



# Abbey Court **MATTERS**

Autumn Term 2 2025 Issue 393 Circulation 1120





# MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNORS



**Matthew Powell -  
Parent Governor**

Wasn't it just September? One minute we were packing away summer clothes, and now—bam!—It's December, and the festive whirlwind has begun.

But here's the truth: the magic of this season isn't in the big gestures. It's in the little things; a child's laughter when they find an elf in a silly spot, or a quiet moment decorating the tree together. These tiny moments become the memories we treasure most.

Whether you're an elf enthusiast or just trying to survive until Christmas morning, take a breath, enjoy the sparkle, and remember—the small stuff is the real magic.

For our pupils, let's celebrate both the big and small achievements that have been made so far this year.

Happy December from all of us!



# Reception Class Celebrate Learning and Christmas!



This term, Reception have loved exploring different celebrations, culminating in some festive Christmas activities!



This week, the children wrote letters to Santa using symbols and their preferred communication methods to make choices.



They then enjoyed their very first educational visit—walking to the local postbox to post their letters!



Pupils walked very sensibly, and demonstrated fantastic awareness of road safety throughout the journey. We are so proud of their independence and enthusiasm.



Well done, Reception class!



# P8's Chocolate Adventure

This term, P8 has been exploring the world of chocolate! In Geography, pupils learned where chocolate comes from and how it's produced, starting with a tasting session of white, milk, and dark chocolate. They discovered that chocolate originates from cacao beans, grown on Theobroma cacao trees in the Amazon Rainforest.

Using a multisensory approach, pupils explored cocoa powder and rainforest-themed sensory trays, then stepped inside the rainforest using Virtual Reality headsets. These activities sparked curiosity and helped develop locational knowledge.

Amazing work, P8—well done!



# S1's Journey of Independence and Joy

S1 have been developing a sense of self and discovering what makes them happy at school.

Through independent and peer learning, pupils have been building creativity, taking turns, following rules, communicating, developing balance and muscle control, and improving hand-eye coordination. They engaged with the world around them, anticipating and responding to new experiences.

Learning these skills helps shape personality and fosters independence. Managing their own time—a challenging concept for many pupils at Abbey Court—is something S1 are becoming increasingly confident with.

This is Linked to **Article 31** (Children have the right to relax and play) and **Article 28** (Children have the right to an education),



# FE Pupil Voice



The Pupil Voice meetings at Abbey Court School support Article 12 of the Rights of a Child by giving our students 'the right to give their opinions freely on issues that affect them'.

In the Autumn Term, students in the Further Education department have been giving their opinions on 'food' offered to them in school, with a focus on food at snack time.

You Said...

- You enjoy snack time and the food on offer.
- You like being able to make your own snack.
- You want new healthy snack ideas to try.
- It was agreed that, whilst you like toast, it can be too filling for a snack.

We Did...

- Toast has been 'banned' for the term whilst the pupils explore alternative snacks.
- Pupil Voice representatives agreed on which snack items could stay, such as the fruit and rice cakes.
- Classes have researched healthy snack recipes to try. These are now being trialed, such as fruit flapjacks and banana muffins.

The work completed in this terms Pupil Voice meetings has supported the students learning and understanding on Article 24, which states that 'children have the right to the best health care possible, clean water to drink, healthy food and a clean and safe environment to live in'.



# S10 Shine with Life and Independence

This term, S10 have been focusing on building essential life skills to prepare for their transition to Further Education next year. Pupils have embraced a range of practical activities designed to promote independence and confidence in everyday tasks.

From making their own drinks and snacks, to cooking and setting the table, S10 have shown fantastic progress. In life skills sessions, pupils have mastered important household skills, such as washing up and even changing a bed. These experiences not only develop practical abilities, but also encourage responsibility and self-reliance—key qualities for their next steps.

Well done to S10 for their hard work and determination. We're proud of the independence they are gaining and the enthusiasm they bring to every challenge!



# Slippers, Smiles, & Sleepover Fun: Year 6's Big Night In!



This term, our Year 6 pupils swapped their school shoes for slippers and embarked on a school sleepover! The evening kicked off with a splash, as everyone enjoyed a lively swimming session.

After drying off, it was time to roll up sleeves and get creative in the kitchen. Pupils became mini chefs, crafting their own delicious pizzas and pasta—and yes, there were plenty of tasty toppings to go around! Next up was a burst of energy in the soft play area.



When bedtime approached, pupils snuggled down with blankets and cushions to watch a film. It was the perfect way to wind down after such an action-packed day.

For some pupils, this was their first time away from home, and they showed incredible confidence and resilience.



The sleepover wasn't just about fun—it was about building friendships, independence.



A huge thank you to all the staff who made this magical night possible. We can't wait to do it again!

# Exploring the KS1 Curriculum: Building Strong Foundations

Key Stage 1 (KS1) marks an exciting stage in a child's learning journey, covering Years 1 and 2 for pupils aged 5–7. This phase is all about laying the foundations for lifelong learning, nurturing curiosity, and developing essential skills and growing independence.

## What does Key Stage 1 include?

The KS1 curriculum is designed to provide a broad and balanced education that focuses on curriculum subject areas alongside important life skills.



## The role of continuous provision

Resource-rich learning environments play a crucial role in KS1 education, particularly in Year 1, as children adapt from the play-based Early Years Foundation Stage to more structured learning. By providing a variety of high-quality, engaging resources and incorporating sensory experiences, we create opportunities for exploration, creativity, and deeper understanding.

## Why is Key Stage 1 important?

Key Stage 1 sets the stage for future success by:

- Strengthening key skills.
- Fostering independence and resilience.
- Encouraging curiosity and creativity.



## Why is it important?

- **Promotes independence:** A well-resourced environment empowers children to make choices and take ownership of their learning.
- **Stimulates creativity and problem-solving:** Diverse, open-ended materials encourage imagination, critical thinking, and innovative solutions.
- **Engages the senses:** Sensory experiences enhance focus, memory, and emotional regulation, supporting holistic development.
- **Supports key skills:** Hands-on, sensory-rich activities reinforce literacy, numeracy, and social skills in meaningful, real-world contexts.
- **Inclusive learning:** Sensory approaches cater to different learning styles and needs, ensuring all children can access and enjoy the curriculum.



## How can parents support their child?

- Read together / share a book together daily.
- Practice number skills through songs, games and everyday activities.
- Explore nature and the world around them

Value play and exploration: Encourage activities that allow children to make choices and solve problems.

Key Stage 1 is a time of discovery and growth. By working together—school, parents, and pupils—we can ensure every child thrives and enjoys learning.



# ABBHEY COURT TRUST



**Registered Charity Number: 1160511**

Abbey Court School Charitable Trust supports and fundraises for the school and community. Our current fundraising efforts are focused on raising money to maintain and develop Larkin Farm. Our goal this year is to raise more than £14,000. Please get in touch if you can help us to achieve this.

## Christmas Jumper Fashion Show



On Thursday 13th November 2025, the Cliffe Road site was hosted its annual Christmas Jumper Fashion Show, to raise money for Abbey Court School Trust.

The event showcased a wonderful selection of pupils modelling an array of colorful and creative Christmas jumpers.

Pupils put in a lot of practice and effort to prepare for the event, and presented themselves with confidence.

Parents and carers had the opportunity to purchase the jumpers on display, with all proceeds going directly to Abbey Court School Trust, helping us continue to provide enriching experiences for our pupils.

Thank you to everyone who attended, supported, and contributed to making this event such a success. Your involvement helps us create memorable moments for our pupils.





**Christmas Jumper Fashion Show  
Hamper Winner!**

We're delighted to announce that the winning ticket for the Christmas Hamper was number **449**.

**Congratulations to Ms. Stanley!** We hope you enjoy your festive goodies.

Thank you to everyone who took part and supported the event!

**ANNEKA'S BRIGHTON MARATHON  
TRAINING IS POWERING AHEAD!**

Anneka is putting in the miles as she prepares to take on the Brighton Marathon for Abbey Court Trust.

We are cheering Anneka on every step of the way and look forward to following her journey all the way to the finish line!

If you would like to donate and help Anneka reach her fundraising goal, please **scan the QR code** and show your support for Abbey Court Trust. Every donation makes a difference!



**Larkin Farm Amazon Wish List**

**Next time you're browsing Amazon, why not pop a little something in your basket for our furry and feathered friends at Larkin Farm? From everyday essentials to special treats, your kindness helps us keep tails wagging and feathers fluffed!**

**Every gift, big or small, makes a difference — and our animals will be very grateful!**

**Scan the QR code or click on the link to find our more.**

**<https://amzn.eu/a1GEacq>**



**Chloe Knight is taking on the London Marathon!**

We're thrilled to share that Parent Governor Chloe Knight is running the London Marathon to raise money for Abbey Court School.

This incredible challenge is not just about crossing the finish line—it's about making a real difference for our students and community.

Every step Chloe takes is powered by your support! Your donations, big or small, will help us continue providing exceptional opportunities and care for our pupils.

Scan the QR code to donate, and cheer Chloe on as she goes the distance for Abbey Court School!



# Primary Christmas Production

## The Christmas Star



On Tuesday 16th December, primary pupils came together to present this year's Christmas Production, 'The Christmas Star'. The story followed a Christmas star who worried they weren't bright enough to light up Christmas Eve.



Pupils worked hard to create costumes and practice their performances. All pupils contributed to the production—some children appeared live on stage, whilst others were represented by video.



After the performance, parents stayed to enjoy a mince pie and drink.

We would like to thank all the pupils, staff, and families, who helped make this event such a success. We are very proud of the creativity and confidence our pupils showed during the production.



# Secondary Christmas Market



In classes, pupils worked hard to plan, design and made a range of cards, decorations and crafts to sell, as part of an enterprise scheme.

On 15th December, pupils sold their Christmas merchandise at the Abbey Court Christmas Market. All classes from S1 – S11 set up a stall and worked to sell their items.

The market concluded with carols, led by the Key Stage 3 choir and refreshments in the hall, served by Further Education students.

Over the few weeks leading up to Christmas, the secondary pupils have been exploring Christmas Markets. The pupils were given opportunities to take virtual tours, look at photographs of markets, and look at items that could be bought in a market.

Some classes took the opportunity during their educational visits to explore Christmas shops, and gain inspiration from decorations in the local community.



# Christingle



This year, Abbey Court School pupils were fortunate to take part in not just one, but two beautiful Christingle services. On Monday 15th December, our school chaplain, Revd Sue Valente Kerr, led a heartfelt Christingle service within the school, creating a wonderful atmosphere of reflection and celebration.

In addition, some of our Key Stage 2 pupils had the special opportunity to visit All Saints Church, Frindsbury, where they experienced the tradition in a stunning church setting. The pupils enjoyed learning about the meaning behind the Christingle and its symbolism, while taking part in this cherished festive tradition.

Both services were a lovely way to come together as a community and celebrate the true spirit of Christmas.



# Working with Kent Police:

## Learning About Our Community Helpers

Over the past academic year, we've had an exciting opportunity to work closely with Kent Police to help our pupils understand the important role they play in keeping our community safe. Through engaging with the officers, the children have explored the theme of "People Who Help Us" and learned about safe strangers—trusted adults they can turn to if they ever need help.

Our sessions have been hands-on and fun! Pupils loved trying on parts of the police uniform and discovering what each item is used for. The highlight for many was exploring the police car, learning about its special features, and even seeing the flashing lights up close!



These experiences have helped children:

- Recognising the police as friendly and helpful members of the community.
- Understanding how officers keep us safe, and support people in need.
- Learning who they can trust, and what to do if they ever feel unsafe.

We are grateful to Kent Police for their time and support. We look forward to continuing to work with them, in making these sessions so memorable.

It's been a fantastic way to bring learning to life and strengthen our pupils' sense of safety and community.

# Learning at the Farm



Students in the Further Education department have been actively engaging in hands-on learning at the farm, extending their learning beyond the classroom. As part of their 'Careers Learning and Work Experience' programme, they have undertaken a variety of practical tasks.



Students have been responsible for ensuring animals are well cared for, by providing food and water, as well as maintaining clean and safe habitats, by mucking out the stables, cleaning up the paddocks, and providing fresh bedding.



Some learners have demonstrated independence by following symbolised instruction sheets. Others have successfully completed tasks through verbal guidance and adult modelling. These experiences not only build confidence, but also foster practical skills that prepare students for future opportunities.



# Language of the Term

## Language of the Term 1: Sinhala from Sri Lanka

Each term, we invite guests to join us in celebrating our *Language of the Term*, giving pupils the chance to experience global cultures first hand.

In term 1, we focused on Sinhala, the official language of Sri Lanka. To make the celebration special, we welcomed Miss Nivanthi, a parent from our school community, who shared her time, knowledge, and culinary skills with the students in the Further Education department.



Miss Nivanthi worked with students to prepare a delicious Sri Lankan-style chicken fried rice.

Students enjoyed watching, learning, and of course, taste the dish.



📖 Learning Beyond the Classroom Alongside the cooking demonstration, students explored the Sinhala language, learning greetings, phrases, and discovering how language reflects identity and heritage.

## Language of the Term 2: Lithuanian

This term, the Language of the Term has been Lithuanian. The celebration was filled with food, storytelling, and language learning, giving both Secondary and Primary pupils a chance to experience the richness of Lithuanian culture.

Secondary pupils had the opportunity to cook traditional Lithuanian potato pancakes (Blynai) with Mrs. Simona. The activity was hands-on, fun, and delicious! Pupils not only learned how to prepare this popular dish, but also shared the finished pancakes with all classes.



In Primary, Mrs. Simona charmed the children with a story, told in Lithuanian. Listening to the rhythm and sounds of the language gave pupils a new appreciation for how stories can connect us across cultures.

Pupils across the school learned some keywords in Lithuanian. From greetings to simple everyday phrases, these words gave pupils a glimpse into the language spoken by millions in Lithuania and by Lithuanian communities around the world.



# CHRISTMAS AT LARKIN FARM



On Sunday 7th December, Larkin Farm was transformed into a festive wonderland, full of Christmas cheer and community spirit.

Families explored the activity trail, spotted cheeky elves, and met the farm's friendly animals. Children's completed festive challenges, and enjoyed the magic of the season.



Children enjoyed meeting Father Christmas, and getting a present from him. The farm buzzed with excitement at the mini Christmas market, while the tombola and raffle kept everyone guessing with fantastic prizes. There were plenty of tasty treats—hot chocolate, mince pies, and festive goodies to keep everyone warm and happy.



A huge thank you to Father Christmas for joining us, our stall holders, and to all the volunteers who made this event possible.

Thanks also go to everyone who came along to support the event, which helps raise funds for Abbey Court School Trust, who support the running of the farm.



# Abbey Court & District Young Farmers Club



'We Grow People'



**'You do not have to be a farmer to become a young farmer'**

**Become a member...**

***Abbey Court and District Young Farmers Club***

**For young people age 10 to 28 years**

**Based at: Larkin Farm, Templars Drive, Strood, Kent, ME2 3FD**

On Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> November, 'Abbey Court & District Young Farmers' went to Detling Showground to display our entries for the Autumn Competitions.

The club received:

- 1st place—for Christmas decorated cookies.
- 1st Place—for Christmas Club Bake.
- 1st Place—for a Harvest Festival Poem.
- 2nd place - for reading a passage from the book 'Aragon'.
- 2nd Place—for a Club Tablecloth.
- 2nd Place— for a Wild Berry Gin.
- Highly Commended—for a Santa Stop Here Sign.
- Highly Commended—for a Club Pinata.



Out of all six clubs for the event, we came first overall!

There is a huge amount of work that goes into competitions and lots of planning. They are great fun, build friendships, build resilience, teamwork and confidence within the club.

**CONGRATULATIONS ABBEY COURT & DISTRICT YOUNG FARMERS CLUB!**

## Young Farmers hit the dance floor!

Some of our Young Farmers joined the Junior Disco, an event that brings clubs together for a night of fun and friendship. They danced the evening away to classics like *Tiger Feet* and the *Macarena*, enjoyed delicious pizza, and even took part in the raffle.

A fantastic night of music, laughter, and making new connections!



# Community Project with Wickes



On 13th November, after several months of planning, we were delighted to welcome managers from local regional Wickes stores to our school farm for a fantastic community project.

Wickes donated a wide range of essential items, including a Keter shed, lawn mower, jet washer, timber for rebuilding pens and creating new animal areas, wood preservative, paint, and a variety of hand tools and materials. These resources will be invaluable for pupils as part of their work experience and will support ongoing maintenance across the farm.



The managers also donated a whole day of hard work. Fortunately, the weather was on our side, and it was a glorious day for all the activities. Volunteers painted the stable block, assembled the new shed, set up and used the lawn mower, laid a new membrane in the composting area, and cut back brambles. The chickens were particularly pleased with their fresh wood chip bedding, kindly laid by the team.

Students from Further Education came to support the project. They thoroughly enjoyed meeting and working alongside the Wickes team. Everyone agreed it was a job well done.



**A huge thank you to Wickes for their incredible support!**

# A HUGE THANK YOU

Everyone at Abbey Court School would like to extend a huge heartfelt  
'THANK YOU'

to everyone who has generously donated to our school fundraising  
events. Your kind donations have made a real difference, and we  
couldn't do these events without your support.

Here are just a few examples of the generosity shown:



**KENT TURKEY'S**

Donation of turkey voucher



**MYATTS OF MOCKBEGGAR**

A Christmas veg box



**LONDON CITY LIONESSES**

2 Free tickets



**COPPER RIVET DISTILLERY**

2 tickets for a gin tasting and tour -



**PATIENCE**

Beauty treatment vouchers



**ROYAL ENGINEERS MUSEUM**

Annual family ticket



**IMAGES UNLIMITED**

Gift vouchers for family photoshoots



**LEAH @ BLUE AURORA**



**WELLBEING**

2 x Massage vouchers



**SOPHIE DURY @ BABY BLISS**

Baby sensory bag



**DANIELA ALINA VATASOIU @**

**ADB NAILS:**

Voucher for set of gel nails



**CHARLOTTE FERRIS @ HAIR**

**STATION 26**

Voucher for a blow dry



**AMETHYST HORTICULTURE**

**NURSEY IN NEWINGTON FOR**

**DONATION**

A 7ft tree for our Christmas event.



**MR & MRS MITCHELL**

Donation of floristry items



**BECKY FORD**

Cayuga's



**KYNDI**

Christmas Lights



**KENT BAT GROUP**

Donation of 6 bat boxes



**REX FROM WOODSELL**

Built the bat boxes to encourage wildlife  
onto our site.



**BEAUTY AND AESTHETICS BY PA-**

**TIENCE**

3 x Beauty vouchers



**PECKS GROUP**

Christmas tree



**CITY OF ROCHESTER 7941**

£100



**WEBB NETWORKS LTD**

Christmas lights



**JEC ELECTRICAL CONTRACTORS**

Christmas lights



**ROBINSON MARK 255**

£100



**TIME CHRISTMAS**

Christmas lights



**TESCO GILLINGHAM**

Sweets and treats



**HARIBO BLUEWATER**

Haribo



**NORTH CHURCH HOMES**

Tombola prizes



**MATT POWELL & THE WORKS**

Donation of Christmas books



**PETER TICKLE**

Potatoes for the farm



**ALISON REEVES**

Christmas tree & Decorations

# Communication Corner



Lynsey Cook Kelly Ann Ralph

Pop up toys are great to work on:

- Choice making
- Requesting help
- Early interaction skills -an exclamation of 'wow' or 'uh-oh' when it pops.
- Turn taking skills – model my turn/your turn.
- There are plenty of varieties out there now, such as pirates, dinosaurs, animals and TV characters!



Stacking cups/speed stacking cups (pictured ), for older learners are great to work on:

- Choice making
- Requesting help
- Expectant pauses
- 'Ready, Steady, Go'
- Question words – where?, how high?, who's turn?
- Exclamations



Potato head toys are great to work on:

- Choice making
- Requesting help
- Vocabulary development (body parts)
- Giving opinions
- Turn taking



Stacking toys are great to work on:

- Choice making
- Requesting help
- Expectant pauses
- Ready, Steady, Go



Light up toys and wind-up toys are great to work on:

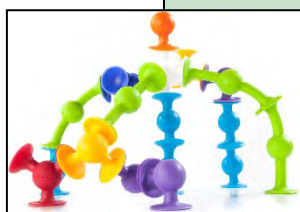
- Requesting help to turn it on
- Expectant pauses
- Ready, Steady, Go
- Visual Tracking skills



**Please ensure that any items that you consider are suitable for your child with regard to small parts / choking hazards etc.**

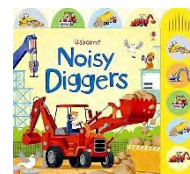
Suction pop toys are great to work on:

- Choosing
- Requesting help
- Practicing vocabulary
- Commenting
- Exclamatory words



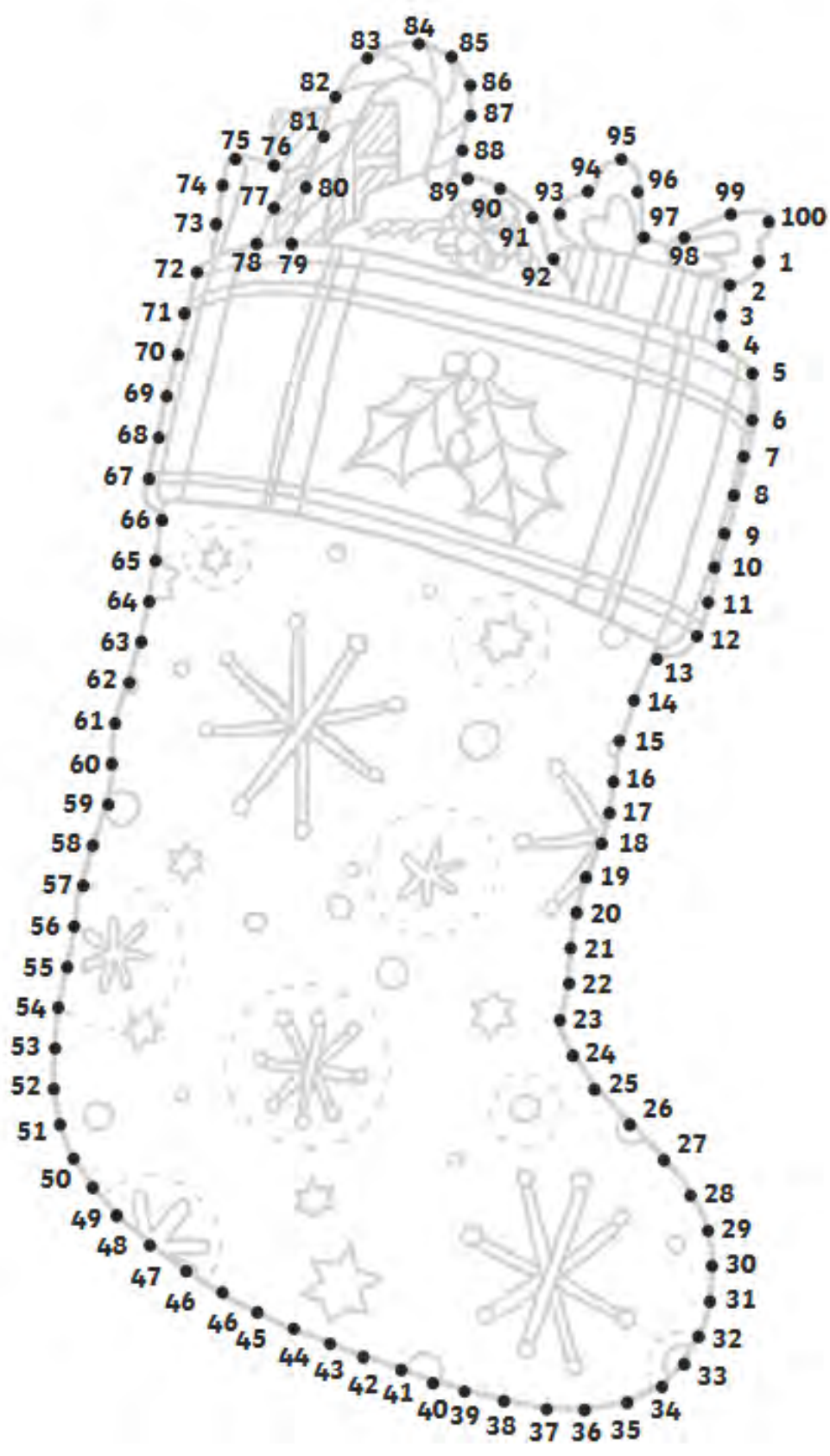
Simple books (sensory, noisy/feely or lift the flap) are great to work on:

- Choosing
- Requesting help
- Exposure to vocabulary
- Commenting (what it feels/sounds like)
- Greetings - "Hello axolotl!", "Bye Cat"





# Siblings Page



visit [twinkl.com](https://www.twinkl.com)





# WELCOME TO OUR NEW STAFF!



Irina Abrosimova recently joined Abbey Court as a Teaching Assistant in S10. She brings experience from working with younger children in Early Years, and is passionate about supporting learning and development. Outside of work, Irina loves exploring new places with her husband and their 4-year-old son.



Michelle Sullivan joined Abbey Court in October after a 20-year career working at a Building Society.

Seeking a more fulfilling and challenging role, she has found Abbey Court to be exactly that, and loves her job.

Michelle enjoys spending time with friends and family, and going on shopping trips with her mum.



Hannah Calvert joined Abbey Court School this term. Her passion for supporting children with special needs

inspired her to transition into education after leaving her previous career in retail. Outside of work, Hannah enjoys spending quality time with her family.



After over 20 years at Abbey Court School, we say goodbye to Sam Frankum, as she begins a new adventure. Sam's dedication and kindness have left a lasting mark on our community. We wish you every success and happiness in the next chapter — you will be greatly missed!

We are also sad to say goodbye to Caretaker Ben Shaw and Teaching Assistant Claire Bloor. We wish them all the very best for the future. We also wish Leigh Jackson, cleaner, and Supply Teaching Assistant Pat Churchward a very happy retirement!

# Merry Christmas

## Term Dates

**Friday 19th December 2025**

**LAST DAY OF TERM**

**Monday 22nd December 2025 to Friday 2nd January 2026**

**CHRISTMAS BREAK**

**Monday 5th January 2026**

**INSET DAY (STAFF ONLY)**

**Tuesday 6th January 2026**

**PUPILS RETURN TO SCHOOL**