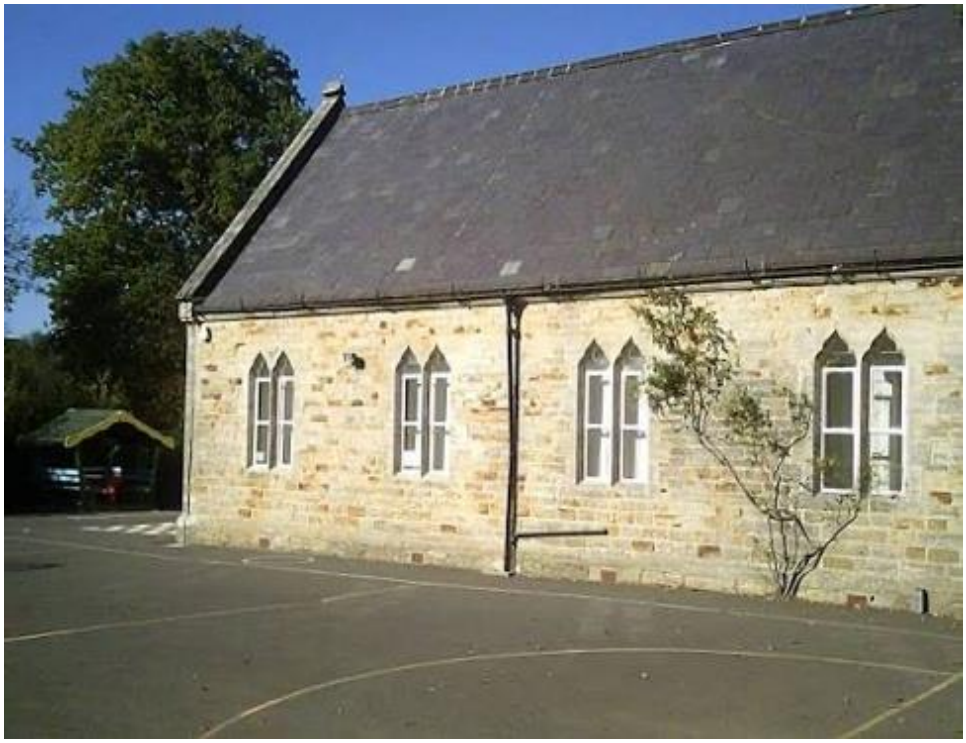
St Mark's School, Staplefield



Headteacher Recruitment 2026

St Mark's CE Primary School, Staplefield

14 November 2026

Dear Applicant,

We are delighted you are considering the post of Headteacher at our school and hope you will find the enclosed information of interest.

Following the resignation of our current Headteacher, we are seeking a Headteacher who:

- Is reflective, compassionate, courageous, creative and collaborative.
- Is able to work closely with governors, staff, and families to pursue ambitious educational standards and opportunities for pupils of all backgrounds, aptitudes and abilities.
- Understands the unique character of a small, rural, church school where every child is known and nurtured.
- Has strategic vision for the school, informed by a thorough knowledge of local context, national context and developments in educational research.
- Will uphold and further develop the school's strong and distinctive Christian ethos and links with the broader community.

St Mark's is well-respected locally and known to be a very welcoming and caring, church and community primary school, where children enjoy learning and achieve well. The school first opened in 1849 and there are currently 95 pupils on roll, many of whom travel to school from surrounding villages and towns.

Our staff and governors as well as parents and carers work very hard to provide an environment in which all children are challenged and can thrive. Our pupils have excellent social skills, a strong sense of personal responsibility, a caring attitude to one another and enthusiasm for their learning.

Much more information about our school is contained in the pack of information and on our school website at www.stmarks.w-sussex.uk .

A visit to school is required to see what our school has to offer and what you can do to build on strong foundations and make a significant contribution to the next phase in its history.

Please submit your application using the application form with a supporting statement of no more than three sides of A4 when typed. The selection panel will normally expect that your application form will provide evidence of your qualifications, experience and professional knowledge. The supporting statement will demonstrate how your professional and personal skills satisfy the person specification and the qualities described in the job advertisement. Please return your completed application form and supporting letter by 12 noon on 20 January 2027 to the School Secretary, Mrs Marie Richardson office@st-marks.w-sussex.sch.uk

Interviews will take place on the 2 and 3 February 2027.

We look forward to hearing from you. Yours sincerely,



Helen Arnold, Chair of Governors

St Mark's Church of England Primary School's Vision

'Together in God's love, we will shine'

We will provide a secure and happy learning environment where everyone is valued and demonstrates our core values of **respect** and **kindness**.

In partnership with the home, the Church and our local community, we will foster a lifelong **love** of learning.

We will become thoughtful, responsible citizens in the Global community promoting the value of **understanding** in all its forms.

We believe that every child is an individual with equal rights to our care, time and attention and we will nurture and support each other on our journey of discovery, knowledge and faith guided by God's **love.**

We will create an environment in which everyone learns that he/she is made in the image of **God**.

We will develop **honest** and thriving independent learners with high self-esteem and a strong ethos of **perseverance.**

We will encourage a natural curiosity and excitement for learning through our curriculum and with creative, challenging and personalised teaching and learning, **each child WILL achieve**.

The whole school community has worked on deciding what our core values should be and we believe these underpin all the work we do with children and adults at St Mark's.

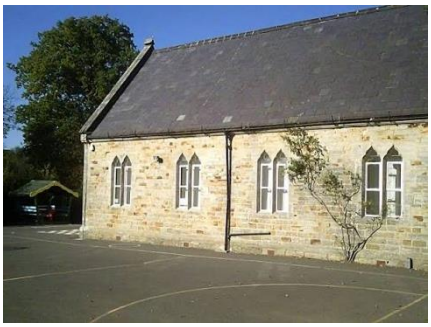


Together	in God's love	we will shine.
• We will provide a secure and happy learning environment where everyone is valued and demonstrates our core values of **respect** and **kindness**. • In partnership with the home, the Church and our local community, we will foster a lifelong **love** of learning • We will become thoughtful, responsible citizens in the Global community promoting the value of **understanding** in all its forms.	• We believe that every child is an individual with equal rights to our care, time and attention and we will nurture and support each other on our journey of discovery, knowledge and faith guided by God's **love**. • We will create an environment in which everyone learns that he/she is made in the image of **God**.	• We will develop **honest** and thriving independent learners with high self-esteem and a strong ethos of **perseverance** • We will encourage a natural curiosity and excitement for learning through our curriculum and with creative, challenging and personalised teaching and learning, **each child WILL achieve.**

Our Vision is based on Matthew 5 v14-16:

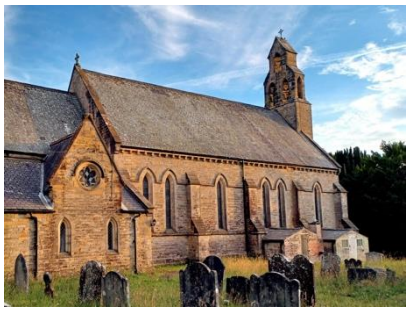
You're here to be light, bringing out the God-colours in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We're going public with this, as public as a city on a hill. If I make you light-bearers, you don't think I'm going to hide you under a bucket, do you? I'm putting you on a light stand. Now that I've put you there on a hilltop, on a light stand—shine! Keep open house; be generous with your lives. By opening up to others, you'll prompt people to open up with God, this generous Father in heaven.

About St Mark's School



The school is located next to the Church of St Mark's and close to the village green in the beautiful Mid-Sussex village of Staplefield, which has good transport links to Haywards Heath, Crawley and Brighton. The school has close links with the church and it supports and is supported by the local community in many social and cultural activities. It is also part of the North East Area Rural Schools (NEARS) network of schools, which collaborates closely in order to improve provision for all children within the locality.

Over the years the school has benefitted from ongoing refurbishment and development and there are several flexible outdoor learning spaces including a garden and an attractive area of woodland 'The Whispering Wood' where children enjoy cross-curricular study and Forest Schools sessions. There are four classes and all the teachers skilfully balance the benefits of mixed year teaching with the challenges of enabling pupils in their classes to meet age related objectives. The governing body is made up of a well-qualified, enthusiastic and hard-working group of individuals with a range of skills and experiences and who are passionate about and committed to the school and its pupils. The school is also very fortunate to have supportive, involved parents who value and care about the school, and an active friends group which has raised money over the years to improve facilities for the children.



In our last Ofsted Inspection March 2024 we were delighted the inspector recognised how special St Mark's is, and celebrated the many strengths of the school. In June 25, SIAMS noted: "Inspired by the vision for everyone to shine in God's love, leaders actively create a school culture of inclusion and equity. Pupils and adults are known as individuals, valued for their unique talents and are supported to succeed".

About the Village of Staplefield



Staplefield is a small rural village, in Mid Sussex, and only a mile and a half from the A23 (London to Brighton) and the M23. It is about 5 miles north of Haywards Heath and 7 miles south of Crawley. The picturesque St Mark's Church (with famous wall paintings by Charles Eamer Kempe) is central in the village and St Mark's School nestles behind the church, up a pedestrian path. Staplefield is in the parish of West Weald, which embraces the villages of Staplefield, Slaugham, Handcross, Warninglid, Pease Pottage and Woodgate and there are strong links between the church and the school. A daily bus service runs between Crawley and Brighton, but most people come by car to the village.





At the heart of Staplefield is the Common on which there is the Cricket pavilion and cricket is played on the common most weeks in the summer. In May, the Bank Holiday Fete and Classi Car display draws in many people from around the county. Brantridge School which supports children with particular needs is located at the top of the Common. There are two public houses in the village, both newly refurbished and very welcoming and the is the village hall.





Staplefield is known for its fine sense of community and caring for one another of which the school and church play an important part. Village lunches are held monthly and are well supported.

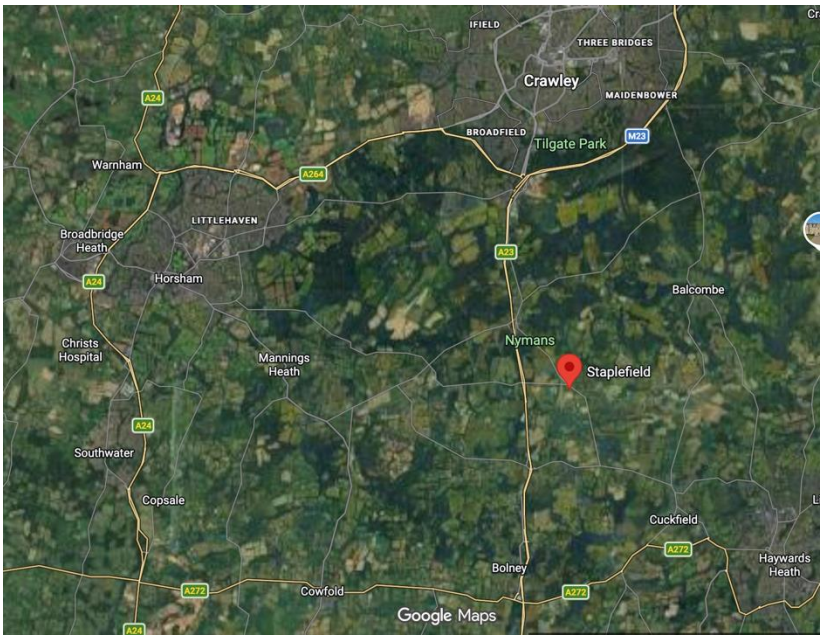
Nymans Gardens (National Trust) is in the Parish of Staplefield and memorials to the Messel family are located in the church.

To reach Staplefield from the north:

Leave A23 at Handcross, turn R at mini-roundabout, follow road for 2 miles (passing Nymans Gardens on the left) and enter Staplefield (common on R). At the Crossroads, turn Left, the school path is on the left, just past St Mark's Church.

To get to Staplefield from the south:

Leave A23 at signs to Staplefield and Warninglid, turn R, follow signs to Cuckfield (2 miles), turn left at triangle, and come down the hill (passing Holmstead Youth with a Mission on L). At the crossroads turn R and the school is on the L, just past St Mark's Church.



What do people say about St Mark's School?

What our children say:

St. Mark's is a good school as it's a place you get to think about God and light the candle and get to know God. We sing songs in worship and we get our brains working with Maths and English.
There's an enrichment curriculum and there's lots of fun stuff like the teddy bears picnic.
We love to see the deer in the field.
I like that a lot of the activities take place outside."
At St. Mark's, you will be able to make friends easily and won't be left out.
We are supporting and kind.
We don't judge based on appearance.
We have a forest school that everyone can use throughout the year.
I like the castle shaped doors
I like how the teachers are funny but have good boundaries so learning is good"
We're a small school with a big welcome!

Our parents say:

I can't put into words how amazing this school is - my child loves school and always comes home happy.
The staff go above and beyond to help our children succeed
I like the friendly community feel - staff know everyone by name.
My child has thrived at St Mark's!
The community aspect, how involved it is with local events as well as the global view of how to make a positive impact on the world.

Staff say:

I love Teaching at St Mark's. The school has a real family feel and the staff have a great deal of autonomy. I am incredibly happy here, the happiest I have felt in my career to date and it is a wonderful place to work.
"St Mark's is the best school I have worked in because there is a genuine sense of care for both the children and the staff. Everyone is committed to supporting children as individuals and helping them thrive in all aspects of school life. Wellbeing is at the heart of everything we do, The beautiful rural setting, abundance of wildlife, and close links with the church all add to what makes St Mark's such a unique and special community."
it is about helping children develop confidence, kindness, curiosity and a love of learning that will stay with them for life. Moreover, we give children (and staff!) the permission to be wholly themselves and celebrate our uniqueness. We're a quirky bunch - but we wouldn't want it any other way!
Of course, what makes our school most special is the children themselves. Their enthusiasm, individuality and determination bring our school to life each and every day. It is a privilege to watch them learn, succeed and flourish.

Governors say:

It's a joy to be part of the school community where children come first - Christian ethos underpins everything, and the school has a special place in my heart. Children thrive, professional development and succession planning supports all adults – it is a vibrant, happy community.
St. Mark's is a wonderful welcoming school community where everyone is both valued as an individual and as part of the family.
St Mark's is a place where love, kindness and generosity is valued, and which aims to bring out the best in everyone.

Our community say

The school reaches out to the village and makes us welcome.
The children are respectful and always smiling – they clearly enjoy school!

St Mark's CE Primary School Photo Gallery



Governors of St Mark's CE Primary School, Staplefield

The Governors of St Mark's are:

Mrs Helen Arnold	Chairman of Governors LA Governor (formerly Foundation)
Mrs Judith Belam	Foundation Governor
Mrs Denise Harber	Co-opted Governor Former Chair of Governors until July 2025
Mr Dan Holmes	Staff Governor
Rev Monique Mendez da Costa *on maternity leave from 15/9/26	Curate of West Weald Parish Foundation Governor
Mrs Kerri Potter	Vice chair of Governors Parent Governor
Rev Carl Smith *on Sabbatical 31/8/26 - 29/11/26	Rector of West Weald Ex-officio Governor
Dr Victoria Tackie	Parent Governor
Mrs Abi Paige	Clerk to Governors
Ms Laura Kelsey	Co-Headteacher
Miss Martha Button	C-Headteacher/SENDCo

Headteacher: St Mark's C.E. Primary School, Staplefield

Following the resignation of the school's highly respected Headteacher, the Governors of St Mark's wish to appoint an intuitive and effective school leader to take the school forward in the next phase of its development.

The successful applicant will take up post from April 2027.

The governors are looking for a Headteacher who:

- Has and is able to communicate a vision for this school which builds on the principle that all pupils have an equal right to be safe, enjoy learning, and achieve well
- Understands and can promote and develop excellent teaching and learning
- Is a confident and proven effective leader, able to inspire and motivate adults and pupils of all backgrounds, aptitudes, and abilities
- Is committed to further developing the strong Christian ethos of the school and firmly embedded code of values
- Demonstrates a clear understanding of the specific challenges of leading and managing a small, rural, church school where every child is known and nurtured
- Encourages collaboration and welcomes challenge, support, and the participation of parents, governors, staff, the diocese and the local authority in the further development of the school
- Recognises the importance of good community links, and seeks mutually beneficial partnerships with the church, other schools and groups in the locality (NEARS).

St Mark's is able to offer:

- A well-respected church and community school in an enviable village setting near to beautiful countryside and a number of thriving West Sussex towns
- Pupils who enjoy being at school, behave well, and have good attitudes to learning
- A dedicated and committed staff who work hard and enable pupils to learn
- A strong and distinctive Christian character based on a clearly defined vision and set of values that are known and respected by pupils, staff, governors and parents
- Excellent links with other schools in the North East Area Rural Schools locality, which benefit pupils
- A supportive and capable governing body who work effectively in partnership with school professionals in a culture of continuous school improvement
- Parents who value the school and recognise the important part it plays in helping their children to thrive
- Excellent links with St Mark's Church and its community

- A financially stable and balanced budget, successful SIAMS (June 25), and OFSTED (March 24)
- An exciting opportunity for a senior leader with successful leadership experience to shape the next stage in the life of the school.

The best way to appreciate the distinctiveness of St Mark's is to visit and see the school in action. All applicants are required to visit the school and this can be arranged by contacting the school office on: 01444 400398

Our website is: www.st-marks.w-sussex.sch.uk

Please submit your application using the application form with a supporting letter of no more than three sides of A4 when typed. This should tell us how you satisfy the person specification.

Please return your completed application form and supporting letter, by 12noon on 21 January 2027 to our School Secretary, Mrs Marie Richardson on:

Email: office@st-marks.w-sussex.sch.uk

The closing date for applications is 12 noon on **21 January 2027**
Interviews will be held on **2 and 3 February 2027**

St Mark's School and West Sussex County Council are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. We will ensure that all our recruitment and selection practices reflect this commitment. All successful candidates will be subject to an appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service check along with other relevant employment checks including satisfactory references.

Equity, inclusion and accessibility is very important to West Sussex County Council. We welcome and encourage applications from everyone as this helps us build a diverse and a talented workforce, that reflects the communities we serve. We ensure our approach to recruitment is flexible and supportive to enable all applicants to be at their best and to ensure they have the best possible chance of success.

JOB DESCRIPTION

School:	**St Mark's C.E. Primary School, Staplefield**
Job:	**HEADTEACHER**
Pay range:	**Group 1 school, ISR – Leadership Spine Points 9-15**
Responsible to:	**The Governors, West Sussex County Council and Diocese of Chichester**

Main Purposes of the Job:

- To provide professional leadership for the school, secure its success and improvement and ensure high quality education that inspires and motivates its pupils and improves standards of learning and achievement.
- To provide inspirational leadership for the staff within a culture of trust and integrity.
- To work with and through others to secure the commitment of the wider community to the school.
- To be responsible for the leadership, internal organisation, management and control of the school, consulting appropriately with stakeholders.
- To create a safe and caring environment for all pupils and staff by ensuring that the relevant policies are known and adhered to, and to promote and safeguard the welfare of all pupils and staff.
- To carry out the duties set out in the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document.

Main Tasks:

<u>School culture:</u>

The Headteacher will:

- Articulate and promote the school's strong and distinctive aims and Christian ethos by working with governors and school staff to affirm, execute, and further develop the school's vision and values.
- Sustain and further develop the school's ethos and strategic direction in partnership with those responsible for governance and through consultation with the school community.
- Further develop a reflective, compassionate, and collaborative culture where pupils experience a positive and enriching school life.
- Uphold ambitious educational standards which prepare pupils from all backgrounds for their next phase of edcuation and life.
- Promote positive and respectul relationships across the school community and a safe, orderly, and inclusive environment.
- Ensure a culture of high staff professionalism.

<u>Teaching:</u>

The Headteacher will:

- Establish and sustain high-quality, expert teaching across all subjects and phases, built on an evidence informed understanding of effective teaching and how pupils learn.
- Ensure teaching is underpinned by high levels of subject expertise and approaches which respect the distinct nature of subject disciplines or specialist domains.
- Ensure effective use is made of formative assessment.

Curriculum and assessment:

The Headteacher will:

- Ensure a broad, structured and coherent curriculum entitlement which sets out the knowledge, skills and values that will be taught.
- Establish effective curricular leadership, developing subject leaders with high levels of relevant expertise with access to professional networks and communities.
- Ensure that all pupils are taught to read throigh the provision of evidence-informed approaches to reading, particuarly the use of systematic synthetic phonics.
- Ensure valid, reliable and proportionate approaches are used when assessing pupils' knowledge and understanding of the curriculum.

Behaviour:

The Headteacher will:

- Establish and sustain high expectations of behaviour for all pupils, built upon relationships, rules and routines, which are understood clearly by all staff and pupils.
- Ensure high standards of pupil behaviour and courteous conduct in accordance with the school's behaviour policy.
- Implement consistent, fair and respectful approaches to managing behaviours.
- Ensure that adults within the school model and teach the behaviours of a good citizen.

Additional and special educational needs and disabilities:

The Headteacher will:

- Ensure the school holds ambitious expectations for all pupils with additional and special educational needs and disabilities.
- Establish and sustain a culture and practices that enable pupils to access the curriculum and learn effectively.
- Ensure the school works effectively in partnership with parents, carers and professionals, to identify the additional needs and special educational needs and disabilities of pupils, providing support and adaptation where appropriate.
- Ensure the school fulfils its statutory duties with regard to the SEND code of practice.

Professional development:

The Headteacher will:

- Ensure staff have access to high-quality, sustained profesional development opportunities, aligned to balance the priorities of whole-school improvement, team, and individual needs.
- Prioritise the professional development of staff, ensuring effective planning, delivery and evaluation which is consistent with the approaches laid out in the standard for teachers' professional development.
- Ensure that professional development opportunities draw on expert provision from beyond the school as well as within it including, nationally recognised career and professional frameworks and programmes to build capacity and support succession planning.

Organisational management:

The Headteacher will:

- Ensure the protection and safety of pupils and staff through effective approaches to safeguarding as part of the duty of care.
- Prioritise and allocate financial resources appropriately, ensuring efficiency, effectiveness and probity in the use of public funds.
- Ensure staff are deployed and managed well with due attention paid to workload.
- Establish and oversee systems, processes, and policies that enable the school to operate effectively and efficiently.
- Ensure rigorous approaches to identifying, managing, and mitigating risk.

Continuous school improvement:

The Headteacher will:

- Make use of effective and proportional processes of evaulation to identify and analyse complex or persistent problems and barriers which limit school effectiveness and identify priority areas for improvement.
- Develop appropriate evidence-informed strategies for improvement as part of well-targeted plans which are realistic, timely, appropriately sequenced and suited to the school's context.
- Ensure careful and effective implementation of improvement strategies, which lead to sustained school improvement over time.

Working in partnership:

The Headteacher will:

- Forge constructive relationships beyond the school, working in partnership with parents, carers and the local community.
- Commit their school to work successfully with other schools and organisations in a climate of mutual challenge and support.
- Establish and maintain working relationships with fellow professionals and colleagues across other public services to improve educational outcomes for all pupils.

Governance and accountability:

The Headteacher will:

- Understand and welcome the role of effective governance, upholding their obligation to give account and accept responsibility.

- Establish and sustain professional working relationships with those responsible for governance.
- Ensure that staff know and understand their professional responsibilities and are held to account.
- Ensure the school effectively and efficiently operates within the required regulatory frameworks and meets all statutory duties.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

HEADTEACHER of St Mark's CE School, Staplefield

Pay range: **Group 1 school, ISR – Leadership Spine Points 9-15**
Responsible to: **The Governors, West Sussex County Council and The Diocese of Chichester**

The Governing Body of St Mark's is determined to ensure that the school provides an excellent centre of learning for all within its community. We are looking for a headteacher who can both deliver and further develop the vision, 'Together in God's love, we will shine'. The successful applicant will have the following characteristics:	**Essential**	**Desirable**
QUALIFICATIONS AND TRAINING		
Qualified teacher status	X	
Degree	X	
Relevant postgraduate qualification	X	
Senior Leadership Development (e.g. National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH)		X
Up to date safeguarding training (e.g. DSL) and a commitment to a culture of safeguarding across the school	X	
EXPERIENCE		
Proven successful leadership and management experience in at least one school (AHT, DHT or HT)	X	
Teaching experience in a range of contexts	X	
Leadership of whole school improvement including self-evaluation and strategic planning based on a thorough analysis of what is working well and identification of complex barriers	X	
Demonstrable experience of successful management of staff and staff development	X	
Experience of teaching in a church school and supporting the faiths of the school community		X
PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE		
Previous experience of being or working with a Designated Safeguarding Lead or refined knowledge of the role and responsibilities	X	
Understanding of evidence informed curriculum design that meets the needs of learners of all backgrounds, aptitudes and abilities, and to lead this collaboratively	X	
Understanding of evidence-informed approaches to reading and oracy	X	

Understanding of effective strategies that successfully manage behaviour and promote positive learning behaviours, using therapeutic approaches	X	
Knowledge of effective governance and a willingness to engage constructively in the process of governance	X	
Evidence of working effective partnership with parents, carers and professionals to meet the needs of all pupils including those with SEND	x	
Clear understanding of statutory duties and regulatory frameworks and a determination to ensure that appropriate practice is maintained across the school	x	
PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL SKILLS		
Ability to communicate a vision and inspire others	x	
Ability to lead by example – with integrity, creativity, resilience, courage and clarity	X	
Evidence of ability to plan strategically and evaluate accurately	x	
Effective communication and interpersonal skills to ensure positive working relationships	x	
Data analysis skills and the ability to use data to set targets and identify areas for development	x	
Ability to identify emerging talents, coaching current and aspiring leaders in a climate where excellence is the standard, leading to clear succession planning	x	
TEACHING AND LEARNING		
Understanding of high-quality teaching and assessment based on evidence, and the ability to model this for others and support others to improve	x	
Evidence of success as a practising teacher and the ability to support colleagues to develop their own practice	x	
A commitment to achieving ambitious outcomes for all pupils, and evidence of overcoming disadvantage and advancing equality	X	
PERSONAL SKILLS		
Ability to work under pressure and prioritise effectively, maintaining confidentiality at all times	X	

Commitment to ensuring that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways that exploit the position	X	
Commitment to working in partnership with parents, carers, governors, the community, the local authority, the diocese and other partners	X	
Understanding of school finance and financial management		X
CHRISTIAN DISTINCTIVENESS		
Be fully supportive of moving the Christian ethos of the school forward, and developing this further	x	
Ability to lead the Christian Distinctiveness of the school as outlined in the Church of England Vision for Education in order to meet all aspects of the SIAMS schedule	x	
The confidence and ability to lead inspirational Christian Collective Worship appropriate to our VC status (1944 Education Act)	x	