



VALENTINE
PRIMARY & NURSERY

**Early Years
Foundation Stage
(EYFS) Leader**

(MAT cover April 2026 – April 2027)

**Candidate Information
Pack**

Job start date: February 2026/April 2026

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Are you an ambitious leader with a passion for developing high-quality early years educational provision? Are you looking for your next step or wanting to make a difference across a 0-5 Nursery and Reception year group?

Dear Colleague,

Thank you for your interest in our EYFS Lead vacancy. We are seeking an exceptional leader to join our senior leadership team—someone who is passionate, knowledgeable, and deeply committed to ensuring that every child, regardless of need, thrives.

As EYFS Leader, you will oversee the most formative stage of primary education, nurturing pupils' curiosity, excitement and wonder.

Following our May 2025 Ofsted inspection, the school secured Good in all areas under new leadership, after 12 years of *Requires Improvement*. Our EYFS provision expanded in Autumn 2025 with the opening of a school-based nursery for children aged 0–5, strengthening our future pipeline into the school.

This role combines leadership with class teaching. We seek a practitioner with strong, demonstrable classroom practice who can model and develop excellence across the phase. The post is initially maternity cover, with the potential to become a substantive senior leadership role as the school grows.

Information about our school group and the role:

The school is situated in Sholing, Southampton. We are a large site encompassing three buildings. We work in collaboration with a partnership of schools, called the St Mary's Partnership.

Our offer to every teacher:

- Commitment to your professional development and opportunities for career progression. • Coaching and developmental support.
- Perks at work – including CALM app subscription and additional leave days through the year.

Application information:

Your interview day is a mutual process aligned to helping you to decide if this is the school to advance your career in. We aim to make the day as supportive as possible. Any questions pre or post application can be sent to Kevin Brown, our ops manager.

[\(kevin.brown@valentineprimary.co.uk\)](mailto:kevin.brown@valentineprimary.co.uk).

Conversations with the Executive Headteacher are encouraged as are visits. It would be expected that the post holder can demonstrate strongly the competencies outlined in this post definition to be shortlisted for interview.

Valentine Primary School & Nursery – POST DEFINITION

JOB DESCRIPTION: EYFS Leader
(dependent on experience)



GRADE: Main or Upper Pay Ranges

with TLR

CONTRACTURAL ARRANGEMENTS: Fixed Term* (with possibility to permanent) START

DATE: February or April 2026

CORE DUTIES

To lead the provision for high-quality, inclusive practice across the Early Years Foundation Stage, ensuring the effective implementation of our policies and processes for Reading, Phonics, Early Writing, Early Maths, the Wider Curriculum, Assessment and EYFS pedagogy. This includes full adherence to EYFS operational non-negotiables.

To lead learning across Nursery and Reception, modelling and securing consistent, high-quality practice in teaching, learning, pastoral care, safeguarding and behaviour. The EYFS Leader will ensure that all children make strong progress and achieve the highest possible outcomes.

To undertake the core responsibilities of an EYFS leader, including the strategic leadership of Nursery and Reception and any additional responsibilities allocated by the Executive Headteacher.

CLASS TEACHER

The post-holder will have class responsibility within the EYFS and will receive release time twice per week to carry out monitoring activities across the phase and to work alongside senior leaders. They will also undertake the duties and responsibilities of a class teacher as outlined in the current School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document.

GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES:

To assist and support the Executive Headteacher to:

- Lead and deliver a broad, balanced and developmentally appropriate EYFS curriculum, fully aligned with the *Early Years Foundation Stage Framework (2025)*, ensuring children develop the prime and specific skills needed for a successful transition into Key Stage 1.
- Implement all school policies and processes for Early Reading, Writing, Phonics, Early Maths, the Wider Curriculum, Assessment and EYFS pedagogy, ensuring fidelity to the chosen programmes and progression towards KS1 expectations.
- Ensure full implementation of EYFS operational non-negotiables so that routines, environments and interactions consistently reflect best practice across Nursery and Reception.
- Monitor, evaluate and challenge curriculum planning and delivery across the EYFS to secure rapid, sustained progress and close gaps so that children leave Reception ready for KS1.

- Use assessment, moderation and observational data forensically to track children's progress against EYFS outcomes, ensuring planning is sharply focused and adaptive to individual need.
- Work with other leaders to deliver a strong pastoral welfare system across the EYFS, promoting children's safety, wellbeing, independence and self-regulation in line with statutory EYFS requirements.
 - Lead, monitor and challenge provision and interventions for underachieving children, vulnerable pupils, EAL and SEND children, ensuring they make rapid and sustained progress from their starting points towards the expected ELGs and KS1 readiness.
- Maintain high standards of behaviour, routines and emotional regulation across EYFS, modelling developmentally appropriate strategies that prepare children for KS1 behavioural expectations.
- Uphold and develop the school's ethos through high-quality interactions, enabling environments and positive relationships in line with the EYFS Framework (2025). • Contribute to the strategic development of the school as part of the middle leadership team, including input to self-evaluation and school improvement planning through monitoring and analysis of EYFS provision.
- Support the daily operational management of inclusion across the EYFS, responding swiftly to concerns and ensuring timely communication with staff and families.
- Engage in ongoing professional development to remain fully up-to-date with EYFS and early childhood education research, statutory guidance and national expectations. • Support the Executive Headteacher to implement change effectively across the phase, modelling professionalism and adaptability.
- Promote and uphold decisions and policies agreed by the senior leadership team. • Help maintain excellent behaviour and conduct across the school, including undertaking one lunchtime duty each week.
- Conduct appraisal for designated EYFS staff, ensuring clear targets and high professional standards.
- Ensure the EYFS learning environments—indoors and outdoors—are stimulating, purposeful, safe and aligned with the principles of the EYFS Framework (2025). • Lead and deliver regular EYFS assemblies that promote the school's values and support children's personal development.
- Participate in the Senior Leadership Team of each supported school, including attending daily morning briefings and undertaking lunch duties.
- Carry out any other reasonable duties as directed by the Executive Headteacher.

DAY-TO-DAY MANAGEMENT OF THE SCHOOL:

To support the Executive Headteacher in ensuring the smooth day-to-day running of the school, taking on

managerial responsibilities as required. This includes overseeing the organisation and operational leadership of the EYFS, managing the Nursery Manager and nursery team, and providing leadership across the Reception team while maintaining a class teaching commitment. Responsibilities include:

- Undertaking class teaching while also providing leadership, direction and daily oversight of the nursery provision, ensuring high-quality practice and compliance with statutory requirements.
- Working with the Nursery Manager to ensure effective deployment of staff, continuity of provision from Nursery to Reception, and smooth transitions for children and families.
- Planning timetables and rotas that secure efficient use of EYFS learning environments, staffing and space across Nursery and Reception.
- Providing pastoral support for staff and pupils, fostering strong relationships and ensuring the wellbeing of the EYFS community.
- Leading the organisation and oversight of Midday Supervision and extended services within the EYFS phase.
- Overseeing pupil supervision during lunchtimes to ensure a safe, positive and well-managed environment.
- Leading and delivering assemblies that promote the school's ethos and support children's personal development.
- Managing operational arrangements for staff absence, cover and release time across the EYFS phase to ensure continuity of learning and smooth running of provision.

Senior leaders are expected to attend and contribute to weekly Senior Leadership Team meetings, undertake one lunch duty each week and participate in daily early-morning briefings.

EXTERNAL LIASON:

The post-holder will work proactively with a wide range of external agencies and professional partners to ensure high-quality support, early intervention and effective provision for children across Nursery and Reception. This includes maintaining strong partnerships with:

- Early Years Advisory Team (EYAT) – to support high-quality early years practice, curriculum development and compliance with EYFS statutory guidance.
- Southampton Educational Psychology Services – providing assessment, consultation and support for children with emerging or identified needs.
- Local nurseries and childminders – to strengthen transition arrangements, share best practice and support continuity of learning for children entering or leaving the school's EYFS provision.
- Educational Psychologists

- Specialist Teacher Advisory Services (e.g., autism, hearing impairment, visual impairment) • Speech

and Language Therapists

- Occupational Therapists and Physiotherapists
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)
- Local Authority SEND Caseworkers / EHCP Coordinators
- Social Workers and Early Help Teams
- School Nursing Team
- Virtual School for Looked After Children
- Family Support and Outreach Workers
- Other SENCOs within local networks or partnerships
- Alternative provision settings and specialist schools
- Safeguarding leads (internal and external)
- Medical professionals supporting individual pupils, such as paediatricians and community health teams

These partnerships are essential in ensuring that children's developmental, educational and safeguarding needs are met swiftly and effectively.

This job description sets out the duties of the post at the time it was drawn up. The above mentioned duties are neither exclusive nor exhaustive and the post holder may be required to carry out other relevant duties as directed by the Headteacher within the school as may be reasonably expected. This is not a common occurrence and would not justify a reconsideration of the grading of the post.

Person Specification – Early Years Foundation Stage Leader (Nursery and Reception)

Category	Essential	Desirable
1. Qualifications/ Professional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualified teacher status Evidence of continuing professional development • Experience relating to school leadership and management in the EYFS age range. • Ability to identify own learning needs and to support others in identifying their learning needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Postgraduate level qualification • Leadership Pathways certification • Experience of working with other schools/organisations/agencies • Experience of leading/coordinating professional development opportunities • NPQ for Early Years <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NPQ for Senior Leadership
2. Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful experience of leading in EYFS. • Substantial, successful teaching experience – evidence of delivering an outstanding quality of education • Successful experience in a leadership and management role. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching experience between EYFS and KS1 • Curriculum leadership in one or more core subjects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of teaching in more than one school

<p>3. Strategic Leadership</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to articulate and share a vision of EYFS education within the context of the school's mission statement • Ability to inspire and motivate staff, pupils, parents and governors to achieve the aims of the school • Evidence of successful strategies for planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluation school improvement for EYFS • Ability to analyse data, develop strategic plans, set targets and monitor/evaluate progress towards these <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of what constitutes quality in educational provision in Early Years, the characteristics of effective learning and strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of the role of the governing body • Evidence of having successfully translated vision into reality at whole school level
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	<p>for raising standards and the achievement of all pupils</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of and commitment to promoting and safeguarding the welfare of pupils 	
<p>Category</p>	<p>Essential</p>	<p>Desirable</p>

<p>4. Teaching and Learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A secure understanding of the requirements of the National Curriculum and Early Years development framework <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge and experience of a range of successful teaching and learning strategies to meet the needs of all pupils • A secure understanding of assessment strategies and the use of assessment to inform the next stages of learning • Experience of effective monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning • Secure knowledge of statutory requirements relating to the curriculum and assessment • Understanding of the characteristics of an effective learning environment and the key elements of successful behaviour management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of successful teaching and learning across key stages • Successful experience in creating an effective learning environment and in developing and implementing policy and practice relating to behaviour management • Whole school curriculum leadership • Promoting SMSC of pupils across the curriculum
<p>5. Leading and Managing Staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of working and leading staff teams • Ability to delegate work and support colleagues in undertaking responsibilities • Experience of performance management and supporting the professional development of colleagues • Understanding of effective budget planning and resource deployment • Leadership of middle management / phase leaders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of working with governors to enable them to fulfil whole school responsibilities • Successful involvement in staff recruitment, appointment/induction, • Understanding of how financial and resource management enable a school to achieve its educational priorities
<p>6. Accountability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to communicate effectively, orally and in writing to a range of audiences – e.g. staff, pupils, parents, governors, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of presenting reports to governors

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of effective whole school self-evaluation and improvement strategies • Ability to provide clear information and advice to staff and governors • Secure understanding of current practice in performance management, including capability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding the criteria for the evaluation of finance and budgets • Leading sessions to inform parents • Experience of offering challenge and support to improve performance.
Category	Essential	Desirable
7. Skills, Qualities & Abilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High quality teaching skills • Strong commitment to the mission statement • High expectations of pupils' learning and attainment • Strong commitment to school improvement and raising achievement for all • Ability to build and maintain good relationships • Ability to remain positive and enthusiastic when working under pressure • Ability to organise work, prioritise tasks, make decisions and manage time effectively • Empathy with children 	
8. References	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive recommendation in professional references • Satisfactory health and attendance record 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional reference without reservations. • Strong positive examples of
9. Safeguarding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff to share this commitment. An enhanced DBS check is required for all successful applicants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership impact

