

Autumn Term 2021

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.

Now in my ninth year as Headteacher of Amherst it is a chance to reflect on the achievements of last year and focus on the development priorities for this year.

Firstly, welcome to all new children and families in Year 3 and other year groups. I hope your first months at Amherst have been a positive experience. The Buddy system in Year 3 continues to be a success and helped aid transition into Year 3, especially on the first morning. We also try to ensure that the Buddy system continues beyond just the first day.

Due to the disruption caused by the pandemic, last year's Year 6 cohort were not required to sit SATs tests. We decided we would complete our own internal SATs test in May 2021 using the 2019 paper. The children and staff had worked so hard we felt it was good opportunity to demonstrate all they had learnt.

Writing continues to be assessed by teachers in each individual school rather than a written exam. For a child to be at the Expected Standard they needed to score 100 + with the maximum score being 120. For a child to be assessed as achieving a High Score they needed to score 110+.

Well done and thank you to all the children and teaching team for their hard work and commitment to high standards during such a disruptive year.

Subject		Amherst 2021	National 2019
Reading, Writing & Maths Combined	Expected Standard	81%	65%
	Higher standard	23%	11%
Reading	Expected Standard+	95%	73%
	High score (110+)	57%	27%
Writing	Expected Standard+	83%	78%
	Greater Depth	27%	20%
Grammar Punctuation and Spelling	Expected Standard+	90%	78%
	High score (110+)	54%	34%
Maths	Expected Standard+	95%	79%
	High score (110+)	60%	27%

Kent Test

Seventy-nine Year 6 children sat the Kent Test (11+) on Thursday 9th September. Sixty-five (71%) passed the test. Congratulations must be awarded to the children, teachers and parents. It is a team effort.

School Improvement Plan

At the beginning of every year, schools write a School Improvement Plan. I would like to share with you the three key priorities on our plan for this year:

- Effective subject leadership ensures the school's curriculum enables high levels of pupil achievement and progress.
- Ensure all tasks within lessons are thoughtful, well sequenced and meaningful.
- To ensure expected level of progress in writing is the same or above the national average.

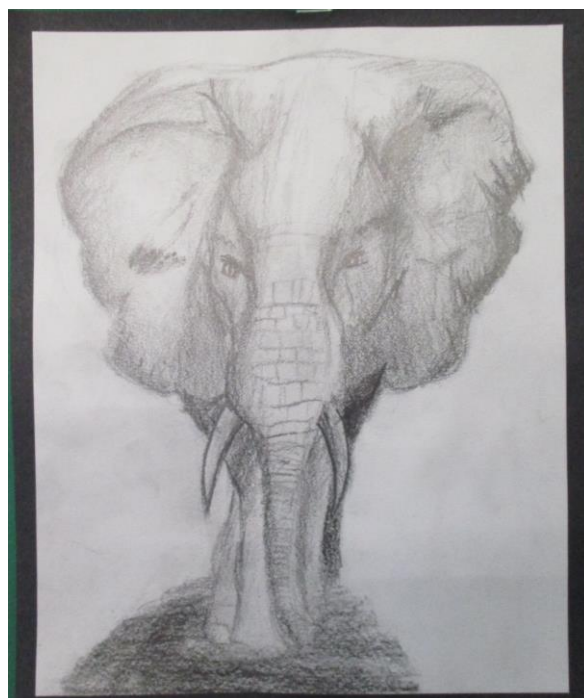
The plan has 17 objectives. Other objectives of interest include:

- Reintroduce a full extra-curricular programme of clubs, music (including whole school singing), visits, workshops and use of school library to broaden the children's cultural capital and enjoyment of school.
- To provide road safety education for all pupils to increase their chances of safety in Sevenoaks and when they transfer to secondary school.
- To provide opportunities to support children's mental and emotional well-being.
- To continue to embed and improve the delivery and impact of whole school values based PSHE curriculum, including Online Safety and SRE.
- SEND pupils make expected progress in reading, writing and maths.
- Ensure children have positive attitudes to their learning.
- To ensure governor monitoring provides a wide range of evidence for governors to judge and challenge standards effectively.

Bandoola

On my return to school this week, I was greeted by the most amazing Bandoola displays. It lifted my spirits to look at each year group's work and see the fantastic artwork and writing. It is clear the children have really engaged in this project and worked so hard. They should all feel proud of their achievements. Below is just one example (Year 6) of some of the stunning artwork that has been produced. Please click on the link below to view the Bandoola Gallery on the school website. I have sent pictures to Will Grill who I know was keen to see the outcomes of the project.

<https://www.amherst.kent.sch.uk/gallery/?pid=3&gcatid=1&albumid=54>



I continue to try to teach a different class each Friday morning. It enables me to get to know the children better (at least learn their names!) and get a feel for how their class is progressing. The children get to know me as a teacher and a person, which helps develop positive relationships. It also ensures that any whole school strategies and initiatives are firmly rooted in improving teaching and learning.

We are determined where possible to continue with all our Christmas events. It was wonderful to have Year 4 parents attend the Year 4 Christmas Variety Show this week. Well done to the Year 4 children and staff for such a wonderful performance, which made us all start to feel very Christmassy! I hope we make it to the end of term with all events planned getting to take place. I will keep you updated.

If you ever feel the need to come and speak to me, please don't hesitate to contact the office. If I am available, I am always happy to chat immediately and if not, make an appointment.

Finally, thank you to everyone who has completed the recent parent questionnaire. Your feedback both positive and negative is greatly valued.

Best Wishes

Andrew Reid