

A warm welcome to

St. Mary's



Church of England (VA) Primary School

Dear Prospective Headship Candidate,

Thank you for showing your interest in becoming the new Headteacher of our school. We truly believe that we have a very special school and encourage you to discover this on a visit.

As the new Headteacher of St. Mary's, you will play the lead role in realising our vision; to enable all our children to 'Aspire, Nurture, Flourish; Developing Life in All its Fullness'.

We follow a child centred approach to learning encouraging children to be resilient lifelong learners. We encourage our children to be 'risk takers' with their learning in order to help them develop into confident young adults in a modern British society.

Our children say 'learning is fun', 'teachers really help me understand', 'everyone is cared for', 'we are all friends at St Mary's'. To ensure we have a 'broad and balanced curriculum' we run curriculum focus weeks where children spend the week focusing on a particular subject.



As a Church school, we have much to offer the children, including a purpose-made library in order that children can share a love of reading and literature, as well as fundamental Christian values which give a clear sense of identity and belonging. Our gardening and vegetable area and prayer garden are all aimed at enriching a child's spiritual, moral, cultural and social experiences. Our children say that a visitor will see children who are 'kind', 'caring', 'well mannered' and 'love learning'.

We are spoilt with our beautiful location. The Aquadrome is a local nature reserve within walking distance as is our Parish Church where we have regular Church services. We have close links with our local community and shops.

The Governing Body and PTA (known as Friends of St Mary's) at St. Mary's are working tirelessly to ensure that our school gives the best possible education. We are a strong, supportive school community who work together. For further information about our school, please visit our website at www.stmarys698.herts.sch.uk.

We look forward to welcoming you to our school very soon. Visits to the school are strongly encouraged and our Interim Headteacher, Mr Duncan Gauld, would be delighted to meet you and show you around. Please do not hesitate to contact the school office on 01923 776529 or admin@stmarys698.herts.sch.uk to book an appointment.

Mr David Carruthers, Chair of Governors

Aspire, Nurture, Flourish

Developing Life in all its Fullness

At St. Mary's our vision is to value every child and provide them with the opportunity to learn and develop individually for the future in a safe, happy and Christian environment. At St. Mary's we aim to provide:

- Inspirational teaching which provides 'cultural capital' experiences to give our children the best possible start to their early education and future success.
- Opportunities to discover each child's potential
- Opportunities for children to develop both personally and spiritually within a Christian environment and ethos
- A respectful environment which fosters enjoyment and love of learning
- A setting which enables children to excel and prepares them for their future lives.

Ethos and Values

St. Mary's is a voluntary aided Church of England school located a short distance from the Parish church.

We are a fully inclusive school which welcomes children of the Christian faith, other faiths and those with no faith. Children attend from 4 to 11 years of age.

The school has a close relationship with St. Mary's church and aims to provide the best possible education within the context of a Christian community. A child's years in primary school are an exciting and challenging time.

We seek to provide a caring and supportive environment for each child within the context of a Christian community, offering equal opportunities to all. We encourage children to feel positive about themselves and to become aware of the valuable contribution each has to make to society.

The school is a place where conflicts and difficulties are openly discussed, helping them to develop socially, emotionally and academically. We seek to challenge the children so that they reach their full potential.

What does our curriculum look like at St. Mary's?

In Reception, we follow the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum. In Key Stage 1 (Year One and Year Two) and Key Stage 2 (Years Three to Six) St Mary's follows the National Curriculum.

More detailed information about the curriculum in each year-group can be found under each class page on the website where Curriculum Booklets are published each half-term in order to let parents and carers know what is being covered and how they can support learning at home.

At St. Mary's we have a topic based creative curriculum where we make purposeful links across different curriculum areas in order to make learning meaningful for the children. Parents and carers are also kept informed of changes to our curriculum via information sessions and curriculum evenings throughout the academic year.

Early Years Curriculum

Teaching in the Early Years class is based upon the EYFS Curriculum. All Early Years staff are trained and experienced in helping children learn and develop, within all areas of the curriculum and in keeping children healthy and safe.

The curriculum provides children with a broad range of knowledge and skills that build the foundation for good future progress through school and life. The Foundation Stage curriculum is designed to provide real experiences that support the development of children's skills. The curriculum can change as learning is led by the children's interest.

There are seven areas of learning and development that shapes our learning in the early years. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

Prime Areas:

- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development** involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities.
- **Communication and Language** development involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations.
- **Physical Development** involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive; and to develop their co-ordination, control, and movement. Children must also be helped to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food.

Staff support the children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

Specific Areas:

- **Literacy** development involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children must be given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest.
- **Mathematics** involves providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces, and measures.
- **Knowledge of the world** involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.
- **Expressive arts and design** involves enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology.

National Curriculum for KS1 and KS2

Our Teaching and Learning Policy seeks to identify the features of effective teaching which translates the aims of the school and the curriculum into relevant, challenging and enjoyable learning experiences for all children.

The Curriculum at St Mary's follows a topic based approach which covers the National Curriculum Programme of Study in a way that makes learning interesting and engaging for our children. The curriculum is designed to support children's natural curiosity and stimulate their creativity.

We teach English, Guided Reading, and Mathematics every day in both KS1 and KS2. Phonics is taught daily in KS1; spelling, punctuation and grammar is taught daily in KS2.

English

Children are taught skills through topic and discrete teaching and through following different genres. In both key stages we ensure that we teach the National Curriculum is through Herts for Learning plans.

Phonics and Reading

We use Unlocking Letters & Sounds as our DfE approved phonics scheme. All children have daily phonics session in EYFS and KS1 and where applicable lower KS2. In addition to phonics teaching, all children in school learn to read and write high frequency words. Learning to recognise, say, read, spell and use these words in sentences supports language and literacy development. We use a range of guided reading books to support the development of reading. Books are organised to align with our phonics. Each class has a book area which contains books of interest to the children and the topics they are studying. Children take home reading books and are expected to read every day. Children also visit the school library to choose a book of interest every week.

Speaking and Listening

We believe that language development underpins all learning and aim to develop all children's cultural literacy. Each class is involved in their own class assembly alongside Christmas, Easter and Year 6 productions. We encourage the older children to participate in debates and develop their ability to see different points of view.

Writing

Drama and real life experiences i.e. trips are used effectively to develop writing. Opportunities for extended writing are embedded throughout the foundation subjects, especially RE, history, geography, PSHE and science.

Mathematics

We follow the principles of maths mastery. Mental maths is taught daily throughout the school. Teachers strive to make links with other subjects, their current topic and with day to day life. 'Tell me and I will forget; show me and I may remember; involve me and I will understand'. We use a CPA (concrete, pictorial, abstract) approach to Maths which enables children to commit their learning to their long term memory. We not only consolidate learning but use problems solving to further apply children's knowledge and skills.

Science

Our aim with the Science curriculum is to harness our pupils' natural curiosity for the world around them. Our key focus is to encourage children to ask questions and discover ways to learn the answers themselves. We have an annual science week and through visits to places such as the Aquadrome and Science Museum, we are ensuring that our pupils view science as an exciting and ever evolving subject.

RE

As a Church School, RE is taught throughout St Mary's following the Bedfordshire Agreed RE Syllabus and supplemented by the Understanding Christianity resources. We teach not only Christianity but also the other major faiths of Judaism, Hinduism and Islam. We celebrate all the major Christian festivals and our children's learning is reinforced and extended through whole school assemblies and visiting places of worship. There are opportunities to meet and get to know people of various faiths through visitors coming to our school or classes going on school visits.

Music

Music is very important to us here at St Mary's. We have various peripatetic music teachers in the school – drum, guitar and piano. We have a singing assembly once a week, KS1 choir and a KS2 choir who participate in various concerts with other local schools.

Personal, Social, Health Education and Citizenship (PSHE)

PSHE enables children to learn about rights and responsibilities for themselves and to promote self-esteem and self-confidence. PSHE is taught discretely and through a cross curricular approach, incorporating British Values and PE. Being healthy and happy is vital learning. As children get older we teach them about the changes to their body through Relationship and Sex Education (RSE). PSHE also helps your child to understand what drugs are and learn how to make safe and appropriate choices. The aim of PSHE is to create well rounded young people who will be able to thrive. Developing positive mental health is essential and as such we have a Mental Health Lead and regularly discuss this important issue with our children.

Art and Design

Art brings out creativity in children and is also very therapeutic. We aim to give children a wide range of skills, knowledge and experiences in art. We use a range of media including clay, paint, charcoal, textiles. Every year we hold an Art Gallery whereby children invite their parents into school to showcase their work.

Design Technology

Through our topic based learning, we aim to offer opportunities to be creative, to think in new ways and to bring their original ideas into reality through design and making in our DT curriculum. Children are taught skills of construction, textiles, food preparations and graphics. They are taught to plan, design and evaluate their work.

Computing

Children are taught coding and key skills through the use of Chromebooks, I Pads and laptops. Programming devices such as Beebots are also used in the earlier years.

Modern Foreign Languages (MFL)

The language we teach at St Mary's is Spanish. We have a visiting teacher from the Reach Free School working with our children across KS2. The curriculum follows the 'Language Angels' Scheme of Work.

History

Our History curriculum supports children's interest in the world around them and curiosity to explore the past. History is taught through a wide range of topics including Ancient Egypt, our Local Area, Great Fire of London and the Second World War. Through our History teaching we encourage children to ask questions, be observant, make links between the past and present and 'think like historians'. We bring History to life by looking at artefacts, inviting visitors into our school, trips, workshops and written accounts.

Geography

When teaching Geography, we provide children with the knowledge and skills to ask geographical questions and carry out enquiries. Knowledge and understanding of places, patterns and processes, environmental change and sustainable development are all areas that we look at. Throughout the key stages, children investigate a variety of people, place and environments at different scales in the UK and around the world. They find out how people affect the environment and how they are affected by it. They carry out investigations inside and outside the classroom.

Physical Education (P.E.)

We pride ourselves on our level of physical activity at St Mary's. Every child will have the opportunity to experience games, athletics, dance, gym, swimming, and orienteering. We have two sports coaches who deliver PE as well as the class teachers. During the summer term we have a sports week and sports day. We take part in School Sports Partnership inter-school competitions and festivals in a wide variety of sports and activities including dance, athletics, football and netball.

Forest School

Forest school is outdoor, nature-based learning that focuses on the holistic development of children. In forest school, activities are provided, but rather than being adult-led, each child chooses and tailors the activity to suit them. We utilise not only our school grounds but the Aquadrome too.

Reflections on Learning

Children, parents & carers are encouraged to talk about what they have done at school, but some children are more forthcoming than others. Our website has an overview of learning each term and each week the class teacher will upload a summary of learning. We hold workshops throughout the year and each term teachers host a 'learning showcase' where parents/carers will be able to see what a child has learned.

What happens in Collective Worship?

As a Church of England School we follow the 'Roots and Fruits' Programme which follows our core values and the Christian yearly cycle. Every child is encouraged to participate and we are sensitive to the beliefs of all religions represented in the school.

Inclusive Practice & SEND

Anything that gets in the way of a child's learning can cause a special educational need (SEN). Some of the most common difficulties are linked to reading, writing, maths or social and emotional needs.

We keep track of children's progress and a child may be identified as having SEN if they do not make the progress we would expect.

Our Inclusion Manager and our Pastoral Lead ensure each child's needs are being met by the school. We operate a three wave system which identifies specific learning needs and assesses the correct provision to be put into place to enable each child to reach their full potential. Our SEND policy will give you more information about the various stages and support for children with additional needs.

The class teacher ensures that all children in the class are given tasks that are appropriate to their abilities and that challenge their thinking. Our Inclusion Lead, works with teachers to identify children who have particular potential and to ensure that they are helped to develop their abilities. These children may be involved in particular projects and activities in or out of school and will be presented with challenging tasks in the classroom.

School trips & visits

We all learn best when we can use all of our five senses- experiencing things first hand. It's because of this that the school arranges visits to help your child learn more about the subjects they are studying.

Whatever the subject, you can be sure that the purpose of these visits are to help your child learn. Throughout the year we organise trips for all the children.

We ask for voluntary contributions from parents to cover the cost. Recent trips have included- Roald Dahl Museum, The Globe Theatre, Chiltern Open Air Museum, Bethnal Green Museum of Childhood, the Seaside, Cassiobury Park, Aquadrome, Three Rivers District Council (to hold a debate in the Council Chamber with Year 6, chaired by Councillor Hiscox and the Leader of the Council).

Year 6 undertake a week long school journey. Residential visits develop leadership, confidence and independence skills. Risk assessments are carried out by staff leading trips before the visit takes place.

Behaviour

All children and staff are aware of the consistent expectation we have throughout the school, based on the therapeutic theory of STEPs Hertfordshire. Children are reminded positively about the expectations of behaviour and children who find this difficult are supported by Mrs Allen our Pastoral Support Lead and class teachers. Please see our behaviour policy for more details.

Bullying & other discriminatory behaviour

Bullying is a rare event but does happen in the majority of schools. We teach children how to resolve conflicts and deal with conflicts through PSHE lessons and Collective Worship.

We have an Anti-Bullying Week and children are taught about Protective Behaviours. Children do fall out with each other from time to time and school staff know best how to deal with these events and listen to all sides before making judgements.

Bullying is different to one-off instances of aggression or conflict and any report of bullying is taken very seriously. We always inform parents if we feel that a child is a victim of bullying or a perpetrator and we work with parents to improve the situation.

Safeguarding

We work with parents to support children in both their learning and emotional well-being. Please refer to our Child Protection Policy for more details.

We ask that parents leave the school grounds by 8.50 am in the morning and 3.30 pm in the afternoon so that all gates can be closed. We ensure that we have an appropriate number of staff on playground and lunch duty. Many staff have completed first aid training. We spend time talking to children in classes and assemblies about what being safe means both physically and on-line.

All volunteers as well as staff have a DBS check.

Voluntary Contributions

The school subscriptions are a voluntary contribution. The money contributes to the 10% of funding we have to provide to the Diocese of St Albans required for major projects. It currently stands at £30 per term payable via the School Gateway or a donation of £10 per month payable via Direct Debit.

Home & School Partnership

At the start of every school year you are invited to a 'Meet the Teacher' session with the class teacher where ideas can be shared. All class information will be shared at these sessions including homework. We hold two parent consultation evenings, one in the Autumn Term and one in the Spring Term. You will also receive a written report at the end of the school year.

The first point of contact is the child's class teacher, but any concern can be passed to a member of staff. Appointments with the Headteacher can be made either before or after school in person or via a telephone conversation. We pride ourselves on our communication and high expectations but if we have fallen short in any way, our Complaints Policy is on the school website.

Leadership & Governance

The Headteacher, in consultation with the Governing Body, is responsible for the internal management and discipline of the school. Governors make sure that the curriculum is delivered; they are involved in personnel issues; they make decisions about spending priorities and seek to make the best possible use of resources; they monitor the condition of the premises and endeavour to ensure that the school conducts its affairs in accordance with legal obligations. Governors view their role as a partnership with parents and teachers for the benefit of all children attending St Mary's Church of England Primary School.

Clubs & Wrap Around Care

We pride ourselves on the variety of clubs we offer. Please look at the website for further details. We have our own out of school club for working parents called JD Club. We run a breakfast club from 7.45 until the start of the school day and an after school club from 3.15 to 5.15.

The School Day

8.40 am	Children enter the classroom (staggered across year groups)
8.50 am	Registration and focused learning starts
10.30 am	Morning Break
11.45 am	Lunch
12.45 pm	Registration and Collective Worship
1.00 pm	Afternoon lessons start
3.10 pm	End of the school day (staggered across year groups)

Contextual Data

Address

Stockers Farm Road, Hertfordshire, WD3 1NY

Local authority

Hertfordshire (919)

Headteacher

Mr Duncan Gauld (Interim Headteacher – Executive Headteacher & CEO Chess Valley Primary Learning Trust)

Age range

4 to 11

Phase of education

Primary

School type

Voluntary aided school (applying for academy status to join Chess Valley Primary Learning Trust)

School ID

URN: 117447, DfE number: 919/3359

Website

<http://www.stmarys698.herts.sch.uk> (opens in new tab)

Telephone

01923776529

Ofsted rating

Good (Last inspection: 29 March 2019)

[Ofsted report](#) (opens in new tab)

Data from other services

[Compare school and college performance](#) (opens in new tab)

[Schools financial benchmarking](#) (opens in new tab)

Religious character

Church of England

Diocese

Diocese of St Albans

SIAMS rating

Good (March 2018)

<https://www.stmarys698.herts.sch.uk/ofsted-performance-data-siams-and-parent-view/>

Nursery provision

No Nursery class but private Nursery provision on site

School capacity

210

Number of pupils on roll

195 (at January 2023)

Class numbers

Reception 29

Year 1 27

Year 2 29

Year 3 26

Year 4 25

Year 5 29

Year 6 30

Number of pupils eligible for free school meals

Reception & KS1 10

KS2 7

Total 17

Percentage of children eligible for free school meals

8.7%

SEND Register Information

EHCPs 3 (6 applications in process)

SEN Support 28

The primary needs of SEN children: SpLD, autism, SEMH, ADHD, Speech & Language, MLD

Chess Valley Primary Learning Trust

<https://www.chessvalleyplt.org.uk/>

Christ Church Chorleywood C of E School - <https://www.christchurchschool.herts.sch.uk/>

Sarratt C of E Primary School - <https://sarratt.herts.sch.uk/>
