



AMHERST NEWS



News No 14 www.amherst.kent.sch.uk

01732 452577

14th December 2018

Star of the week

3A	Eliza A	5B	Izabella H
3W	Imogen F	5H	Elspeth L
3S	Rachel B	5J	Oscar P
4W	Madi S	6H	Georgia A
4F	Emily R	6P	Alannah B
4C	Charlotte P	6B	Yiannis P

Message from Mr Reid

As it is our last newsletter of the term, I would like to wish everybody a very happy Christmas and hope you have restful holiday and remain illness free! Take the time to be together as a family and try to rediscover the enjoyment of Christmas despite all the stresses and strains it can create. Encourage your children to write proper thank you letters rather than a quick text or email! A handwritten letter stands out more than ever these days and requires more effort, which results in a stronger form of gratitude. It has been a highly successful autumn term and I look forward to working together in 2019.

Mr Reid

Return to School

Please would parents note that there will be staff inset days on Thursday 3rd and Friday 4th January, so children will return on Monday 7th.

Forthcoming Events

- 18.12.18** Evening Carol Service 6.00pm at St. Mary's Church
- 18.12.18** Whole School to Stag Pantomime
- 19.12.18** Last Day - School Finishes 3.30pm

Further information on the above events can be found in the letters sent home.

Christmas Carol Service – 18th December

Please note the change of date for the School Carol Service at St Mary's Church.

Amazon Gifting this Christmas

With Christmas fast approaching, please remember when buying on Amazon to copy and paste the link below. The school receives a small percentage for each transaction made, so the more people that use it the greater the monthly donation! It is a very easy process, and we are slowly reaping the benefits! Please remember to share with friends and family.
<http://bit.ly/amherstschool> School website link:
<http://www.amherst.kent.sch.uk/page/?pid=178>

Parent Questionnaire

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
1. My child is happy at this school.	164 (81%)	37 (18%)	1 (1%)		
2. My child feels safe at this school.	167 (83%)	35 (17%)			
3. My child makes good progress at this school.	146 (72%)	55 (27%)			1 (1%)
4. My child is well looked after at this school.	173 (86%)	27 (13%)	2 (1%)		
5. My child is taught well at this school.	172 (85%)	29 (14%)			1 (1%)
6. My child receives appropriate homework for their age.	125 (62%)	65 (32%)	11 (5%)		1 (1%)
7. This school makes sure its pupils are well behaved.	135 (67%)	62 (31%)	3 (2%)	1 (0.5%)	1 (0.5%)
8. This school deals effectively with bullying.	80 (40%)	79 (39%)	5 (3%)	2 (1%)	36 (17%)
9. This school is well led and managed.	178 (88%)	23 (11%)		1 (1%)	
10. This school responds well to any concerns I raise.	131 (65%)	63 (31%)	1 (0.5%)	1 (0.5%)	6 (3%)
11. I receive valuable information from the school about my child's progress.	125 (62%)	68 (34%)	9 (4%)		
12. Would you recommend this school to another parent?	179 (89%)	22 (10%)	1 (1%)		

Thank you to all parents who completed our recent parent questionnaire. We had 202 returns, which provided us with just over a 50% response rate. Overall, the responses were very positive and thank you to everybody who took the time give written feedback. The written feedback is so valuable as it gives us more of an insight to certain responses.

Areas of greatest increase on Strongly Agree compared to 2017 were:

- My child makes good progress at this school 72% (2017 – 54%)
- My child is well taught at this school 85% (2017 – 69%)
- My child is happy at this school 81% (2017 – 73%)
- Would you recommend this school 89% - (2017 – 73%)

Key factors that may have contributed to this increase are the introduction two years ago of pupil conferencing (1:1 time for the teacher to chat with each child individually) and Paired Teaching (an additional teacher two days a week, for a term, each year group once a year). We also have a highly dedicated, committed and skilled teaching team!

We take very seriously the seven parents who feel bullying is not dealt with effectively. Parents who replied No response said that this was due to not experiencing bullying which can be interpreted as a positive! We have excellent procedures in place to challenging bullying behaviour. We are always reliant on parents letting us know how their child is feeling, as bullying can be subtle and go unnoticed. As with all behaviours, it is how a child feels that is the most important element regardless of their perception or interpretation of other children's behaviour. We will all respond in different ways according to our personal context, resilience and experiences.

Homework continues to divide opinion. Some people wanting more, some people wanting less.

Thank you once again for taking the time to complete the questionnaire as you views help inform future decisions and strategies.

Final Arrangements for Theatre Visit to 'Dick Whittington'

The trip to the Stag Theatre in Sevenoaks to see 'Dick Whittington' takes place on Tuesday 18th December.

As the performance is from 10.30pm until 1.00pm, there will be no school lunch that day and we ask that all children bring a packed lunch. This will then be eaten when we return from the theatre at approximately 1.30pm. Children will be provided with an orange juice drink during the interval. Please inform the School Office if your child **should not** have this.

Due to lunch being later, children should bring a small snack to accompany their juice during the interval. Please no sweets or crisps. A chewy bar or cereal bar would be ideal. Please ensure all snacks are nut free. Thank you.

Year 4 Trip to Natural History Museum

On Tuesday, Year 4 visited the Natural History Museum in London. The children attended a workshop where they applied what they had learnt in class, becoming scientific detectives as they figured out to which animals various specimens belonged. The children and staff enjoyed browsing the museum and had a wonderful day, in what is sure to become an annual trip!



Missing Coat

Is a parent missing a navy blue winter coat? We have one at reception waiting to be reunited with its owner.

School Lunch Menu Change - Wednesday 19th December

Please note that on the last day of term a roast dinner will not be served as per usual Wednesdays, but instead the week 2 Friday option will be served (quiche/goujons, chips and beans).

Riverhead Parish Council – Parking

Riverhead Parish Council request that you please park responsibly when dropping off and collecting your children.

Mobile Phones

If your child walks to school (mainly Year 6) and has a mobile phone, please remember it is school policy that the phone must be handed into the school office each day. We also need a written letter from home explaining that your child will be bringing a phone to school. Mobile phones or any electronic device must not be kept in a child's bag or locker. Thank you for your support.

Driving

We have received reports of reckless driving on Barnfield Road where cars mounted the grass verges. Please ensure that you drive carefully around the school to ensure children's safety.

Sport

Amherst Sports T-Shirts Please could all children return any Amherst T-Shirts they used last term.

Uniform, PE & Games Kit Please ensure that your child has the correct named kit in school for Games and PE lessons, including trainers and football boots as we no longer have spares. Likewise, all school uniform should be named.

Music

Choir in the Community

The Amherst Choir have had a busy week, performing at both Rivermere Care Home and Riverhead Infants School. The children sang brilliantly on both occasions, one performance being straight after the Christmas lunch. The highlight was our traditional rendition of *We Wish You a Merry Christmas!* Many thanks to Mrs Henderson for her musical accompaniment. The choir can be heard singing at next week's carol service.



PTA News

PTA DATES for your diary:

PTA MEETING: Tuesday 8 January 2019 (all welcome to attend)
CAKE & 2ND HAND UNIFORM SALE: Friday 18 January 2019
RIVERHEAD & AMHERST SPRING BALL: Saturday 23 March 2019

****RIVERHEAD & AMHERST SPRING BALL – Saturday 23 March****

Tickets on sale NOW for the biennial Spring Ball.

WHERE: **Westerham Golf Club**

TIME: **7.00pm–12.30am**

EARLY BIRD TICKETS: **£50pp until end-January** (available online at www.pta-events.co.uk/amherstpta), thereafter £60pp

Gather together 10 friends for each table, and you'll be indulged with a drinks reception with canapes, two-course meal with tea/coffee afterwards, DJ, interactive silent auction, raffle and table games ... be sure to put it in your diary.

Please remember **all the local companies** that supported the **Christmas Bazaar** while doing your Christmas shopping ... not long to go now!

EASYFUNDRAISING

easyfundraising turns your **Christmas online shopping into free donations**. How? Just start your online shopping first at easyfundraising, then shop as normal – our easy fundraising link is <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/> code (Amherst School PTA – Sevenoaks)

COMMUNICATING WITH THE PTA

Chair: **Debbie Trigg** (amherst-chair@outlook.com)

Vice Chair (Events & PTA website): **Sandy Shirras** (amherst-events@outlook.com)

Vice Chair (Marketing): **Michelle Sadler** (amherst-marketing@outlook.com)

Treasurer: **Bradley Shirras** (amherst-treasurer@outlook.com)

Events in the local community

Barracudas Activity Day Camps

Bookings now open for 2019 clubs (prices held from 2018). Fun activity days and weeks for ages 4½-14 years, with over 80 exciting adventures. From £3.64 per hour. Visit www.barracudas.co.uk or call 01480 467567 for more info.

Chipstead FC Christmas Holiday Coaching Courses

CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY COACHING COURSES for School Years - Year 1 to Year 6

Thursday 20th & Friday 21st December 2018

Thursday 3rd & Friday 4th January 2019

Time: 1000 - 1530

Cost: £20.00 per day

Venue: Knole Academy 3G Pitch, Bradbourne Vale Road, Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 3LE

Pre-Booking is Required Please book early to avoid disappointment – this course was oversubscribed last year.

Contact 07771 700612 or carolinejdavies@googlemail.com

Stonepitts Farm Christmas Trees

Stonepitts Farm in Seal will be donating £2 to Amherst for every tree they sell to our families and staff. Please see www.stonepitts.com for more details. A copy of this newsletter should be shown at the time of purchase. Thank you in advance for your support.

Music Lessons

Music lessons are available for many instruments at Amherst. The tutors currently teaching at Amherst are –

Clarinet	Andrew Harper	07912 304 256	andrewharper44@hotmail.com
Cello	Catherine Brooker		catherinebrooker@ymail.com
Violin	Jo Kiely	01732 465743	joanna.kiely@btinternet.com
Violin/Viola/Flute	Penny da Silva	07763 204109	pennydasilva@hotmail.co.uk
Flute/Fife/Recorder/Piano	Mark Underwood	07985 563063	mcunderwood@me.com
Drums	Billy Cunningham	07751 881706	billysondrums@gmail.com
Guitar	Tom Murray		tomrmurray@hotmail.co.uk
Singing	Wendy Chown	07785 968647	wendychown@outlook.com
Piano	Connie Brooks	01622691212	customerservices@kent-music.com
Piano	Simon Proctor	01622691212	customerservices@kent-music.com
Brass	Becky Craig		etkecraig@googlemail.com
Piano/Oboe	Sarah Harper	07501 332102	sarahlucyharper@yahoo.com

Please contact these tutors directly if you are interested in lessons. Please note that any child can only sign up for one instrument lesson during school time. Instrument hire is available from Guy Saunders on 01732-740755 and further details can be obtained from his website at: www.saundersmusic.co.uk.

Arrangements for Admissions of Pupils to school from September 2020

In line with other schools and Kent County Council, Amherst School is consulting on a change to its Admissions Arrangements for September 2020 in the shape of an extra criterion that would extend the prioritisation of Looked After Children.

Please visit the school website to view the arrangements:

www.amherst.kent.sch.uk/page/?title=Admissions&pid=18

If you would like to comment on the proposed amendments then please do so by email to office@amherst.kent.sch.uk School. All comments must be received by the end of Friday 14 December and will be considered by the Governing Body.

Regular items and reminders

No nuts in School!

We have children in school who have severe allergies to nuts. Please do not send any form of nuts in for children's snacks or packed lunches. Please also note that nuts should not be brought along to any event held in the school. Thank you.

School Hall Hire

The school hall is available to hire for long term lets, dance groups, sports clubs etc. If you are interested or know anyone looking to hire a hall, please contact Jo Sims, School Business Manager.

Regular items and reminders – contd

Stationery

Stationery packs are available from the school office for £8.00. We also have ink pens for £4.00.

Communication

If you wish to speak to your class teacher urgently at drop-off or collection time, please enquire at Reception or the School Office. Please do not go directly to the classroom. Teachers are often available at the gate at the end of the day, when often a quick word is all that is needed.

Weekends

Please note that school is not open at weekends. Whilst there may be music tutors, builders etc. in the building they are not authorised to allow admittance to the school.

Letterbox

We have a silver letterbox in the school lobby. If you do not need to speak to somebody in school, please pop any correspondence into the letterbox. It will be emptied regularly during the school day. We, of course, prefer letters to be sent in via your child's book bag.

Ask – Amherst School Kitchen

Dinner Money – If your child would like to start having school lunch or you wish to make any changes to your child's lunch arrangements, please notify the school office on officer@amherst.kent.sch.uk. Menus are on the school website – look for School Meals under the Parents tab.

(Daily charge £2.35)

Weekly	£11.75
Term 1	£77.55
Term 2	£89.30
Both Autumn terms	£166.85

Payment can be made via www.schoolgateway.com where you are also able to check your balance. If you have any problems paying electronically, please contact the school office.

Free School Meals - Please be advised that if you think your child may be entitled to free school meals, you can apply using the following link: <https://www.cloudforedu.org.uk/ofsm/kent/>. All applications are dealt with in confidence.

Snacks at breaktime - Please could we remind all children that they should only be eating fruit or vegetables as their snack at playtime. The school provides fruit and milk to purchase or children may bring in fruit from home. Please be reminded that chocolate and sweets are not permitted as a break time snack.

Fruit at breaktime - Our school kitchen offers a variety of fruit at morning break including melon, raw carrot, apples, orange segments and bananas. Cost is 30p per portion. Please send in the correct change with your child.

Milk at breaktimes - Small cartons of milk in various flavours are available at morning break at a cost of 30p per carton. Please send in the correct change with your child on a daily basis.

Inclusion News

INCLUSION NEWS DECEMBER 2018

CLICKER 7 – for free

Don't forget, if you would like to access Clicker 7 for use at home, just drop me an email with your child's name and class to helen.holmes@amherst.kent.sch.uk and I will send you a unique log-in and password.

FAMILY COURSES

If you would like more information about the following courses taking place in early 2019, please ask Mrs Holmes:

- Managing Children's Behaviour at Downsview Primary School – 21st January to 11th February
- Parents Towards Employment at St Mary's Primary School – 21st January to 11th February
- Managing Children's Behaviour at New Ash Green Primary School – 22nd January to 12th February
- Managing Children's Behaviour at Edenbridge Children's Centre – 23rd January – 13th February
- Managing Children's Behaviour at West Kingsdown Primary School – 31st January – 21st February

BOOKS PLEASE If your child borrows Barrington Stoke books or Rapid Readers (graphic books) from Mrs Holmes's office please have a look at home and bring them back, and swap for a new one. The bookshelf has a few gaps at the moment.

ASD drop-in dates for parents and carers of children with ASD

Thursday 31st January 2019, Swanley Youth Hub, (next to St Marys School) St Marys Road, Swanley

Wednesday 12th June 2019, Hope Church, The Mill Lane Centre, Mill Lane 128 Seal Rd, Sevenoaks

1pm to 3pm – Pop in any time and stay as long as you like. This will be a regular opportunity to

- Ask questions,
- Talk through any issues you are having with a professional
- Meet other parents and have a cup of tea or coffee and a chat
- Meet professionals who may be supporting you and your child
- Discuss next steps including possible courses.

These people will usually be available to talk to: ~Specialist Teachers, ~Kent Autistic Trust, ~Speech and Language Therapist, and ~Information, Advise, Support Kent (IASK). **Please phone Sevenoaks Specialist Teaching & Learning Service On 01959 560592 for further information**

TTRS starts again on Monday January 14th 2019

Parent Drop-ins I am available most Wednesday afternoons (sometimes Tuesdays) from 2.30 to 3.30 for a chat about any concerns you might want to share in an informal way. Just phone the school office for an appointment.
Thank you. Helen Holmes, Inclusion Manager
(helen.holmes@amherst.kent.sch.uk).

**Term Dates for the academic year
2018/2019/2020**

TERM 2

FINISH: Wednesday 19th December 2018

TERM 3

START: Monday 7th January 2019

Staff Inset Thursday 3rd January 2019

Staff Inset Friday 4th January 2019

FINISH: Friday 15th February 2019

TERM 4

START: Monday 25th February 2019

FINISH: Friday 5th April 2019

TERM 5

START: Tuesday 23rd April 2019

Staff Inset Friday 24th May 2019

FINISH: Thursday 23rd May 2019

TERM 6

START: Monday 3rd June 2019

FINISH: Tuesday 23rd July 2019

TERM 1

Staff Inset Monday 2nd September 2019

START: Tuesday 3rd September 2019

Staff Inset Friday 18th October 2019

FINISH: Thursday 17th October 2019

TERM 2

START: Monday 28th October 2019

FINISH: Wednesday 18th December 2019

TERM 3

START: Tuesday 7th January 2020

Staff Inset Monday 6th January 2020

FINISH: Friday 14th February 2020