

## Spring Term 2026

### *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.*

It has been a busy and productive spring term. We have some key events in the coming days such as the Year 3 Easter performance and our annual music concert. I always look forward to the Year 3 performance as it is an opportunity to see how much the children have matured and settled since they started in September.

This academic year has seen the introduction of a new Ofsted framework for schools. Inspections under the new framework began in November. Ofsted frameworks are often reviewed and changed. This latest framework has many significant changes that I would like to share with you. There are now seven areas which a school will be inspected under:

- Safeguarding (either 'met' or 'not met')
- Inclusion
- Curriculum and teaching
- Achievement
- Attendance and behaviour
- Personal development and wellbeing
- Leadership and governance

For each of these areas, other than Safeguarding, schools will be graded using the following criteria:

- Exceptional
- Strong Standard
- Expected Standard
- Needs Attention
- Urgent Improvement

The format of the final report has changed to an inspection report card that provides a written evaluation and grading for each area. There will no longer be an overall one-word judgment for schools. A key theme throughout this framework is inclusion. Schools will be inspected approximately every four years. Amherst was last inspected in May 2022, so we are expecting an inspection towards the end of this academic year. I have been through many Ofsted inspections as a teacher and headteacher, experiencing a wide range of different frameworks over the last 27 years. Themes I have observed that are constant during that time are children being safe, achieving their full potential and experiencing high quality teaching. I agree that those are the ingredients for children to experience a successful education which is what we are endeavoring to achieve at Amherst. Hopefully with a bit of enjoyment thrown in too!

I am reading an interesting book at the moment that explores the themes of obsession with the pursuit of happiness and entitlement. Some of it makes for uncomfortable reading as we all want to be happy and want our children to be happy. It discusses what actually is happiness? A common misconception is that to be happy, you need to remove all things in your life that are causing struggle or pain. The old phrase 'no pain no gain' is very true. If you want to be fit and healthy it involves sacrifice and commitment by exercising regularly and eating a healthy diet. If you want to do well at work or school it will involve giving up your time and working hard. A key aspect is to decide what type of struggle and pain you want in your life. What are you able to accept? If you are approaching a new job or career, work out what the likely struggles and commitment will be. If you want to become a parent, work out what sacrifices you are going to have to make. Parenting is full of periods of struggle and pain! It is important to remember that if we perceive our role as a parent is to remove all our child's struggles and pain, they will not develop resilience or the ability to manage on their own. A sense of entitlement will grow which will not be helpful as they move through life. Easier said than done I know, but worth remembering.

The children and staff have worked hard to complete our whole school book project on *Bandoola the Great Elephant Rescue* by Will Grill. The projects were introduced many years ago to raise standards in writing and create a sense of excitement. Both objectives were achieved and the artwork created has become an important part of the projects too. As often happens in education areas of need go in cycles. Raising standards in writing is once again a key area for schools to focus on. The whole

school book projects create the opportunity for children to draft their writing and then complete it again for the displays. This process is key for children to become more proficient writers. It is rare that your first attempt is your best. There is a link on today's newsletter to see the gallery of children's work. Many pieces would not look out of place at a secondary school.

The end of term is approaching fast and I hope you all get the chance to have a break whether going away or staying at home. I look forward to seeing many of you at the Year 3 performance and the music concert next week.

Best Wishes

Andrew Reid