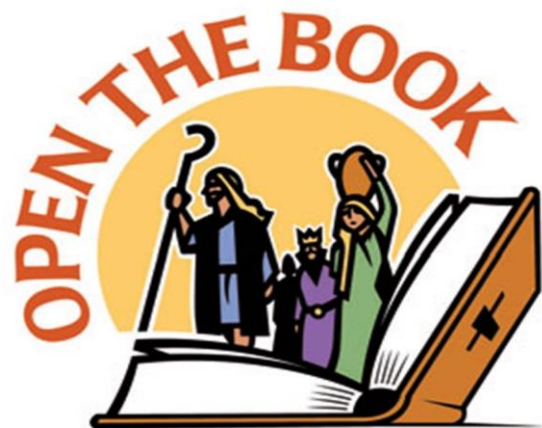


Monday 31st March 2014

Head's desk

A few weeks ago, Layston School were delighted to host the very first Hertfordshire training session of 'Open the Book'. This is an initiative to present the Bible stories in schools in accessible and enjoyable ways.

Delegates from other church schools and local parishes joined together for a demonstration assembly followed by a question and answer session. The story chosen for the day was the Prodigal Son and the children participated enthusiastically in the drama, donning masks and cloaks.



With spring on the way we have been nurturing two sets of eggs which the children have been watching hatch and are now observing in the brooding box. Reception and Year 1 have been especially closely involved and you can see some of their responses in the children's voice section.

We always get a very full turn out to our parent consultation evenings and thank you for your feedback to questions relating to the roll out of free school meals for reception children and KS1, revision of our behaviour policy and year 4 transition.

66 questionnaires were returned of which the overwhelming majority support children continuing being able to bring in packed lunch from home.

Likewise there was virtually 100% support for clearer guidelines for children and parents on acceptable behaviours in school, sanctions in place and how these are reported to you, together with more tangible rewards for those whose behaviours are exemplary.

Helpful comments on year 4 transition will be integrated into transition arrangements and the odd additional comment relating to the other sections will be factored into our reviews.

We are delighted that Angie Blanchard on behalf of our Walking bus Scheme was nominated for the County Travel Awards Competition and attended a ceremony on Tues 25th March at Hertford theatre together with her family and governor Marg Goodhill. Angie was presented with a highly commended certificate and we are incredibly proud of her achievement and that of all the adults and children that make our walking bus such a success.

Summary of Achievement Spring 2014

- Continue to enrich the outdoor learning experiences for the children, introducing some gardening activities
- Two day Art Solutions workshop which provided the school with exceptional displays and a subsequent letter from the Art Solutions Team praising the children's aptitude, work ethic, behaviour and creativity in advance of their years.
- Formal opening of the new pre-school provision by the Mayor and his wife and comments he made about the warmth of welcome and Christian ethos he and his wife experienced on visiting our school
- Strengthening of e- safety across the school through installation of Hector safety button on computers, enhanced links on our website about e- safety for our families and direct teaching and learning about e-safety to our children
- Winning the inter schools Speed Stacking competition and being asked to represent our district in the Royston finals. Thank you Mrs Scarrott.
- Road safety training for Year R and Y2 and scooter training for Y2 and 3.

- Revision of our behaviour policy in consultation with our parents (full copies available from Summer term)
- Consultation with parents about the impact of free school meals provision for the under 7's.
- Hosting of Bishop Alan and an 'Open the Book' training session for Hertfordshire. On both occasions the school received very complimentary letters praising the children's receptivity and behaviour and the Christian ethos of the school.
- Angie Blanchard on behalf of our Walking Bus Scheme reached the finals of the County Travel Awards Competition to find exceptional individuals promoting community initiatives
- Running a whole school circus skills day to help develop coordination, self-esteem and learn new skills
- Celebrating World Book Day on March 6th in costume
- Whole school visioning of enhanced play provision for the bottom playground
- Decision to install a decorative canopy across the back of the KS2 building to provide shelter, dry storage and extended play opportunities on the back playground.
- Commissioning survey on the demountable classroom and the roof and window walling for the whole building with view to upgrades
- Staff attending training, inter school clusters and developing programmes of study for the new National Curriculum roll out in September 2014
- Review of transition arrangements for Y4 children to Middle School
- Governors have set up a working party to discuss possible impact of housing expansion in the area

Reception



We had great fun on world book day guessing each other's favourite character. The children looked fabulous in their costumes which were much more imaginative than my own.

We enjoyed seeing all the costumes in school in our whole school assembly.

We found marbles dipped in paint hard to control when we made straight and curved lines. Sometimes the marble jumped out if we tipped the tray too quickly.



But the really big news this month has been our Living Eggs. They were delivered to us on Monday 17th and we had to care for them for two weeks. There was great excitement on Wednesday as Mrs Smith heard cheeping when she arrived in class and when we all arrived this is what we saw. We had 10 eggs altogether and all hatched safely by Friday. Four boys and six girls.

We discovered that chicks call to each other to encourage them to hatch out and that chicks have a beak tooth to help them hatch out. When the chicks hatched they were very tired and needed to sleep, their feathers soon fluffed up and they do not need to eat for 24hrs.





We have had the chicks out in the classroom and found that they can jump and fly a short distance.

Tyler said 'They feel soft and fluffy when I stroked them.'



Grace said 'It tickled when they pecked the bread from my hand.'

We discovered that the chicks could jump as two jumped right out of the tray! We also found out that if we were quiet and still the chicks came to our hands to feed.

When we went in the hall for PE we made up a chicken movement dance and tried to hatch out of a shell.



Chicks also like chopped egg to eat and we all tried offering them some, but our chicks did not like it. They much preferred bread.

We needed to feed and give them water every morning to keep them strong and healthy. They have been rehomed and we look forward to hearing how they have settled in.

Year 1

Beau - they don't have little fluffy bits on their wings any more, they're a little bit like grown up wings.



Harry - the eggs cracked open because they were pecking. In three days they were out. Some of the feathers have turned white. We got them out on the table and I had clean up after them. Our chick grew 6 multilink blocks. We kept a chick diary.

Oliver - they were wet when they came out of the eggs, really soaking because they had to eat all the stuff inside so they had energy to get out quickly.

Dempsey - when they came out they, the chick that hatched first was pecking the second chick that hatched. Maybe it was because he wanted him to wake up. So the second chick ignored him. It stopped because he woke up.



Isaac - the chicks are fluffy. When the eggs are hatched the chicks are wet.



Rylee - we had to cup them in our hands really gently. One chick got to the end of the paper towel it was trying to escape so and Emma and I cupped it and caught it.

Year 2

In Year 2 we have been busy taking advantage of the glorious March weather. We have been working outside learning about Capacity and Measuring. We had great fun with water and a variety of measuring containers and we have also made our own 'Playdough'. We had gloopy messy fun measuring the ingredients and kneading it together.



"I really enjoyed being outside, but my fingers got really cold in the water!" - Bethany

"I loved making the playdough and getting really messy!" - Toni

We also had fun measuring the length, width and perimeter of the playground, deciding whether it should be in metres or millimetres! We had enjoyed designing our ideal playground with a water feature and huge slide!

In our RE lessons we continued with our theme of measuring and capacity. We had a go at making bread with Mrs Freeman to re-enact the Last Supper. We weighed the ingredients, kneaded it, watched (and waited) while it was proving, then baked it. We made 3 loaves and got to taste it. It was delicious.

We also visited St Peters church to see Rev. Hill. He told us about the different areas in a church and what they are used for.

Our topic for this half term is Maths all around us. We are looking forward to going on a discovery walk around Buntingford. We will be looking at the buildings in the High Street and conducting survey of vehicles using the High Street. As part of our topic we are reading books about The Adventures of Flat Stanley by Jeff Brown. We have made our own Stanleys with moveable arms and legs. We are hoping to attach him to the kites we are making and fly him in the park - just like one of the stories!



In Year 2 we were all very excited to dress up for World Book Day. It was great fun to see all the costumes people were wearing, and to guess which book they were from. Even the teachers dressed up!



"It was great coming to school in our costumes, it was a nice change from wearing our uniform." - Emily & Poppy.

"It was weird doing my work dressed as Harry Potter!" - Matthew.

"It was a good thing to do, I was Winnie the Witch!" - Venedia

Year 3

"In the last few weeks, we have been learning about day and night and how it comes and goes. I found it very exciting!" Megan E.

"We were learning about day and night and how the Earth rotates" Oscar.



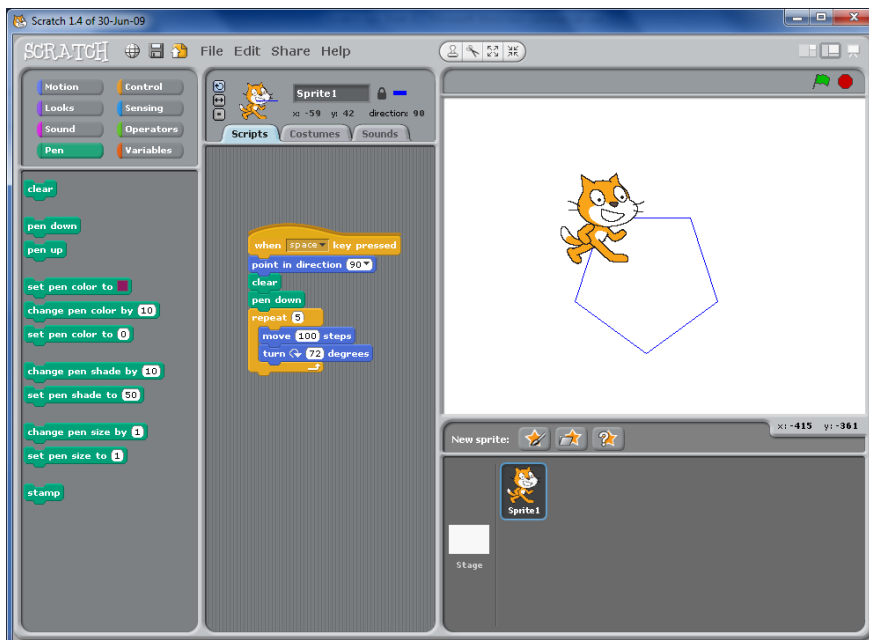
Recently, we finally finished our solar system display, featuring scale models of all the planets. Please feel free to pop in and take a look.

"We have been modelling newspaper pebble planets! I made a small bit of Uranus and held Saturn! I loved it!" Reuben.

"In the classroom we made some planets and put them in order from the sun. I wrote a space story in literacy" Harry.



"Making the planets was great fun. We did all the planets in the solar system" Jessica K and Megan D.



We have also been learning how to program using Scratch. This is a brilliant free program (which doesn't even need to be downloaded). You can try it at home here: <http://scratch.mit.edu/>

Some further information can be found on the Year 3 blog.

"This month we have been doing Scratch and the cat can go up and down and sideways" Lewie.

"ICT is my favourite lesson. We have been playing with Scratch and it's fun" Ella.

"I liked it when we played on Scratch. Scratch can draw shapes" Archie.

We have also done Chicken McNugget problems in maths. "We were doing chicken nugget problems and we were only allowed 6, 9 and 12 nuggets and it was fun." Lewie.

"In PE we have been doing Rounders and Crazy Catch. It was really fun" Sam.

"I liked it when we did pyjama day for sports relief. I thought it was epic" Ethan.

Year 4



We have been continuing our fantasy theme in Year 4 and many of us have made castles for our homework. We also wrote about real and imaginary castles, made up recipes, designed brochures and found out about toys from medieval times.



We are putting together our fantasy pop-up books - lots of hard work and great fun! We marbled some paper for the cover.

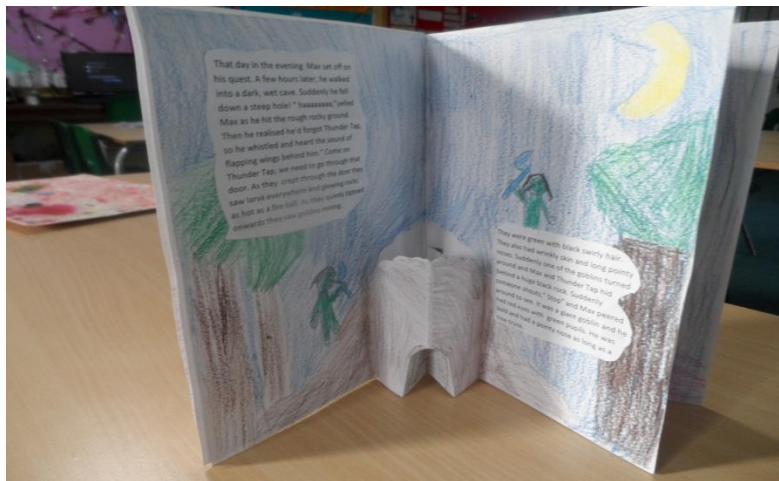




We made some of our own paper for the inside covers.



We have made lots of pop-up.. Some castles, doors, cottages, portals etc.



Finally we will be sewing the books together with a blurb on the back. Real authors!

PTA

This Term

We hope you are all enjoying the Easter competition! Entries are due in by the end of this week and results will be announced at the Easter service on the 2nd April at church.

On Wednesday 2nd April after school we will be holding the Easter Egg Tombola. Please continue to send in your egg donations into school.

Thank you to all the children and staff who donated to Sports Relief 2014 last week. The assortment of pyjamas and onesies was great and we raised a grand total of £147.

Next Term

Our next PTA meeting will be on Wednesday 23rd April at 7.30pm in the staff room, at a different time of the month due to the Easter break. Everyone is welcome.

The Year 1 cakebake will be held on Tuesday 6th May.

Big Steve is booked for the next school disco on Friday 9th May. You will be able to put your child's name down after the Easter holidays with your class rep.

A number of tables have already been booked for the Quiz Night on Saturday 17th May. Please let one of the PTA know if you would like a table. Details are posted up around the playground and school.

Finally, discussions are continuing about how we use the money you have helped raise over the recent months. We hope to have more information after our next meeting.

Thank you for your continued support.

Governors

Our focus as a Governing Body this month has been around our Annual Review by our Hertfordshire County Council School Standards Partner and on updating our Collective Worship policy.

We are delighted to report that Annual Review was highly successful with Hertfordshire County Council sharing the view of the School Leadership Team and Governors, that standards at Layston remain high and that we continue to make progress. The review was set against the new Ofsted framework which has changed considerably since our last Ofsted inspection. Congratulations to all the staff at Layston who are so very committed and enthusiastic about ensuring that each and every child at the school fulfils their potential.

The high achievement of our children is evidenced by the latest Ofsted Data Dashboard which presents the data from last academic year. The 2013 dashboard has just been released and can be accessed at <http://dashboard.ofsted.gov.uk/dash.php?urn=117390>. Whilst we saw an improvement in attendance last year, the dashboard indicates that it continues to be a challenge at Layston for the Governors and Senior Leadership team to tackle.

Our collective worship policy has been updated to reflect a stronger Christian emphasis and to better illustrate what we do in our assemblies. All the school policies can be accessed through the school website at http://www.layston.herts.sch.uk/parent_information/policies.html

Wishing you and yours a happy and peaceful Easter

Tina Wilson

Looking forward...

Our School Calendar for Summer term 2014 accompanies this newsletter.

We look forward to inviting the whole Layston School community to our Easter service at St Peter's on Wednesday 2nd April and wish you all a fun, safe and enjoyable Easter break.

With kind regards

Myra Bloomfield

Headteacher