Teaching Assistant

Dorchester St Birinus Church of England Primary School

Contract: Full-time / Term Time Only/ Fixed Term
Hours: 32.5 Hours per week

Grade: SCP3-8 (depending on experience).
Salary: FTE: £25,6140-£30,023 (£13.28- £15.56 per hour).

Responsible to: Headteacher / Class Teacher
Start date: As soon as possible.

About the Role

Dorchester St Birinus Church of England Primary School is looking for an enthusiastic and nurturing Teaching Assistant to join our team.

This is an exciting opportunity to join a small, ambitious school at an important point in its journey. We are strengthening our provision, developing our curriculum and building a culture in which every child is known, valued and supported to achieve well.

We are looking for someone who sees the role of a Teaching Assistant as much more than simply providing an extra pair of hands.

The successful candidate will work flexibly across the school, supporting high-quality teaching, delivering targeted interventions and responding to the emerging needs of individual pupils and groups. They will have a good understanding of SEND and the barriers that can affect children's learning, participation, behaviour and wellbeing.

We need someone who can build excellent relationships with children while maintaining high expectations for their learning, behaviour and independence.

Above all, we are looking for someone who genuinely believes that every child can succeed with the right support, relationships and opportunities.

Our School

Dorchester St Birinus is a small Church of England primary school at the heart of its community.

Our Christian vision, “Let your light shine,” underpins our ambition for every member of our school community. Through our values, including compassion and curiosity, we want children to become confident, thoughtful and increasingly independent learners who recognise their own potential and the potential of others.

As a small school, relationships matter enormously. Staff work collaboratively across classes and roles, and Teaching Assistants are valued members of the professional team.

We are looking for someone who wants to contribute actively to that team and to the next stage of our school's development.

Key Responsibilities

Supporting Teaching and Learning

The Teaching Assistant will:

- work alongside teachers to support high-quality teaching and learning across the classroom;
- support individuals, groups and whole-class learning as directed by the teacher;
- deliver structured interventions and targeted learning activities, adapting these appropriately in response to pupils' needs;
- use questioning, modelling, scaffolding and feedback effectively to move children's learning forward;
- support pupils to develop independence rather than creating unnecessary reliance on adult support;
- recognise when a pupil requires additional support and when to gradually withdraw that support;
- reinforce prior learning and help pupils make connections across the curriculum;
- provide teachers with useful observations and feedback about pupils' learning, engagement and progress;
- support assessment through accurate observations and records where appropriate; and
- contribute to a calm, purposeful and inclusive learning environment.

Inclusion

The successful candidate will:

- have a good understanding of SEND and the range of barriers that can affect children's access to learning;
- support pupils with additional needs sensitively and effectively while maintaining ambitious expectations;
- understand that behaviour can communicate an underlying need and respond with curiosity, consistency and appropriate professional boundaries;
- use agreed strategies, reasonable adjustments and individual support plans consistently;
- work closely with teachers and the SENCo to implement provision for pupils with SEND;
- support pupils' communication, emotional regulation, executive functioning, social interaction and independence where appropriate;
- contribute observations to pupil profiles, provision maps and reviews where required;
- recognise changes or emerging needs and communicate these promptly to the appropriate member of staff; and
- promote inclusion while avoiding unnecessary separation of pupils from their peers or the wider curriculum.

Supporting Behaviour, Relationships and Wellbeing

The Teaching Assistant will:

- build warm, positive and professional relationships with pupils;
- model calm, respectful and consistent behaviour;
- uphold the school's behaviour expectations and routines;
- support pupils to develop self-regulation, resilience and positive relationships;
- respond appropriately to dysregulation or distressed behaviour in accordance with school policy and agreed individual strategies;
- help children understand expectations, choices and consequences while preserving dignity;
- support positive play and social interaction during less structured parts of the school day where required; and

- contribute to a culture in which children feel safe, respected and able to learn.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

The successful candidate must:

- place children's safety and wellbeing at the centre of their practice;
- understand their responsibilities under the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures;
- recognise potential indicators of abuse, neglect, exploitation or other safeguarding concerns;
- listen appropriately to children and report concerns promptly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy DSL;
- maintain appropriate professional boundaries and confidentiality;
- follow the school's procedures for recording and reporting concerns; and
- undertake all required safeguarding training and maintain up-to-date knowledge.

Working as Part of the Team

The Teaching Assistant will:

- work collaboratively with teachers, support staff, the SENCo and school leaders;
- communicate professionally and constructively with colleagues;
- contribute ideas and observations rather than waiting to be directed in every situation;
- respond flexibly to changing priorities and pupil needs;
- participate in relevant training, meetings and professional development;
- reflect on their own practice and be receptive to feedback and coaching;
- contribute positively to the wider life of the school; and
- demonstrate the professional standards, discretion and reliability expected of someone working with children.

Person Specification

Essential

We are particularly interested in candidates who can demonstrate:

Experience

- Relevant, demonstrable experience of supporting children's learning within a school or comparable educational setting.
- Experience of working with children with SEND and/or additional needs.
- Experience of supporting individuals and groups of pupils.
- Experience of implementing strategies or interventions designed by teachers, SENCOs or other professionals.

Knowledge and understanding

- A good understanding of how primary-aged children learn and develop.
- A good awareness of SEND and common barriers to learning and participation.
- An understanding of the importance of adaptive teaching and appropriate scaffolding.

- An understanding of the relationship between communication, emotional regulation, behaviour and learning.
- A sound understanding of safeguarding responsibilities when working with children.
- An understanding that effective support should develop pupils' confidence and independence rather than dependence on an adult.

Skills and attributes

- Strong literacy and numeracy skills.
- The ability to communicate clearly and professionally with children and adults.
- The ability to build positive relationships while maintaining clear boundaries and high expectations.
- A calm, patient and consistent approach.
- Good observational skills and the confidence to communicate emerging concerns to teachers and leaders.
- Initiative and the ability to respond appropriately to situations without requiring constant direction.
- Flexibility and willingness to work across different classes, age groups and areas of need.
- The ability to work constructively as part of a team.
- Reliability, professionalism and discretion.
- A commitment to inclusion and ambitious expectations for all pupils.
- A willingness to learn, reflect and develop professionally.
- A commitment to supporting the Christian vision and values of Dorchester St Birinus Church of England Primary School.

Desirable

It would be advantageous for candidates to have:

- a recognised Teaching Assistant qualification at Level 2, Level 3 or above;
- experience within a primary school;
- experience of working across more than one primary age phase;
- experience of delivering evidence-informed interventions;
- experience supporting pupils with communication and interaction needs, cognition and learning needs, SEMH needs and/or sensory or physical needs;
- experience of supporting children experiencing dysregulation or distressed behaviour;
- relevant training in areas such as phonics, speech and language, autism, ADHD, emotional regulation, literacy or numeracy interventions;
- paediatric first-aid training; and/or
- appropriate positive handling or de-escalation training.

The Person We Are Looking For

Qualifications matter, but attitude, professional judgement and impact with children matter too.

We are looking for someone who notices the child who is beginning to struggle before they reach crisis; who can recognise a misconception and respond appropriately; who knows when to scaffold and when to step back; and who understands that supporting a child successfully sometimes means enabling them to do something independently rather than doing it for them.

You will be curious about children's needs, ambitious for their progress and prepared to work collaboratively with colleagues to find approaches that help pupils succeed.

You will be comfortable working in a school where priorities can change during the day and where flexibility, initiative and teamwork are essential.

In return, you will join a collaborative and nurturing team, where your contribution will be valued and where there are opportunities to develop your knowledge and practice as the school continues its exciting journey.

Safer Recruitment

Dorchester St Birinus Church of England Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

The successful applicant will be subject to the school's safer recruitment procedures, including appropriate references, identity and right-to-work checks, an enhanced DBS check and children's barred list check where applicable, together with any other pre-employment checks required by current statutory guidance.

Shortlisted candidates will also be subject to appropriate online searches in accordance with the school's safer recruitment procedures.

The school is committed to equality of opportunity and welcomes applications from suitably qualified candidates from all backgrounds.