

Herne Flyer 10 – Autumn Term 2025

Knowing Every Child – Inspiring Every Mind – Achieving Every Day



Friday 14th November 2025

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Dear Parents & Carers,

We like to be open and transparent with you, so I've got quite a meaty subject to address this week. I'd like to mention something that has brought forth questions from prospective and existing parents alike after PIS recently let parents know that, due to lower pupil intake numbers in Reception, they are possibly planning for vertically grouped classes across Year R and Y1 from September. As we work closely together, we were aware of this process. We are now being asked by parents if we will follow suit as most PIS pupils transfer up to Herne. The honest answer, it's probable, as the current Yr2 has only 106 pupils, but it is not as simple as it first sounds.

Pupil numbers post-Covid have dropped significantly across the UK. Both PIS and Herne are Local Authority maintained schools and our admissions are, to a large degree, dictated by the LA. Schools get their main funding from the government based on pupil numbers...less pupils means less funding. This, in turn, affects the number of staff schools can afford to employ and the degree to which schools can put in additional support (beyond individual pupil's SEND needs which brings some additional funding). While classes at R & KS1 are capped at 30 per teacher, this is not the case at KS2 but we would not want classes much beyond 30 as this would mean needing to put in additional staff which, again, would not be funded proportionately.

It is most likely that, longer term, both schools will need to move to 3-form entry (90 PAN - Pupil Admission Number) as demographic numbers and LA advice suggests this will provide enough places for local pupils. PIS have already shared this with parents. We must also consider this now as the wave of smaller pupil numbers move up from KS1 to Herne.

At Herne, we are considering that if this happens, this option could be viewed with a degree of positivity as it could be beneficial to our pupils. We are a 3-form entry building with 4-form entry of classes! Whether we follow suit and vertically group next year will be dependent on advice from the LA about incoming pupil numbers. This means that although we can work with PIS to predict their numbers transferring, we have no guarantee of total numbers from them or numbers from other sources until after April. It's a tricky one. This year, for example, PIS had 85 in Yr2 but we had 99 places offered in Yr3 by the LA and 97 taken up but we knew this would be 96 longer term, 6 children do not constitute a whole class and it would not be sustainable to have 4 smaller classes as we haven't received enough funding to staff 4 classes.

So, I hear you ask, why are we (PIS & Herne) not doing a great deal of marketing to increase our intake? It's very simple...marketing just spreads potential pupils in any location in a different way, it doesn't make new pupils. There are many small village schools around us and when there is a lower birth rate, PIS & Herne would be potentially encouraging children from other school catchments to join us, making some of these small schools very vulnerable, not sustainable and risking the closure we hear about in small schools right across the country. This causes schools to be less likely to work collegiately together as they are in competition for pupils, reduces parental choice and can discourage new families from moving into villages.

Going vertically grouped is a huge task for staff to plan for - it requires a 2-year rotating curriculum - so this isn't something that we would do unless we really have to, but we are currently looking into the implications ready for next September. There are many pros and cons to this depending on which research you choose to read. I have no doubt that if we need to, we'll do it well, making our curriculum just as exciting as ever. Do bear in mind that all of our local small schools do this already as most have a PAN of 15. It isn't revolutionary but it is, for both PIS and Herne, an evolution process. It also doesn't stop either school taking an extra "bulge" class in any year where there is enough increase in demand locally to make another whole class, e.g. from new housing, etc.

We will plan for both situations but will make a firm decision somewhere between the indicative pupil numbers after applications are in (January) and the real admission numbers being issued in late April. In the meanwhile, we are discussing our options and logistics. If needed, it would most likely, involve our new Yr3 (current Yr2) and Yr4 (current Yr3) being grouped across 7 classes for September 2026 initially. We will still have higher numbers going into Yr 5 and Yr6 for September '26 so they would need to remain in 4 forms per year group. This would, however, need to change as those Yr3/4 classes move in a wave up through the school.

Staff here have been informed recently of this potential change. We will let you know more as soon as we are able but hope this helps you understand where we are right now. It's complex and we've been discussing local area pupil number projections in our respective Governing Bodies over the last 12 months. I'll make sure we keep you updated as soon as we know more!



On a far, far happier note...it's been a busy but wonderful week at Herne, and one in which we celebrated all that is good about the community of Petersfield. On Sunday we were so proud of the Choir who represented the school at the **Remembrance Sunday** parade. Huge thanks to Miss Morphew for organising and to Yr4 staff who joined us. On Tuesday, we took the Ambassadors and some of our Service Children to the **Armistice Day** service at the cenotaph. Thanks to Mrs Katie Elliot- Smith for coordinating this. We had a lovely treat on the way home, Mayor, Chris Page, took the children into the newly refurbished Council Chambers. We felt very honoured.





On Wednesday I was invited to join in the celebrations for **25 years of The Kings Arms** and attend their AGM. This amazing charity runs groups for pupils who need emotional support to transition to, and engage with, secondary school. We are so lucky to have this resource and many of our children benefit in the summer term of Y6. They also offer wonderful support to children registered as Young Carers.

Our very own Mr Tim Aeschliman received an award for his contribution. He and his wife, Caroline (CEO), play a huge part in the success of this project as do several of our parents and ex-pupils who are either employed by the trust, support as Board Members or volunteer. It really was a truly humbling and awe-inspiring event. We were also entertained by magician, Dynamo, who supports the charity after similar experiences and support growing up. If

you want to know more about this wonderful organisation, do click on the link. You may even want to make a voluntary contribution to help their fund raising as a Christmas gift to the charity. <https://www.thekingsarms.org.uk/>

And finally, whatever you are up to this weekend, enjoy. We're going to tackle the Christmas gift shopping! Ho, ho, ho?(And of course practising my moves for the school disco)

Best wishes

Sue Sayers

Headteacher

Herne Catering Contract from January 2026

We're really pleased to announce that following the announcement of the closure of our current catering supplier, Hampshire Education Catering, we have recently awarded the catering contract to Hertfordshire Catering Limited (HCL). HCL comes with many years school catering experience in Hertfordshire and Surrey. For more information about the company and to view sample menus please go to <https://www.hcl.co.uk/>. We will be sending out more information about the Herne bespoke menus and how you can pay and order meals over the next few weeks.



Hampshire's consultation on school admission arrangements for 2027-28 In accordance with statutory requirements, Hants is consulting on the 2027/28 admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools within its area and would like to hear your views. You can view the full consultation from midday at

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/aboutthecouncil/haveyoursay/consultations/admission-arrangements27-28>



Yo-Chi Classes at Herne!

Yo-Chi is a creative and educational programme combining seasonal yoga, Tai-Chi and Mindfulness. It gives children a tool box of wellbeing self help skills and techniques. £8 per class, payable half termly. Mondays, 3.30pm-4.30pm in Cherry class. Contact Elsa on elsadonovan@club-morgan.com or 07821 625195. www.yo-chi.co.uk

IN-SCHOOL CHILD HEALTH CLINICS

We are really pleased to share with you that we now have a regular drop in with the school nurse. **The next date is booked for Wednesday December 3rd from 9.00am – 12.00noon.** If you have concerns for your child with bedwetting, healthy eating, challenging behaviour or anxiety please contact our Home School Link Worker l.tandy@hernejunior.com to book a half hour appointment. Please note that these slots should not be used as a place to seek advice regarding specific medical conditions.



Special Values Winners!



NOVEMBER		DECEMBER	
Monday 17 th	Maple class swimming at Churchers	Monday 1 st	Maple class swimming at Churchers
Monday 24 th	Maple class swimming at Churchers	Friday 5 th	RockSteady Concert to Parents/Carers
Wednesday 26 th	HAFS - School Disco for Years 4 & 6	Monday 8 th	Maple class swimming at Churchers
Thursday 27 th	HAFS - School Disco for Years 3 & 5	Monday 15 th	Maple class swimming at Churchers
		Thursday 18 th	School Christmas Dinner
		Friday 19 th	Last day of term – 12.30pm finish