

Autumn Term 2025

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 thirteenth 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.

For our 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.

In May 2025 our Year 6 pupils completed their SATs exams. These are national tests completed by all children across the country assessing their ability in reading, writing, maths, grammar, punctuation and spelling (GPS). The children performed brilliantly, achieving significantly above the national average in all areas.

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 in reading, maths and GPS 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.

Subject		School	National
Reading, Writing & Maths %	Expected Standard	78	62
	Higher standard	22	8
Reading %	Expected Standard+	84	75
	High score (110+)	47	33
Writing %	Expected Standard+	84	72
	Greater Depth	26	13
GPS %	Expected Standard+	85	73
	High score (110+)	45	30
Maths %	Expected Standard+	86	74
	High score (110+)	44	26
Reading average Scaled score		109	105
GPS average scaled score		109	105
Maths average scaled score		108	105

Kent Test

Eighty Year 6 children sat the Kent Test (11+) on Thursday 11th September. Fifty-six (70%) passed the test. Well done to all 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:

1. For all children to develop the reading comprehension skills to enable greater understanding.
2. To update and embed changes to the school's Behaviour Policy.
3. To self-evaluate using the new Ofsted Framework to understand areas of strength and areas for development.

You may be aware that there is a new Ofsted inspection framework that will be now be used to judge the performance of all schools. Broadly the content is the same but divided into seven new categories. A key thread throughout this new framework is a focus on inclusion. As a school we are currently self-evaluating against the new framework to identify areas of strength and areas to improve. The categories are:

- Safeguarding
- Inclusion
- Curriculum and Teaching
- Achievement
- Attendance and Behaviour
- Personal Development and Wellbeing
- Leadership and Governance

Whenever I conduct a school tour with prospective parents, one area we always visit is the school library. We are fortunate at Amherst to have such a good library located in a prominent and central position. Helping children become confident and fluent readers is one of the most valuable things we can do as educators and parents. Enabling children to discover reading for pleasure is when a positive shift in their reading habits occurs. Children no longer see reading as a task to be completed but an experience to enjoy and look forward to.

A key element in developing reading for pleasure is understanding what you have read. Young children can often 'read' but don't fully engage with the text, as their understanding of characters' emotions and following a plot is limited. Having a focus on developing children's reading comprehension this year will hopefully improve this. An effective activity in school to develop this skill is guided reading. Guided reading is when a small group work with the teacher to read a text together, and then explore the meaning of what they have read. We have created additional space in our curriculum this year to prioritise guided reading.

As a parent, please continue to hear your child read every day and find time to read to them. If they are a reluctant reader, reading to them every day is even more important. It still enables them to enjoy books, builds vocabulary and provides a bonding experience as parent and child. I read to my youngest child (Year 6) at bedtime which we both really enjoy, although sometimes I fall asleep before him!

Christmas Bazaar

Thank you to the PTA committee and class reps for their hard work to enable Saturday's Christmas Bazaar to be such a success. Thank you to all parents that attended and gave their generous support. It had a wonderful Christmassy atmosphere and will have helped generate much needed funds.

Leaf by Sandra Dieckmann

The most recent whole school book project has been a huge success. Corridor, classroom and hall displays for each year group are now finished. The children are always so keen to see what the other year groups have done. There is a gallery on the school website if you have not had a chance to look at the amazing work the children have produced. These projects create a fantastic sense of whole school cohesion and celebration.

Year 4 completed two wonderful Christmas performances on Monday and Tuesday this week. What a showcase of talent that including singing, dancing, gymnastics and acting. I look forward to seeing many of you at the Carol Service (Monday 15th December 6.00pm) at St. Mary's.

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.

Best Wishes

Andrew Reid