

## *Summer Term 2016*

### *This term in school...*

*Welcome to my Headteacher's Letter. Sent home termly it will let you know what's happening in school: at a leadership level, for the whole school and in the classroom.*

As we approach the end of the year I would like to use this term's letter to share staffing information for September 2016. The children will be informed this afternoon (4.7.16) who their teacher will be next year. The children will be meeting their new teacher on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> July.

Firstly I would like to share with you the staffing changes for September:

Miss Bodenham, who has completed the first three years of her teaching career at Amherst, is leaving to facilitate an exciting change. She is relocating to London and has been appointed as a Year 5 teacher at Eaton Square School. Miss Bodenham has been an excellent teacher at Amherst and also led the School Council, PSHE and French. I wish her every success and I am pleased that her training and experience at Amherst has enabled her to further her career at another excellent school.

I am pleased to be able to welcome two excellent additions to our teaching team:

Miss Miranda Huntley will be starting her second year of teaching having completed her NQT year at Edenbridge Primary School. She completed a PGCE at University of Sussex which involved a teaching practice at Ide Hill Primary School. She completed a BA (Hons) in American Literature with Creative Writing at University of East Anglia. She also has worked in publishing as a magazine editor for four years before deciding to train as a teacher.

Miss Jessica Maunder will be an NQT and is a maths specialist (First Class Hons in Economics from Exeter University). During the third year of her degree she studied at the College of William and Mary in Virginia, USA. On completion of her degree she worked in London for a digital marketing company for two years before deciding to train to become a teacher. She has completed a PGCE at Canterbury Christ Church University College. She is also a keen artist, tennis and hockey player, playing hockey for Sevenoaks Hockey Club.

We also have some internal movement between year groups for next year. Miss Apps is to move from Year 6 to Year 3. Mr Clarke is to move from Year 4 to Year 6. Miss Foinette (Mon - Wed) and Mrs Fox (Thursday and Friday) are moving to Year 4. Miss Parish is to become the year group leader of Year 6. We are also delighted to have Mr Tom Barratt completing his PGCE training with us next year and we look forward to watching him develop as a teacher.

### **Staffing structure for 2016/17**

#### **Year 3**

Miss Apps - Year Group Leader – teaching Beetle Class

Mrs Wheeler – teaching Spider Class

Miss Maunder – teaching Dragonfly Class

#### **Year 4**

Mr Hancock - Year Group Leader - teaching 3W

Miss Foinette and Mrs Fox – teaching 3B

Miss Holland – teaching 3F

#### **Year 5**

Mrs Barratt - Year Group Leader – teaching 4H

Miss Jones (Assistant Headteacher) – teaching 4AH

Miss Wonnacott – teaching 4C

## **Year 6**

Miss Parish - Year Group Leader – teaching 5W

Miss Huntley – teaching 5J

Mr Clarke – teaching 5B

Miss Carver is currently away on maternity leave and recently gave birth to Arlo Michael Carver. Both are doing well. Congratulations to Mrs Lester, who recently returned from maternity leave, and is expecting their second baby in December.

As I come to the end of my third year at Amherst and eighth year as a Headteacher I reflect increasingly that recruitment and retention of the best possible staff is the single most important duty we undertake as a leadership team. I feel excited about the team in place for September and believe they will uphold our high standards and hopefully impart a love of learning. Every child has the right to experience an inspirational teacher and I will continue to strive to enable that to happen for your child at Amherst.

There have been many highlights to this year but I would like to reference three in particular. Firstly our celebrations to commemorate fifty years of Amherst School. It was a wonderful day of celebrations and finished with an afternoon tea attended by so many ex staff. Being only the fourth Headteacher of Amherst in the last fifty years galvanised my sense of purpose and moral duty. Due to Amherst's strong identity and sense of heritage there is a feeling that the school itself has strength of character. Amherst often does its own thing in a positive way. Many national strategies will continue to come and go but Amherst has the ability to pick which to adopt and which ones not to. This collective strength of character ensures that the children's achievements and well-being are at the heart of the decision making. I feel strongly that I am just the current custodian of Amherst School and have a duty to uphold those traditions of independent thought and excellence.

Secondly, I so enjoyed the Year 6 residential trip to Hilltop in Norfolk. I was immensely proud of all the children (and staff) throughout the week as they committed so enthusiastically to every activity. It was such a pleasure to be repeatedly told by the Hilltop instructors how amazing Amherst children were to work with. If you would like to view the thousands of photos taken please go on the school website and look under: Year Groups – Year 6 – Shared Galleries. On a personal note, I also managed to have more sleep at Hilltop than I normally do at home!

Thirdly, I really enjoyed our whole school writing project based on 'Shackleton's Journey'. The buzz of learning across the school by children and staff was fantastic. The outcomes produced by the children in all years were superb. In response to that project I decided we would complete two whole school writing projects each year, one in September and one in January. I am pleased to be able to announce that September's text is going to be 'The Wolves of Currumpaw' which is Will Grill's (author of Shackleton's Journey) second book. I have contacted Flying Eye Books publishers to see if they would like to work collaboratively on the project. The book is currently available to buy if you wish your child to read it over the summer holidays. It is another beautifully illustrated book based on a true story.

I wish you all a wonderful summer break when it arrives and hope to see many of you at the performances of 'Alice in Wonderland', 'Summer BBQ' and Sports Day.

Mr Reid