



Headteacher Recruitment Pack

Bringing Out The Best

Closing date: Midday, 23 March 2026

St James Church of England (Aided) Primary School, Elstead

Thursley Road, Elstead, GU8 6DH



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Welcome from Chair of Governors

Thank you for your interest in St James Church of England Primary School and the position of Headteacher. We are a one form entry primary school based in the rural village of Elstead, Surrey and have a recently established nursery for 22 full time places.

The governors and staff have many reasons to feel proud of St James. In particular our children all achieve the best they can academically, whilst growing up as confident, well-rounded individuals with respect for each other. We value the positive working relationship that has developed between the governing body and the leadership team. Should you be our next Headteacher, you will have the support of a well-integrated team of staff and governors.

Recent Ofsted and SIAMS inspections both recognised our commitment to the personal development of our children who demonstrate compassion, confidence, resilience and creativity, equipping them with the vital life skills and positive habits for the future.

WE ARE SEEKING AN EXCEPTIONAL SCHOOL LEADER TO BECOME THE NEXT HEADTEACHER, BUILDING ON THE CURRENT STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL AND LEADING US IN CONTINUED IMPROVEMENT AND SUCCESS.

We recognise there will be many challenges in the years ahead as government policies develop and educational techniques continue to evolve. We seek a Headteacher with the ability to adapt to changing circumstances, to show leadership in continuous improvement and to be a proven and effective leader of change, keeping in mind our aims that:

1. St James is the school of choice for local families.
2. We attract, retain and develop talented staff.
3. St James is the heart of our community and our community is the heart of St James.
4. We engender responsibility for a sustainable future.
5. We ensure financial sustainability of our village Primary School.

The school's joyful and inclusive Christian vision is at the heart of leaders' decisions and actions. *SIAMS 2025*

We have agreed to convert to academy status and join the Good Shepherd Trust (GST). We have been awarded an academy order and are actively working with the Regional Director, the GST Board and the Local Authority with the aim of joining within the next 12 months.

The accompanying pack provides a lot of information about our school, its ethos, its resources and other essential facts. However, to enable you to get a more personal feel about St James, I would like to encourage you to accept our invitation to visit us during the school day. You may be sure of a warm welcome and we would be delighted to show you round all the facilities; you will have the opportunity to meet informally with some of our staff and children.

Kind regards

Lizzie Geffen

Chair of Governors

10 February 2026

Dear Prospective Applicant

Headteacher position – St James Church of England (Voluntary Aided) Primary School, Elstead

On behalf of the Diocese of Guildford, I warmly welcome your enquiry about the position of Headteacher of St James Church of England (VA) Primary School, Elstead and I hope that you find this application pack useful in deciding to apply for the role.

I would encourage you to make an application for the role of Headteacher of this popular school, which is very much at the centre of the local community it serves and enjoys close links with its local churches and the Diocese.

This is a unique opportunity to lead a vibrant, caring and inclusive school where staff, pupils, parents and governors work closely together to ensure that every child achieves the very best that they can be.

Every Church of England school within the Diocese is part of the wider family of diocesan schools and enjoys a close relationship with the Diocese.

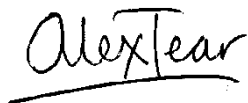
The Diocesan Education Team are available to provide support and advice to our Heads and Governing bodies and we offer training and professional development opportunities to all our school leaders as you develop your career.

Colleagues that are new to Church school Headship, are invited to take part in our Diocesan Induction programme which is specifically designed to meet the needs of Church school Headteachers and will also be allocated a headteacher mentor in the first year.

The diocese is working closely with the governing body to ensure that we find the right person to lead St James Church of England Primary School. Could that special person be you?

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,



Canon (Mr) Alex Tear FCCT
Diocesan Director of Education
Diocese of Guildford

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The Guildford Diocesan Board of Finance is a registered charity (248245)
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About St James Primary school

St James Primary school was originally founded in 1837 with a new school building opened in 1969. The school is at the heart of Elstead and serves its village community and the surrounding area by providing a happy and challenging learning environment where children are encouraged and supported. The school has 197 children and a nursery allowing for 22 full time places. St James Primary school is a source of local pride; it is the heart of our community and our community is the heart of St James.

- We have an impressive range of resources which support and enhance the curriculum. These include a large playing field, a wildlife area with pond where Forest School happens weekly, allotment with polytunnel, heated un-covered outdoor swimming pool and a children's kitchen. Our Little Ducks Nursery operates from a separate building on site, with separate access. Our long-term objective is to replace the current nursery building. Our location in rural Surrey also gives us easy access to the beautiful Elstead and Thursley commons.
- We have high expectations and our motto keeps us focused on bringing out the best in every child throughout their primary years by ensuring successful learning that is joyful, interesting and meaningful and by building a high level of self-respect and self-esteem.
- We encourage our children to be open-minded and curious, embrace learning from mistakes, develop a growth mind-set, be empathetic, look after their wellbeing and that of others, value and celebrate diversity, be independent, creative, collaborative, aspirational and ambitious, and active learners.
- Attainment on entry is varied but by KS2 is close to the Surrey average. We place great emphasis on the value of our all-through, 9-year programme of learning.

Applications to join the Reception year are positive, with 50% of first preferences coming from families already at our Nursery, although there is no automatic entry into St James Reception from the Nursery. This year we have 27 1st preference applications for YR in September 2026. Our Year 6 leavers have a good choice of secondary schools within a reasonable distance from Elstead.

- Operating as a very cohesive and dedicated group, staff are a strength of the school. Traditionally turnover is low and our reputation in the area has enabled us to recruit successfully. Staff are trained to a high level and our management and development of SEND pupils has a strong reputation in the locality.
- Valerie Elliott was appointed as Headteacher in 2016 and has seen the school through a period of expansion with an on-site Nursery and two years in a Federation with St Mary's Infant school, Shackleford. The Local Authority closed St Mary's in August 2025, ending the Federation, after which St James consulted on converting to academy status.
- We are fortunate to have the support of a vibrant and active PTA. The PTA is generous in both time and effective fundraising, demonstrated by its commitment to funding our much-loved swimming pool for over 40 years on top of raising money for annual improvements to children's opportunities and class resources.
- Involvement within the community is well demonstrated by the support given at Summer and Winter Fairs and at village events such as the annual Pancake and Paper Boat Races, Christmas Tree lighting and Remembrance Sunday ceremonies.

The school is highly ambitious for all pupils. Everyone is dedicated to giving pupils a wide-ranging education. This contributes to the school's exciting atmosphere. *Ofsted 2024*



Our Vision & Values

The life of our school is rooted in our Christian vision. Its impact permeates our school community, resonating differently and meaningfully with various groups. It supports a sense of belonging and shared values among staff and pupils.

The Lord your God is with you, a Mighty One, who will save. He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will renew you with His Love, He will rejoice over you with singing.

Zephaniah 3:17

We develop in children a strong moral code based around our Christian values of wisdom, service, friendship and courage; we create a strong learning environment based on our key behaviours of being safe, respectful, responsible and ready; we equip children with tools to manage their wellbeing, developing life-long positive habits that celebrate confidence, communication, calm and creativity.

We work in partnership with parents, St James' Church and the wider community to develop confident, motivated and responsible individuals who will make a positive contribution to society.

The school has always enjoyed strong links with St James' Church; Acts of Worship are based on Christian values and are planned jointly by the Rector and the Head. Our choir regularly joins Sunday service events.

Our vision for learning





Key Facts

Pupils rise to the high expectations staff have for both their behaviour and learning. Their behaviour is exceptionally positive. *Ofsted 2024*

School: St James

- **Type of school:** Church of England Primary School, Voluntary Aided
- **Age range:** 2-11yrs
- **School numbers on roll:** 197 (capacity 210) *plus* Little Ducks nursery (see below)
- **% Attendance:** 97.6 (24-25: 94.9)
- **% SEND:** 9.1 (EHCP: 3.72)
- **% PPG:** 19.2
- **% EAL:** 10.6
- **Results: TARGETS SUMMER 2026** Y6 Reading 90% ; Writing 80% ; Maths 85% ; Y1 Phonics 95% ; YR GLD 75%
- **Results: ACTUALS SUMMER 2025** Y6 Reading 88% ; Writing 85% ; Maths 58% ; Y1 Phonics 91% ; YR GLD 81%
- **Staff:** 44
- **Governors:** 12 plus option for 2 Associate Members

Nursery: Little Ducks

- **Number of places:** 22 FTE
- **Numbers on roll:** 32 (full and part time)



What pupils, parents, staff & inspectors say

Pupils

We love:

- Our teachers, helpful adults,
- Everyone is respectful.
- Positive ethos.
- The running club.
- Library, Swimming pool, Trim trail, Forest School.
- J Factor, Bake Off, Inter -house competitions, Sports events, Friday Disco.
- School council, Year 6 leadership roles.
- Playing with friends.
- Power maths, school trips which are linked to topics.
- Celebration assembly.

Staff

- It is like a family. Everyone cares whether it is staff, children, parents and everyone has time to listen.
- The school values teacher wellbeing and there is a culture of respect, equality and trust.
- Learning is so much more than the national curriculum - we offer so many opportunities for children to shine at St James. Amongst the staff, we have an amazing camaraderie and friendship. We support one another during the good times and the bad, and we have the freedom to do this by the culture of the SLT.

Parents

- The school feels nurturing, grounded, and focused on helping each child grow not only academically but also emotionally and socially.
- There is a strong culture of kindness, familiarity, and staff who genuinely know and support the children as individuals. It feels like a safe, steady environment where children are encouraged to belong, try, and develop confidence at their own pace.
- We love the community culture and varying activities on offer e.g. forest school, swimming pool. J Factor, Bake Off, Wishing Service.
- St James has a strong sense of community and a personal, nurturing approach to each child.
- The feeling that children are known, cared for, and supported as individuals — not just as pupils — is what makes the school special.
- Every child is included in all aspects of school life in their own way.
- The children come first. It is not a one size fits all school.

Inspectors

- This is a happy and joyful school.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to their learning and trust teachers to help them learn and achieve.
- Pupils of all ages understand the importance of staying mentally healthy. They value the school's programme which equips them with ways to cope with life's ups and downs. Pupils frequently use the techniques that they are taught if they are anxious or worried.
- The 'bringing out the best' strapline is reflected in the way pupils and staff are supported and challenged to grow. Pupils are valued as individuals with their needs met with compassion, ambition and belief in their worth.
- The Christian vision inspires a community grounded in care, compassion and mutual responsibility.
- A strong partnership with the local church provides consistent pastoral care to staff and families. As a result, flourishing is nurtured through strengthened relationships between the school and community.

What we want from our Headteacher

- To be visible, accessible and supportive, prioritising what is best for the children.
- To be approachable, calm and friendly with a big heart.
- To be bold, lead and inspire.

- A team player; someone who will work with staff and parents to progress what we have already started to build.
- A good communicator, able to handle confrontation and take the difficult decisions when needed.
- Steady, values-led leadership that protects what already works while guiding the school forward.
- A consistent, calm, and confident leader who places community at the centre of the school.
- Consistent, proactive change & improvements, able to make the most of any and all resources & assets.





Job Description

Post: Headteacher

Responsible to: Governing Body

Salary: L8-15

Location: St James C of E Primary School, Elstead, Surrey

The Governing body of St James Primary school expects the Headteacher to uphold the Headteachers Standards (2020) in all aspects of their role. In addition, as a Church of England school, the Headteacher will ensure that the school's Christian vision and values are promoted throughout the school.

Leadership and Management

- Establish and sustain the school's ethos and strategic direction together with the governing board, maintaining a constant drive for improvement.
- Create a culture where pupils experience a positive and enriching school life.
- Ensure that the school's theologically rooted Christian vision and values are clearly articulated, understood and acted upon by all members of the school community.
- Provide strong, values-driven leadership that welcomes diverse views, both offers and accepts challenge, and delegates effectively.
- Recruit, retain and deploy staff appropriately to achieve the school's strategic direction and overall vision.

- Manage staff fairly and effectively, ensuring that all staff are supported, valued and motivated to develop their skills, work as a team and contribute to the school's success.
- Understand the importance of staff wellbeing and a positive work-life balance in maintaining staff satisfaction and retention.
- Encourage high standards of behaviour from pupils, built on rules and routines that are understood by staff and pupils and clearly demonstrated by all adults.
- Work with the School Business Manager and Governing Body to set and monitor budgets, managing the school's financial resources appropriately to adhere to the strategic direction and ensure sustainability in the longer term.
- Ensure that the school's buildings and premises are maintained and developed so that they meet both current and future needs.

Teaching, Curriculum and Assessment

- Maintain and develop a rich curriculum, ensuring high standards of teaching and learning, so that every child can reach their full potential.
- Ensure that high standards of learning and teaching are at the core of strategic planning, resource management and effective delivery.
- Continually review the school's curriculum, so that it is broad, ambitious, inclusive and purposeful.
- Ensure teaching is underpinned by subject expertise.
- Ensure that all groups of children, including those who have SEND, EAL or are eligible for Pupil Premium, are able to access the full curriculum.
- Work with a range of stakeholders to make sure that all groups of children are fully supported, monitoring progress and implementing interventions where necessary to ensure that all children make progress.
- Monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching, using effective appraisal mechanisms to ensure that provision is of the highest quality across the curriculum.
- Use a variety of data to identify underperformance within the staff team or by pupils, and then ensure that this is challenged and improved.

Community and Relationships

- Work closely with parents and carers, ensuring that they are kept informed of their children's progress, feel included in the school community, and are supported to work with the school in pupils' best interests.
- Maintain and develop the excellent working relationship with our parish church of St James', Elstead.
- Communicate regularly and effectively with the school and wider community, via a range of formats such as updates, newsletters, use of social media and community publications.
- Strengthen opportunities for parents and carers to be involved in the life of the school, including volunteering and attending a range of events.
- Establish and maintain partnerships with other local schools.
- Ensure a secure and successful transition to secondary school for our Year 6 pupils.
- Develop links with the local community to enhance the school's excellent reputation and place at the heart of the village.
- Welcome volunteers and other organisations into our school, as appropriate, to enhance the experiences of our pupils.
- Oversee all marketing of the school, including website and social media, to ensure that it promotes an honest and positive image, supports parent choice and provides useful information.

Accountability and Governance

- Ensure that the school is fully compliant with all its legal responsibilities.
- Act as the school's Designated Safeguarding Leader, and lead on all aspects of safeguarding and Child Protection.
- Assure staff and pupils' safety and welfare through effective approaches to safeguarding, as part of a duty of care.
- Ensure that individual staff accountabilities are clearly defined, understood, agreed and subject to rigorous review and evaluation.
- Develop and update school policies, in line with statutory requirements and in response to developments in the educational and social environment.

- Present a coherent and accurate account of the school's performance to the Governing Body. Work with governors to monitor performance, drive improvement and implement the school's vision.
- Create conditions in which pupils, staff and the school community feel they can to speak up and be heard if they have concerns or ideas for improvement.
- Present a coherent and accurate account to various external stakeholders, such as the Diocese or the Local Authority, and work in partnership with these organisations as required.





Person Specification

Qualifications and training

- Qualified teacher status.
- Undertaken recent and relevant further professional development.
- National professional qualification for headship (NPQH) or demonstrable progress towards it, with a commitment to obtain the qualification within two years of appointment.

Experience

- Successful school leadership and management experience.
- Substantial teaching experience.
- Experience of leading continued school improvement, successfully leading change and inspiring others.
- Demonstrable experience of successful line management and staff development.
- Experience of developing and maintaining effective relationships with the local and wider community, including parents and other schools to enhance learning and educational achievement.

Skills and Knowledge

- Data analysis skills, and the ability to use data to set targets and identify weaknesses.
- Evidence of setting ambitious goals and targets; using data and benchmarks to monitor and measure progress.

- Understanding of high-quality teaching based on evidence, and the ability to model this for others and support others to improve.
- Understanding of school finances and financial management.
- Effective communication and interpersonal skills.
- Ability to build effective working relationships.

Personal Qualities

- Commitment to safeguarding and equality.
- Commitment to uphold the 7 principles of public life (the [Nolan principles](#)) at all times.
- A commitment to getting the best outcomes for all pupils and promoting the school's ethos and values.
- Ability to work under pressure and prioritise effectively.
- Commitment to maintaining confidentiality at all times.
- Builds strong relationships with all stakeholders including the Governing Body, PTA and wider parent body.
- Commitment to uphold the Christian ethos and values of the school
- Ability to articulate a philosophy for church school education and be capable leading collective worship engagingly
- Ability to provide leadership in the spiritual development of pupils and staff.



Application Process

Closing date: Midday, Monday, 23rd March 2026
Shortlisting: Wednesday 25th March 2026
Interview dates: Wednesday 22nd & Thursday 23rd April 2026
Start date: 1st September 2026

A visit to the school is warmly welcome and encouraged. This can be arranged by contacting Valerie Elliott via the school office.

E: info@st-james-elstead.surrey.sch.uk

T: 01252 703248

We ask all candidates to:

1. Complete the accompanying Application Form and return this electronically to Rachel Dunnage, Clerk to Governors: rdunnage@st-james-elstead.surrey.sch.uk
2. Consider the job description and person specification for this post. We ask you to address these details, the specific skills and attributes you would bring to the role and your reasons for wanting to lead our school, in your personal statement that will accompany your application.
3. Ensure your personal statement is no more than 2 sides of A4, font size 11 or above.
4. Ensure your name is the first part of the saved title of any submissions.

All applications received will be acknowledged.

Safer Recruitment

St James C of E Primary School is committed to:

- equality of opportunity and welcomes applications from candidates of all ages, backgrounds and identities. The Governing Body is committed to meeting its duties under the Equality Act 2010.
- safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. The successful candidate will be subject to an enhanced DBS check and all pre-employment checks in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education.

All applications will be forwarded to the panel comprising governors and representatives from Guildford Diocese, St James' Church and Surrey County Council. In compliance with Safer Recruitment guidelines, CVs will not be accepted.

Visit us on the web at www.st-james-elstead.surrey.sch.uk