

Steeple Morden VC Primary School



Headteacher Application Pack

February 2024

Letter from the Governors



Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in our vacancy for the post of Headteacher at Steeple Morden Church of England Primary School.

We are delighted that you are considering our school for your next role. We are a supportive governing body and are extremely proud of our talented and committed staff. We are looking to appoint a dedicated, dynamic and skilled practitioner to lead our school through an important period of transition.

This is a great opportunity for an enthusiastic and dedicated person to join and lead our school, coming at an exciting time as we rise to the challenges of educating and teaching our children to be the very best they can be.

We are a school which cares about every child and has a strong focus on every pupil's progress in education and their well-being, with safeguarding at the core of everything we do. We strive for all the children to be brave, be kind and the best they can be.

Following our latest Ofsted inspection (November 2023), our school was downgraded from "Good" to "Requires Improvement". The school has made good progress on a programme of work to respond to issues raised in the previous inspection in May 2022 (where the school remained Good), but it was not sufficient to satisfy Ofsted at the point when the inspection was carried out. We are working with the local authority and the diocese to respond rapidly to the latest report.

We are looking for a headteacher with the energy and drive to lead the school through this challenging period of change, supported by a team of experienced and committed staff. It is of utmost importance to us that all pupils show strong progress in their learning and continue to have a rich and varied educational experience during their time at Steeple Morden school. With the upward trend in the number of children who require extra assistance over the last few years, we are looking for a headteacher who has innovative ideas for ensuring that all pupils thrive, while balancing that fundamental need against the financial constraints faced by a small village school in the current environment.

The school takes pride in the high expectations it sets for the behaviour of pupils, and the vast majority meet these standards. However, the recent Ofsted report noted that there are a minority of pupils whose disruptive behaviour can, at times, impact on the learning of others. We are committed to eliminating this behaviour and so it is important that our new headteacher also subscribes to this view.

We hope that you will come and visit our school to see for yourself the friendly and welcoming atmosphere that our school is known for, and to ask any further questions you may have.

The closing date for applications is noon on Monday 11 March. Applications should be completed online at My New Term: mynewterm.com/jobs/110793/EDV-2024-SMCVPS-52550

Yours faithfully

Steeple Morden School Governors

"Be brave, be kind, be the best you can be"

The selection process



Visits to school are warmly welcomed and encouraged. To arrange a visit please contact the school office by telephone 01763 852 474 or by email : office@steeplemorden.cambs.sch.uk.

1. The vacancy is for a Headteacher to start in September 2024.
2. The salary range will be L12-18
3. The key dates are:

Closing Date for Applications: Noon Monday 11th March 2024

Shortlisting of applicants: Monday 11th March 2024

Interviews and Assessments: Monday and Tuesday 18th and 19th March 2024

As a Governing Body at Steeple Morden School we are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young persons. The Headteacher must ensure that the highest priority is given to following the guidance and regulations to safeguard children and young people. The successful candidate will be required to undergo an Enhanced Disclosure from the Disclosure & Barring Service and complete a Disqualification Declaration.

Please note that an online search may be conducted on shortlisted candidates

If you have any questions regarding this role please email our chair of governors, Mark Arnold chair@smpsgovernor.co.uk



“Be brave, be kind, be the best you can be”

Welcome to Steeple Morden School



We are a co-educational Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School and we aim to serve our community by providing an education of the highest quality. We welcome children of all faiths, and none, and we aim to create a community of tolerance and acceptance.

We are very proud of our school, its history, its community and the pupils and staff that are here today. The school was first established in 1867 and has gone through many changes in the intervening years to become the thriving, modern community it is today.

We currently have 167 pupils on our role. We believe that they should have every opportunity to achieve high academic standards and develop a full awareness of social and moral values. Our school provides a safe, secure and stimulating environment where children and adults can work productively.

We are particularly proud of our Values and Ethos as well as the parable that our values are linked to 'The Lost Sheep' which was primarily chosen to show that we care for every member of our school community and no-one should feel left out or lost.

Our curriculum, which is currently being refreshed, follows the guidance and framework of the 2014 National Curriculum and the Early Years Statutory Framework, reorganized into topics which also reflect the needs and interest of our children. On top of this we enrich pupil's learnings with enhanced opportunities such as learning a new language each year ranging from British Sign Language to Mandarin.

We have a list of '50 things we want our pupils to be able to do by the end of year 6' that reminds us and our pupils of the many things they are learning along the way, in addition to their core subject learning. Examples such as 'be resilient', 'to have skills to resolve conflict' and 'be yourself and be happy!' show our pupils what they can achieve through every-day challenges, whilst others such as 'to grow, prepare, cook & eat a range of food' and 'to speak or perform in front of an audience' give them targets to work towards.

We also have 4 key curriculum drivers which are prevalent in many of the activities we do in school, not just in our termly topics. These 4 drivers are; the Arts, the Environment, Spirituality & Mindfulness and Initiative. Opportunities such as music lessons and concerts, gardening, peer mediators and a school council all contribute to learning over and above our termly topics.

The school council, with a member chosen to represent each class, provides a way for the children to let their views be known to staff, and for staff to explain things to the children. Responsibilities are taken very seriously and decisions made democratically.

We currently have single year group classes throughout the school from Reception to Year 6. We have a stable and strong teaching team who are expertly supported by a range of general teaching assistants, two part time behaviour support workers and some one-to-one support staff.

Ensuring full access to the curriculum and meeting the educational needs of those in the school who require extra assistance is a key responsibility in the school. We have an experienced SENDCo on our staff, who is assisted by a dedicated, full-time SEND Teaching Assistant who works with individuals and groups on targeted learning areas. We also work enthusiastically with outside agencies as appropriate.

In addition to those with extra needs, we also have children with additional abilities and significant thought and effort goes into creating opportunities for these to be stretched.

"Be brave, be kind, be the best you can be"



Welcome to Steeple Morden School (*cont.*)

Our ambition is that all pupils, irrespective of their background or the challenges they face, make good progress and achieve success in all subject areas. The focus of our Pupil Premium strategy is to support disadvantaged pupils to achieve that goal, including progress for those who are already high attainers.

We also recognise the challenges faced by vulnerable pupils, such as those who have a social worker or who live in challenging circumstances. The activities we have in place are also intended to support their needs, regardless of whether they are disadvantaged/eligible for the Pupil Premium Grant (PPG) or not. Currently, 18% of our pupils are eligible for this grant.

There is an established before- and after-school club on-site which is independently run, but works closely with the school. Parents and members of the local church and community visit the school regularly to work in a voluntary capacity with the children.

The school is also fortunate to be supported by a thriving Parent Teachers Association which organises a number of very successful fund-raising events and a used-uniform platform. The annual Summer Fete and Bonfire Night celebrations are well attended by school families and villagers alike.

We have a full Governing Body, including experienced and new members who are committed to the ethos of the school and ensuring pupils benefit from their time at the school and leave prepared for the next stage of their education. The Governing Body recognizes the need to work closely with the school leadership to set the future direction for Steeple Morden Primary and respond to the challenges highlighted by the recent Ofsted report. For more information about the current structure and membership, and the school in general, please see our website: www.steeplemorden.cambs.sch.uk



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Where are we?



Steeple Morden offers an idyllic English country lifestyle with the thriving community served by a church, garage and pub - and, of course, Steeple Morden Primary School. Many of the villagers commute to London and Cambridge or the closer towns of Royston and Baldock.

With a population of 1200, Steeple Morden is one of a cluster of small rural villages set in mainly arable farmland in South Cambridgeshire.

We can trace the school's history back to 1867 when the Vicar of the Parish, William Martin, started a church day school, having obtained a government grant and financial support from New College and Lord Hardwicke. A classroom was added in 1872 and by 1880 average attendance was between 95 and 120. In the 1890s, evening classes in subjects including: drawing, history, and commercial arithmetic.

The school has a catchment area formed by the villages of Steeple Morden, Abington Pigotts, Litlington and Odsey and sits between the towns of Royston and Baldock off the A505, well situated for London and Cambridge by both road and rail.



The majority of children attending Steeple Morden Primary School move on to Bassingbourn Village College. The college has an excellent reputation and was judged to be Good in its recent Ofsted inspection.

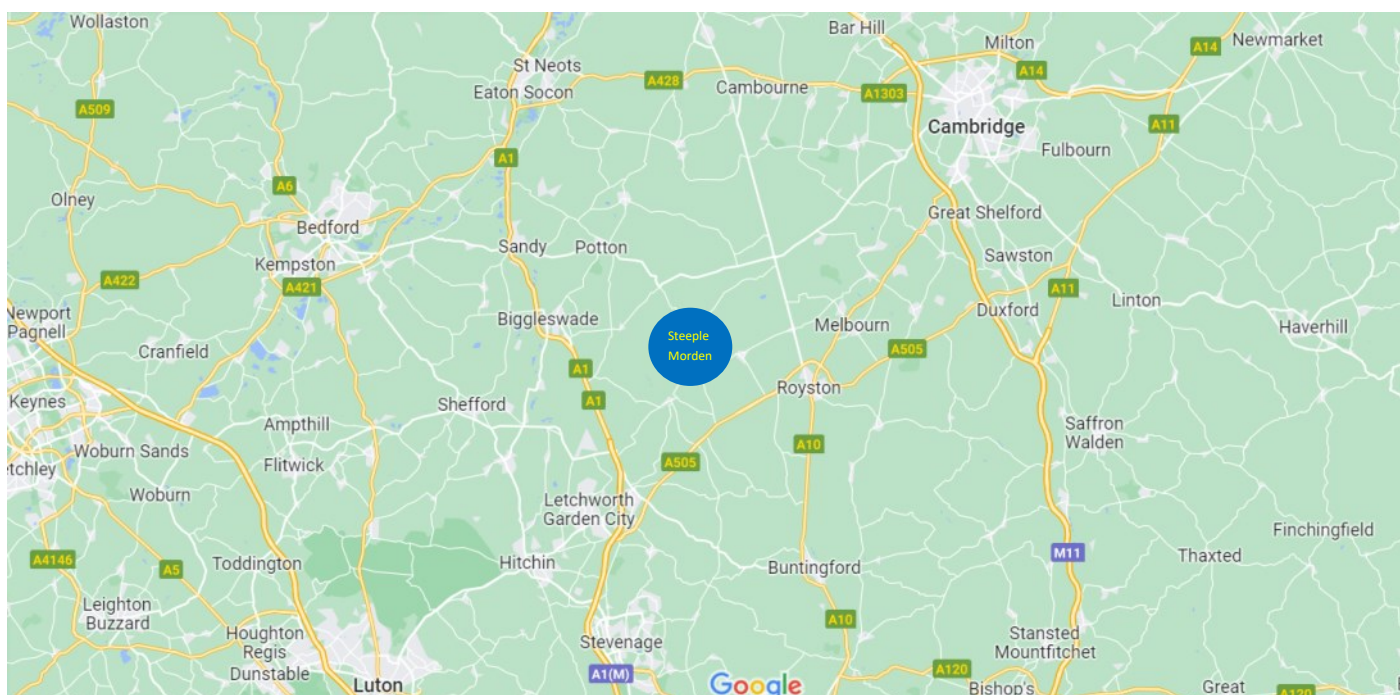
There are good road links to the village from a wide selection of local towns including Stevenage, Bedford, Letchworth, Baldock and Royston. Cambridge is just 15 miles to the east.

Further information about the village and local churches can be found on their websites:

steeplemordenpc.org.uk

and

shingaychurches.co.uk



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What people say about us



We asked our stakeholders what they liked about our school. Here's what they had to say.

Staff:

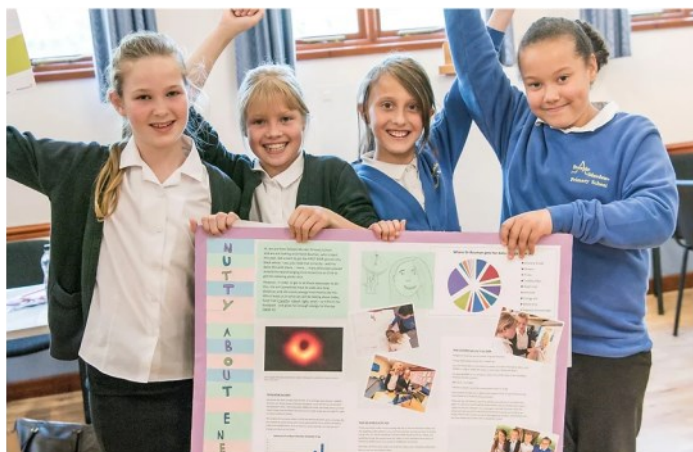
- We are a good team, we have each others' backs, supporting but also challenging when we need it.
- Our curriculum drivers show that we value independence, the environment, the arts and spirituality.

Staff work hard and parents are supportive.

- We go above and beyond for our school and its families.
- There is never a dull moment.
- We want to be worked 'with' – come and see us in action!

Children:

- Learning is exciting.
- We celebrate our successes.
- We are the best that we can be.
- We are kind and sporty.
- The teachers are kind.
- We are a lovely school with nice food.
- Everyone cares for us.
- We like helping people when they are hurt.
- We like learning new Numberblocks.
- Our teachers can do anything.
- We like that we have to think hard about Maths.
- We can invent games in 'cool time'.



Parents:

- I have three children currently at Steeple Morden Primary School, all very different personalities but all thriving academically and beyond. It's such a lovely friendly school - and what is very clear is that all the staff really care about the children; they are at the heart of everything.
- We moved into the area mid year due to relocation, and therefore needed to find a new school for both of our children. We have found the school to be friendly and welcoming by all staff and children. Both of my children have been fully supported in their transition to the new school. We are so pleased that we have joined such a friendly and welcoming community. We chose the school as it locally has a reputation for excellence and is a small community-driven institution, we have not been disappointed in our choice. All the staff at the school are child-centred and we really do feel the adults know our children and care about them as individuals, which means they get the best from them.
- Steeple Morden Primary School offers my children a safe and happy environment where they are encouraged to be the best they can be whilst being supported every step, both educationally and emotionally. The amazing team at the school show dedication, support and genuine care for each pupil at the school, which is reflected on the smiling faces that come out of school each day.

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Job Description



Core purpose:

The Headteacher will provide professional leadership and management to ensure Steeple Morden School's continued improvement and success in accordance with the School Development Plan and the ethos of every child being the best they can be. They will lead by example to secure high quality education in a safe and fulfilling learning environment; maintain a culture focused on safeguarding; work with the Governing Body to develop a strategic vision for the school in the context of its ethos as a Church school and in its place in the wider community; work with the whole school community through the day-to-day operation of the school; manage the school budget effectively and ensure best value from the use of resources; ensure a culture of challenge and support so that every member of our school community feels valued and is able to succeed.

Key Responsibilities:

We have based our requirements on the National Standards of Excellence for Headteachers.

Qualities and Knowledge

Hold and articulate clear values and moral purpose, focused on providing a firstclass education for our pupils.

Demonstrate positive relationships and attitudes towards pupils, staff, parents, governors and members of the local community.

Lead by example - with integrity, creativity, resilience, and clarity.

Sustain wide, current knowledge and understanding of education and school systems locally, nationally and globally, and pursue continuous professional development.

Work with political and financial astuteness, within a clear set of principles centred on the school's vision, ably translating local and national policy into the school's context.

Communicate compellingly the school's vision and drive the strategic leadership, empowering all pupils and staff to excel.

Pupils and Staff

Demand ambitious standards for all pupils, overcoming disadvantage and advancing equality, instilling a strong sense of accountability in staff for the impact of their work on pupil outcomes.

Secure excellent teaching through an analytical understanding of how pupils learn and of the core features of successful classroom practice and curriculum design, leading to rich curriculum opportunities and pupils' well-being.

Create an ethos within which all staff are motivated and supported to develop their own skills and subject knowledge, and to support each other.

Hold all staff to account for their professional conduct and practice.

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Job Description (cont.)



Systems and Process

Ensure that the school's systems, organisation and processes are well considered, efficient and fit for purpose, upholding the principles of transparency, integrity and probity.

Provide a safe, calm and well-ordered environment for all pupils and staff, focused on safeguarding pupils, working to eliminate bad behaviour and developing exemplary behaviour in school and in the wider society.

Establish rigorous, fair and transparent systems and measures for managing the performance of all staff, addressing any under-performance, supporting staff to improve and valuing excellent practice.

Welcome strong governance and actively support the governing board to understand its role and deliver its functions effectively – in particular its functions to set school strategy and hold the headteacher to account for pupil, staff and financial performance.

Exercise strategic, curriculum-led financial planning to ensure the equitable deployment of budgets and resources, in the best interests of pupils' achievements and the school's sustainability.

SEND and Pupil Premium

Promote culture which values everybody and enables all children to access the curriculum. Maintain ambitious expectations for all children with SEND and/or receiving Pupil Premium.

Work effectively in partnership with parents, carers and professionals to identify additional needs and provide support and adaptation to meet children's needs.

Ensure that the school fulfils statutory duties regarding the SEND Code of Practice and uses Pupil Premium budget effectively to improve outcomes for disadvantaged children.

The Headteacher should be willing to undertake any other tasks necessary to ensure the smooth running of the school.

The Headteacher is accountable to the Governors for the standards achieved and the conduct, management and administration of the school.

This Governing Body and the Local Authority are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young persons and Headteachers must ensure that the highest priority is given following guidance and regulations to safeguard children and young people. The successful candidate will be required to undergo an Enhanced Disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

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Personal Specification



In order to meet the high standards expected of the Headteacher in Steeple Morden School, the Governing Body is seeking to employ a person with the following qualities, experience and skills. The criteria below are built around the framework of National Standards of Excellence for Headteachers. They will form the basis for shortlisting and the interview process.

The selection panel will use the following assessment tools:

Application form (A), Interview/assessment activities (I) and Reference and Employment checks (R)

	Essential	Desirable	Assessment
Qualifications & Professional Development			
Qualified Teacher Status and first degree or equivalent	✓		A
National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH)		✓	A
Evidence of CPD relevant to school leadership	✓		A
Experience of education management and budget management	✓		AI
Experience of SEND	✓		AI
Personal Qualities			
Approachable, empathetic and enjoys engaging with children, staff, parents and the wider community	✓		AIR
Flexible leadership style, being 'hands-on' when required	✓		IR
Proven successful school management and leadership experience at senior level		✓	AR
Resilient, robust, but also compassionate	✓		IR
Thorough understanding of safeguarding and proven experience of promoting child wellbeing	✓		AR
Effective communicator, able to articulate the ethos and values of our school	✓		IR
Willing to listen to all members of the school community	✓		IR
Evidence of good judgement and the ability to make evidence-based sound decisions	✓		IR

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Personal Specification (cont.)



	Essential	Desirable	Assessment
Leadership of the Curriculum and pupil development			
Evidence of a commitment to promoting the welfare and safeguarding of all children	✓		AIR
Be sympathetic to the school's Christian Distinctiveness ethos with commitment to maintaining and developing the distinctive Christian character of the school in partnership with the church	✓		AI
Experience of curriculum development	✓		AI
Experience of leading and assessing a major curriculum area	✓		AI
Experience in monitoring and evaluating children's progress to inform teaching and planning	✓		AIR
Skilled in delivering effective approaches to behaviour management and attendance	✓		AIR
Experience of working to meet the needs of children and families of all backgrounds	✓		AI
Leading and managing staff			
Lead by example in excellent teaching, promoting high morale and passion for the school	✓		I
Commitment to equal opportunities for all children and staff	✓		AI
Commitment to high performance for all pupils	✓		AI
Ability to develop effective relationships with all staff	✓		I
Commitment to continuous professional development for all staff	✓		AI
Experience of giving and receiving effective feedback and acting to improve personal performance	✓		I
Experience of recruiting, managing, training and developing staff		✓	AI
Ability to identify the talents and skills already present in the school, those that need support and develop effective CPD	✓		I
Systems and processes			
Evidence of understanding financial pressures and successfully managing a budget	✓		AI
An ability to work under pressure, to prioritise appropriately and to meet deadlines	✓		I
Experience of analysis and use of data, monitoring systems and self-evaluation	✓		I
Experience of preparing effective documentation for consideration by different audiences, including governors and parents	✓		I
Accountability and Governance			
Experience of school development planning, and managing school improvement	✓		AIR
Working successfully with a strong governing body to provide strategic leadership		✓	AIR

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