

Friday 28th February 2014

Head's desk

A big welcome back to you all. We are already enjoying the sunshine and the children are able to get out and about so much more.

We were privileged to receive a visit from Bishop Alan on February 6th and were delighted he not only took Collective Worship but visited all the classes and chatted to the children. He wrote us a letter afterwards praising the school saying how he was 'impressed with the way.... (the school have) been working on the Christian ethos ...not only the outward signs such as the cross in the hallway, but the Christian ethos has clearly affected relationships' and he went on to commend 'first rate pupil guides' and to send us best wishes for 'all you are doing for these pupils'.



Your children took part in a circus skills workshop towards the end last half term and had a fun challenging and intriguing time, learning new skills and making discoveries about their own capabilities.



A fun filled parent taster session rounded off last half term. We were pleased so many of you came to support your children and learn a little more about their classroom projects. We send a big thank you to all parents who helped on the morning. We received so many positive comments and will certainly continue to run these sessions in future.



Partnership with parents is paramount to us and I thank all those who come and talk to us about their perception of the school, what we get right and how we might improve. Open communication is key to ensuring the best learning outcomes for all children. Even if you have a concern do please come and discuss it with me.

Our last parent chat session took place on 4th February 2014 and was attended by 6 parents with 1 emailed response. Set out below is how we have managed these suggestions.

You told us	As a result we are/have
We would like to see PE kit and associated clothing stored more efficiently in school	Mrs Bartlett and Mrs Brears have set up a 2 person task force to look into possible solutions.
Quantity of unclaimed lost property is growing	At end of each half term we will set out lost property in the dining hall over 2 days from 3pm. for collection. Any unclaimed property will be recycled, hopefully in an on-site bin to be installed soon (thank you PTA).
Dog fouling outside the school is a nuisance	We will investigate signage to discourage perpetrators.
Lack of clarity about times for Forest School and what clothing to bring	Email went out to all with dates of Forest School for all year groups together with notice that children can come into school dressed in Forest School clothes on appropriate days.

At Parent chat we also informed parents about E safety. There is already a strong filter on the Hertfordshire grid to keep children safe. To enhance this we have installed a dolphin icon called Hector on to the computers. If they see anything inappropriate or they feel uncomfortable with on screen the children click on the Hector logo and this will freeze the screen. This message is being reinforced at assembly time and in class.

In addition we have put additional links on our website for parental and child information on how to stay safe using technologies. Staff receive regular training on

E safety and we are looking to provide opportunities for parental training in the near future.

We also shared plans of some potential upgrades to our building to enhance learning opportunities. Specifically a canopy to cover the back of the KS2 building bringing both shelter and additional covered storage space for outside learning resources. In addition we would like to develop the bottom playground areas to provide a covered area and an increase in high quality hard landscaped learning playscapes to support and captivate learners. It is important that any additions allow for flexible usage and are of outstanding quality, design and creativity as well as being eco aware. To this end we are currently in negotiation with infinite playgrounds

www.infiniteplaygrounds.co.uk . Of course this will be a whole school project and your children's ideas will form an important element of the design process. In addition we look forward to working with the PTA in realising our vision.

Reception



We had great fun learning circus skills. First we had to throw and catch a small square of fabric, easy when we tossed it into the air as a square; much harder when it was rolled into a ball.

Next we had to make our stick jump from our elbows to our hands. Fantastic fun but harder than it looks.



We then tried spinning plates. Mrs Smith found it very hard because she has long fingernails.



Best of all though was trying out the tightrope. We all felt really shaky when we started but adults helped us.



We also enjoyed sharing our learning with so many parents,

We all had a busy fun morning and look forward to the next taster session.



Year 1



We were juggling with some sticks. It felt hard. We had to put our hands out, like reaching out - Dan.

And Emily... we had to throw them up high in the air. It felt scary that it was going to land on you but we caught it. It made me feel happy because I could juggle.

I had to pinch the middle of the juggling stick to help me learn to be a circus star - Charlotte.



I was putting it on my toe and flicking it up onto my hand - Isaac.

Parent taster session

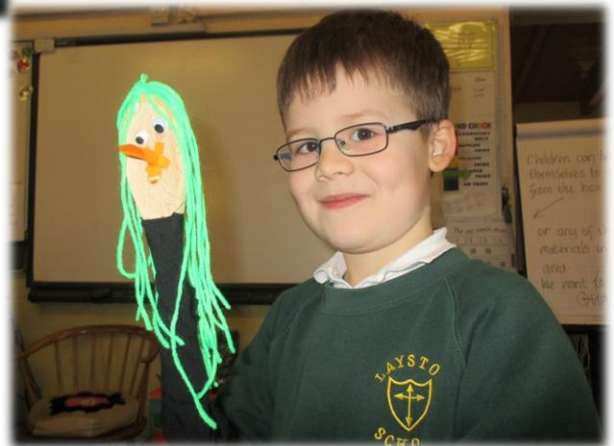


I was making puppets with my nan. It was fun. My nan thought it was hard!

- Jonny

And Ben... my dad was helping make the puppet. I liked him coming in!

I liked my mummy helping me make the dress for the puppet. I liked the green hair the best - Oliver K.



My puppet has a heart nose on it. I liked his goo goo sticky eyes - Aiden.

I am counting.....I made a rocket.... - Thomas.



Year 2

What a busy half term we have had in Year 2! We have been on our first school trip to the Roald Dahl museum where we learnt all about Roald Dahl's books and his life! We saw his special writing shed and chair and even got to dress up as Roald Dahl book characters!



"We had so much fun we forgot that we were learning!" Isla Yr 2



"I sat in Roald Dahl's chair. It was amazing. I felt like an author and could have written a brilliant book!" Harry Yr 2



In the same week we also had a circus man come into school to teach circus skills! It was brilliant! We got to spin plates, balance on a tight rope and juggle with the most dangerous of the circus equipment yet...silky scarfs!

"I loved the monsters catch!" Alfie Y2

"I got to roll on the floor spinning a plate!" Toni Y2



We really enjoyed our R.E topic last half term and were so excited to have a visit from Bishop Alan!

"I loved showing him our stain glass window! He really liked it" Savanna



"I showed him our class prayer tree" Frankie Y2

Year 3

Just before half term we had loads of fun learning different circus skills (well I certainly did!). We sampled a whole range of activities including: balancing feathers, juggling scarves, performing tricks with sticks and even walking on a tightrope!



"I loved circus skills. I learned how to ride four-wheeled roller skates." Harry.



"We got to walk on a real tightrope and I did some juggling. It was fun." Megan D.

"My favourite part was balancing the feathers." Megan E.

"It was awesome. We went to balance on the tightrope but we needed help!" Aidan.



This term we have been learning about space and we have focused on a rather important historical event: the first moon landing. We have attempted to retell the story of the landing by creating our very own Lego animation movies on the iPads. To do this we have been learning all about stop motion which requires lots of tiny movements, patience and plenty of photos! Thank you to the parents that popped in to see the animations in progress during the taster session.



"I thought the animations were great. I did the actual moon landing!" Reuben.



"It was super. I did mine about Neil Armstrong going to the moon." Ethan.



"It was fun. We had to move it really tiny steps!" Luke.

"I thought that the Lego animation was particularly good. I put loads of blue Lego on the surface so it looked like the sea." Jessica D.



Year 4



Following on from our Art Solutions day, Year 4 have made a huge 3d dragon as part of their topic about fantasy stories. It can be spied in the corridor. They have written 'lost' posters of their dragons, as well as advertisements for their 'magic wands'.

The children said that Art Solutions had helped them understand how to put the dragon together and use art straws and cardboard tubes to help with the tail and wings. "It looks great!" said Katie.



PTA

It's been a quiet start to the year, but at the last meeting we agreed on our events schedule for the remainder of the year and will publish it shortly.

Our events leading up to Easter include our Easter Egg Tombola which will be in the playground after school on Wednesday 2nd April. Nearer the time we will be asking for donations of Easter eggs to be brought into school. We will also be holding an Easter competition, which will be judged by Reverend Hill, details will be sent home soon with entries due in at the end of March.

Finally we will be supporting Sport Relief 2014 by giving the children the opportunity to come to school in their PJ's on Friday 21st March in return for a £1 donation to the Sport Relief 2014 fund. Posters will go up soon for this.

At our last meeting we also discussed what we would like to spend the money we are raising on next. Last year as you know we were able to purchase 16 iPads for the school, amongst other things, from money raised at events which you all generously supported. This year we are looking at contributing towards enhancing some of the outside areas for both play and learning and are working on ideas with the school to do this. Please continue to help us so that we can make this happen, we really appreciate your support and so do the children and staff!!

Our next meeting is on Wednesday 5th March at 7.30pm in the staff room, everyone is welcome.

Thanks again, from the PTA.

Governors

The Governors met in February with a full agenda. A key outcome was to set up a 'Layston growth task force' to consider the impact of the confirmed housing growth to Layston, please let us have your views and comments on this please, either catch one of us in the playground, email the school office, or use the suggestion box that is located outside the office.

We have also restructured the Governing Body, next term Paul Ryman will step down as Chair. Paul has done a tremendous job and I'm sure the whole school community will join us in thanking him for his contribution. Catherine Tallis will take on the role of Chair.

Governors here at Layston play a central role in supporting and adding value to the school. Governors take part in classroom visits, shape school policies and priorities and monitor school performance and finances. We currently have two vacancies on the Governing Body. No experience is necessary and full training and support is given. For more information see the Governors board next to the school office or have a chat with one of us.

Finally some feedback on the 'parents voice' exercise late last year. The feedback has been invaluable to the Governors; thank you to all who contributed. Feedback fell into three key categories: improving communication, improving the site and attainment of pupils. We have actioned your comments in each area as follows:

Communication

A central theme to your feedback was around enhanced communication. The new look newsletter is now central in how we communicate with you. The board in the lower playground is now updated daily with important news and events and text messages are sent more regularly with key information. Memos continue to be emailed to all with important messages.

Site

We secured a full time caretaker last term; previously we had a shared arrangement with Millfield. This has enabled faster site maintenance such as clearing of leaves and

guttering and as a result the site now looks much smarter. Governors have also conducted detailed site walks to prioritise spending for next year. Consequently we give our full support to the continued upgrading of outside facilities for learning. Thorough stakeholder consultation has identified the need for a canopy on the Y3 and 4 classrooms and enhancements to the lower playground for KS1 to extend educational opportunities. We are also awaiting a boiler replacement and heating upgrade after successfully applying for funding from the County Council.

Attainment

One comment centred on the attainment levels of Layston pupils relative to other First Schools feeding Edwinstree. Children at Layston achieve well, see the Ofsted data dashboard @ [ofstedschooldatadashboard](#). Mrs Bloomfield has also sought feedback from Edwinstree on how well our pupils transition; which was positive.

The school works closely with Edwinstree to ensure transition between schools is as seamless as possible and we welcome feedback from parents with children still at Layston who have made this transition with an older sibling.

Best Wishes,

Tina Wilson

Looking forward...

March Highlights:

Thursday 6th March - World Book Day - come to school dressed as a favourite book character

Monday 10th March - Living eggs in school for 2 weeks! A chance to see eggs incubating and hatching before our eyes.

Monday 10th March - Layston v. Hormead football match 3.30 - 4.30pm (Home)

Wednesday 12th March Y2 and 3 scooter training. Scooters needed in school that day.

Friday 21st March - Sports comic relief - Pyjama day (PTA event)

Mon - Wed 24th - 26th March - Parent Consultation Evenings

Tuesday 25th March - Freman Y4 Book Club Visit

Wednesday March 26th Y2 football Festival 1-3pm Freman.

April Highlights:

Tuesday 1st April- Parent Chat- 2.30 -3.15- no fooling!

Wednesday 2nd April- 9.30 am Easter Service at St Peter's. All welcome.

Wednesday 2nd April- 3.15pm - Chocolate Tombola and decorate an egg competition (PTA event)

Friday 4th April - Term ends at 2pm

Tuesday 22nd April- Summer term begins

Year 4 Charity Sale Summer Term

We are a group of Y4's, Katie, Emma, Charlotte and Leah.

Our idea is to make up some stalls to sell some art and craft things for King Georges Hospital.

We will sell them to raise money for King George's Hospital. The sale will take place on **Thurs 15th May 2014** after school.

If anyone can make something for us to sell please let us know!

With kind regards

Myra Bloomfield

Headteacher