

Layston CofE School Wild Wood Pond Project.

We, at Layston School, have been busy over the last two years developing a 'Wild Wood' at the bottom of our playing fields. We created pathways through existing woodland and planted more trees and a wildflower meadow. This provided a wonderful opportunity for our children to learn more about wildlife and conservation.

Our dream was to add a pond to increase diversity of species and to enable the children to learn about even more creatures. However, being quite a small school, money was tight and the creation of a pond seemed to be a project for the future. Then, a friend introduced us to Mike James at the Ninevah Trust. He came to visit us in May 2010. Our Eco Warriors enthusiastically showed him what we had achieved so far and we were delighted to learn at the end of that month, that the Ninevah Trust was prepared to fund our pond project.

Our pond was created over the summer holidays and the children were very excited to see it when they return to school in September. Despite quite a wet summer, we had one small problem - the pond had scarcely any water in it! After abortive attempts to run hose pipes, we decided to go back to basics and fill it by hand. Our Year 4 children had a great time ferrying buckets backwards and forwards. A brilliant example of teamwork!



This spring, once the ice had melted we were raring to go. Pond watching became a very popular activity. Year 1 have visited the pond every week and have eagerly observed changes. The very first resident proved to be a water boatman, joined over the months by pond skaters, water beetles, worms and water fleas. A bucketful of tadpoles was added to the mix and the children were delighted to spot their first froglet in May.

Dragonflies and damselflies are regular visitors although we think our weed needs to get more established for their larvae to thrive.

Following our recent 'Great Outdoors Day', pond dipping was voted the most popular activity. It is wonderful to see the children's interest and



their care with the creatures they find. They are keen to keep developing the pond environment to increase the number of species. Next year, we intend to keep a school Wild Wood diary so that sightings and wildlife events can be recorded by the children. We are very grateful to the Ninevah Trust for helping us to develop this lovely resource for stimulating the children's interest in and understanding of the natural world.

Gill Langley
Headteacher

