



# St Mary's Catholic School

Benton Park Road, Newcastle upon Tyne. NE7 7PE

*where everyone can succeed*



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Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in our Learning Support Assistant post, 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 great place to work, first and foremost because of our fantastic students. The majority come from our nine Catholic partner primaries and a sizeable minority from other schools across the city and beyond, including from overseas. The majority are Catholics but we welcome equally students from many Faith backgrounds. There is an excellent ethnic, socio-economic and academic mix in the school. Whilst the vast majority of students are English, children from 30+ countries are on roll, with 30+ mother tongues spoken, though the majority of these EAL students have very good English. This diversity within the student body is one of the many positive features of St Mary's and 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 1450 by September 2022, with 5 year groups of around 240. The Sixth Form currently has approx. 280 students, but will grow in the next couple of years, as larger and strongly academic year groups move into Sixth Form.

St Mary's joined the Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust in June 2020, which will grow 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.

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. A Learning Support Assistant has a critical role in supporting students with their learning. 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 candidate, 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 post and the Person Specification summarises the key qualities required.

St Mary's benefits from having excellent staff, both teaching and support. The staff 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. We also enjoy a very strong partnership with our family of primaries, all of whom are fully 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 twelve years, in our full Ofsted inspection, in our subject inspection of English and in our Diocesan inspections. I would encourage you to read our inspection reports and the school prospectus, to get a sense of some of the school's many strengths. Since our last full inspection, our School Improvement Partner's Annual Reports to Governors have continued to grade all aspects of the school as Outstanding. The DfE recognised St Mary's work by naming us as a National Support School in 2011 and we have been involved in school to school support as a Teaching School and this support in other schools is ongoing.

Our students' progress and attainment are excellent, among the very best in the north-east and UK. The latest figures show St Mary's as the top north-east school with the highest value added achievement score, when measured across all the Ebacc subjects of English, Maths, Sciences, Languages and Humanities. Recent attainment is as follows:-



## GCSE

- Significantly above average in 2019 with a Progress 8 score of 0.29. Progress in 2022 is 0.7.
- 86% Grade 4+ in English and Maths in 2022, 86% in 2021, 83% in 2020 and 80% in 2019, consistently among the highest in the north east
- Over 90% Grade 4+ across the other Ebacc subjects every year
- 44% of all GCSE entries were graded 9-7 in 2022 and 91% 9-4

## A LEVEL

- 40% of all A Level entries over the last 5 years were graded at A\*/A
- 100% Vocational pass rate with 88% at Distinction or better and 99% Merit or better over the last 3 years

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 and Support Services, by **9.00am on Friday 9<sup>th</sup> December, 2022** to the above address, or alternatively emailed to [louise.douds@st-marys.newcastle.sch.uk](mailto:louise.douds@st-marys.newcastle.sch.uk). **Short-listed candidates will be informed soon after this date and interviews will be held shortly after this date.**

Yours faithfully,



Emma Patterson  
Headteacher