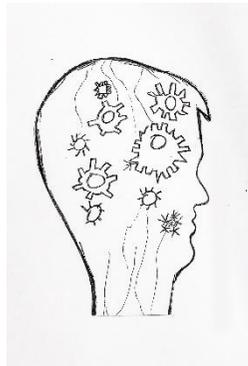


# Lady Joanna Thornhill (Endowed) Primary School



## Early Years Leader Recruitment Information – March 2026





## Lady Joanna Thornhill (Endowed) Primary School

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### Welcome from the Headteacher

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in the role of Early Years Leader at Lady Joanna Thornhill Primary School.

This is an exciting opportunity to join our school at a key moment in its development. We are a community that cares deeply about our children, our families and one another. We believe in an expansive education, one that develops the Head, the Heart and the Hand, and we are looking for someone who shares this belief.

The Early Years is a vital phase in our school. It sets the foundations not only for academic success, but for confidence, curiosity and a love of learning. We are looking for a leader who understands this deeply, someone who is committed to high quality provision, grounded in strong knowledge of child development, and who believes in the power of purposeful play and meaningful relationships.

We are equally committed to collaboration. Our approach to professional development and leadership is rooted in teamwork, shared thinking and collective responsibility. As a member of our Senior Leadership Team, you will play an important role in shaping the direction of the school and contributing to a culture of reflection and continuous improvement.

We strongly encourage you to visit us prior to application. It is the best way to understand who we are, what we value and whether this is the right place for you.

If you are someone who can bring learning to life, inspire others and contribute meaningfully to our community, we would be delighted to hear from you.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs R Foster  
Headteacher

## **The Role**

We are seeking an exceptional Early Years Leader to join our Senior Leadership Team. This role offers the opportunity to shape high quality provision at the very start of children's education and to contribute to the wider strategic direction of the school.

You will exemplify excellence in the classroom and have a strong understanding of Early Years and Year 1. You will be passionate about purposeful play, energised by pedagogy and committed to continual professional development.

You will thrive on adapting learning to meet the needs of all pupils and will be able to inspire children, staff and parents alike.



## Job Description: Early Years Leader

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Post: Early Years Leader  
Grade: UPS3  
Responsible to: Headteacher  
Based at: Lady Joanna Thornhill (Endowed) Primary School  
Start date: September 2026

### **Purpose of the Role**

The Early Years Foundation Stage Leader will fulfil the professional responsibilities of a teacher, as set out in the STPCD, including planning and delivering high quality learning, assessing pupils' progress and promoting positive behaviour.

As a member of the Senior Leadership Team, the Early Years Leader will play a key role in shaping the quality of education at the very start of children's school journey. At Lady Joanna Thornhill Primary School, we are committed to an expansive education that develops the Head, the Heart and the Hand. The Early Years Leader will champion this vision, ensuring that all children experience a rich, purposeful and developmentally informed curriculum which enables them to thrive.

The role includes a significant responsibility for ensuring strong and effective transition into Year 1. The successful candidate will work closely with colleagues to secure continuity in curriculum, pedagogy and expectations so that pupils build successfully on their Early Years foundations and continue to flourish as they move into Key Stage 1.

Working under the direction of the Headteacher, the Early Years Leader will lead the phase to secure high quality teaching and learning rooted in strong pedagogical understanding, effective use of assessment including baseline to inform provision and track progress, and high standards of achievement and inclusion for all pupils.

### **Key Duties and Responsibilities**

#### **Strategic Leadership and Development**

Develop and implement a clear vision for Early Years in line with the school's values and commitment to high quality education

- Evaluate the effectiveness of Early Years provision and its impact on pupil outcomes, using this to inform strategic planning
- Contribute to the School Development Plan and lead a focused Early Years action plan

- Promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social, cultural, physical and mental development alongside British values
- Engage with pupils, parents and staff to evaluate provision and ensure it reflects the school's vision and community
- Work closely with the SENCO to ensure the curriculum meets the needs of all learners, including disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND
- Work in close partnership with Year 1 staff to ensure continuity of provision, curriculum and expectations, supporting a smooth and successful transition for all pupils
- Collaborate with subject leaders to ensure strong curriculum foundations are established in Early Years and built upon in Year 1
- Liaise with the Local Authority and contribute to wider networks, including the CARE group of schools
- Share high quality practice and expertise across the school

### **Leading the Curriculum and Pedagogy**

Develop, articulate and review the vision, aims and intent of the Early Years curriculum

- Clearly communicate the intent, implementation and impact of Early Years in line with whole school priorities
- Ensure the curriculum is ambitious, inclusive and developmentally appropriate, reflects a secure understanding of child development, promotes strong progress towards the Early Learning Goals and is coherently sequenced and consistently implemented
- Ensure strong alignment between Early Years and Year 1, supporting a developmentally informed transition that builds on effective Early Years practice while preparing pupils for the Key Stage 1 curriculum
- Work collaboratively with Year 1 teachers to develop approaches that retain the most effective elements of Early Years pedagogy, including opportunities for structured play, language development and active learning
- Support staff in understanding how early learning experiences underpin future success in reading, writing and mathematics
- Champion purposeful play and high-quality continuous provision as central to effective early learning
- Ensure a strong emphasis on communication and language development, recognising its fundamental role in enabling all pupils to access the full curriculum
- Establish effective and meaningful assessment systems that inform teaching and demonstrate impact

- Take overall responsibility for standards, progress and outcomes within Early Years

### **Leading and Developing Staff**

Foster a culture of collaboration, professional dialogue and shared practice

- Lead regular Early Years team meetings to support consistency and development
- Support and develop staff through coaching, modelling and team teaching
- Facilitate professional dialogue and joint working between Early Years and Year 1 staff to strengthen transition, shared expectations and curriculum understanding
- Evaluate and improve teaching and learning through lesson visits, work scrutiny and pupil voice
- Provide clear, developmental feedback and identify high quality professional development opportunities
- Support accurate assessment and lead internal and external moderation processes
- Promote staff wellbeing, working alongside senior leaders to ensure a supportive and sustainable working environment

### **Learning Environment and Resources**

Create a safe, stimulating and inclusive environment that inspires curiosity and independence

- Champion high quality indoor and outdoor provision that reflects best practice in Early Years education
- Ensure continuous provision supports independence, creativity and ownership of learning
- Support the development of learning environments in both Early Years and Year 1 so that they reflect progression in independence, challenge and curriculum expectations
- Audit and develop resources to ensure they are diverse, inclusive and aligned with curriculum intent
- Oversee the quality of learning environments and displays to ensure they support and celebrate learning
- Manage the Early Years budget effectively to maximise impact on pupils' learning experiences
- Ensure appropriate provision is in place for remote learning where required

### **Wider Responsibilities**

- Work in partnership with parents and carers, recognising them as key partners in children's learning

- Contribute to the strategic leadership of the school as a member of the Senior Leadership Team
- Lead and contribute to meetings, and report to governors and other stakeholders as required
- Engage in ongoing professional development, demonstrating a commitment to continual learning
- Carry out any additional duties appropriate to the role and grade

### **General**

This job description reflects the general nature and level of responsibility of the role. It is not an exhaustive list of all duties, and the post holder may be required to undertake other responsibilities commensurate with the role.



## Person specification: Early Years Leader

Specification	Essential	Desirable
Relevant experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deep understanding of the Early Years curriculum and child development</li> <li>• Experience of leading or contributing to school development and improvement</li> <li>• Experience of developing and supporting staff to improve practice</li> <li>• Experience of implementing teaching and learning strategies to improve quality and pupil outcomes</li> <li>• Experience of working collaboratively within a team</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Successful experience of leadership within the Early Years Foundation Stage</li> <li>• Experience of using evidence informed practice and research to develop teaching and learning</li> <li>• Experience of supporting effective transition from Early Years into Year 1</li> </ul>
Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualified Teacher Status</li> <li>• Evidence of ongoing professional development relevant to the role</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional learning linked to leadership and management such as National Professional Qualifications or postgraduate study</li> </ul>
Skills and knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expert knowledge of the Early Years statutory framework and guidance</li> <li>• Secure understanding of child development, particularly in relation to early language, reading and writing</li> <li>• Strong understanding of high quality teaching and learning in the Early Years, including the role of</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge of effective practice in Year 1 and how to ensure a smooth and developmentally appropriate transition from Early Years</li> <li>• Experience of coaching and mentoring colleagues to improve practice</li> </ul>

	<p>purposeful play and continuous provision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to model excellent classroom practice and support others to improve</li> <li>• Understanding of how learning in the Early Years provides the foundation for success in Year 1 and beyond</li> <li>• Ability to adapt teaching and provision to meet the needs of all pupils, including those with SEND and those who are disadvantaged</li> <li>• Ability to build effective and positive working relationships with staff, pupils, parents and carers</li> <li>• Knowledge of safeguarding requirements and a commitment to keeping children safe</li> <li>• Strong communication, organisational and interpersonal skills</li> <li>• Confidence in using IT to support teaching, learning and leadership</li> <li>• Ability to communicate a clear vision and inspire others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding of assessment and moderation processes within Early Years and Key Stage 1</li> </ul>
<p>Personal qualities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High expectations for all pupils and a commitment to ensuring every child succeeds</li> <li>• A genuine passion for learning and curiosity about how children develop and learn</li> <li>• A reflective and open minded approach, with a willingness to grow and develop</li> <li>• Commitment to the school's ethos of developing the Head, the Heart and the Hand</li> <li>• Ability to inspire and motivate children,</li> </ul>	

	<p>colleagues and the wider school community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Integrity, honesty and professionalism at all times</li><li>• Ability to prioritise effectively and work under pressure</li><li>• Commitment to inclusion, equality and diversity</li><li>• Commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children</li></ul>	
Professional behaviours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Commitment to ongoing professional learning and keeping up to date with developments in education and safeguarding</li><li>• Strong attendance and reliability</li><li>• Flexibility and willingness to contribute to the wider life of the school</li><li>• Commitment to collaborative working and contributing positively to a team culture</li></ul>	

# Recruitment Process

We are committed to appointing an exceptional Early Years Leader who aligns with our values, demonstrates strong classroom practice and is excited to contribute to our school community. Our recruitment process is designed to give candidates multiple opportunities to show who they are, how they think and how they teach.

We strongly encourage all prospective applicants to visit the school prior to application. This is an important opportunity to understand our ethos, meet our team and decide whether this is the right place for you.

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## Stage 1: Application

Candidates are asked to submit a written application which clearly demonstrates:

- Alignment with the school's ethos and values
- Understanding of the role, as outlined in the job description
- How their experience and skills meet the person specification
- Their subject specialism and how they could lead this across the school

We are looking for thoughtful, reflective applications that show a genuine interest in our school.

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## Stage 2: Professional Practice Visit

Shortlisted candidates will be visited in their current setting.

This visit will include:

- Observation of the candidate teaching in their own classroom
- Opportunities to see how they establish relationships, routines and learning behaviours
- A professional discussion about their practice

Following this, candidates will be asked to share something that exemplifies their values. This may be something from their classroom, leadership experience or wider professional work.

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## Stage 3: Selection Day

Candidates will be invited to Lady Joanna Thornhill Primary School to take part in a selection day. This will include:

- Teaching two sessions
  - A phonics session

- A session focused on developing knowledge and understanding of the world (any area of candidate's choice)
  - A written task (no prior preparation required)
  - A pupil interview
  - A formal interview with a panel
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## What We Value

We are looking for someone who:

- Believes in an expansive education that develops the Head, the Heart and the Hand
  - Is deeply committed to high quality Early Years practice
  - Understands the importance of strong foundations in language, reading and writing
  - Values collaboration and thrives in a team
  - Is reflective, curious and committed to continual improvement
  - Can inspire and build strong relationships across the school community
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## Visiting the School

We warmly welcome visits from prospective applicants.

Please contact the school office to arrange an appointment with the Headteacher, the following tour dates are available:

**Friday, 24<sup>th</sup> April @ 9:30am**

**Monday, 27<sup>th</sup> April @ 10:45am**

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