



The Layston Newsletter



Head's desk

December 2024

We started our second half term in autumn exploring the values of FRIENDSHIP. Friendship is a very important Christian Value and one that children can relate to through their everyday experiences. The bible tells us that Jesus was a friend to all, regardless of who they were. He taught them that God is our friend and wants us to be like Him in our friendships with others. Christians believe they can call God their friend because of the relationship made possible through Jesus.

As another autumn term draws to a close, we can all reflect on the high quality teaching and learning, and memorable events of the last half term. Clearly fresh in our minds are the two school productions, Aladdin and Whoops-A-Daisy Angel, our YR Nativity.



Both have demonstrated the depth of talent, teamwork and the high expectations that the staff team here at Layston have for your children. We were all richly rewarded with the children's commitment, enthusiasm and sense of wonder and fun.

Class pages will snap shot some key moments of the children.



Our school choir also performed at our local care home Layston Grove. I have been amazed by their enthusiasm and confidence. Thank you once again to all the children, staff and to the parents/carers for supporting their children and the school.

Donations




FOLS have raised over £1500 at our Christmas fair for the school. A huge thank you to our FOLS members for organising this event and to our parents, children and staff for supporting this event. Thank you for all your generosity in raising money for charity this term and all your donations were greatly appreciated.

A massive thank you to parents who have purchased from the school wish list. These have been gratefully received and very much appreciated!

Attendance

We continue to prioritise attendance and are delighted to award certificates for high attendance. (up to 13th December).

Certificates have been awarded as follows:

	Golden Certificates 100% Attendance	30 total Gold
	Silver Certificates 98% Attendance	25 total Silver
	Bronze Certificates 97% Attendance	16 total Bronze

In total there are 71 awards for 97% attendance and above. Overall percentage for children across whole school is **95%**. Well done all!

Goodbyes:

We say a big thankyou and goodbye to Miss Williams and we look forward to welcoming back Miss Helen Wilcox and Mrs Helen Kelly to our Y2 class in January.



From all of us at Layston, we wish you a very peaceful Christmas in the company of your friends and family and hope that the New Year brings you good health and new opportunities. Thank you for all your continued support and we look forward to seeing you all in 2025 at the start of the spring term on Tuesday 7th January.

Reception

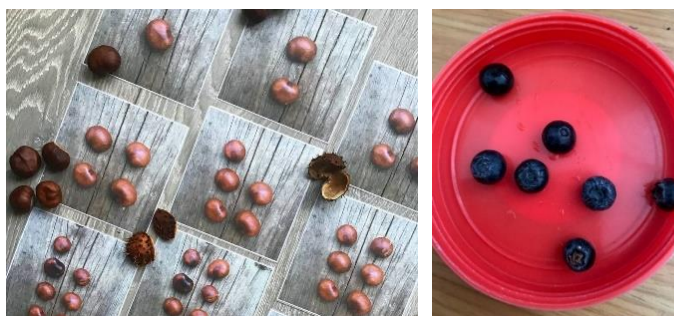
Reception have been working so hard this half term! It has been a joy to see them all so engaged and focused in their adult led learning and their child initiated learning.

We had a really exciting visitor at the beginning of the term linked to People who help us.



We have all made amazing progress in our phonics and are beginning to apply this in our reading and writing. In drawing club we made some amazing pictures linked to our story of Leaf man, after going out to collect leaves and then labelled them. We have also learnt lots of new words in our story of Stickman and wrote lots of CVC words linked to the story.

In maths we have been working really hard at subitising and being able to break down different number by noticing and saying what they see.

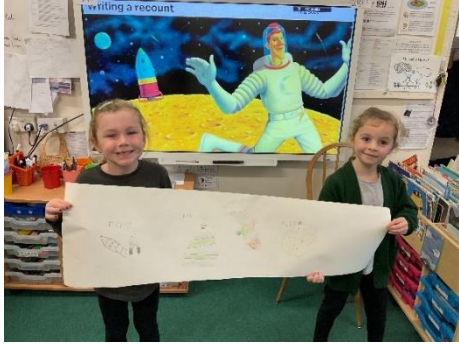


Reception have been amazing at learning about why Christians celebrate Christmas and perform Nativities. We have learnt the story through drama and songs and signs. The children did an amazing job of performing to all the school and YR parents in the church.

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Year 1

In **English**, we read 'Man on the Moon'. We acted out parts of the story and we drew storyboards using time connectives such as then and next. Later in the term, we learnt some of our common exception words through games including Bingo which was very popular! Our last book was 'Twas The Night Before Christmas' which we used to help us write sentences using 'and' as a connective.



In **Maths** we focused on addition and subtraction for most of the term using all sorts of resources to help with our addition and subtraction stories including leaves! We used phrases such as 'true or false' and 'odd one out'. Later in the term we learned to identify some 2D and 3D shapes.



We discussed seasons in **Science** before looking at some everyday materials. In **History** we learned about Amelia Earhart and in **Computing** we gave instructions to Beebots and later wrote our own instructions for making jam sandwiches. We did some great **Art** inspired by fireworks.

Outside of our lessons, we were lucky enough to do a 'Speed Stacking' session where we played different games and worked together to build the biggest tower we could!

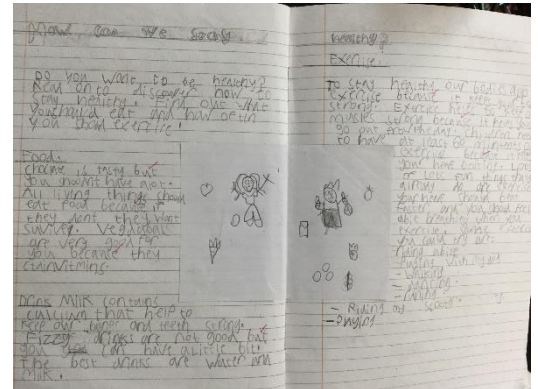
We also spent several weeks practicing our dances for the Christmas Panto and then performed them in front of everyone.



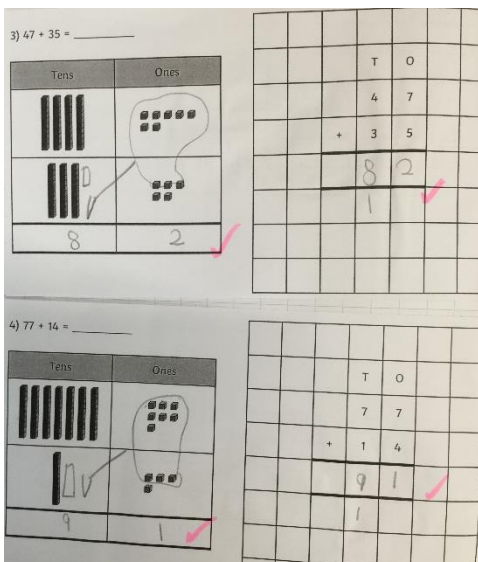
Year 2

We have had a very busy half term in Year 2. We've been working really hard and we are very proud of what they have achieved in the classroom and on the stage!

This half term in English we have written a range of texts. We started with a newspaper report on 'The Great Fire of London' and then wrote an information text, explaining how to stay healthy.



In Geography we have been looking at the continents and oceans of the world. We have labelled maps and tried to create our own. We have learned two songs to help us remember the different continents and oceans - both of which are very catchy and get stuck in our heads!

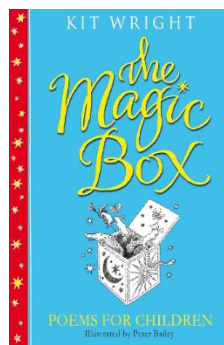
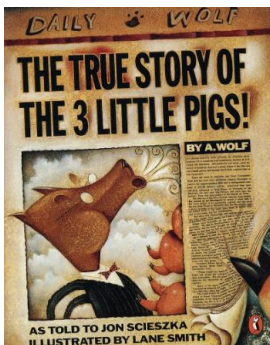


In Maths we have been looking at addition and subtraction. We have been looking at number bonds to 10, adding three numbers together and we have started to look at exchanging 10 ones to 1 ten when adding two 2 digit numbers together. This has been very tricky and they have worked really hard with this.

Year 3

We have had a lovely half term in Year 3, the children have worked extremely hard and that has been shown across all areas of the curriculum.

In English we have written our very own newspaper report on 'The True Story of the Three Little Pigs' and written our own poems based on 'The Magic Box'. Both of these were thoroughly enjoyed by the children and they have shown excellent progression in their writing.



In Maths we have explored the column method for both addition and subtraction which the children have shown great perseverance with. We then moved on to looking at Multiplication and Division, where a growth in confidence has been evident.



In History we have explored the Stone Age, Bronze Age and Iron Age. This allowed us to enjoy and learn from our great trip to Celtic Harmony. The children lived a day in the life of a Stone Age hunter! We gathered and hunted food, cooking a soup with our findings. We also looked at the different tools they used in the Stone Age and built shelters in the woods!



Year 4

It's been another action-packed half term! In maths, we completed our unit on addition and subtraction. In English, we wrote free verse poems and then play scripts including the wormy spaghetti prank from The Twits. This week, the children finished writing their own versions of the Nativity story.



The children enjoyed the class party on Wednesday. Oh and there was also the small matter of a school play! The children got better and better with each performance, and I think they did a fantastic job.



Forest School

It was the half-term before Christmas

And all through the (Forest) house

Nothing was moving, not even a mouse!

Maybe the reason for this was that Forest School sessions have been particularly noisy this half-term with plenty of banging and shouting and jingle-bell shaking and laughing. As well as all the usual forest activities, everyone has been busy making Christmas decorations, balancing, weaving, learning about spiders, playing a great new game called "hunters and survivors" as well as a few of our older favourite games and enjoying cooking marshmallows over the fire.



We are loving the new wildlife camera from FOLS. It has been fascinating to see each week what nocturnal animals have been visiting our Forest. So far most photos are of a black and white cat, but we are delighted to have also seen a fox and a hedgehog.



Lily Lou and I would like to wish all our Forest School families a happy restful Christmas.



Eco Warriors and PE

The Eco Warriors met back in September to decide on a list of actions they are going to take throughout the year. This started this half term with a collective worship on the use of the bins around the school, ensuring that we are recycling where possible. Next half term we will be planning a litter pick around the school grounds.

In PE this term the children have enjoyed a range of sports and activities. Year 1 and Year 2 have participated in an inter-schools speed stacking competition which was thoroughly enjoyed by all. Years 3 and 4 have taken part in inter-schools cross country hosted by Edwinstree Middle School which gave the children the opportunity to experience a sporting event which isn't part of our usual PE curriculum. We will let you know of any further inter-schools events that we are attending.

Governors

I am writing this having just come from St Peter's church where Reception gave a wonderful performance of their nativity show. I am always in awe of what the team and children manage to achieve so soon after starting school and all that implies. Equally importantly, the whole school seemed to be enjoying themselves.

I know Mrs McMurrough updated you a couple of weeks ago on a visit the school commissioned from Herts for Learning to carry out an Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Early Years Provision (EEEYP). The governors also discussed this at our meeting later the same day in the context of last year's Ofsted report. It was pleasing to receive the very positive feedback and to note that all previous recommendations had been successfully actioned by the Early Years team under the leadership of Mrs Stamp.

Overall the governors have been very pleased to see the positive response and hard work the school has put into responding to Ofsted's recommendations. Whilst there is always scope for further improvement, we believe that the school has made good progress in all areas. This year's School Development Plan continues a focus on ensuring that the Early Years curriculum means children are fully ready for Year 1 and that curriculums and assessments are implemented consistently well across the whole school.

Finally I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome Jess Drake to the board publicly and to thank all those who put themselves forward for the recent election and all of you who voted. It is great to see this level of engagement from parents and carers. Please do not hesitate to get in touch with any of the governors if you have any suggestions or comments.

Colin Wilson
Chair of Governors

FOLS

FOLS would like to thank all our families for their support through this term. The Christmas Fair was a huge success and we loved that Santa got to come and pay us a visit. We have enjoyed spending time in school, decorating Christmas Cards, watching the wonderful play and seeing the children so excited!

We would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from FOLS!

