

School Secretary

Information for Applicants



The School's website contains a wealth of information which may be of interest to candidates. The following notes aim to provide, therefore just a brief overview of the School as well as further information about the advertised post.

Introduction

St Faith's is the largest prep school in Cambridge, one of the leading independent schools in the UK and a member of the Independent Association of Prep Schools (IAPS), which comprises the top 600 prep schools in the world. It caters for over 500 boys and girls, aged 4 to 13, and employs over 100 staff, including 50 teachers. Situated in the heart of Cambridge, on a spacious green site with outstanding facilities and easy access to the M11, St Faith's benefits from an enviable location and has the feel of a 'country' prep school with all the advantages of Cambridge on its doorstep. There is a tangible buzz of positivity in the School and new staff are often struck by the happy, productive and supportive atmosphere.

The School enjoys, both locally and nationally, a reputation for providing a first-class all-round education with a strong academic core and excellent pastoral care. Results in senior school entrance examinations have for many years been outstanding with leavers consistently achieving well over 20 scholarships each year. The School's commitment to academic excellence is matched by the value it places on the broader curriculum. The School provides a truly holistic education in which everyone is encouraged to discover their talents and then make the most of them. Pupils achieve a staggering array of success across the curriculum. In recent years, pupils have won national creative writing competitions, reached the final of National Schools' Maths Challenge, performed in regional and national music and theatre groups and been winners of sports at national level. St Faith's pupils are renowned for being great 'all-rounders' with strong inter-personal and leadership skills. As the Good Schools' Guide states, St Faith's 'turns out sparky children with high all-round expectations and the skills to meet them'.

In recent times, the School has received national and international recognition for its curriculum innovation, details of which are provided in a later section of these notes.

The School's Mission Statement, shown below, provides a succinct summary of our ethos.

St Faith's seeks to be a happy, inclusive and supportive community which welcomes families from all religious and cultural backgrounds. Underpinned by Christian values, we nurture every child as an infinitely valuable and uniquely gifted member of the St Faith's family. We aim to cultivate strength of character, distinguished inter-personal qualities, distinctive leadership ability and a keen sense of social responsibility. Our innovative and future-focused education builds on a strong academic heritage and promotes excellence in all areas.

St Faith's is a busy and an active school. Staff here are encouraged and expected to work to the highest professional standards, contributing to the very high regard in which the school and its staff are held by current and former pupils and their parents and ensuring that the children are given all the opportunities that should be available to them at a first-class independent school.

History

St Faith's was founded in 1884 to meet the needs of the children of the Fellows of Cambridge University. R. S. Goodchild, the founder, reputedly named the School after his daughter Faith. In 1938 St Faith's became part of the same foundation as The Leys School, a prestigious senior independent school in Cambridge. Each school operates autonomously with each own staff, Head, budget and individual identity, yet benefits from a close relationship.



In the 1990s, the School moved from being a six-day a week boys' day and boarding school to a coeducational five-day a week day school.

Over time, St Faith's has thrived and grown in to the one of the largest prep schools in the country, with outstanding facilities and a healthy financial position. Well known alumni include John Maynard Keynes (economist), Christopher Cockerell (inventor of the hovercraft) and Alex Goode (England rugby player).

St Faith's is in many ways a reflection of Cambridge. It has a long and distinguished history but has never stood still. The blend of traditional values and continuous desire to improve has enabled the School, like its neighboring City, to develop successfully and earn its reputation for exceptional standards. When recruiting staff, we look for outstanding individuals who can help us to preserve our traditional values and at the same time, be open-minded, innovative and dynamic, so that the School can continue to develop and lead the way in prep school education.

Structure of the School

Essentially there are three sections:

- (i) The Pre Prep which comprises three year groups – Foundation, Year 1 and Year 2 – with three classes in each. The Pre Prep is located at southern most part of the site with its own classrooms, playgrounds and staff. The children are taught by their Class Tutor with the exception of Spanish, Music and Sport which are taught by specialists – the latter three of these subjects are taught in whole-school specialist facilities.
- (ii) Years 3 and 4 which comprises four classes in each year. The Class Tutor teaches the children for approximately three quarters of their timetable, with the remainder being taught by specialists.
- (iii) Years 5 to 8 which comprises four classes in each year. Each class has a Tutor for pastoral purposes and all subjects are taught by specialists using departmental facilities.



Class size for all year groups is between 14 and 20 pupils. Teaching Assistants are employed for all classes up to Year 5 and for most practical subjects thereafter.

Facilities

St Faith's boasts very fine facilities, on a spacious green site. Essentially the twelve-acre site comprises four Georgian buildings complemented by spacious, purpose-built modern facilities. The most recently built accommodation includes a large Sports Hall (opened in 2011), Keynes (Music, Computing and Engineering) opened in 2006 and Ashburton (Science, Art, Drama, Maths, Classics, Library and assembly hall) opened in 1998. The Leys and St Faith's Foundation also owns and uses twenty acres of sports fields, including two astroturf pitches, just two minutes' walk from the main St Faith's site. A virtual tour of the facilities can be viewed on the School website.

The Curriculum

The School curriculum far exceeds national requirements, covering all the National Curriculum subjects as well as Spanish (from age 4), Classics (from age 9) and Engineering (from age 7). An emphasis is placed on excellence and innovation and in recent times the School has received national and international recognition for its curriculum development.

In 2012, St Faith's was formally recognised by the Spanish Embassy for its outstanding language teaching. In 2013 The Royal Society awarded St Faith's Associate Status for its excellence in the teaching of Science and Maths. Also in 2013, the government designated St Faith's a Lead School for the teaching of Computing and for the past three years, our Head of Computing has provided support to over 25 schools in their quest to introduce the Computing curriculum. In 2014, St Faith's won the school's category of the Ashden Awards, an international competition which recognises beacons of excellence in sustainability; in this respect the School is seen as a world leader and is currently supporting many schools in the UK to roll out sustainability education programmes.

In 2015, St Faith's became the first school of this age range to introduce Engineering to the curriculum. This initiative has received accolades and support from the University of Cambridge, leading Engineering companies and the James Dyson Foundation. Earlier this year, St Faith's was a finalist in the TES 'Prep School of the Year 2018' award, and announced as the winner of the TES 'Strategic Initiative of the Year' award (for the introduction of Engineering).



Co-Curricular Activities

Co-curricular activities are important at St Faith's. They range from Music and Drama rehearsals, chess, reading, Art and model making to team sports training, golf, gymnastics and dance. All full-time teachers are expected to run at least one after-school activity each week; many run more than this. Currently over 80 activities are on offer to the children each week.

Many visits to places of local interest are planned to extend and enrich the curriculum, taking advantage of the fascinating possibilities of Cambridge and its environs. The School also runs a planned programme of residential trips, including an annual ski holiday, an outdoor adventure holiday to the Ardèche gorge, a language learning course in Spain, a Music tour to Liverpool, a Classics trip to Rome and Pompeii and a Music and Sports tour to South Africa. These trips are popular, and staffing is carefully planned to allow as many teachers and support staff as possible to take part.

Entrants and Exits

Demand for places is high and the School is heavily oversubscribed. Most children enter the School at age 4; there is no formal assessment at this stage other than a visit by the Head of Pre Prep to the child's nursery to ensure that he/she is ready for our school environment. An additional class is recruited at age 7 (Year 3) and occasional places become available in other year groups when current parents relocate. From Year 2 entry onwards our intake is academically selective, although only in so far as we seek to ensure that a child will cope with the demands of our strong academic curriculum. The overall academic ability of each year is well above the national average.

Approximately half of our leavers move to The Leys and the remainder transfer to a wide variety of independent and maintained schools in Cambridge and further afield; in recent years the most common destinations have been Uppingham, The Perse, King's Ely and St Mary's.

St Faith's Parents' Association

The School encourages open and positive professional links with parents. Social events for all the School community are organised by the St Faith's Parents' Association and in recent times have included a Fireworks Display, Christmas Fair, Summer Ball and wine-tastings.

Safeguarding

St Faith's is committed to recruitment procedures which carefully assess the suitability of all those it employs to work with children. All its employees are subject to an enhanced DBS check and references will be required.

Benefits

The School offers a generous remuneration package.

- St Faith's owns properties which are made available for staff accommodation.
- Free membership of Cambridge University Botanic Gardens.
- All staff benefit from free membership of The Leys sports facilities, including a gym, sports hall and swimming pool.
- All staff are provided with free lunches in term time. Breakfast is also available at a subsidised cost to staff, parents and children each morning.
- A parking space is available on site on four days per week. On the fifth day, staff are expected to park off site. The School provides financial support for the purchase of a bicycle through the Cycle to Work scheme.
- All new members of staff receive a detailed programme of induction and mentoring throughout their first year. The School places high importance on professional development and all staff are expected to be proactive in furthering their skills and knowledge. Regular in-house training is provided and there is a substantial budget for staff to attend external courses.
- Class sizes are small, behaviour of pupils is very good and the School prides itself on having a happy, supportive and dynamic staff team. New members of staff are made very welcome and great care and support is given to help them settle in and enjoy working as part of the community.

Cambridge

Cambridge is a wonderful place to live and work. The wide open green meadows in the city centre together with the beautiful architecture of the colleges make the city a very pleasant place. In recent times, Cambridge has become one of the fastest growing cities and exciting technology clusters in the world, with companies such as Microsoft, Apple sitting alongside the many start-up technology companies. The city's hospital, Addenbrooke's, located just a few minutes away from St Faith's, is expanding and will soon be the one of the largest hospitals in Europe and leading biomedical centres in the world. The expansion of Cambridge, and the science parks and Addenbrooke's in particular, has led to major housing developments in the area as Cambridge becomes an increasingly dynamic and cosmopolitan city.



The Application Process

Applications, in the form of an application form accompanied by a brief letter, should be sent to Janet Mills, HR & Safeguarding Adviser by 10am on Tuesday 3rd July. Interviews will be held on Thursday 12th July.

Terms and Conditions

The post is full time in both term-time and in the holidays. Normal working hours are Monday to Friday, 0800 to 1615 during term time and 0800 to 1600 in the school holidays. This includes a 30 minute lunch break. The centrality of the role means that the school secretary will be expected to be flexible, to a reasonable extent, with their hours in order to complete the work.

The post carries 25 days' holiday per annum, rising to 26 days after 5 years' service. An additional 8 days of bank holiday are added to these days.

Job Description

Working as part of a team of two school secretaries under the line management of the Headmaster's PA to provide administrative support to the school including registration of pupils, responding to telephone calls and welcoming visitors to the school.

The successful applicant will work very closely with the Headmaster's PA, will have an active and integral role in the School Office and the School's administrative teams and will have involvement with the wider support functions in the school. The principal areas of activity can be summarised according to the following headings.

Key Tasks

- Daily registration of pupils for morning and afternoon registration, and dealing with authorised and unauthorised absences. Maintaining a log of any problems.
- Answering and dealing with in-coming calls, and making calls on behalf of staff and pupils. Passing on messages in an efficient manner to pupils, staff and parents.

- Greeting and registering visitors to the school in accordance with safeguarding procedures and appraising them of health and fire safety procedures.
- Maintaining the school information management database.
- The production, collation and distribution of pupil reports, commendations, colours and sports awards
- The setting up of pupil profiles.
- Administration of Parents' Consultation Evenings.
- Ensure that the Late Stay administration is updated on a daily basis
- Sharing the normal work of the school office – photocopying, reports, dealing with incoming and outgoing mail, making appointments for parents' evenings, basic maintenance of office equipment, filing and archiving.
- Management of the Pre Prep Activities booking system.

Other General Tasks

- To operate in accordance with all school policies, procedures, codes of conduct and ethics.
- To observe IT policies and procedures, and to maintain the strictest confidentiality at all times.
- To undertake responsibility to safeguard pupils and adhere at all times to the School's Child Protection procedures.
- To uphold the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998, and to understand and be mindful of the School email and internet policies and procedures.
- To maintain a safe and tidy working environment at all times for pupils, staff and customers and to meet the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and other legislation.
- To ensure the safe disposal of waste.
- To observe and implement all relevant legislative requirements, taking responsibility to maintain and update own knowledge and training as appropriate to the role.

To undertake any other reasonable related tasks as requested by the Headmaster, Bursar and Headmaster's PA.

In conjunction with all staff of the School, support, promote and act within the School's Safeguarding Policy.

This outline does not represent a comprehensive breakdown of all the areas of involvement for the School Secretary, who will be expected to assume other reasonable responsibilities as needs arise.

Person Specification

St Faith's is a busy and an active school. Staff here are encouraged and expected to work to the highest professional standards, contributing to the very high regard in which the school and its staff are held by current and former pupils and their parents and ensuring that the children are given all the opportunities that should be available to them at a first-class independent school.

The role requires administrative, communication and interpersonal skills combined with discretion, diplomacy and an empathetic approach to handling sensitive issues. Levels of competence with the usual range of MS Office software applications is essential. The post holder will have an eye for detail and high standards of work.

The candidate will have the ability to work flexibly, independently, efficiently and to deadlines with a range of different individuals and groups within St Faith's. Inevitably certain times of the academic year are pressured in the pattern of workload and it is important that the post holder is reliable and maintains a positive attitude.

The person specification for the role is outline below.

	Essential	Desirable	A/I/P¹
Professional Qualifications	GCSE Maths and English	Ability to use MS Office products	A I P
Physical requirements of the post	Prolonged use of keyboard/Visual Display Unit & computer Able to work core office hours		A I
Experience, Knowledge and Understanding	Experience of working in a multifunctional secretarial role Equal opportunities, Health & Safety and Child Protection	Experience of working in a school environment Awareness of the Freedom of Information Act and the Data Protection Act Knowledge of SIMS (School Information Management System)	A I P
Skills	Must be able to multitask IT literacy including MS Office Suite with accurate typing Ability to adapt to using a wide range of packages to allow access to School information Excellent phone manner and strong written and oral communication skills to a wide and varied audience including pupils, staff, parents, Governors and others Excellent accuracy and attention to detail	Intranet skills	A I P

¹ A – Application; I – Interview; P - Practical

	Essential	Desirable	A/I/P ¹
	<p>Ability to build good working relationships with a wide and varied audience</p> <p>Excellent organisational skills and ability to prioritise time and work, and to keep clear records</p>		
Personal qualities/ temperament	<p>Professional manner & approach at all times</p> <p>Able to cope well when under pressure from competing priorities and interruptions</p> <p>Tact and diplomacy</p> <p>Equable temperament</p> <p>Able to maintain confidentiality</p> <p>Awareness of the responsibilities of working in an environment with young people</p> <p>Team player</p>		A I
Other	<p>Work within policies of the School, including safeguarding children.</p> <p>The right to work in the UK.</p>	Professional appearance	A I

If you have queries please email the Human Resources Adviser, Janet Mills, on hr@stfaiths.co.uk or telephone (01223 229417).