

**St Mary’s Catholic School**



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22nd April 2024

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in our Learning Support Assistant posts, which, I believe, is a great opportunity to join our highly successful school, at a very exciting point in its development.

St Mary’s is a wonderful school, first and foremost because of our fantastic students.  Our students are lovely young people and we are blessed to have them in our school.  It is our privilege to nurture our students throughout their time with us, ensuring that all students are fully supported in reaching their full potential and developing their own unique God-given gifts and talents.  Many of our students are Catholics but we welcome equally students from many Faith backgrounds.  There is a vibrant mix of cultural, ethnic, socio-economic and faith backgrounds represented in the school and whilst the vast majority of students are English, children from over 40 countries are on roll.  This diversity within the student body is one of the many positive features of St Mary’s.  It is very rewarding to serve these wonderful students in a happy and inclusive community. The roll has grown from around 1100 five years ago to over 1440 by September 2023, with 5 main school year groups of around 235 and a Sixth Form of approximately 270 students. We expect the Sixth Form to continue to grow in the next couple of years, as strongly academic year groups continue to move into Sixth Form.

St Mary’s joined the Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust in June 2020, which has grown to a partnership of 39 North-east schools over time. The Trust is founded on clear principles, to educate the whole child, to ensure every child in our care has an excellent education and to work together to improve opportunities for all our children to succeed and be happy. All the schools in the Trust however maintain their individuality, uniqueness and a great deal of autonomy. As an Outstanding school, St Mary’s plays a leading role within the Trust and more widely, leading significant school improvement, training and leadership development across other schools, as well as sharing good practice in academic achievement and teaching and learning across many other schools in the north-east.  We also play a leading role in teacher training across the region.

The appointment of high calibre staff from within and beyond the school has been a significant factor in St Mary’s achievements and as such the appointment of a Learning Support Assistant is an extremely important one. We are seeking two enthusiastic, motivated team players who are keen to work with young people. A learning Support Assistant has a critical role in supporting students with their learning, either in the classroom, one to one or in a small group situation. Students may experience a wide range of difficulties which a Learning Support Assistant can help them overcome. The appropriate training and induction will be organised for the successful candidates, and such support will be ongoing. The role requires patience, understanding, and excellent communication and interpersonal skills. The Job Description outlines the main responsibilities of the posts and the Person Specification summarises the key qualities required.

St Mary’s benefits from having excellent staff, both teaching and support. The staff team are the school’s greatest asset and, therefore, the task of appointing new staff is always given great importance. Governors are really committed to the school and are very supportive of staff, as are parents. **Staff are very well supported here at St Mary’s, are very happy and really enjoy working in the school. St Mary’s is a beacon within the Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust, and therefore, professional development and career progression opportunities are plentiful.** We also enjoy a very strong partnership with our family of primaries, all of whom are supportive of St Mary’s. Links with parishes are strong as is our partnership with Diocesan and Local Authority schools.

St Mary’s has been judged outstanding four times in the last thirteen years, including most recently in our full Ofsted inspection in September 2023. St Mary’s achieved ‘Outstanding’ for every single judgement in the inspection, including for overall effectiveness, and this really is a unique achievement with the current framework. I would encourage you to read our inspection report and the school prospectus, to get a sense of the school’s many strengths. We also had a full Catholic School Inspection in January 2024. We are thrilled with how this went and it was wonderful to hear the inspection team praise exceptional standards in all areas. Again, I would encourage you to read this report.

High standards of academic achievement are just one element of our mission to provide our students with the best possible holistic education. Their all-round development is equally important. As a Catholic school, nurturing children’s spiritual development is central to everything we do. This aspect of school life is flourishing. Support staff, teachers and school leaders do not need to be Catholic to work here but they do need to be committed to understanding and actively promoting the school’s distinctive Catholic/Christian ethos in their daily work**.**

We have an excellent climate for learning in school. Students are extremely well behaved in and out of lessons. This is a key ingredient in the school’s on-going success and popularity with parents. Again, I would strongly encourage you to read our Main School Prospectus, as it will give you a good flavour of our pastoral distinctiveness and the curriculum organisation of the school.

I hope that once you have had the chance to read the information in this pack and to find out more about the school, you will be keen to apply.  Should you be successful, I can assure you that you will be given unstinting support.

To apply, please complete the **CES application form and include a supporting letter, addressed to me, outlining the qualifications, experience, skills and attributes which you will bring to the post.**

**Your letter should be no more than 750 words. Please note there is no need to complete the supporting statement section of the application form, as your covering letter should outline your suitability for the post.**

**Could I ask all applicants to include in the qualifications section of the form, details of their subjects and grades.**

Your completed application form, letter and reference consent form should be returned, marked for the attention of Louise Douds, Director of Finance & Support Services, by **9.00 am on Friday 3rd May 2024** to the above address, or alternatively emailed to [**louise.douds@st-marys.newcastle.sch.uk**](mailto:louise.douds@st-marys.newcastle.sch.uk)**. Interviews are likely to be held shortly after this date.**

Yours faithfully,



Emma Patterson

Headteacher