



St Mary's
Colchester

Assistant Head (Inclusion and SENDCo)

CANDIDATE INFORMATION PACK

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Website: www.stmaryscolchester.org.uk/vacancies



Dear Applicants,

Thank you for your interest in St Mary's School.

Founded in 1908 by the Bilson sisters, St Mary's has been educating girls from Colchester and the surrounding area for well over a century. As we approach our 120th anniversary in 2028, we are proud of our heritage and ambitious for the next phase of the school's development.

From its earliest days, St Mary's has been shaped by a bold conviction: that girls deserve an education rooted in scholarship, confidence and character. That founding vision remains central to who we are today. Our task now is to honour that inheritance while sharpening our distinctiveness as an academically ambitious school, where curiosity, high expectations and a love of learning matter deeply.

Since joining St Mary's, I have been struck by the strength of the community: the professionalism of staff, the quality of relationships and the genuine care shown to every girl. These are powerful foundations on which to build. Our aspiration is straightforward but demanding: to be a school known equally for warmth and scholarship; a place where pastoral care and academic ambition are not competing ideas, but mutually reinforcing strengths.

We are ambitious for our pupils and for our staff. At St Mary's, we are committed to providing a rigorous and engaging education, alongside strong pastoral care and a breadth of opportunity that enables every girl to thrive. We believe girls flourish when academic challenge is ambitious, joyful and unapologetically serious. Central to this is our belief that excellent teaching, rich challenge and strong relationships transform outcomes. We want pupils to think deeply, grow in confidence and character, and leave us not only with strong outcomes, but with curiosity, courage and a lifelong love of learning.

For colleagues, this creates a rare professional opportunity. We are looking for people who care deeply about scholarship and the craft of teaching; colleagues who share our ambition, are committed to their own professional growth, and want to contribute to a collaborative culture shaped by innovation, collegiality and high standards. This is an important and exciting moment to join the school. We are entering a significant phase of development and, for the right candidate, this is not simply an opportunity to take up a post, but to help shape an important chapter in the life of a distinctive girls' school.

There is much here to value, and much to build. If that sense of purpose resonates with you, I hope you will consider joining us.

With best wishes,

Lee Daniel Faith
Principal

The school

St Mary's is an Independent day school in Colchester, Essex for girls age 3-16 and boys age 3-4.

Our vision is to empower girls to thrive at school and beyond.

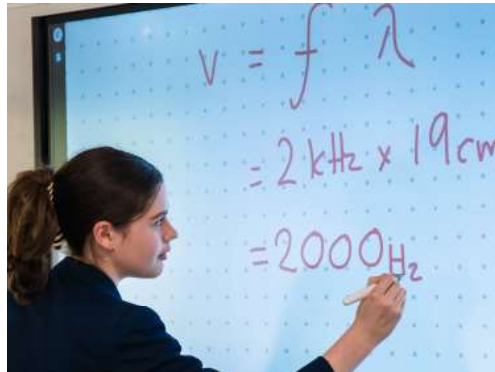
The Lower School was ranked 12th highest performing Preparatory Schools in England by the Sunday Times last year. Many girls achieve scholarships to senior school and we have an impressive 11+ pass rate for those who choose to sit the exam. At the Senior School, excellent GCSE results are achieved each year. We're able to achieve such success by tailoring the education to suit the needs of each individual in our small classes and by giving the girls the encouragement and support they need to aim high.

We are strong believers that success in life comes from more than just impressive exam results. At St Mary's we offer a brilliantly balanced education in order to develop exceptionally well-rounded individuals. With a huge variety of clubs, enrichment activities, music and drama productions, visits and international travel experiences on offer, there's ample opportunity to learn new skills and develop talents. There are numerous positions of responsibility available to the girls which help develop their leadership skills, and we foster team spirit through initiatives such as the School Council and School Houses.

For young people to thrive we firmly believe they must feel confident, relaxed and secure. Every child is known and understood and the girls feel comfortable challenging themselves and asking questions.

We believe in instilling the values of respect and courtesy, and through our charity and outreach work the students develop a strong sense of community. We are a leading Eco School and the students get a strong sense of caring for the environment as a result. As a global member of the Round Square Organisation, those who attend St Mary's benefit from our international links, which helps to broaden their horizons.

In this positive environment our young people develop the strength of character and the self-belief they need to make the very most of the life that lies ahead.



Why Inclusion at St Mary's

At St Mary's, we believe inclusion is not a parallel agenda to academic excellence, but integral to it. We believe girls flourish when they are known well, challenged well and supported well; when high expectations are matched by thoughtful provision; and when ambition and belonging are understood as mutually reinforcing.

As we enter an important phase in the school's development, we are ambitious to strengthen further a culture in which every pupil can thrive intellectually, socially and personally. This includes a clear commitment to excellent provision for pupils with additional needs, rooted not only in strong support systems, but in adaptive teaching, high expectations and genuine inclusion in the fullest sense.

This role offers an exciting opportunity to shape that work strategically across both the Lower and Senior School. It is not a traditional SENDCo post, but a significant senior whole-school leadership role, bringing together inclusion, SEND leadership, key transition pathways, vulnerable learner support and the continued development of excellent classroom practice.

We are looking for a leader who believes deeply in both equity and excellence; someone who understands that inclusive education is not about lowering expectations, but enabling every pupil to meet them. The successful candidate will help shape the next chapter of inclusion at St Mary's, strengthening provision, building staff capacity and contributing to an academically ambitious, intellectually rigorous and deeply humane education for girls.



Job description

Job title:	Assistant Head (Inclusion and SENDCo)
Reporting to:	Principal
Hours:	Full-Time
Salary:	Main professional scale/Upper pay scale + additional allowance

About the Role

The Assistant Head (Inclusion and SENDCo) will be a key member of the Wider Leadership Team, providing strategic and operational leadership for inclusion, SEND and vulnerable learner provision across both the Lower and Senior School.

This is a significant senior whole-school leadership role at an important moment in the school's development. The successful candidate will play a central part in shaping inclusive provision across the school, ensuring pupils with additional needs are both supported and stretched, and that high-quality inclusive practice is embedded in the daily life of classrooms and the wider culture of the school.

The role extends well beyond statutory SEND responsibilities. It includes strategic oversight of inclusion, leadership of adaptive teaching and provision, support for vulnerable learners, close partnership with pastoral and safeguarding colleagues, and a particular focus on effective transition, especially at key points such as Year 6 to Year 7.

The successful candidate will contribute not only specialist expertise, but wider leadership capacity to the school, helping to shape policy, practice and culture as part of a collaborative and ambitious senior team.

We are seeking an experienced and thoughtful leader with a strong moral purpose, intellectual seriousness and a deep commitment to enabling every pupil to flourish. This is a rare opportunity to help shape inclusion strategically in a school that is ambitious both for its pupils and for its future.

Role Purpose

The Assistant Head (Inclusion and SENDCo) is a key member of the Wider Leadership Team with strategic and operational responsibility for inclusion, special educational needs and disabilities, and provision for vulnerable learners across both the Lower and Senior School.

The postholder will provide whole-school leadership for inclusive education, ensuring pupils with additional needs are known, supported, challenged and enabled to flourish academically and personally.

The role combines statutory SEND leadership with wider responsibility for inclusive practice, adaptive teaching, key transition pathways and the development of provision that promotes both equity and excellence.

Strategic Leadership of Inclusion and SEND

The postholder will:

- Lead the strategic development of inclusion and SEND provision across the school.
- Ensure compliance with statutory responsibilities relating to SEND and related guidance.
- Develop, implement and review an ambitious strategic vision for inclusion aligned with the school's values and priorities.
- Lead the review, implementation and evaluation of SEND and inclusion-related policy.
- Work with the Principal and governors to ensure the school meets its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010, including in relation to reasonable adjustments and access arrangements.
- Contribute to the School Improvement Plan and wider strategic planning.
- Lead self-evaluation, monitoring and quality assurance relating to inclusion and SEND.
- Contribute to inspection readiness in relation to inclusion, pupil support and provision.

Leadership of Quality of Education and Inclusive Practice

The postholder will:

- Promote and develop high-quality adaptive teaching and inclusive classroom practice.
- Support colleagues in ensuring pupils with additional needs are both supported and stretched.
- Work with leaders and teachers to ensure ambitious curriculum access for all pupils.
- Monitor the quality and impact of provision and interventions.
- Use assessment and other information intelligently to evaluate outcomes and inform improvement.
- Lead and contribute to professional development for staff in adaptive teaching, inclusion and SEND practice.
- Build staff confidence and capacity through coaching, training and evidence-informed approaches to inclusive pedagogy.

Pupil Support, SEND Provision and Transition

The postholder will:

- Oversee high-quality provision for pupils with SEND and other vulnerable learners.
- Ensure effective systems for identifying, assessing, supporting and reviewing pupil need.
- Oversee the development, quality and impact of pupil support plans and associated review processes, ensuring outcomes are monitored rigorously.
- Maintain strategic oversight of EHCP provision, access arrangements and specialist support processes.
- Maintain strategic oversight of an accurate SEND register and provision mapping, ensuring provision is monitored and reviewed effectively.
- Lead and strengthen transition arrangements, particularly at Year 6–7 and other key transition points.
- Lead or oversee annual review processes and associated statutory review responsibilities.

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- Work in close partnership with families and external agencies.
- Ensure inclusive provision supports pupils' academic progress, confidence and belonging.

Leadership and Management

The postholder will:

- Provide line management, support and strategic direction to relevant colleagues within inclusion and SEND provision.
- Lead, develop and support staff through clear expectations, coaching and accountability.
- Contribute actively to the work of the Senior Leadership Team.
- Lead relevant meetings and contribute to policy development.
- Support effective deployment of staffing and resources within the area of responsibility.
- Contribute to recruitment, induction and professional development where appropriate.
- Contribute, under the direction of the Principal or other relevant members of the Senior Leadership Team, to the effective planning and oversight of resources and budget associated with inclusion and SEND provision.

Collaboration and Whole-School Contribution

The postholder will:

- Work closely with pastoral, safeguarding and academic leaders to ensure coherent support for pupils.
- Contribute to wider whole-school leadership and strategic initiatives.
- Maintain a visible presence across the school and contribute to pupil culture and wider school life.
- Lead assemblies and contribute to communication with pupils, parents and governors as appropriate.
- Promote a culture of high expectations, belonging and inclusion across the school.
- Liaise with and contribute, where appropriate, to reporting and engagement with governors in relation to inclusion and SEND provision, including supporting the oversight role of the SEND Link Governor.

Teaching

The postholder will have a teaching commitment commensurate with the demands of the role, to be determined by the Principal.

Professional Responsibilities

The postholder will:

- Uphold the values, ethos and professional standards of the school.
- Model integrity, sound judgement and collaborative leadership.
- Engage in ongoing professional development.
- Uphold the Nolan Principles of Public Life in professional practice.
- Undertake such other duties as may reasonably be required by the Principal, commensurate with the seniority of the post.

Other Specific Duties

- To attend INSET training, staff meetings and briefings as directed.
- To participate in wider school initiatives, such as Challenge Weeks and residential/day trips.
- To carry out scheduled staff supervisory duties such as at break and lunch times.
- To play a full part in the life of the school community, to support its mission and ethos and to encourage and ensure staff and students follow this example.
- To comply with whole school policies and procedures.
- To maintain a visible, professional, and high profile within the school.

Whilst every effort has been made to explain the main duties and responsibilities of the post, each individual task may not have been identified; therefore, employees will be expected to comply with any reasonable request from the Principal including ad hoc projects and to undertake work of a similar level that is not specified in the job description.

The job description is current, but in consultation with you, may be changed by the Principal to reflect or anticipate changes in the job, commensurate with the grade and job title.

St Mary's is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. All candidates must be willing to undergo child protection screening, including checks with past employers and the Disclosure and Barring Service.

Person specification

The successful candidate will demonstrate many, if not all, of the following qualities, skills and experiences. Essential criteria are those required for appointment; desirable criteria indicate areas of additional strength.

(E) = Essential
(D) = Desirable

Qualifications and Training

- Education to degree level or equivalent (E)
- QTS, PGCE or equivalent (E)
- Evidence of sustained professional development (E)
- Substantial training in SEND and inclusive practice (E)
- National Award for SEND Coordination (NASENCO) or equivalent qualification (D)
- Postgraduate qualification relevant to inclusion, SEND or leadership (D)
- Level 3 safeguarding training (DSL), or willingness to undertake/refresh (D)
- Training in adaptive teaching, neurodevelopmental needs or inclusive pedagogy (D)

Expertise

- Significant experience of leading SEND provision in a school setting (E)
- Experience of strategic leadership and contributing to school improvement (E)
- Experience of improving outcomes for pupils with SEND and vulnerable learners (E)
- Experience of developing staff practice through coaching or professional development (E)
- Experience of working with families and external agencies (E)
- Experience of overseeing transition arrangements for vulnerable pupils, particularly at key transition points (E)
- Experience of line management and leadership of staff (E)
- Experience across more than one phase / all-through or cross-phase understanding (D)
- Experience of girls' education (D)
- Experience of inspection preparation relating to inclusion or pupil support (D)
- Experience of budget or resource oversight (D)



Knowledge and Skills

- Strong knowledge of the SEND Code of Practice and current SEND legislation (E)
- Deep understanding of inclusive practice and adaptive teaching (E)
- Ability to use assessment and provision data intelligently to inform improvement (E)
- Strong strategic thinking and organisational skills (E)
- Excellent communication and relationship-building skills (E)
- Ability to lead change thoughtfully and effectively (E)
- Ability to balance strategic leadership with operational detail (E)
- Knowledge of independent school regulatory and inspection expectations (D)
- Knowledge of evidence-informed approaches to inclusive pedagogy (D)

Leadership Qualities and Personal Attributes

- Commitment to high expectations, equity and inclusion (E)
- Commitment to developing a culture of high expectations, belonging and inclusion (E)
- Strong moral purpose and professional integrity (E)
- Collaborative leadership with clarity and authority (E)
- Warmth, judgement and emotional intelligence (E)
- Resilience and capacity to manage complexity (E)
- Intellectual curiosity and reflective practice (E)
- Commitment to the values and ethos of St Mary's (E)
- Capacity to contribute to wider whole-school leadership beyond specialist remit (E)

Why colleagues choose St Mary's

Employee Assistance Programme

Confidential 24-hour helpline
Counselling sessions
Wellness app

Meals and Refreshments

Lunch available during term-time
Tea and coffee facilities provided

Physical Health

Occupational health support
Bike2Work scheme

Financial

Staff discount for School fees (subject to qualifying criteria)
Financial coaching through the EAP
Regular benchmarking of salaries
Access to BlueLight Card and other discounts

Professional Development

Life and leadership coaching through the EAP
INSET training

Additional Benefits

Pleasant working grounds and location
Free parking on site

St Mary's offers colleagues the opportunity to work in a warm, purposeful and ambitious school community where pupils are known well and relationships matter. Small classes, committed pupils and a strong pastoral culture create the conditions for excellent teaching and meaningful professional impact.

As we approach our 120th anniversary in 2028, this is also an exciting moment to join the school. Colleagues appointed now will have the opportunity to contribute to an important phase of development, helping to shape an academically ambitious, intellectually rigorous and distinctive education for girls.

We value professional voice, collaboration and continuing development, and we are looking for colleagues who want to bring intellectual energy, scholarship and care to the life of the school.



Application process

Closing date for applications: Friday 15th May 2026

Date of interviews: On a rolling basis

Candidates should complete their application form on MyNewTerm: <https://mynewterm.com/school/St-Mary's-School-for-Girls/115394>

If you have any questions about the application process, please contact Mrs M Terry, HR & Compliance Officer at:

Email: careers@stmaryscolchester.org.uk

Post: St Mary's School, 91 Lexden Road, Colchester, Essex, CO3 3RB

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Safeguarding

St Mary's is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. All candidates must be willing to undergo child protection screening.

Please visit www.stmaryscolchester.org.uk/vacancies/ to read our Application & Recruitment process explanatory notes.

Privacy notice

Please read our Privacy Notice for Job Candidates, which can be found at www.stmaryscolchester.org.uk/vacancies/

We respect your privacy and are committed to protecting your personal data. Our Privacy Notice will inform you as to how we look after personal data held by us and tell you about your privacy rights and how the law protects you. It is important that you read this Privacy Notice together with any other privacy notice or fair processing notice we may provide on specific occasions when we are collecting or processing personal data so that you are fully aware of how and why we are using personal data. This Privacy Notice supplements the other notices and is not intended to override them.

