• Feel safe, secure and valued within the nursery environment.
• Demonstrate curiosity, confidence and enthusiasm for learning.
• Make strong progress in their communication, personal development and early learning.
• Develop positive relationships with adults and peers.

### Parents and carers who:

• Feel welcomed and included in their child's early learning journey.
• Understand their child's development and next steps.
• Are confident in supporting learning at home.

### Colleagues who:

• Work collaboratively to support children's development and wellbeing.
• Share professional knowledge and contribute to a positive team culture.
• Maintain consistent expectations for learning and behaviour.

## C: Knowledge and Understanding

The Early Years Practitioner will demonstrate knowledge of:

- The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework
- Child development from birth to five
- The importance of language rich environments
- Play based learning and its role in development
- Safeguarding responsibilities within early years settings
- Inclusive practice and supporting children with additional needs

## D: Professional Responsibilities

### Professional Responsibilities for the postholder to uphold

The Early Years Practitioner will:

- Work collaboratively with colleagues, families and external professionals where required.
- Maintain professional conduct and act as a positive role model for children.
- Participate in training and professional development to continually improve practice.
- Follow all school policies relating to safeguarding, behaviour, health and safety and equality.
- Contribute positively to the ethos and values of St Mary's Church of England Primary School.

# Person Specification – Early Years Practitioner

| Category | Skills/Ability/Experience | Desirable/Essential |
|---|---|---|
| Qualifications / Professional Development | • Relevant Early Years qualification (Level 2 or Level 3 in Early Years Education, Childcare or equivalent)<br>• Commitment to ongoing professional development and reflective practice<br>• Understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework | Essential |
| Experience | • Experience of working with young children aged 3–4 in a nursery, early years or school setting<br>• Experience supporting children's learning through play based approaches<br>• Experience of working with families and building positive relationships | Essential |
| Teaching and Learning (Early Years Practice) | • Secure understanding of the **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)** and child development from birth to five<br>• Knowledge of how young children learn through play, exploration and adult interaction<br>• Ability to observe children's learning and identify next steps in development<br>• Understanding of how to create a stimulating and language rich learning environment<br>• Knowledge of inclusive practice and supporting children with additional needs<br>• Understanding of positive behaviour support appropriate to early years | Essential |
| Assessment and Child Development | • Ability to observe and assess children's development and contribute to planning next steps<br>• Experience using observations, questioning and interaction to support learning<br>• Understanding of how assessment supports children's progress in early years | Essential |
| Accountability and Communication | • Ability to communicate clearly and professionally with children, parents and colleagues<br>• Ability to share information about children's development with families<br>• Ability to contribute effectively within a team | Essential |
| Skills, Qualities and Abilities | • Ability to build warm, trusting relationships with children<br>• High expectations for children's learning, behaviour and wellbeing<br>• Ability to remain calm, patient and positive in a busy environment<br>• Ability to organise work, prioritise tasks and manage time effectively<br>• Strong teamwork skills | Essential |

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| | • Good communication and interpersonal skills<br>• Basic ICT skills to support recording and communication<br>• Flexibility and willingness to support the wider nursery team | |
| References | • Positive professional references supporting suitability to work with children | Essential |
| Safeguarding | • All appointments are subject to satisfactory enhanced DBS clearance and safeguarding checks.<br>• All appointments are subject to satisfactory enhanced DBS clearance and safeguarding checks. | Essential |