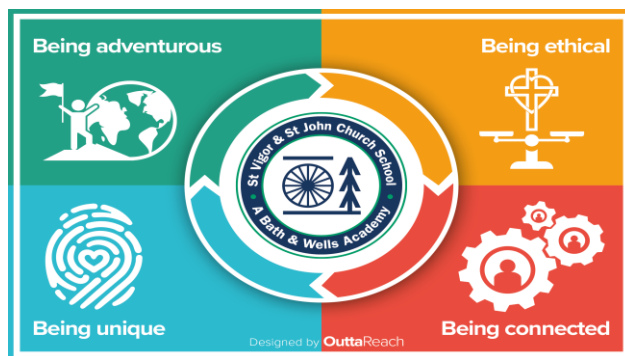




**Tel: 01761 233847**

**School Email:**  
[Enquiries@svsj.bwmat.org](mailto:Enquiries@svsj.bwmat.org)

**Nursery Email:**  
[nursery@svsj.bwmat.org](mailto:nursery@svsj.bwmat.org)

**Website:**  
[www.stvigorandstjohnschool.co.uk](http://www.stvigorandstjohnschool.co.uk)

**Executive Headteacher: Mr Chris Chorley**  
**Head Of School: Mrs Leah Sheppard**

10<sup>th</sup> June 2026

Dear Parents & carers

From September 2026 Mrs Sheppard will be taking on the role of Head of School at St Aldhelm's Church School *as well as SVSJ*, following the departure of their current HoS. It is a huge compliment and testament to her hard work that Leah has been given this opportunity and we are all delighted for her personally.

Just as when Mr Chorley took on the Executive leadership at St Aldhelm's two years ago, these decisions have not been taken lightly and much thought has gone into the sustainability and continued improvements at SVSJ. The governing board have challenged both Mr Chorley and Mrs Sheppard regarding this. The governors will be holding this arrangement under tight review as we move forward with our only focus being the health, happiness and success of all stakeholders at SVSJ. We are confident that this arrangement will be beneficial to both schools.

### ***Why doesn't St Aldhelm's appoint their own Head of School?***

Education is constantly evolving and changing. Executive arrangements such as the one that exists at SVSJ and St Aldhelm's are increasingly common. There is evidence that suggests the same EHT/HoS combination is more effective and brings benefits to both schools. The BWMAT is very supportive of this arrangement.

### ***What are the benefits to SVSJ?***

- Developing shared practice and learning from each other is a key value in education and is always positive.
- A strong partnership allows teachers to share information/planning/ideas/resources etc. These bring benefits to children's learning.



**St Vigor and St John Church School & The Mill Nursery,  
Wells Road, Chilcompton, BA3 4EX**



@ChurchSvsj



- Leadership development opportunities for other staff. SVSJ is blessed with highly committed and able staff. They all have their own aspirations. Arrangements such as these can give some space for other staff to grow whilst retaining their skills and expertise at our school for your children and our overall leadership.
- Efficiencies in Senior Leadership time- fewer meetings means more time to spend on opportunities for children.
- Increased possibilities for joint opportunities for children.
- Having an impact and supporting other educational settings is a key element of OFSTED's EXCEPTIONAL criteria. Whilst that is absolutely not *why* we would do this, it demonstrates our commitment to being the very best school we can be.
- The arrangement *is* financially beneficial to SVSJ freeing up funds to spend on staff elsewhere. Again, not the reason we are doing it, but an advantage nonetheless.

***Will we get less of Mrs Sheppard?***

Going forward, Mrs Sheppard will no longer have the teaching commitment she has had. For the majority of this year she was teaching in Foxglove Class 2 days a week, leaving 3 days for "Head of School" duties. If you imagine roughly those 2-3 days being spent as HoS at St Aldhelm's you can see why Mrs Sheppard and Mr Chorley believe they can make this work. Obviously it won't work in quite that way but it shows the rationale. Many of the commitments/training/meetings Mr Chorley and Mrs Sheppard attend will apply for both schools.

There will be some added leadership capacity at SVSJ for those occasions when neither Mrs Sheppard nor Mr Chorley are available. As noted above, the school has a rich resource of staff talents to support with this. A full structure/timetable/working model will be shared with you before the start of next year.

Yours sincerely

Chris Chorley

*Executive Headteacher*

Zac Cambourne

*Chair of Governors*