



**Benhall Infant School &
St Mark's C of E Junior School**
Robert Burns Avenue
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire



Benhall Infant School: admin@benhall.gloucs.sch.uk Tel: 01242 234717
St Mark's C of E Junior School: admin@st-marks.gloucs.sch.uk Tel: 01242 702280

Wednesday 6th May 2026

Dear Families,

Over recent months, the leadership teams of Benhall Infant School & Preschool and St Mark's C of E Junior School have been working ever more closely to create a coherent, high-quality learning journey for every child—from pre-school, through the infant years and across Key Stage 2. Families at Benhall will already be aware of the interim arrangement in which Mrs James has been serving as Executive Headteacher while Governors considered future leadership options.

Following a thorough leadership review by Benhall Governors, the Governing Bodies of both Benhall and St Mark's have agreed to move forward with formal negotiations to create a more structured collaboration between the two schools. This process is being undertaken in conjunction with, and supported by, the Local Authority to ensure a robust and well-considered approach. By 'Collaboration', we mean a formal partnership, not 'merging', as both schools will remain independent, with their own identities and ethos. The schools will simply be led by a shared Executive Headteacher to support closer working where this is beneficial.

We are delighted to share that from 1st January 2027, Mrs Fitch will be appointed as the Executive Headteacher of both Benhall and St Mark's, with Mrs James returning to Charlton Kings Infants' School. Prior to joining St Mark's, Mrs Fitch brought 14 years of experience teaching in EYFS and KS1 and leading a through-primary school as Headteacher. This, combined with her leadership of the Junior School, means that she has a strong understanding of children's learning journey through each of the Primary school phases. We are therefore confident that this appointment will provide clear, consistent leadership across both schools whilst maintaining the distinctive ethos that each school holds.

We recognise that any period of change can naturally raise questions. Please be assured that the wellbeing, learning and personal development of your children remain at the heart of every decision we make. Our focus throughout this process is to secure the very best long-term educational experience for all pupils. Between now and January 2027, Mrs Fitch and Mrs James will continue to work closely to ensure a thoughtful and well-managed transition. Mrs Fitch will also be spending time at Benhall Infants and Preschool to get to know the children and their families, so please do take the opportunity to introduce yourselves.

We are genuinely excited about the future and confident that this strengthened partnership will bring meaningful and lasting benefits for every child in our care. Thank you for your continued support and trust as we take this positive step forward together.

With best wishes,

Mr Toby Lewis
Chair of Governors
Benhall Infant School

Professor Trevor Cooling
Chair of Governors
St Mark's C of E Junior School