



AMHERST SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

14th EDITION - 15 December 2023



MESSAGE FROM MR REID

Festive Week

It has been a busy and festive last week of term. The week began with our wonderful Carol Service held in St. Mary's Church on Monday. Well done to our six Year 6 readers who read with such confidence and clarity. The school choir sang superbly including the tricky descants in certain carols. Well done to Charlie and Grace G, who enjoyed the premier of their winning Christmas Carol. Thank you to Mr Clarke for all his hard work preparing the children so well.

Pantomime

On Wednesday we took the whole school to see *Jack and the Beanstalk* at The Stag Theatre. The children thoroughly enjoyed the performance and it was great to see so many happy faces. Thank you to Mr Hafford-Robson who found himself being rather more involved in the pantomime than he expected!

Christmas Lunch

On Thursday our school kitchen team cooked a fantastic Christmas lunch for all children and staff. The food was delicious and there were lots of clean plates. It is quite amazing that over 400 meals were served hot and on time. Thank you to kitchen team and the PTA for helping set the hall up and making it look so festive.

Choirs

Training Choir and Amherst Choir had the opportunity to sing in front of the Christmas tree in Trafalgar Square at 4.00pm on Thursday. It was a magical experience and one that the children will cherish. Thank you to all parents for accompanying the children and making it possible. Thank you once again to Mr Clarke and Miss Foinette for enabling such a great event to take place.

Congratulations

Congratulations to Mr and Mrs Barratt who welcomed their new baby daughter, Rose, into the world on Saturday. I'm sure you will join me in wishing them every happiness and a very special Christmas.

Thank You

I would like to take this opportunity to thank parents for their generosity and thoughtfulness in all the presents that staff (including myself) have received in the last few days. Your kindness is much appreciated and it is wonderful that the hard work of all staff is recognised.

I hope you all have a wonderful Christmas.

Please remember that children return to school on Thursday 4th January.

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FESTIVE CELEBRATIONS

CAROLS

Here is what Caroline and Mia in 6W had to say about the event:

On Monday, 11th December 2023, the Amherst Choir sang Christmas carols with the congregation of the church. The service filled us with Christmas cheer as we stuffed Saint Mary's Church with musical notes. As students of Amherst Choir, we

thought this magical Christmas service was wonderful and amazing.

Two students, Grace G and Charlie G, wrote a Christmas carol called 'The Christmas Tree' which was one of the many songs performed at the church service. To accompany the Choir, organist (Alex Trigg), who is from The Choir of St John's college, happily played with us through the carols. We also all listened to the readings read by Year six children which were stories from the Bible. It was a superb service, we all enjoyed ourselves and had lots of fun.

Another member of the audience kindly shared the following with us:

I think this was my first real opening to Advent events this year.

A very warm welcome by the pupils as we entered the church.

The organ, as it roared into action, was out of this world which made me very emotional through the first carol we sung, and so it goes on, it just kept giving - compliments to the organist, Alexander Trigg.

Mr Clarke (music teacher) has the choir in his hands. What a blessing and so good to see for a school choir, and how well the choir was directed and sang. And the super little piece by Grace and Charlie. I left St. Mary's church on a high for preparation for the Christmas season.



TRAFALGAR SQUARE

Our Amherst and Training Choirs sang in front of the Christmas Tree in Trafalgar Square yesterday afternoon.



PANTOMIME

Our visit to the Pantomime was as always a highlight of the year! Jack and the Beanstalk did not disappoint.

Mr H-R was fortunate enough to be chosen to make his stage debut—of course to the entertainment of all. We hope your children had a lot of fun!

One of our parents saw the children leave the theatre and reported back:

"I have just watched the whole school skip very merrily out of the Stag and into their coaches from the warmth of my office across the road - the children clearly had a great time!"



NOTICES

PARENT QUESTIONNAIRES 2023

Please can you complete our **annual parent** questionnaires on the following links. We'd really appreciate if you can spare 5 minutes to give us your feedback—good or bad. We will close these on 5th January 2024.

[Year 3](#) [Year 4](#) [Year 5](#) [Year 6](#)



MRS WOLFE – RIVERHEAD INFANTS SCHOOL

Dear Parents and Children, I would just like to say a huge 'Thank you' for all my gifts, cards and kind words. I was overwhelmed by all the wonderful things arranged for me in my last week and I am so grateful to you all.
Regards—Bridget Wolfe

DONATION OF ADULT T-SHIRTS

We would appreciate any donations of old adult t-shirts for our **art cupboards** in school.

CLUBS

There are a few **open spaces in the following clubs**—please complete our [booking form here](#):

- Street Dance—5 spaces
- Board Games—13 spaces
- Spanish year 4-6—5 spaces
- Training Choir

YEAR 5– RAINFORESTS NEXT TERM

Next term, year 5 will be studying the topic of rainforests and will read the book 'The Explorer' to help aid their understanding. The book, written by Katherine Rundell, is a fantastic example of high quality literature and paints such vivid pictures of living in a rainforest for the children to imagine. If you happen to have a copy at home or wish to buy one, please may your child bring it in after the Christmas holidays.

LOVE TO DANCE LETTER – YEAR 6

We are taking a team of dancers to perform at the Stag theatre: there will be a show on **Thursday 12th March 2024**. If your child is interested in taking part, we will be holding auditions on **Friday 5th January 2024 promptly at 08.00am** in the hall. Children don't need to sign up for the auditions - please just turn up on time.

All Year 6 pupils are welcome to audition and no previous dance experience is required. No preparation is needed, as we will teach them a routine during the audition. Please arrive in dance / comfortable clothes that allow free movement and indoor trainers.

VACANCIES

Please click on www.kent-teach.com to see our current list of vacancies.

- Breakfast Club Manager - Part-time
- Midday Supervisory Assistant - Part-time
- Teaching Assistant - Full-time/Part-time

FUTURE DATES

- 2 January - Inset Day
- 3 January - Inset Day
- 4 January - Term 3 Starts
- 5 January - Year 6 Love to Dance
- 8 January - Clubs Start
- 30 January - Year 6 Young Voices
- 9 February - Term 3 Ends
- 19 February - Term 4 Starts

PE TIMETABLE

TERM 3

Please find next term's PE Timetable here.

Term 3 – PE Timetable 2023/24					
Indoor PE sessions					
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
9.10 – 10.10					
11 – 12			4SF Yoga		5J Dance
1.35 – 2.30	6W Indoor Athletics (Coach)	6B Indoor Athletics (Coach)	4C Yoga	3CL Fitness (Coach)	5A Dance
2.30 – 3.25	6A Indoor Athletics (Coach)	3H Fitness (Coach)	4S Yoga	3W Fitness (Coach)	5HR Dance
Outdoor PE sessions					
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
9.10 – 10.10					
11 – 12			5J Handball		
1.30 – 2.30	3W Tag rugby		5A Handball	1:45-2:30 4SF Hockey (Coach)	6W Hockey
2.30 – 3.30	3CL Football		5HR Handball	2:30-3_15 4C Hockey (Coach)	6B Football
2.00 – 3.00 (Extra class)	3H Netball			4S Football	6A Tag Rugby

LET'S CELEBRATE

STAR OF THE WEEK

3CL	Evie S
3H	Cameron H
3W	Lara H
4C	Artie K
4S	Eloise C
4SF	Seb H

5A	Leo G
5HR	Leni M
5J	Ollie P
6A	Autumn J
6B	Molly G
6W	Charlotte T

MUSIC EXAM RESULTS

Congratulations to **Eitan D (5A)** who passed his Grade 1 violin exam with **merit** and **William G (6W)** who passed his grade 1 piano exam.

PTA

Please [click here](#) to read our December Newsletter.



YOUR AMHERST PTA

UPDATE

December 2023

UPDATE FROM THE CHAIR

Wow, what a busy time the last few weeks have been. I firstly would like to thank each and every one of you for your donations, time and really positive feedback. The Christmas bazaar was an enormous success and had such a wonderful atmosphere. It was great to have so many helpers and all stalls ran like clockwork. Thank you! I had a great team to support the bazaar but I have to mention my wonderful vice chair Nicole Miles - she works so hard for the PTA team and put a lot of time into this bazaar and all our festive plans, I certainly couldn't have done it without her. I'd like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and fantastic New Year. I look forward to catching up with you in 2024.

Hayley x

LOOKING AHEAD

Dates of future events for your diaries:

26th Jan - nearly new uniform sale
9th Feb - Valentine's raffle
22nd March - School Disco

Coming up later in the year:
26th April - duck race
17th May - ice lolly sale
6th July - Amherst BBQ

Other events will be held throughout the year, such as sales of Team Amherst hoodies, Quiz Night and Year 6 leavers disco (dates to be confirmed).

P.S. If you are interested in joining the PTA team from September 2024, please do get in contact if you would like any further information!

CROCHET GIFTS

Throughout this term, we have been crocheting different things such as Granny squares, flowers and hearts. We took these to the **Rivermere Care Home** this afternoon and gave them to the residents staying there. They really enjoyed these small gifts and they have invited us for a game of Scrabble in the New Year!

- Effie, Charlotte and Sara in 6W



COMMUNITY EVENTS

BARRACUDAS EARLY BOOKING OFFER

BOOK NOW!

SCHOOL HOLIDAY CHILDCARE EXCLUSIVE SCHOOL DISCOUNT!

USE CODE: SCHOOL10 For an EXTRA 10% off a week!

EARLY BOOKING OFFER: Save up to £89 on a week! Book before 31st Dec 2023. Last £10 per day so £50 per week per child.

Visit barracudas.co.uk or call 01480 467 567

EARLY BOOKING OFFER

We've launched at our lowest rates. You can save up to £89 a week if you book now with our Early Booking offer and your exclusive code!

On top of that, you can also secure your booking with our reduced deposit rates. Perfect to ease your finances in the run up to Christmas. You can confirm your booking for just £10 a day or £25 a week (standard deposit rates are £15 a day and £50 a week).

LOW DEPOSIT OFFER ENDS 31ST DECEMBER, 2023
EARLY BTRD RATES END 31ST JANUARY, 2024



SO Hockey

Christmas Hockey

Monday 18 & Tuesday 19 December

Are you in Years 1-8?

Join our fun hockey camps with Richard & Joel

From 10am to 3pm for just £45 per day

@ Holly Bush Lane Astro TN13 3XW
www.tickettailor.com/events/sohockey/1002676

Children's Ballet

Age 3-4 years

Saturday Mornings at Riverhead Infants School

From 9:00-9:30am

To book a Free Taster Please contact: amy@sevenoaksdance.co.uk

E-scooters – are you breaking the law?

Can I ride my e-scooter to school or work? No, it's illegal...

E-scooters are classed as motor vehicles and are required to be taxed and insured. It's not possible to get insurance for privately owned e-scooters, which means it's illegal to use them.

Can I ride my e-scooter on the pavement? No, it's illegal...

You cannot use e-scooters on public footpaths, cycle lanes or roads.

What happens if I'm caught using my e-scooter in public spaces? The scooter may be seized and as a result, destroyed.

If stopped by an officer, you may be asked to complete a breath and drugs test. You also risk a £300 fine and six penalty points on your licence for no insurance.

Kent Police Think before you buy: The number of electrical scooters being used on our streets has risen, as well as reports of serious injury and fatalities. For more information and advice on the use of e-scooters visit www.kent.police.uk/road-safety

Online safety information for parents and carers

Online safety is an important part of keeping children safe at school. All of our pupils are taught how to be safe and behave appropriately online, but we can only be successful in keeping children safe online if we work together. It's important that as adults, we take an active interest in our children's online lives and show a willingness to engage in the digital world with them. If you believe a child is in immediate danger, always contact 999 for police assistance.

GOLDen rules for parents and carers

- ### Ground advice
- Discuss and agree as a family how the internet will be used in your home. Let your children tell you what they think is and isn't acceptable for them to do online, such as not being nasty to people, keeping personal information private and speaking to an adult when they are worried. Then add your own rules such as how long they can spend online and when and where webcams can be used.
 - You might find it helpful to write these 'ground rules' down as a visual reminder.
 - Make sure your child understands that their actions and behaviours online can have offline consequences.
 - Remember these are whole family rules, so consider your own use of the internet and think about how much information you are sharing on your social networks about your children and who can see it, such as school photos.
 - Agree on what will happen if they don't follow your family rules.
- ### Online safety
- Make sure you apply parental controls to all internet enabled devices in your household, including tablets, phones and games consoles. They can restrict access to inappropriate content and can help you manage how much time your child spends online.
 - Make sure your child understands the parental controls are in place to protect them, not restrict them; some children will actively work around parental controls if they feel constrained without knowing why.
 - Set up filters on internet search engines to limit the likelihood of your children accidentally coming across inappropriate content when searching online.
 - Be aware that internet history can be hidden and deleted, so talk to your children and supervise their online use appropriately.
 - Remember filters and parental controls are not 100% effective so you cannot rely on them alone to protect your children. It is important your children understand they should tell you straight away if they see something inappropriate or upsetting online.
- ### Listen
- Take an active interest in your child's online life and talk openly with them about the things they do. Talk to your child about which websites and apps they like to use and why; engage in their online world with them.
 - Be aware of any changes in behaviour, language and attitude in your child. These behaviour changes can indicate something is upsetting your child online. Children who are groomed, radicalised, abused or exploited online will often be pressured to withdraw from family and friends.
- ### Dialogue
- Talk to your children – be open and positive when talking about the internet.
 - Make sure your child knows they can come to you for help if something happens online that makes them feel scared, worried or uncomfortable. Many children won't disclose online worries because they are scared adults will blame them or remove their access to the internet.
 - Ask your child if they know where to go for help, where to find safety advice, information about privacy settings and how to report or block users on their games and websites.
 - Explore their games and websites together to ensure your child knows how to block and report anyone who is nasty or inappropriate. Encourage your child not to retaliate or reply and to keep any evidence. If the game/app has a 'parent section', explore the parental controls and reporting systems yourself.
 - Ensure your child understands pictures, videos or comments posted online can be very difficult to remove and rarely remain private.
 - Discuss the pressures for young people to send inappropriate or nude/indecent images to each other. How might this behaviour affect their relationship? Do they know what they would do? Young people need to be aware images can be copied, saved and shared without their knowledge and if they are under 18, they may also be breaking the law by making an indecent image of themselves.

- Think U Know**: www.thinkuknow.co.uk
The National Crime Agency Child Exploitation and Online Protection Command (NCA-CEOP) have a website which is suitable for children aged 5-16 and has a section just for parents/carers with advice and information.
- NSPCC**: www.nspcc.org.uk/online/safety
The NSPCC have produced resources for parents. Their website covers excellent advice for parents about issues such as online grooming, nude image sharing and cyberbullying, as well as specific advice for children with special educational needs and disabilities.
- ChildLine**: www.childline.org.uk
The Childline website has a wide range of information and advice on both online and offline safety for children. There is information about online gaming, grooming, and the Zilt App which helps children feel empowered when confronted with inappropriate chat online. They also provide a helpline for children to get advice over the phone: 0800 1111
- UK Safer Internet Centre**: www.saferinternet.org.uk
The UK Safer Internet Centre provides a wide variety of advice and guidance to help you discuss online safety with your children. There are useful checklists for privacy settings on social networks and suggestions to consider before buying devices for your children.
- Childnet**: www.childnet.com
Childnet has resources, including videos and storybooks, to help you discuss online safety with your children. It includes advice on setting up parental controls, cyberbullying and setting up a family agreement for safer internet use.
- Internet Matters**: www.internetmatters.org
Internet Matters bring you all the information you need to keep your children safe online. It has a tool which guides you through how to set up parental controls on all the different devices in your home to protect your children.

