

Wednesday 26th November

Head's desk

A big thank you to everyone who commented on the previous edition of the Layston letter. Feedback has been very favourable. This month we have had a packed schedule with many things achieved and celebrated and many things to come.

Since half term we have introduced 'Forest School' for all our children and our PTA have bought class sets of waterproof jackets and trousers to support this learning. From the very first session, Forest School aims to increase each child's self-confidence, self-esteem and independence, enabling each child to reach their full potential. The learning happens not in the confines of four walls but in the open natural forest where everything changes throughout the year.

"If you close your eyes it sounds like the sea with the wind rustling through the trees" (child year2).

The children learn by doing, talking and taking on challenges. Forest School gives each child a chance to express themselves in a way they might not be able to within a classroom setting. We are awaiting parent booklets about forest school to come back from the printers for distribution to all of our parents.





Enabling the children to share their learning the within our community is important to us and with this in mind we have made our own Christmas CD recording with each class and our choir contributing. The completed CD for sale features a striking design by a child in year 3.



The children's artistic talents have been further utilised through designing a poster to promote St Peter's Church Christmas services. By way of a thank you, the Rev. Ian Hill and church wardens have been kind enough to provide a book for each child in recognition of the care and thoughtfulness that went into



the project as well as specific book prizes for the winning entries.

To celebrate anti bullying week which we call 'Friendship Week', all the children participated in a performing arts presentation called 'Outside the Circle' which explored the nature of friendship and that if you really want to be a friend you need to know the things you have in common but you also need to enjoy the things that makes each one of us special.

As a result the children reflected:

"It is special that we live in God's world".

"Friendship is about community and not being pushed away".

"It's about friends and not being left out by them".



Indeed we have plenty to be inclusive about as our Christmas production of 'The Black Shadow' scheduled for the 10- 12th of December, is being enthusiastically practised, meticulously planned and eagerly awaited by the whole community. Together with a

new inter-school sports league with competitive fixtures between local schools beginning in November; a Christmas fete on Saturday 7th December at 2pm replete with Santa's grotto, an array of stalls and crafts organised by our



PTA; Christmas class parties and whole school

Christmas dinner plus some excellent in school workshops from 'History off the Page' and 'Science Boffins'; the final part of the Autumn term will be "fun, fantastic and fulsome" (child year 4).

Reception



We had fun drawing Rangoli patterns to on the playground.

"I like being able to chalk on the ground."

"It was fun working with a partner"

"We had to tell each other what we wanted to do."



Mr Collier visited our school to remind us how to keep safe when we walked to and from school.

Most importantly we had to remember to STOP before crossing the road

"I liked it 'cos Mums and Dads came."

"I helped Dad cross the road."

Year 1

Year One's topic this half term is toys and how they work. On Friday 'History Off The Page' came into school for the day with an exhibition of toys from the past.



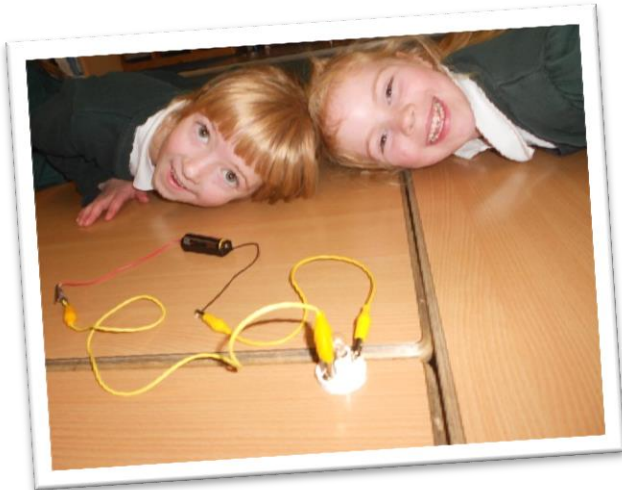
Year One were able to explore these in a truly hands on way, investigating construction toys, puppets, cars, wooden toys, wind-up toys and much more. Then in the afternoon they made their own! Thanks to everyone who helped make it a really special day.



Year 2

This half term, Year 2 have been focusing on the topic 'How things work'. We have started to investigate different types of forces in our own science lab role play area and are all really excited about our 'science day' workshops!

"It's so cool! We played with the magnets and explained to Miss Bowman and Mrs Bloomfield about how they work!" (Magnus Coates and Joseph Scott)



In Literacy we have been reading the story of Mr Grinling and his lighthouse adventures focusing on describing characters, the story and the setting! Also in Science and D&T we're even making our very own red and white light house model using electric circuits to light up the top of the light house!

"I can't wait to make the light house! Miss Bowman and Mrs Strachan have brought in tubes ready for us!" (Bethany Ryman)

During PSHE we have looked at being reflective and understanding of our feelings and the word 'humility'. We have created our own quiet place in the classroom where we can relax, think and reflect. Some of us even write our thoughts and stick them up onto display!

"I like our quiet area because it's where you can think about God and other people."

(Jake McPherson)



Year 3

This month we have had a wicked month. Firstly in literacy we have written a letter to the crayons to convince them to come back. The crayons have been on strike because they've been going blunt and getting headaches and plenty of other things.

In science we have been learning about forces. We have been learning about gravity and how it pulls us to the centre of the earth! We have also been



exploring the class for magnetic objects. Mr Strahan had some coins BUT some were not magnetic. We found that some coins were not made out of magnetic metal.



In maths we have been learning about tallying and one day we went into the high street. We were counting what the most popular colour of cars was. It was really exciting and we saw loads of cars.



In P.E. we have been learning how to play dodgeball. We have also been taught by Mr Green how to play hockey. Some people were very good.

We have also done R.E., Forest School, art, paired reading and even a cake bake.

Our month has been great fun!

Reuben Shorey and Megan Eaglesfield



We have certainly had a very active month. The children are really enjoying their Forest School sessions in the Wild Wood. They have also taken part in some fun inter-school sport. At the end of October, we had a great morning at Edwinstree playing tag rugby against some of the local schools.



We have also had two recent football competitions. On Monday evening the Year 3 team fought gallantly to earn a well-deserved 2-2 draw against Millfield thanks to a last-gasp equaliser from Joseph McKinley. It was really good to see them working together as a team and spurring each other on. Well done to everyone that took part and thanks to those that came along to support them in the freezing conditions!

Year 4

Year 4 have been making videos about World War II. In groups we have researched an area such as 'Evacuees' or 'Rationing'. We made up role plays or news flashes to get across our information.

We are really busy now practising for the Christmas play. We have lots of lines to learn and Mrs. Cooper is making sure we really 'act our parts'! The story is great and we are looking forward to performing - don't forget to come along and see us!



Getting ready to record to record the CD!

Sorry no photos of the play - we don't want to give anything away!



PTA

Since the last newsletter we held the Year 3 cakebake, many thanks to everyone who made and bought cakes on the day. We raised £93.

Our events for the remainder of the year focus around Christmas with the fair starting off our festivities on Saturday 7th December between 2 and 4pm. Letters have gone out to all parents requesting donations for our various stalls and help leading up to and on the day of the fair itself. Any help that you can give us would be very much appreciated. We will shortly be sending out books of raffle tickets for our Grand Draw, please do your best to sell 'your book'.

After each of the Christmas Play performances the following week we will be standing at the exits with donation tins. As a thank you to the children for putting on what is always a fantastic performance each year we like to show our appreciation by paying for a travelling theatre company to come and give them a performance in the lead up to Christmas. Your donations after the play enable us to do this, so thank you in advance!! We will also be selling refreshments before the Thursday evening performance from the dining room.

At our last meeting, Mrs Bloomfield made a request to us that we purchase some waterproof jackets and trousers so that the children can spend more time outside without the risk of getting damp and dirty. We have bought enough for everyone to be able to use them when required and in different sizes to cater for our little reception children to our big year 4's! They will be used in their forest school which I am sure you will hear more about in the coming weeks.

Finally, we are planning to spend a little more money this month, keep your eyes and ears peeled as Santa might just make a special delivery at the Christmas Fair.

Thank you for all your support this year, the PTA would like to wish you all a very Happy Christmas.

Looking forward...

In January we will be benefitting from the extension of the provision offered through our partnership with the two external Early Years providers who share our site- Layston pre-school and Buntings. A grand opening day is planned for Thurs 23rd January 2014 and details can be found through contacts listed on our website at www.layston.herts.sch.uk.

Another new venture for us is the hosting a whole school/community arts project running over two days from Monday 20th - Tuesday 21st January 2014 at which we will be creating giant 3D murals to celebrate our English Country side providing opportunities for reflection and wonder on the nature of Creation and Stewardship in the context of sustainability. We will be inviting as many parents as possible to join us and help create something very special and long lasting for our school.

In a world where self-interest is rife, that children can foster compassion for one another and their world is both important and timely. Through participating in National fundraising days like 'Children in Need', or responding to disaster relief appeals such as the Philippines relief fund, we empower children to understand that their actions can make a positive difference to the lives of others.



Our Christian value of this half term is 'Humility' and as we look forward to advent and the birth of Christ we are reminded that Jesus chose the way of humility and poverty and embraced the sick, lonely, poor and dispossessed. As a school community we look forward to celebrating Christmas at Church on Tuesday Dec 17th in a child centred version of the 'nine lessons and carols' service and sharing the wonder and simplicity of that First Christmas with our parent community.

Kind regards

Mrs Bloomfield