



Loving to learn, Learning to love.
For every child a chance to shine



LAYSTON C of E FIRST SCHOOL

The Causeway, Buntingford, Herts. SG9 9EU

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Head teacher: Mrs Adele McMurrough

24th September 2026

Dear Parents/Carers,
Living Our Vision

Layston Church of England First School

Our School Vision

At Layston we believe in the reality of God in our lives and the Christian Values that guide and inspire us. We are bold in our application of Christianity to transform relationships and take the Gospel intent of **"Love one another"** as a blue print for making active choices in our day-to-day lives together. We foster awe and wonder through a creative curriculum that underpins and promotes our love for learning. We are **inclusive** and **nurture** each person as a child of God with every chance to shine.

Matthew 5:14 & 16

14 "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

Let Your Light Shine.
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www.PaigeJarvis.net

Over the past couple of weeks, we have been delighted to welcome Ryan from the Diocese to Layston. He has worked alongside staff, providing training to support our preparations for our upcoming SIAMS inspection and helping us further develop our understanding of the *Understanding Christianity* approach to Religious Education.

One of the most exciting outcomes of this work has been the creation of our Big Frieze in the school hall. Working together as a school community, children and staff have explored the Bible timeline and how individual stories connect as part of God's bigger story. This has sparked thoughtful discussions and helped children deepen their understanding of faith in an engaging and meaningful way.

As a Church school, we are committed to helping every child flourish and *let their light shine*. The Big Frieze is a wonderful visual reminder of our vision and values, encouraging curiosity, reflection and a sense of belonging for all.



Spirituality: Forest School Fire Lighting and Spiritual Growth

In Forest School, all pupils have been practising how to make a *fairy fire*, creating a tiny flame by striking a fire steel and striker onto a cotton wool pad. We were delighted that every child was successful and demonstrated a strong understanding of how to stay safe around fire. We are especially proud of our Year 4 pupils, who showed remarkable independence, courage and determination while also encouraging and supporting their peers. This activity provided an opportunity for spiritual growth as pupils experienced a sense of awe and wonder at the power of something so small to create light and warmth. It encouraged perseverance, self-belief and reflection, helping children recognise that great things can often begin with a tiny spark.





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Our School Value: Community

In Collective Worship, we have been exploring our school value of **Community** and thinking about what it truly means to belong. The children shared wonderful ideas about how a strong community is built through **kindness, courage and respect**, and how every person has an important part to play.

We reflected on how being part of a community means looking after one another, celebrating each other's successes and offering support when someone needs help. The children recognised that acts of kindness, no matter how small, can make a big difference and help everyone feel valued and included.

We also discussed the courage it sometimes takes to welcome new friends, stand up for what is right, share our ideas, or offer help to others. By showing kindness and courage each day, we strengthen our sense of belonging and make our school community an even better place for everyone.

Teaching and Learning at Layston

Over the past couple of weeks, we have welcomed visitors into school to review and celebrate the wonderful teaching and learning taking place across Layston. Our Early Years Adviser was delighted to see how quickly routines have been established within our Reception and Year 1 mixed-age class. She noted how well the learning environment have been adapted to meet the needs of both year groups, ensuring that all children feel settled and engaged as they begin the year.

We were also pleased to welcome our English Hub partner into school to support our phonics provision. This provided an opportunity to share our Read Write Inc. grouping arrangements and discuss how these are supporting pupils to make strong progress in early reading. During the visit, the adviser was able to observe all of our phonics groups in action and was pleased to see phonics being taught with fidelity to the programme, with pupils engaged, enthusiastic and developing their skills with confidence.

Staffing update:

I would like to let parents and carers know that Miss Kelly, our Year 2 teacher, will be leaving Layston at Christmas. This has not been an easy decision for her, but she has chosen to take up an opportunity closer to home that better supports her personal circumstances.

Whilst we are naturally saddened to see her go, we fully support her decision and would like to thank her for her dedication, commitment and contribution to school life. She has been a valued member of our staff team, and we know that many children and families have benefited from her care, enthusiasm and hard work. She will be greatly missed, and we wish her every happiness and success in the future.

We have already begun the recruitment process for a new Year 2 teacher to join us from January. As always, we will ensure that thorough transition arrangements and handovers are in place so that learning continues seamlessly and both children and parents feel well supported throughout the change.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support and partnership. Together, we will ensure that this transition is a positive experience for all involved.

Reminders:

Volunteers in school:

If you would like to volunteer in school please can you register your interest by emailing the school office as soon as possible admin@layston.herts.sch.uk An induction meeting for parent volunteers will take place on Wednesday 30th September at 9:00am.



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Dates for diaries

Here are a few key dates for the first half of the autumn term. We will update you as and when additional dates are added with regard to school visits, visitors in school and FOLs fundraising events.

Parent Volunteers Meeting	Wednesday 30 th September 9:00-9:30am
Harvest Festival	Tuesday 20 th October 9:30am St Peter's Church
Black History Month African Dance	Monday 19 th October TBC
Celebrating World Mental Health Day	Friday 9 th October
Flu Immunisation	TBC
Open morning for prospective parents for Reception intake next year.	Tuesday 6 th October 9:30-10:30am
Parent Consultations	Tuesday 20 th & Wednesday 21 st October 3:30-6:00pm
INSET	Friday 23 rd October
Half term	Monday 26 th - Friday 30 th October

Teachers will be updating you on any trips and enrichment during the autumn term.

If you have any questions or require any support please contact your child's class teacher via the school office email address: admin@layston.herts.sch.uk address. For any SEND or mental health queries please contact Mrs Rolt DRolt@layston.herts.sch.uk

Best wishes,

Adele McMurrough
Headteacher