

CANDIDATE BRIEF FOR THE POSITION OF

FINANCE & OPERATIONS OFFICER



ST MARY'S SCHOOL
HAMPSTEAD

JANUARY 2027



INTRODUCTION TO ST MARY'S SCHOOL, HAMPSTEAD

St Mary's School, Hampstead is a Roman Catholic Preparatory and Pre-Prep School for girls aged 2 years 6 months to 11 years. Founded in 1871 by the Congregation of Jesus in the heart of Hampstead, the School is surrounded by woodland and gardens on an enviable plot of almost one acre, giving it a freedom of space unusual in a London school. St Mary's is proud to be very much part of the wider community while remaining true to the passionately held beliefs of the Congregation's founder, Mary Ward. In 1617, Mary Ward believed in the provision of a thoroughly grounded academic and spiritual education for girls as a foundation for an enriched and confident adulthood. Her words were as resonant then as they are today. Her enlightened understanding of the need for an all-round education of women was based on her certainty that, 'There is no such difference between men and women that women may not also do great things.' Although the School has been run as a separate charity since 1992, there are still active and enduring links with the Congregation of Jesus community. Today, the School prides itself on its girls achieving academic success whilst developing into caring, thoughtful individuals who are kind to each other and embody the School's ethos and values. They are encouraged to be Risk takers, Resilient, Respectful and Reflective in their faith, behaviour and academic work. St Mary's is an oasis where life-long values are taught and modelled. Many other schools talk about the importance of the individual but, at St Mary's,

there really is a wholehearted commitment to an all-round education given with love. The School gives the children physical and emotional space in which to grow. The Trustees, Governors, Head and Staff are united in their commitment to offering an education that provides the highest possible attainment for each child. The School provides a broad and creative curriculum where interests and talents can be nurtured and celebrated. Spiritual and moral principles are cherished in a way that is reflected in the daily life of all within the School. St Mary's values the unique contribution of every child within the school community and aims to encourage an active partnership between home, school, parish and the wider community. Intellectual development is emphasised and fostered along with the pursuit of academic excellence. Academic expectations are high and measured pupil achievement is significantly above national standards both in the state and independent sectors. Relationships with destination schools are seen as extremely valuable by the parent body and the Year 6 pupils themselves. The School is justifiably proud of its excellent 11+ results. Year 6 leavers regularly gain offers and academic scholarships from schools including Camden School for Girls, Channing School, City of London School for Girls, Francis Holland School, Henrietta Barnet, Highgate School, North London Collegiate, South Hampstead High School, St Mary's Ascot, St Michael's Grammar and St Paul's Girls' School. The School is registered with IAPS, ISA and CISC.



LOCATION AND CAMPUS

St Mary's is situated on one of the most attractive main roads in London and, unlike other schools in the area, is blessed with green space. The School occupies a spacious, turn-of-the-century Grade 2 Listed building, with mosaic floors and gardens to the rear, giving the School a surprising feel of the country, with the children able to play surrounded by lawns and mature trees. Hampstead is famous for its literary and artistic connections, with Kingsley Amis, Agatha Christie, John Betjeman, Florence Nightingale, Sigmund Freud and Edward Elgar as just a few who have chosen to live in the area. The theatre, cobbled streets, quirky shops and famous Heath have never lost their appeal and remain a haven for families and culture lovers alike. The transport connections are excellent. The overground at Hampstead Heath (ten minutes' walk from the centre of Hampstead Village) allows for easy travel across London, while the Northern Line to Bank is only a 25-minute journey. The number 46 bus route goes through to Farringdon, while a 25-minute walk will take you to Chalk Farm and Camden.

Number 47 Fitzjohn's Avenue was designed by the architect George Lethbridge and built during the 1880s as a family home. The house and gardens were designed with grandeur and space in mind, two adjoining plots having been originally purchased by Louis and Anna Casella.

It is reputed to have been one of the first houses constructed on the newly created Avenue. The house was sold to the Convent in 1926 when they moved from England's Lane, with the Chapel being built during the late 1930s. The altar, pews and stained-glass windows in the Chapel came from the original Gothic Chapel at the England's Lane site, where the School was situated from 1875. A hall at garden level was constructed at the same time below the Chapel. The Chapel is situated at the heart of the School and provides space for prayer and stillness in beautifully calm surroundings. Classrooms are light and very large in comparison to many London schools, and a number have exceptional architectural features, including stained glass and original windows. Two halls provide large community spaces for the children. The clever design of the Mary Ward Hall, completed in 2010, which is used as a performance and assembly hall, gives even the youngest members of the School an area that inspires confident performance that can be shared unobtrusively by their parents. This is an exceptional addition to the School, providing not only the hall but also a new Art Room. Its inspirational design also provides an extra playground on the roof.



An extension built in the 1960s provides for six delightfully proportioned EYFS classes. The Dining Room was refurbished in 2015 with a new kitchen unit and beautifully designed servery. In addition to the bistro-like ambience, a small corner has been designed creatively to give a home-kitchen appearance to provide a home economics demonstration area for the pupils. St Mary's is immensely proud of its pioneering Global Learning Centre, which has benefitted from refurbishment. The space includes a cutting-edge Engineering and Robotics Lab, Virtual Reality Launch Pad, and Art and Design Studio, as well as a Green Room.

"As if the large interactive display screens (including the floor) and 3D printer wasn't impressive enough, every pupil has access to VR headsets to aid 'interactive learning experiences' as part of their lessons."

The Good Schools Guide

The leafy playgrounds make it easy to forget you are in London and are located within one safe, convenient site. Uniquely for the local area, the outdoor space is extensive, enabling Staff to integrate many outdoor lessons into their timetables. The children in Nursery have their own dedicated garden, aptly named 'The Secret Garden', where they can dig in the mud, play at the water tables, learn from nature and spend time in the sensory room.



STRUCTURE OF THE SCHOOL & ADMISSIONS

There is a two-form entry at Nursery. From Reception onwards, there are two parallel forms, which continue through to Year 6. Class sizes are limited to 20 pupils, with setting in Maths and English from Year 5, enabling the curriculum to be closely tailored to individual needs. The School follows national nomenclature with EYFS, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Preference is given first to siblings and then to Catholics. Roughly 50% of the pupils are Catholic, and there is a real cultural mix, with many children coming from families who have originated from countries that are traditionally Roman Catholic. Over 70% of the children are bilingual.

SPIRITUAL LIFE

The St Mary's community is inclusive and diverse, embracing and celebrating families from all faiths and none. The School teaches the principles and foundations of all world religions during Religious Education, and the children are encouraged to discuss their beliefs openly. At the centre of the School is the Chapel: not just in

a physical location but also in ethos and action. The Catholic education provided by St Mary's is based on the Gospel values of love, kindness, friendship, generosity, forgiveness and respect. Pupils are actively encouraged to engage with the wider community and to enjoy the immeasurable benefit of making a positive contribution to society, and this is put into action by placing a significant focus on charity work and caring. By working on common themes throughout the School, the children experience a programme which enables and supports their faith development. All children participate fully in acts of worship through assemblies, hymn practices, whole-school Masses, Praying Together Services and prayer before meals and at the beginning and end of the day. Father Chris Connor is the School Chaplain. He provides spiritual guidance and wonderful pastoral support and care for the whole school community. All of the School's Masses and liturgies take place in the Chapel. The children are taught a wide variety of liturgical music, which enhances all worship. There is a wonderful Chapel Choir, which not only performs at School but also takes part in other singing events in the city throughout the school year. Children are prepared for the sacraments of First Communion and Confession with the close involvement of parents and Staff. Pupils are encouraged to understand the practical side of their religion by involving themselves in charitable work in the local community and supporting various charities around the world.





COMMUNITY SPIRIT

The focus and uniqueness of the School is the commitment to preparing the pupils to be aware of their rights and responsibilities. Being ready and willing to give something back is seen as important, and the pupils are expected to understand the value of justice, fairness, kindness and being ready to have a go! The 'St Mary's Way' sets a code of behaviour for all to follow and is used by all the children, from Pre-Nursery upwards:

THE ST MARY'S WAY

- **Treat other people as you would like to be treated**
- **Do your best to be your best**
- **Be honest and truthful**
- **Listen to each other**
- **Be kind and helpful**
- **Forgive**
- **Share**

The children are respected, and there is every opportunity for their voices to be heard. There is a lovely, natural, friendly buzz in all of the classrooms, with children interacting purposefully with their teachers in the very active pursuit of learning. An understanding and respect for nature is inspired by the School's surroundings and is evident both in the way in which the School is run and in the enthusiastic response of pupils to environmental initiatives, including consideration of how they get to and from school each day. The girls regularly take part in fundraising charity days and nationwide events, such as World Book Day.

"This is a school with a big heart. Charity runs through its core, and during the Covid lockdown, the School raised enough money to buy 22 toilets around the world as part of their 'taps, toilets and trash' initiative. Plastic bottles are now banned on-site, and each child has been equipped with their own re-usable bottle."

The Good Schools Guide

Around 80% of pupils are local, and parents speak of being able to make genuine friends with a very strong 'social mix'. The PTA, known as the Friends of St Mary's, concentrates on developing this community spirit and on charitable giving, with parents keen and willing to become involved.



ACADEMIC MATTERS

A strong emphasis is placed on academic achievement. The girls have to be prepared for all of the different entry examinations to their destination schools. Although some of these schools belong to the 11+ London Consortium, some destination schools are not part of this, and so the girls have to be prepared to undertake a number of different entry examinations, all with different requirements. St Mary's currently adopts the Creative Curriculum approach to teaching and learning, using a single topic to deliver all aspects of the curriculum. The academic philosophy is that, by linking academic subjects, learning becomes motivating, purposeful and real. Also, by placing creativity at the centre of the curriculum, children will remain at the forefront of education practices, learn to take greater risks, make tangible connections in their learning and think deeply about real-world problems. Central to delivering this Creative Curriculum is the Global Learning Centre. This modern, innovative space has been specially designed to promote STEAM at St Mary's and provide the girls with advanced skills for the next stage of their education. Religious Education receives a very high priority in terms of curriculum time, funding and resources, and indeed, the Westminster Diocese Inspection Report of 2019 stated that *"The School's very strong Catholic identity permeates all aspects of the learning environment of the School... The quality of teaching is judged outstanding. Teaching is creative, engaging and fun, ensuring that pupils enjoy their lessons."* There is also provision of excellent teaching and learning for children who require support, with individual programmes being exceptionally well planned and delivered with care and sensitivity by well-trained Staff.





EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND ENRICHMENT

In keeping with the commitment to enrich, extend and involve children, interests and talents are nurtured, and there is a wonderful variety of experiences and activities in which children can fully immerse themselves. The sports programme is inclusive, and every pupil from Pre-Nursery to Year 6 will participate in at least two P.E. lessons a week. The lessons are supported by a plethora of sports clubs before and after school. There is a well-equipped hall onsite for gymnastics (in which St Mary's is particularly strong), and the spacious outside play area has been enhanced. Climbing equipment has been installed, and the full-size netball court has allowed for football, rugby, cricket and tennis lessons to be introduced alongside netball, dodgeball and rounders. The School also uses excellent local facilities, such as Hampstead Heath for athletics and Swiss Cottage Leisure Centre for swimming. Children show great enthusiasm and an appropriate competitive spirit for individual and team events. They also enjoy participating in many fixtures and tournaments against local schools, and the School achieves considerable success across the board. Drama and Music are highly valued parts of the curriculum and

club offering, with a host of performances in choirs, concerts and plays throughout the year. Children are taught the essential skills of performing, composing and appreciating a variety of musical styles. One-to-one instrument lessons are hugely popular and the School benefits from easy access to talented peripatetic teachers who offer individual or group tuition in piano, violin, flute, recorder and voice. St Mary's is very proud of the superb results its pupils gain in external Music exams. Drama and role-play are used across all curriculum areas for all age groups. The School offers a wide variety of clubs to enrich and extend the school day. The current club list numbers over 40, and whilst the list is constantly changing to accommodate new ideas suggested by the girls themselves, they typically include chess, drama, Spanish, debating, coding, accounting, gymnastics, ballet, 11+ club, German, mathemagicians, book club and wind band to name but a few. Many of the clubs start before lessons from 8.00am and, along with the popular After-School Club, provide high-quality and stimulating wraparound care to support working St Mary's families. After-School Club is led by members of the existing Teaching Staff where pupils benefit from a varied programme of structured activities, and there is also a quiet area for children to complete their homework or read with a teacher. Regular educational day trips are made throughout London and further afield, and school trips abroad are annual events. The School also collaborates with Let's Leap to offer a year-round Holiday Club.





THE ROLE

JOB DESCRIPTION

The Finance & Operations Officer will be joining a Finance Team, consisting of the Finance Manager and a part-time Finance Assistant (Purchase Ledger), who is retiring in Summer 2027. Initially, there will be some cross over of purchase ledger functions as tasks are gradually moved over to the Finance & Operations Officer ahead of the retirement of the Finance Assistant (Purchase Ledger). During this time, there may be greater weighting to supporting the Operations aspects of this role.

Safeguarding: The School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

The following responsibilities will be included in the duties which you may be required to perform:

- Child protection, discipline, health and safety.
- Promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children and young persons for whom you are responsible and with whom you come into contact.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Essential:

- Hold relevant accounting qualification or have strong relevant experience
- High levels of personal integrity
- Excellent organisational and time management skills, with the ability to work independently and as a team
- Ability to maintain confidentiality and to always act with discretion
- Strong attention to detail and ability to audit own work
- Strong oral and written communication skills
- Presentable and comfortable in a “front of house” role (meet and greet), when needed, with excellent customer service skills
- Strong Excel skills and a readiness to use new technologies
- Strong background in administration
- The ability to liaise professionally with a range of internal and external stakeholders
- The ability to work accurately at speed and under pressure
- The ability to be proactive
- Willingness to be flexible and involved in the wider life of the School
- Interest in working in a school environment

Desirable:

- Accounting qualification or willingness to obtain
- Experience of Sage 50
- Previous successful experience in a similar financial role, preferably in an educational role
- Experience of working in a school environment



THE ROLE

JOB DESCRIPTION

The duties and responsibilities in the job description are not restrictive and you may be required to undertake other reasonable duties from time to time. Any duties should not substantially change the general character of the post.

OBJECTIVES (FINANCE):

The Finance & Operations Officer is responsible for working with and supporting the Finance Manager with the following financial responsibilities:

Purchase ledger:

- implementing the purchase ledger processes to ensure that all suppliers are paid in a timely manner;
- preparing BACS payments for approval by authorised signatories and recording payments within the Sage accounting system;
- obtaining correct authorisation from budget holders for invoices/purchase orders received;
- committing order values to departmental budgets;
- inputting purchase invoices/receipts to the Sage accounting system daily to the correct nominal and department codes and with the correct VAT code;
- reviewing staff expense forms to ensure that they are properly authorised;
- ensuring proper authorisation of payments;
- ensuring that the School Barclaycard and other payment cards are reconciled on a monthly basis to supporting documentation;
- preparing analyses of expenditure and budgets as required by the Finance Manager;
- monitoring and responding to emails to the Finance email inbox;
- overseeing school stocks of classroom and admin resources; and
- ordering supplies, resources and equipment for the school, including receiving and matching goods to orders and reconciling paperwork.

OBJECTIVES (CONTINUED):

Fees and debtors ledger:

- preparing the spreadsheet for termly fee invoices and “extras” invoices for review and approval by Finance Manager and Bursar;
- reconciling the fees spreadsheet to total pupil numbers each term;
- ensuring all Bursaries and discounts are correctly recorded;
- preparing termly fee invoices and “extras” invoices, in Sage using the correct VAT coding;
- liaising with relevant staff in connection with billing of “extras”, e.g., trip organisers, After School Club Coordinator and Pre-Nursery/Nursery Teachers;
- ensuring all leavers are billed correctly with deposits returned as appropriate;
- ensuring all new joiners are billed appropriately;
- billing Local Authorities for pupils receiving financial support, when required;
- filing fee invoices and related documentation;
- reviewing receipt of fees in a timely manner including production of routine debt recovery letters, when required;
- producing analysis and information on outstanding debtors as required by the Finance Manager and Bursar;
- dealing with routine queries from parents in respect of fees, when required; and
- dealing with routine Child Care vouchers including queries from parents, receipts, processing and registering with new providers as appropriate, when required.

Banking:

- ensuring the proper collection, recording, reconciliation and banking of any monies received by the School (including cash handling and regular banking), when required.



THE ROLE

OBJECTIVES (FINANCE CONTINUED):

General:

- deputising for the Finance Manager, as required;
- assisting with the preparation of supporting schedules for management accounts and year end accounts as required by the Finance Manager;
- assisting with the annual audit process;
- supporting school activities and events (e.g. setting up online payment portals, supporting with administrative aspects, and attending the event to support with taking payments);
- filing financial documents; and
- any other duties as reasonably required by the Headmistress, Bursar or Finance Manager.

Potential for the role to expand to cover other accounting or financial processes.

OBJECTIVES (OPERATIONS):

The Finance & Operations Officer is responsible for working with and supporting the Bursar, Deputy Head, Head of Marketing, Admissions & Development and the wider support staff team with the following operational responsibilities:

HR:

- supporting the Bursar with HR and compliance processes, including adding supply staff to the SCR

Development & Admissions:

- supporting the Head of Marketing, Admissions & Development to:
 - manage and process admissions paperwork and data;
 - grow, maintain and improve the School's alumni network, ensuring records remain accurate and relationships are actively managed;
 - manage and develop the School's CRM to ensure accurate, GDPR-compliant records of alumni, donors and supporters, and to support effective stewardship, communications and reporting; and
 - monitor and track grants and donations.

OBJECTIVES (CONTINUED):

Events & Hire:

- supporting with:
 - the coordination of internal and external events;
 - external hire bookings, including preparing hire agreements.

Administration:

- supporting the wider support staff team with general administrative responsibilities, as needed.



BENEFITS OF WORKING AT ST MARY'S

- Free lunch in term-time. Tea and coffee are available in the staff room throughout the year.
- Cycle to work scheme: A Cycle to Work Scheme is available to all staff, covering Santander Cycles annual membership as well as bicycles and protective equipment.
- Counselling helpline: The School provides access to 24-hour counselling helpline.
- Bupa 24/7 Anytime Healthline: The School provides staff and their families access via CISC to a confidential medical advice helpline.
- Optical Express benefits: The School provides staff access via CISC to Optical Express benefits.
- Annual flu vaccine: Annual on-site flu vaccination is offered to all staff (in Autumn Term).
- Perks at Work: Discounts for purchases with thousands of retailers, as well as free online wellbeing classes.
- Critical illness cover: Canada Life will pay £25,000 in certain circumstances (cover available up to state pension age).
- Supportive professional development opportunities.
- Warm and welcoming work environment with close proximity to Hampstead village.
- Season Ticket Loan: The School provides a loan to support staff with the cost of season tickets for travel to work. More information is available from the Bursar.

EMPLOYMENT TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The successful candidate will be offered an attractive salary commensurate with qualifications and experience. The post will be offered subject to the necessary pre-employment checks, including medical fitness and enhanced DBS checks.

Hours of Work:

- Full-time, 7:45am-4:15pm (1hr lunch break) daily, six weeks' holiday plus bank holidays.

Pay Scale:

- Other Support Staff Pay Scale Point SS10 – SS16 (currently £32,500 - £35,500), with upper ranges of SS17 – SS21 (currently £36,000 – £38,000) and SS22 – 26 (currently £38,500 – £40,500).

HOW TO APPLY

Please see the attached documentation, including an application form, which must be completed in full. Please note that we do not accept CVs for employment applications.

The School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare and wellbeing of children and young people. Applicants must undergo child protection screening, including checks with past employers and the Disclosure and Barring Service.

Closing date: 8am, Monday 2 November 2026.

Interviews: Tuesday 10 November 2026.

Start Date: 1 January 2027 (some flexibility for the right candidate).



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HAMPSTEAD

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