

Summer 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.

Welcome to new Year 3 parents who will be reading my Headteacher's letter for the first time. As we approach the end of the year, I would like to use this term's letter to share staffing information for September 2026.

As I come to end of my thirteenth year as headteacher at Amherst, I reflect on what has been another highly successful year. Our vision is to *Inspire Every Pupil* and I have observed many examples this year of children being highly engaged and enjoying their learning.

I would like to share the staffing structure for next year and which teacher will teach your child.

Staffing structure for 2026/27

Year 3

Oak Class - Miss Foinette (Mon – Wed) and Mrs Barratt (Thurs and Fri) Year Group Leaders – teaching Rabbits Class

Elm Class - Mr Stevens – teaching Hedgehogs Class

Ash Class - Mrs Kelly – teaching Squirrels Class

Year 4

Maple Class - Mr Hafford Robson - Year Group Leader – teaching 3WH

Cedar Class - Mrs Lester (Mon, Tues, Wed and Fri) and Mrs Stafford (Thurs) – teaching 3B

Birch Class - Miss Holtshausen – teaching 3FB

Year 5

Rowan Class - Miss Jones (Mon - Wed) and Miss Huntley (Thurs and Fri) – teaching 4C

Willow Class - Mrs Carver (Mon – Wed) and Mrs Siddorns (Thurs and Fri) – teaching 4SL

Beech Class - Mr Taylor – teaching 4HR

Year 6

Sycamore Class - Mrs Adams – Senior Year Group Leader – teaching 5J

Hawthorn Class - Miss Nicholl – teaching 5A

Chestnut Class - Mrs Mais (Mon – Wed) and Mrs Fox (Thurs and Fri) – teaching 5CS

Assistant Headteacher

Miss Jones – who will also be covering Mrs Archer's maternity leave as Year 5 Year Group Leader.

Inclusion Manager

Miss Watson (Mon – Fri).

Recruitment and retention are a challenge, so I am pleased to have such a strong teaching team in place. Staffing is always a key priority, as your child's teacher is the person who will have the most impact on their social, emotional and academic progress.

You will have noticed that we have decided to change to class names next year rather than using the year group number and teacher's initial. We have labelled the room rather than the group of children, so their class name will change each year as they move through the school.

Another change we are going to implement from September is children wearing PE kit to school on their PE days. Please ensure your child is wearing the correct school PE kit to ensure the children look smart and are appropriately dressed.

Regarding school uniform, we are happy for children to wear a smart plain black trainer (if the trainer has a logo on it, this needs to be black too) as their school shoe if you wish to. It also enables girls to have that option too. Both a school shoe or smart plain black trainer will be acceptable. Please could you avoid your child wearing an ankle boot style shoe.

We have several staff who are leaving and I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their hard work.

Mr Barratt has been appointed as the Deputy Headteacher of Smarden Primary School. This is a significant promotion and we are really pleased that Mr Barratt's experience as a Year Group Leader and member of the school leadership team has enabled him to secure this post. Mr Barratt joined Amherst in 2015 to train to be a teacher and it has been a pleasure to work with him as he progressed to becoming a highly valued member of the school teaching and leadership team. Mr Barratt has made a significant contribution to school sport during his time which so many children have benefitted from. I know he will be highly successful as a Deputy Headteacher.

Mr Clarke has been appointed by Surrey Arts as East Surrey Area Manager, a role within Surrey County Council. He will be leading Surrey Arts' music education work across East Surrey, covering Reigate & Banstead, Epsom & Ewell and Tandridge. The role involves working closely with schools to develop high-quality music education, support and coordinate instrumental teaching provision, and develop out-of-school music centres. First and foremost, Mr Clarke is an excellent teacher and highly valued member of the school leadership team. Mr Clarke joined Amherst in 2014 and had an immediate positive impact setting up Amherst Choir and then later Training Choir. The outstanding music provision he created has been sustained and grown throughout his time at Amherst. Many children and families have gained so much from the experience of singing in the choirs and the wide range of performances attended. His dedication and skill set are quite unique.

Mrs Wheeler is leaving us to have more time to develop her tutoring business and spend time supporting her elderly mother. She has given so much to Amherst over the years as an excellent class teacher and also her contribution to school sport.

Miss Coates has secured her first teaching post at St. Katharine's Knockholt Primary School. Ms Kitto has secured her first teaching post at St. Paul's Primary School in Swanley. We wish them every success in their new roles.

We have internally appointed new Year Group Leaders to replace Mr Clarke and Mr Barratt. Mrs Foinette and Mrs Barratt will be leading Year 3 and Mr Hafford-Robson will be leading Year 4. I look forward to supporting them as they contribute to the whole school leadership of Amherst in the coming year.

We have been successful in recruiting three new teachers to join Amherst in September. Mr Stevens is an experienced teacher who will be part of the Year 3 team next year. Mrs Kelly is an experienced teacher that will also be joining the Year 3 team. Miss Holtshausen will be beginning her third year of teaching and joining the Year 4 team. I am delighted to have been able to recruit such strong teachers to continue and sustain the high-quality teaching provision we provide at Amherst.

Thank you to all staff – teachers, teaching assistants, kitchen, midday team, breakfast club, after school club, office/reception and premises/cleaning team who are vital to the children's success and smooth running of the school. I would also like to thank music teachers, sports coaches and volunteers that have helped contribute to our superb educational offer.

As you can see it is a period of change at Amherst, which can at times feel daunting but also provides the school with the opportunity to bring in new skills and ideas. I often liken my role to that of a football manager. I now have the challenge of winning the league again but with a different squad of players!

I look forward to seeing many of you when attending this year's Sports Day on Friday 3rd July and the summer production 'Mary Poppins'. The children having been working so hard and can't wait to perform.

If I do not see you before the end of term, I hope you all have a wonderful summer holiday.

Best wishes

Mr Reid