



# The Layston Newsletter



Dec 2025

## Head's desk

We started our second half term exploring the values of Peace and Hope. The children have explored peace making actions ranging from helping to resolve conflict to creating space for stillness. Peace in the sense of total well-being, is God's intention for the whole of creation, and is a promise that awaits ultimate fulfilment.

As another exceptional autumn term draws to a close, we can all reflect on the quality teaching and learning and the memorable events of the last half term. Clearly fresh in our minds are the two school productions, 'Olivia' and our YR Nativity, 'Shine Star Shine'. Both have demonstrated the depth of talent, team work and 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 wonderment and fun during these productions. They really did shine brightly.

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

Today we say goodbye to Mrs Burton from our Year R team who is leaving for personal family reasons. We would like to thank her for 10 years dedicated service and wish her all the best






for the future. We have recruited Emma Roberts, an experienced early Years practitioner to join our YR team from January 2026.

### Attendance

We continue to prioritise attendance and are delighted to list all the children who have achieved 100% attendance over the Autumn Term (up to 16<sup>th</sup> December).

- Reception - Nieve, Sadie, Luca, George
- Year 1 - Millie, Rosie, Liam
- Year 2 - Violet, Ralph, Oscar, Tyler, Olive, Daisy, Elsie, Oscar
- Year 3 - Ted, Lilah, Isla, Rafe, Georgia, Hallie, Amelia
- Year 4 - Maia, Marco, Poppie, Lottie, Joseph, Lily, Flossie

Certificates have been awarded as follows:

	Golden Certificates 100% Attendance	29 total Gold
	Silver Certificates 98% Attendance	30 total Silver
	Bronze Certificates 96% Attendance	13 total Bronze

In total there are 72 awards for 96% attendance and above.

Overall percentage for children across whole school is **95%**. Well done all!

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 all you have wished for. Thank you for all your continued support and we look forward to seeing you in 2026.



# 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 finished this term by going to the Church of St. Peter to perform our Nativity. It was lovely to see the parents and the rest of the audience enjoying our singing. We certainly did. We liked our costumes too.

We have all made amazing progress in our phonics and are beginning to apply this in our reading and writing. We like sounding out new words with the help of 'Fred Talk'. We have also learnt lots of new words in our story of Stickman and wrote lots of CVC words linked to the story. We enjoyed reading about pirates and made lots of pirate maps to help us hide all the treasure.

In maths we have been working really hard at exploring numbers to 5. We can count accurately on our fingers and find the numerals on number lines. We can tell if some numbers are missing. We like making different arrangements of 5. We used five frames to represent our numbers. We enjoyed exploring shapes and went on several walks around the school to spot shapes in the environment.

The challenge was to find shapes within shapes such as windows and doors.



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



# Year 1

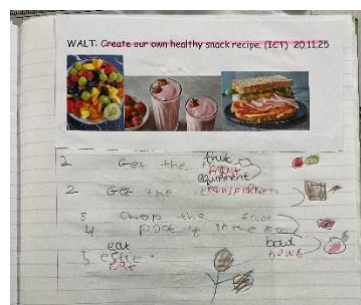
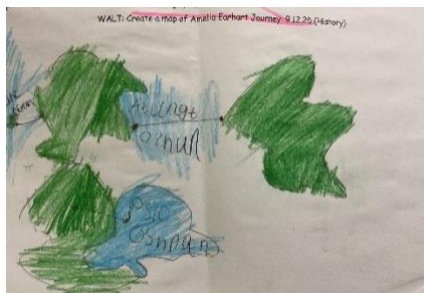
We have had a busy half term in year 1 and it has been lovely to see all the children engaged in their learning. Have a lovely Christmas!

In Maths, we have been learning about addition and subtraction within 10. Children are beginning to think about parts and whole exploring the cherry model. The children have also been engaged when recognising and sorting 2D and 3D shapes.



In English, our focus books have been *Gruffalo Crumble* by Julia Donaldson, *Three Billy Goats Gruff* by Mac Barnett, *The Princess and the Pea*, by Rachel Isadora and *Professor Goose Debunks Goldilocks* by Paulette Bourgeois. The children have been writing labels, lists and captions and their own recipes. The children had lots of fun at their *Gruffalo Crumble* Tea Party!

In ICT, the children have enjoyed becoming TV Chefs. They have been able to practice using the IPADS when filming their own recipes. The children were also able to write and follow their instructions when pretending to make a healthy snack. In Geography, the children have been locating where they live on an aerial photograph, recognising local features. They have been creating maps using classroom objects before drawing simple maps of the school grounds. The children have been using maps to follow simple routes around the school grounds and carry out an enquiry about how to improve their playground. Year 1 have been fascinated when learning about Amelia Earhart in History asking questions about the past. Finding answers about the past using pictures, stories & artefacts.



## Year 2

We have had a great half term in Year 2 and it has been lovely to see the children enjoying their learning!

In Maths, we have been looking at addition and subtraction with numbers up to 100. We have been looking at how we can use our number bonds to help us to complete these calculations.



In History, we have been learning all about the Great Fire of London. We have explored the events of the fire and looked at similarities and differences between London now and in 1666. We had a great time on our school trip to Mill Green Museum and Water Mill.



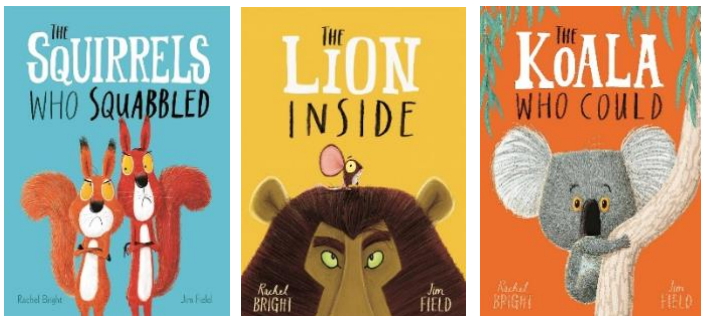
We also had lots of fun taking part in the speed stacking competition!

We hope you have a lovely Christmas and New Year! ☺

## 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 explored three Fable Stories. The children thoroughly enjoyed writing their own fable based on one of the three focus texts! Six children were chosen to show their final story to Mrs McMurrough, as Miss Croucher was extremely impressed with their creativity and handwriting!



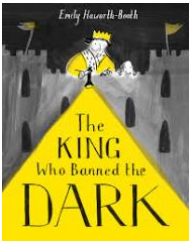
In Maths, we have explored the use of column method which the children have shown great perseverance with. We have recently moved on to looking at Multiplication and Division, where a growth in confidence has been evident.

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!



## Year 4

What an action packed half term we have had! All have worked so hard.



We have enjoyed learning about persuasion through *The King Who Banned the Dark*. We have created powerful poetry after reading the *A Small Dragon*. Finally, we have begun exploring information texts ready to explain how our own inventions work.



In Guided Reading we have been hooked by *Kensuke's Kingdom* while also enjoying our class story of *There's A Boy In The Girls Bathroom*.



Year 4 loved performing *Olivia*. They all worked tirelessly to learn lines, improve their acting and sing beautifully. It was great to see so many shine and thrive with the extra responsibility.

Year 4 loved learning about electrical circuits as part of our science topic, and had great fun drawing accurate circuit diagrams and making complete circuits safely.



The whole class loved celebrating their unhomework challenges. We were able to share the games, poetry, posters and even a 7 scene script. The engagement from the children was fantastic and all enjoyed being able to show off the hard work they had put in at home.

Finally, we have studied the Amazon rainforest this week. Year 4 are now experts on the 4 layers of the rainforest, biomes and how the rainforest is being impacted by humans.



I would like to say a big thankyou to all of Year 4 who have made this term a real success.

# Forest School

Hasn't the weather recently been ever so changeable? Frost and freezing cold one morning, foggy the next followed by glorious sunshine. Layston pupils have taken it, and the very muddy conditions in the forest, in their stride, arriving prepared for each session outside and full of their usual curiosity and enthusiasm.

This half term we have listened to the UK's spookiest bird calls, we've learned some knots and made some knot people, we've explored lots of Maths outside, identifying shapes and patterns and tessellations. We've played lots of nature based games and enjoyed all our outdoor learning.



The past few weeks the Forest has been filled with delightful sounds and smells of Christmas - songs, jingle bells, hot chocolate, elf snowdust, reindeer footsteps all accompanied by our usual friendly birdcalls and gentle breezes. Infectious happiness!



A very happy Christmas from all in the Forest, enjoy time to connect with family, friends and nature. See you in 2026.

# Governors

The full governing board ("FGB") has met twice this term as usual and looked at a number of topics. Whilst budgets have been as challenging as ever, there has been a lot to celebrate this term. I'm writing this having just come from the wonderful Reception nativity performance at St Peters - it's always a joy to see what the children are able to achieve so soon after starting at school and how supportive the whole school is.

Governors have increased the number of visits we make to the school in support of our School Development Plan. It has been pleasing to see the progress that children are making following our refreshed approach to implementing the Read Write Inc phonics scheme and we look forward to seeing continuing improvements in outcomes for both reading and writing as a result.

We have been delighted to welcome both Mr Harwood and Mrs Rolt to the school leadership team and see the energy and enthusiasm they bring to their roles. Thank you for your support. We are also grateful to the commitment and flexibility of all staff who have stepped in as needed to meet day to day challenges.

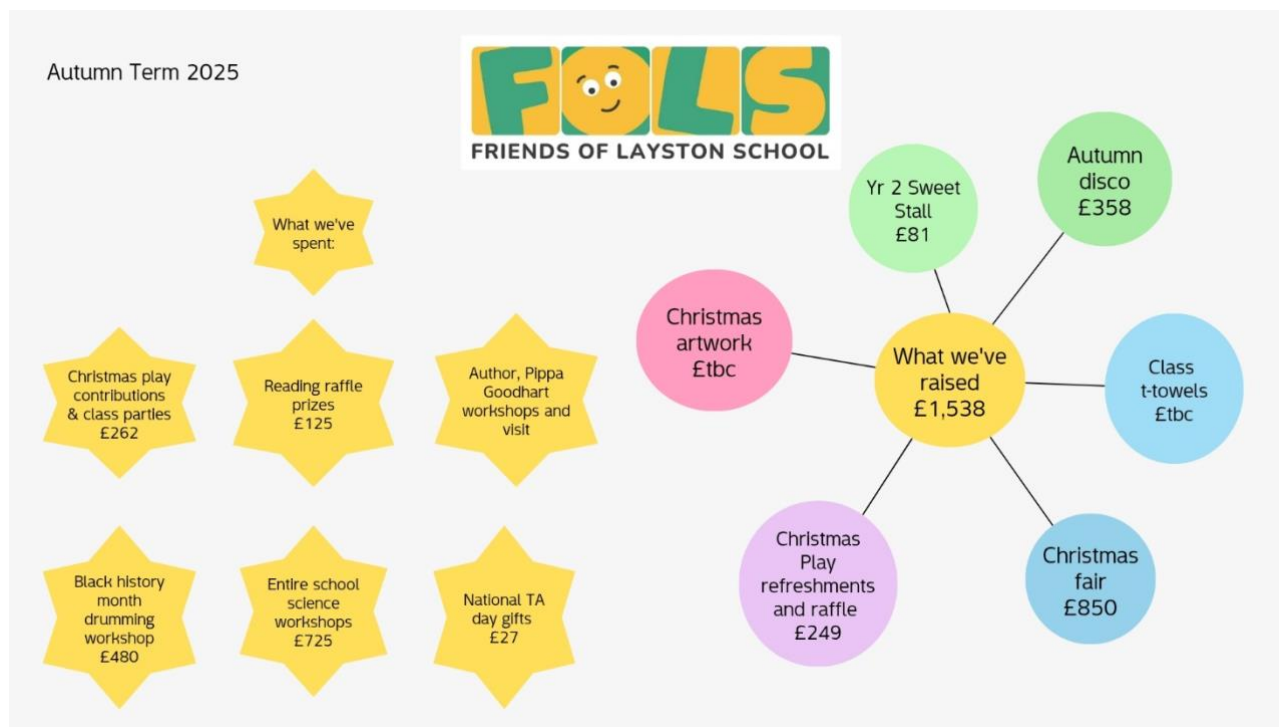
On the governor side, we had two nominations for the parent governor vacancies. Cat Morris and Katie Orger have therefore been duly (re)appointed as parent governors. There remains a vacancy for a further parent governor so please do speak to me or any of the other governors if you are interested in the possibility of helping in this way and would like to know more about what is involved. I would also like to take this opportunity to say a huge thank you for all their contributions to Becky Beazley, whose term of office as a governor came to an end, and to Bernadette King, who had to resign due to moving out of the area.

As always I would also like to say a big thank you to FOLS for all the work they do to support the school both putting on events such as the hugely enjoyable Christmas Fair and raising funds to support enrichment activities for the children, and to all those who volunteer to help. Without your input the school would be a poorer place in all senses of the word.

If you have any comments or questions please do speak to any of the governors.

Colin Wilson,  
Chair of Governors

# FOLS



FOLS would like to thank all our families for their support throughout this term. We are pleased to report a successful Christmas Fair and would like to extend our thanks to Santa for making a special appearance during his peak season.

With your help, FOLS has proudly supported our fantastic Christmas Play and the lovely Reception Nativity this year, amongst other events. We've also enjoyed helping bring this year's school tea towel to life.

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