



The Layston Newsletter



Head's desk

Feb 2026

We started the new Spring term exploring the value of Wisdom. Christians believe that true wisdom comes from God. As they grow in faith so wisdom will increase. In the Bible wisdom is seen as both a gift from God and a characteristic of God. In his parables Jesus taught that placing trust in God and recognising what is of value in life brings fulfilment.



Spirituality:

The children have shown a strong sense of spirituality throughout this half term, particularly during their Forest School sessions. They have spent time quietly observing nature, from watching birds to noticing the first signs of spring as the snowdrops emerged. This week, the children deepened this connection through forest bathing and grounding activities, which encouraged them to be still, reflective, and mindful of the natural world around them.

Curriculum and Teaching:

This half term, the children have been deeply engaged in developing their writing through our Essential Writing Scheme, with particular emphasis on improving presentation and handwriting. They have also been working extremely hard to strengthen their reading accuracy and fluency by applying their RWI phonics skills across a range of activities.

We would also like to thank all the parents who attended our recent Parent Chat on supporting children with anxiety. It was a highly constructive and valuable session for everyone involved.

Enrichment:

World Book Day - 5th March 2026

We will be celebrating World Book Day on Thursday 5th March 2026. The day will be focused on enjoying books and reading for pleasure. On the day children are welcome to dress up, either as a character from a book, or in pyjamas as though they were going to enjoy a bed time story! If your child does not enjoy dressing up, they are very welcome to come to school in their normal school uniform.

Reading Afternoon

We will be hosting a cosy reading afternoon where you are invited to come in and share a book with your child from 2.30pm. This will also be an opportunity for the children to share the activities they have completed on World Book Day with you. Please contact Miss Wilcox or Mrs Kelly if you have any questions about World Book Day. We encourage you to visit the library over the break and continue sharing books with your children whenever possible—happy reading!

Attendance:

At Layston we want our children to feel safe, happy and enjoy coming to school. We are pleased to report that attendance for this half term is **94.84%**. This has improved from this time last year. Thank you for your continued support with this.

YR 93.68%

Y1 94.62%

Y2 95%

Y3 97.62%

Y4 92.22%

Well done to our Y3 children who won the Attendance Bus this week!

Lateness:

It is the duty of parents to ensure that children attend school regularly and punctually. When pupils arrive late, they miss out on essential instruction given at the beginning of the lesson. This can significantly reduce achievement, regardless of academic ability. Children may also feel awkward arriving to the classroom when everyone else is settled and teaching has already begun. Furthermore, when one pupil arrives late, it disrupts the other pupils in the class who have already started their school working day. Please note that if your child arrives after registers close at 9:10am, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

Do you qualify for free school meals?

If you feel that you might be entitled to benefit from free school meals, please visit

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/schools-and-education/at-school/free-school-meals/free-school-meals.aspx> to apply or speak to the school office.

Please note that there has been a change to the income threshold so you may be eligible now even if you were not before. If you have already qualified, you do not need to re-apply.

Holiday Club

Royston town will be running a sports holiday club at Layston on 19th and 20th Feb. Please click on the link below to book. <https://roystontownfc.ktckts.com/brand/after-school>

PARENT CONFERENCES WEEK BEGINNING 9th/16th MARCH. PLEASE BOOK YOUR SPACE VIA THE ARBOR BOOKING SYSTEM.

Have an enjoyable half term break and we look forward to seeing you all for the second half of the spring term.

Reception

In Reception our topic was learning about different places in the world and the UK.

We discussed the similarities and differences between hot and cold places. Next half term we will be learning about the First Moon Landing, and Space travel.



In Maths the children were encouraged to focus on the quantities of sets, without being distracted by colour, shape or size. They were encouraged to notice when quantities were equal or unequal, and were beginning to consider how they can manipulate the number of objects in 2 sets to make them equal.

Children have been reading books about animals and then writing their own stories. They have also written instructions on how to look after their own pets. Children have continued to have daily Read Write Inc sessions to develop their phonic knowledge and how to apply their skills in reading and writing simple words.



We have been learning about Chinese New Year. We explored how this is celebrated. We read the Zodiac story, exploring why 2026 is the year of the horse!

We hope you all have a fantastic half-term break.

Mrs Berry and Reception Team



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.

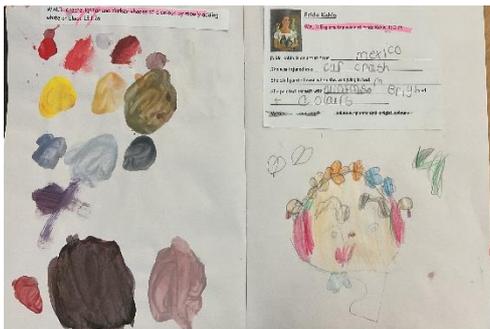
In Maths, the children have enjoyed carrying out practical activities when learning about addition and subtraction within 20. It has been lovely to see all the children explain their answers in more detail, using their sentence stems to support their learning.

In English, the children have enjoyed role-playing, hot seating, planning and writing single-clause sentences. Leaving spaces between words. Using 'and' to link words within sentences. Our focus books have been Stanley's Stick by John Hegley and Ruby's Worry by Tom Percival.



In Art, the children have been working very hard on their primary and secondary colours, using different types of brushes to make different types of lines when painting. We have also been exploring the work of Frida Kahlo,

To finish of the term, Y1 have really enjoyed learning about Shrove Tuesday taking part in lots of fun activities. They even had the opportunity to try yummy pancakes.



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 English we have been writing lots of letters in our unit based on the book 'Dragon Post'. We explored features of letters and then chose someone to write a letter to. We are now looking at the story of Rapunzel and identifying the features of traditional tales. The children have loved acting out the story!



In Science we have been looking at materials. We identified the properties of materials and carried out our own investigations to identify which material was best suited to make a coat. We worked together as a group to find out whether the materials were waterproof or absorbent.

In Maths we have continued to look at addition and subtraction of numbers up to 100. We have been using base-10 to help us with our calculations. We have explored exchanging tens and ones when crossing a ten. We have also been learning about the properties of 2D and 3D shapes.



The children loved designing and making their own vehicles with wheels and axles in our Design and Technology lessons!



We hope you have a lovely half term break!

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 own versions of 'Alice in Wonderland'. The children were able to take a copy of this home to share with parents. Some children (that wanted to) also shared their stories with the reception children! We have now moved onto to exploring persuasive language and will be writing persuasive letters after half term!

In Maths, we have continued to explore multiplication and division. Looking at some very tricky questions! The children have worked very hard on this unit and we are very impressed with the effort levels we have seen!

In Science, we have enjoyed exploring various different rocks and fossils. This unit seems to have been a favourite with the children and we have shared a lot of excitement over the lessons! We thoroughly enjoyed the Science Workshop day!

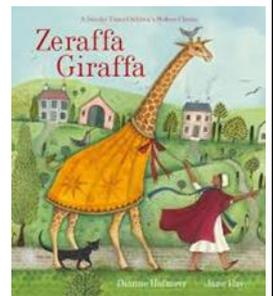


Year 4

Year 4 returned from Christmas to master multiplication. We are still working tirelessly to rapidly recall all our times tables; however, the class have persevered with multiplying two and three-digit numbers by a single digit. After that, we moved onto the trickiest operation: division. I am so proud of how hard they have worked so hard to partition numbers to multiples, use speed writing and accurately divide.



In English, we have enjoyed writing explanation texts for our own inventions. Year 4 even impressed a Hertfordshire education with their writing, presentation and immaculate handwriting. After that we have begun our narrative unit and have enjoyed exploring *Starbird* and *Zeraffa Giraffa*.



In RE, we have learnt about the gospel of the good Samaritan. Year 4 enjoyed retelling the story, acting out a modern version and hot-seating the characters to consider what we could learn from Jesus' message of 'love thy neighbour.'

Vikings have been our History focus, with the class investigating how they gained their potentially unfair reputation. The class have considered how history is recorded, when the Vikings were seen as most powerful, how artefacts change perception and even investigated how place name endings can tell us about the past.

I am really pleased to say the whole class has really stepped up their reading this term. They have loved *Kensuke's Kingdom* and *There's a boy in the girls bathroom*. Our classroom library was transformed over Christmas and the majority of the class have become passionate free readers.

PE, Eco Warriors and Outdoor Learning

Eco Warriors:

Our fantastic Eco Warriors have been hard at work helping to keep our school environment clean and beautiful. This half term, the team carried out a school grounds litter pick, collecting bags of rubbish from around the playground, field, and pathways.

The children showed great teamwork and responsibility, demonstrating how small actions can make a big difference to our environment. We are incredibly proud of their positive attitude and commitment to caring for our school and the planet.

Well done, Eco Warriors — you are true environmental champions!

PE:

Physical Education continues to be an exciting and important part of school life. This half term, pupils have been developing their skills in a range of activities including hockey and yoga!

Through PE lessons, children are building confidence, improving coordination, and learning the importance of teamwork, resilience, and fair play. It has been wonderful to see their enthusiasm, determination, and support for one another.

We are proud of the positive attitudes shown during lessons and look forward to more active, energetic learning in the next half term.

We are thrilled to share that our Year 3/4 girls' football club had a special experience recently! The team had the exciting opportunity to be mascots for **Stevenage FC Women** at one of their home fixtures. Being mascots gave the girls a memorable day walking out with the team and soaking up the match-day atmosphere — an inspiring experience for our budding footballers and a great way to celebrate girls in sport.

Well done to all our players for representing the school so brilliantly!



Forest School

Berries are red

Some birds are blue

Forest School, you've been muddy

But we still love you.

All Forest School groups have shown great resilience and continued curiosity this half term, even when the weather has been frosty or snowy and our forest has been especially muddy.



We have learned lots about birds. Identifying the birds we see at Layston and feeding them. We have played bird games, done mindful bird colouring outside and built our own bird's nests. We all have our favourite birds - I wonder if you will see them during the half-term break? Keep your eyes open.



There has been lots of measuring too - depth of our puddles and flow of water downwards and wind direction. We have ended the half-term around the fire, eating

heart- shaped toast and strawberry jam (reciting our made-up poems) and enjoying some forest bathing with our friends.



Wishing you all a lovely half-term break.

Lily Lou & Ivy Eileen