

HEAD OF BIOLOGY



St Mary's School
CAMBRIDGE

SEPTEMBER 2026

St Mary's School
Bateman Street
Cambridge
CB2 1LY

T: 01223 353253
F: 01223 280254

hr@stmaryscambridge.co.uk

Welcome from the Head

Thank you for showing interest in this role at St Mary's School, Cambridge.

We are an independent day and boarding school for girls aged 3 to 18. We have a school roll of over 500 students. Approximately 15% of the students are boarders. Reflecting the cosmopolitan community of Cambridge, on average 25% of students originate from overseas, from around 30 countries.

The School offers a secure and welcoming learning environment for girls: we are delightfully situated in the heart of the academically renowned and culturally vibrant city of Cambridge. The Junior School is adjacent to the famous backdrop of Coe Fen, and the Senior School and Boarding House overlook the University of Cambridge Botanic Gardens.

Cambridge is an outstanding place to live and work. As a university city, Cambridge has the cultural advantages of a much larger settlement but with a population of approximately 145,000, it is a safe, clean and attractive location. The city has an international reputation owing to its world ranking university and the school benefits from its proximity to the digital and enterprise communities in the various high-tech science parks and enterprise hubs. We are within easy travelling distance of London, less than an hour by train and a short hop from London Stansted Airport.

There has been major investment in new facilities at the School over the past decade: a new Junior School; a new Sixth Form Centre; new provision of Art & Photography; the creation of our Science Hub; and our new boarding facility, Mary Ward House. We have developed our sporting facilities through an ambitious collaboration with Homerton College, University of Cambridge and have invested in a new boat house in a joint partnership with City of Cambridge Rowing Club and Homerton College. We are proud to have opened our Mary Ward Educational Suite in January 2024 which provides new state of the art teaching spaces.

High quality facilities are only as good as the people who work in them, so we invest heavily in our staff, who we know are our greatest asset. We encourage staff to develop themselves through training and facilitate bespoke CPD opportunities for all.

St Mary's School promotes equal opportunity for all staff and pupils and is committed to its culture of diversity and inclusion. We encourage applications from candidates from a wide range of backgrounds.

Above all, St Mary's School, Cambridge is a very happy place. We have an excellent local reputation for being very friendly and nurturing, and yet ambitious, for the young women in our care, enabling strong progress to next steps at university, the world of work or a gap year. Our girls are genuinely delightful, the teachers and support staff are exceptionally dedicated; we are a very close-knit, loving, joyful and purposeful community.

St Mary's really is a warm and welcoming environment for all staff, whatever their role, and we look forward to receiving your application.

Hannah Helliar

The St Mary's Approach

We are proud to be a Christian school in the Catholic tradition and founded on the principles of our 17th century foundress, Mary Ward, our vision is that 'By God's grace, women in time will do much' (Mary Ward 1585-1645). The challenge for women is not over, and whilst there are now more opportunities for 'women to do much' there are still considerable barriers and so our work continues via our mission to develop curious, creative and compassionate young women with the aspiration, confidence and integrity to shape a better world for the common good. Our approach is based on the core values of Freedom, Joy, Justice, Love and Truth and we live these values in school through our HEART habits of

H – Hard work	We show perseverance and sustain focus.
E – Empathy	We are kind, joyful, generous, value friendship and celebrate diversity.
A – Adaptability	We adjust to difficult situations, are open minded, discerning and take calculated risks.
R – Responsibility	We act justly and strive to uphold truth and lead by example.
T – Thoughtfulness	We are creative, reflective, attentive, show gratitude, hear others and disagree well.

Our unique approach to education fosters a love of life and of learning, while growing the academic curiosity and spiritual wellbeing of each individual girl so that they can look beyond themselves and enter adulthood aspiring to be more and to give more, not just to have more. We warmly welcome girls, and staff, of all Christian denominations and other faith and secular backgrounds to join our thriving community.

The school recently celebrated its 125th anniversary, and building on our 400-year tradition, St Mary's School, Cambridge belongs to an international network of approximately two hundred Mary Ward schools.

A Love for Learning at St Mary's

At our school, our values — freedom, joy, justice, love and truth — shape a respectful, inclusive and engaging learning environment where every student can be herself and achieve her best. We nurture curiosity, ambition and a genuine love of learning, inspiring students to pursue academic excellence with confidence and purpose.

Through expert teaching, a challenging curriculum and personalised support, we empower each pupil to embrace opportunities, overcome challenges and fulfil her potential. Our commitment is not only to outstanding results, but also to developing independent, reflective and critical thinkers who are ready to thrive at university and beyond with adaptability, creativity and determination.

As a learning community, we are proud to be continuously refining and enhancing our practice, and we welcome applications from colleagues who share our ambition, curiosity and dedication to high-quality, research-informed teaching.

Digital St Mary's

St Mary's is a digital school. The goals of the School are supported through

- developing a community of staff and students which learns in, responds to and engages with an ever-changing digital world;
- preparing students for their future by giving them the confidence to work in a digital environment;
- establishing creative teaching and learning environments;
- employing teaching staff who are trained and supported to be technologically and digitally skilled.

All members of St Mary's work digitally using Microsoft 365 as a platform. All students in the Senior School and Sixth Form have access to an individual device (Microsoft Surface Pro) which are used extensively in lessons and for home learning.

Job Description: HEAD OF BIOLOGY

Reporting to:	Head of Science and Deputy Head Operations & Data
Hours of Work:	Full-time
Salary:	£37,945 - £53,219 FTE (dependent on experience)
Direct reports:	3 Teachers of Biology
Start Date:	Tuesday 1 September 2026

Science Department: Department Summary

St Mary's School is looking to appoint an outstanding Head of Biology to teach Biology, up to and including Key Stage 5. The ability to teach Physics or Chemistry is an advantage. The ability to teach all, or most, of the three Sciences up to Key Stage 3 is desirable. A general interest in STEM subjects is essential.

As the head of a thriving and core department you will lead a team of enthusiastic and skilled colleagues who love their subject and are keen to continue to develop in their roles. As a teacher you will work with a broad ability range of enthusiastic students in small classes who are a delight to teach. You should enjoy the challenge of teaching motivated and ambitious students and show a love for the subject which reaches beyond the classroom.

The Science Department is a central part of school life and has gained a reputation for academic excellence, with parents and students alike viewing science as a desirable career pathway. The department is superbly resourced with purpose-built laboratories to encourage and facilitate student enquiry and research. As such this is a fantastic opportunity for an aspiring, imaginative and inspirational teacher to join a creative and innovative environment. You will join and be supported by a successful Science faculty with exacting standards.

There are currently 5 full-time and 4 part-time teachers in the department and 3 highly experienced and dedicated technicians who manage well-resourced Science prep rooms and who contribute to the department's success. Each lab is equipped with a PC, an interactive whiteboard and a 'Genee Vision Visualiser' (digital camera projector).

Chemistry, Biology and Physics are taught as separate subjects from Year 8 to A Level. At KS3, students follow an 'in-house' course that teaches the foundations of the subject. From Year 9, the Edexcel IGCSE course is followed. At GCSE students can choose, with advice from their teachers, either the separate or the double award IGCSE route.

At A level the Chemistry and Biology departments follows the OCR A course and Physics the Edexcel course. All three subjects are popular options with students studying in classes of usually no more than 10. A high number of students go on to read a range of subjects at university from Physics and Engineering to Veterinary Science and Medicine. All members of the science faculty provide strong support and guidance to students for their university applications.

Applicants without a formal teaching qualification should be able to demonstrate an ability to teach and example teaching they have undertaken (including adult education, university teaching). They should also have high subject knowledge, be effective communicators and be able to identify themselves with young people.

For further information, please do not hesitate to contact the Head of Science Miss Egan-Smith (MEgan-Smith@stmaryscambridge.co.uk).

Maggie Egan-Smith

Head of Science

Head of Biology: Job Description

The Head of Biology will:

Overall Expectations

- be fully responsible for leading, overseeing and teaching the Biology curriculum;
- enhance the standing of the department within the School and embed the subject within the culture of the School;
- support the Strategic Plan and School Development Plan by actively contributing to culture of continuous improvement and development;
- provide opportunities for all students to develop a love of the subject;
- be inclusive, by being responsive to the needs of students, positively affecting their behaviour and attitudes, and offering them a broad range of opportunities;
- develop and maintain high levels of student uptake in the subject;

Vision

- determine an exciting vision for the possibilities of Biology within the school, including developing proactive links with our international boarding students and our Junior School;
- want to develop the School's reputation for excellence in the field of Biology;
- be creative in promoting Biology to all our other stakeholders;

Leadership & Management

- lead and manage all members of staff within the department;
- regularly meet with members of department to maintain and develop all aspects of the department, such as teaching resources, schemes of work and the physical environment of the department;
- work closely with members of department to help develop all their skills, within the School culture of continual appraisal and professional development;
- support teachers who teach the subject ensuring schemes of work are followed, and that appropriately high standards are maintained through the setting of guidelines and lesson observation;
- encourage high quality assessment and feedback throughout the department;
- support probationary, new and student teachers, including the induction process of ECTs, as appropriate;
- keep abreast of new developments in the subject, making departmental colleagues aware of new developments;
- oversee the departmental development plan in coordination with the Senior Deputy;
- prepare annual analyses of the Department's end of year and public examination results;
- share in the work of appointing new members of the department;
- maintain and develop the team to deliver against existing commitments and plan and prepare for the future by identifying and addressing requirements in terms of competence and succession planning;
- inform your direct line-manager of any difficulties that may arise in the department;
- manage the departmental budget;

Whole School Responsibility

- actively participate in the promotion of the School, for example, showcasing the department during open events and contributing to the marketing strategy, publications and publicity material;
- represent the department at Sixth Form option events;
- establish and maintain Junior School links and foster educational continuity between Years 6 and 7, contributing to transitional activities as necessary;
- encourage and contribute to the retention of students into our Sixth Form;

- work with the Admissions Team with the setting and marking of entrance exam papers across the Senior School, throughout the year, and be prepared to mark papers that are sat during normal school holidays;
- help to establish curriculum links between departments and be part of the wider Heads of Department team

Teaching & Learning

- teach Biology to all Key Stages, and it is preferable they have the desire and ability support with Biology for university application;
- develop more robust and systematic cycles of monitoring and evaluation that contribute clearly into actions for continued improvement in Biology;
- be responsible for the selection of appropriate textbooks and teaching materials;
- promote the values of St Mary's as a community of learners so that students acquire the values, attitudes, skills and knowledge needed to make a positive contribution to society;
- be responsible for developing a variety of teaching approaches within the department which emphasise the need for student engagement;
- work with the Head of Science, Senior Deputy and the Assistant Head Teaching & Learning on all matters concerned with teaching, learning and the curriculum;
- monitor the setting and reviewing of homework and update the departmental assessment strategy;
- ensure procedures for rewards and sanctions within school policy are followed throughout the department;

Administration, Logistics and Other Responsibilities

- meet regularly with their direct report line-manager;
- manage the use and provision of space to ensure that all departmental areas are safe, secure, orderly and stimulating environments for students;
- maintain departmental resources, including those in the library and ordering new equipment where appropriate;
- take responsibility for Health & Safety procedures and practices within the departmental areas;
- liaise with the Bursar, Operations Manager, the Works Team over maintenance;
- ensure pupils are entered for public examinations including external exams and re-sits, in conjunction with the Examinations Officer, and that the department is represented when A Level results are published;
- attend Head of Department meetings, any other appropriate academic meetings, and whole school meetings;
- update the Departmental Handbook;
- organise the agenda for the weekly/fortnightly departmental meeting, ensuring that members of the department are fully briefed and have every opportunity to put forward new ideas, that minutes are kept and reported;
- oversee the internal assessment and tracking of pupils, as determined by school policy, and establishing a common approach to task work;
- oversee the selection of students for prizes;
- publicise students' successes and keep accurate and up-to-date records of achievement;

Enrichment & Extra-Curricular

- ensure that curriculum enrichment is fully embedded;
- liaise with the Head of Science and Senior Deputy to create extra-curricular opportunities including outreach as necessary;
- encourage our students to participate in national competitions.

Key Responsibilities for a teacher

KEY AREAS	PROFESSIONAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES
Teaching & Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning and preparing courses and lessons • Teaching, according to the needs of each student • Assessing, recording and reporting on the development, progress and attainment of students • Setting high educational standards for every student within the classroom • Promotion of the general wellbeing of classes and the individual students within these • Provision of specific subject related guidance and advice to students on further education and future careers, including information about sources of more expert advice on specific questions and university/work experience interview practice • On school systems, keeping records of and writing reports on the academic progress and needs of students • Ongoing self-review of your methods of teaching and programmes of work • Where appropriate, moderation of non-examinable assessments, including Extended Project Qualification or other project based qualifications • Setting of cover work when absent, when appropriate to do so
Safeguarding & Pastoral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To promote and safeguard the welfare of students at all times • To comply with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy of the School, and ensure that any concerns relating to the safety or welfare of children are reported to the appropriate person • Maintaining good order and discipline among the students when they are engaged in authorised school activities elsewhere • Maintaining student health and safety • Liaising with the Head of Boarding, the Heads of Year, tutors and the nurses regarding the welfare of students • Keeping records of and writing reports on the personal and social needs of students • Tutor duties including one-to-one meetings with tutees, attendance at assemblies, registration of the attendance of students and supervision of their attendance, organising form prayers and delivery of PSHEE, whether these duties are to be performed before, during or after school sessions
Enrichment & Extra Curricular	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in the enrichment programme as part of timetabled lessons • Participation in the extra-curricular programme, both within the department and for the whole School, outside of timetabled lessons
Professional Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adherence to the Staff Behaviour Policy of the School at all times • Participation in an induction programme • Attendance of all INSET meetings and completion of relevant training • Communication and consultation with parents • Communication and cooperation with persons or professional bodies outside the school • Participation in meetings arranged for any of the purposes described above • Attendance at Briefings, Parent Evenings, and Open Events, or any other events reasonably required by the School • Participation in meetings at the school which relate to the curriculum for the school or the administration or organisation of the school, including pastoral arrangements • Participation in reviews and appraisal of your performance and that of other teachers, where appropriate • Participation in arrangements for further training and professional development including those aimed at meeting the needs identified in performance objectives or in appraisal statements • Teachers will be required to be available for cover as indicated on the reserve list but also at other non-contact times as the need arises • Assistance with invigilation, as required • Participation in administrative/organisational tasks related to duties around the school • Other related duties as directed by Head, senior leaders or line-manager

Person Specification

SPECIFICATION	DETAIL
Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undergraduate Degree in relevant area PGCE, QTS or equivalent desirable
Qualities and Attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commitment to academic excellence Ability to work effectively in a team Excellent organisational skills and attention to detail Ability to communicate articulately and confidently with all stakeholders High levels of personal and professional responsibility and integrity Resilient, flexible and responsive to challenge Prioritise deadlines and work under pressure Self-motivation, enthusiasm and approachability Good rapport with students, colleagues and parents Appropriate levels of personal presentation
Experience, Knowledge and Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excellent secondary school classroom practice Confident use of ICT Effective planning, teaching and class management Preparing and sharing teaching resources Motivating and inspiring students Creative and innovative in teaching and learning Commitment to improve, monitor and self-evaluate teaching and learning Involvement in all elements of school life including enrichment activities Commitment to best practice in pastoral support and student welfare Promotion of safety and wellbeing of students
Personal Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commitment to the ethos of the school High expectations for student attainment and conduct Commitment to own personal development Commitment to a culture of continuous improvement Readiness to contribute to the whole school when required

Benefits

At St Mary's you will enjoy an exceptional career and comprehensive benefits including a defined contribution workplace pension scheme offered through APTIS (Aviva Pensions Trust for Independent Schools) at a flexible employer contribution level up to 22%, BUPA cash plan, 33% discount (pro rata for part-time staff) on school fees, a work laptop, an occupational sickness scheme, free lunches and refreshments, a rail season ticket discount, access to the Cambridge University Botanic Gardens and much more.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

St Mary's School is committed to ensuring equal opportunities in all aspects of employment and selects staff on merit irrespective of race, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity, marital status, sex, sexuality/gender preference, disability or age. You are not obliged to complete the Equal Opportunities Form, but any information given will help us monitor the effectiveness of our policies and procedures.

If you have a disability, you are invited to request any special arrangements that you may require for interview or any adjustments that you would consider necessary to your working arrangements by contacting our Human Resources department (hr@stmaryscambridge.co.uk, 01223 353253).

Process

Application is welcomed by completing the Application Form and Equal Opportunities Form which can be found on the Vacancies page of our website. This may be accompanied by a covering letter and a curriculum vitae. We are unable to accept applications supported by a CV alone.

Interviews will be conducted in person, and they will explore candidates' suitability to work with children. Candidates are required to bring with them the necessary ID documentation and any relevant qualification certificate(s), all of which must be originals. Further information of the interview format will be provided if you are shortlisted for interview.

If you have any question, please contact the HR Team by email: hr@stmaryscambridge.co.uk or call: 01223 353253.

Closing date: 8.00am Monday 9 March 2026

Interview date: week beginning Monday 16 March 2026

We will review applications on receipt. Suitable candidates may be interviewed before the closing date, and we reserve the right to withdraw the position if an early appointment is made.

Child Welfare and Child Protection Issues

The interview for this post will include exploring issues relating to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children including:

- motivation to work with children and young people;
- ability to form and maintain appropriate relationships with children and young people;
- emotional resilience in working with challenging behaviours;
- attitudes to the use of authority and maintaining discipline.

Any relevant issues arising from the take up of references will be discussed at interview. The school is an equal opportunities employer. We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Successful applicants are subject to an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Check.



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