



# Abbey Court **MATTERS**

Summer Term 5 2023 Issue 378 Circulation 1112



**“Abbey Court Foundation  
Special School continues to be  
an outstanding school”.**

**Ofsted, 2023**



## Message from the Governors



*Jon Carthy – Co-Opted Governor*

As we approach the end of Term 5, the glorious long sunny days must be just around the corner!

Following the publication of the Ofsted inspection report, I could not write this headline without starting with it.

I know that the report has been shared, but I felt it worth picking out just a small number of quotes from the report:

*“Abbey Court provides an inspirational physical and emotional environment in which pupils thrive and enjoy their education.”*

*“Staff expertly use diverse communication methods and are persistent in finding an approach that works for everyone.”*

*“The curriculum on offer at Abbey Court School is exceptional.”*

*“Parents praised staff and the school facilities and commented on their child’s happiness and progress.”*

As a school leader myself, I offer my huge congratulations to the Abbey Court community of pupils, parents and carers, staff, volunteers and governors following the confirmation that this school continues to be outstanding.

During April, the governors had the privilege of spending time exploring in detail the new secondary site at Cliffe Road. We will never fully comprehend the time and effort it has taken key staff, over many years to get a building of such high quality and targeted purpose for the young people of our community.

However, what we have now is an incredibly bright, spacious and purposeful building, designed and built specifically for the pupils of Abbey Court. I know that many of you have taken opportunities offered to come and see the new building. I am very much looking forward to my next visit, when I will see seeing learning taking place in the new spaces. I am sure that future editions of the newsletter will showcase pupils benefiting from these new facilities.

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### Trust Lottery Draw

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The Third Trust Lottery Draw of the 2022/23 Academic Year took place on Friday 31st March 2023.

The first prize of £40 went to Mrs Marilyn Pawley; the second prize of £20 went to Ms Petya Pavlova; and the third prize of £10 went to Ms Karen Joy.



The fourth Trust Lottery Draw of the 2022/23 Academic Year took place on Friday 5th May 2023.

The first prize of £40 went to Mrs Simone Simmonds; the second prize of £20 went to Mrs Linda Randall; and the third prize of £10 went to Rev Jean Kerr.



Many congratulations to all of the lucky winners!



Class S4 have been making a Donkey Enrichment activity station. Pupils realised that they were unable to cut the wood with scissors and had to instead use their Design Technology skills and knowledge in order to shape the wood. They were safety conscious, ensuring they had eye protection on in the form of goggles. S4 found this tiring work as they had to work hard moving their saw forwards and backwards, showing fantastic perseverance to cut this in half. The next stage of their process is to use the glue gun. They are looking forward to showing the donkeys the finished masterpiece!



*Larkin Farm*

*“The school’s farm provides a wealth of opportunities for pupils to extend their communication and independence skills as well as learn first hand about science.”*

**Ofsted, 2023**



Our topic in P8 this term is ‘Minibeasts’. The pupils have been visiting the bug hotels at the farm and using magnify glasses to search for minibeasts. They found ladybirds, ants and a woodlouse, and placed these into magnify viewing containers and took them back to class to observe. During a class discussion, they were able to identify characteristics of each minibeast, such as, do they have wings and how many legs do they have?



This term, as part of S5’s work on the farm, the pupils have been learning about ‘growing’, as well as the plant lifecycle. The pupils have planted seeds of different fruits, vegetables and flowers. Some of these seeds, once grown, will be transferred to the polytunnel at the farm, and others will be planted outside the classroom to create a sensory garden. The pupils have taken on the responsibility of caring for the plants by watering them regularly and ensuring they are in sunlight in order to help them grow.

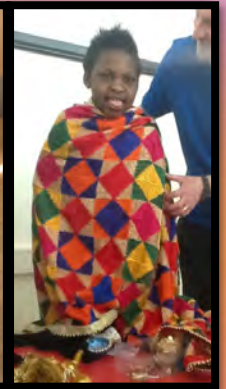
- You will need...
- Flower pot
  - Seeds
  - Soil
  - Trowel
  - Watering can

- 1 Collect a flower pot
- 2 Collect the soil
- 3 Add soil to the pot
- 4 Place a seed in the pot
- 5 Put soil on top
- 6 Water the seeds



## Punjabi Language Day

As part of our school's Languages Curriculum, and to celebrate diversity, pupils take part in themed language days throughout the year. This term, pupils on the Primary site celebrated Punjabi Language Day. They participated in activities in class to learn about the Punjabi language, as well as learning about the culture of the countries where this language is spoken. Our EAL Assistant, Raminder, held a special assembly to share all about her culture and language as Punjabi is her first language! Pupils loved exploring the vibrant clothing, practising how to pronounce Punjabi words using the microphone, and taking part in Bhangra dancing! Raminder also visited classes to read a popular story, 'Topiwala', in both English and Punjabi. It was such a joy to see pupils engage and show such an interest in this Languages Day. A big thankyou to Raminder and Joanna for supporting with this great learning event.



*"The curriculum on offer at Abbey Court School is exceptional."*

Ofsted, 2023

## German

S9 have been learning about holidays, or 'Ferien', in German this term.

To introduce them to the topic, they unpacked a suitcase full of items needed for a holiday to the Black Forest, or 'der Schwarzwald'. The students enjoyed exploring each item and were able to label the items with the correct German symbol. The class repeated the German words with great accuracy. Pupils then got themselves holiday ready by putting their sunhats and sunglasses on. They made sure they had enough 'Geld' (money) and their passports! Then, the class enjoyed taking selfies in their summer gear! They are looking forward to researching more about the Black Forest in the coming weeks.







## ART

At the start of the Summer Term, S1 began to explore the idea of 'Still Life'. Initially, they have been considering perspective by building up a range of images to recreate a piece of artwork they were provided with.

Pupils had to consider mathematical positional language such as 'beside', 'above', 'below', 'between', 'under', etc., before placing the image to match that of the fruit bowl example. They also had to recognise colour and shape, as some of the fruits looked very similar. Observation was key!

The next step was to begin creating their own 'Still Life' ideas by selecting random items from the classroom and building an image with them – taking risks and challenging the usual way of seeing an object. I think you will agree the pupils have clearly risen to the occasion, especially with some of the visual responses you can see in the photographs!

The next step is to consider gathering related objects and thinking about their relationship to each other, before producing their own artwork which will be used for an end of year project.



# Science

During Summer Term 1, S8's Science topic was 'Extinction'! Within the topic, pupils have been exploring what the word 'extinction' means, and other key vocabulary and animals.

The pupils have chosen an animal that they would like to focus on and have researched information on the plasma screen as to why these animals are extinct or close to extinction. The pupils have been exploring an interactive map of the world to identify animals which are endangered.

The pupils have then been able to make a poster about their animals to teach others about endangered animals.



*"The content of each subject has been considered, and planned, in the finest detail."*

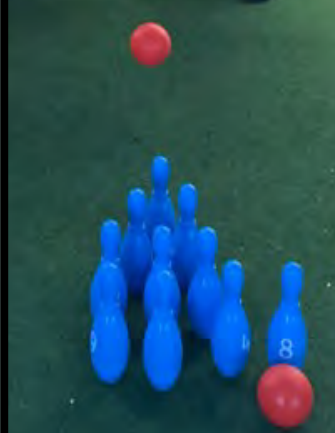
Ofsted, 2023

# Numeracy



S8 have been learning about money for their Numeracy topic this term. Pupils have been paying for a ticket to participate in a game of skittles. They practised taking turns and have been developing their social skills. Pupils have been distinguishing the 'ticket office' to make the payment, and they had to practise exchanging money and to wait for their change. They then passed their ticket to the ticket officer to participate in their game.

Great use of money!

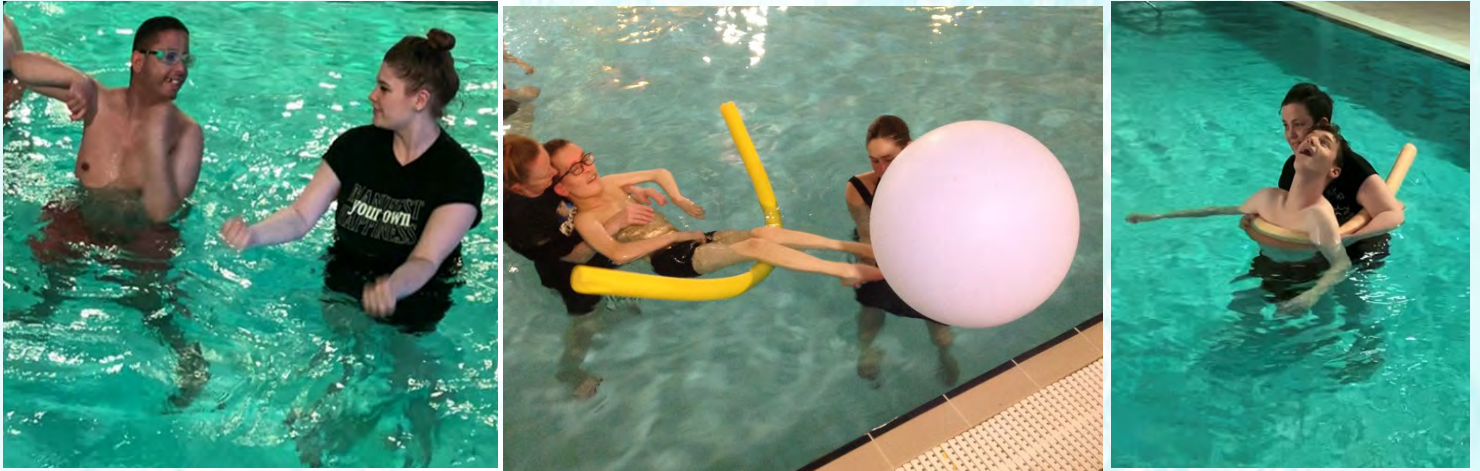




## Just keep swimming...

In the Further Education Department, students have been discussing their goals and next steps in swimming. They have reflected on what they can already do and looked at targets to work towards by the end of the year.

During sessions in the hydrotherapy pool, pupils have been developing their core strength and stamina in a range of aerobic activities and swimming styles.



Students showed great perseverance when swimming the entire length of the pool using front crawl.



Two students have achieved their 5m and 10m Rainbow Distance swimming awards! Keep up the fantastic swimming, FE2!





*“The collective school community’s ambition for pupils is reflected in a curriculum that more than mirrors the breadth of a mainstream curriculum.” Ofsted 2023*

During Summer Term 1, P11’s class topic has been ‘The American Experience’. Within the topic, P11 have been learning about the Native Americans and how they lived. They learnt about colours and patterns in their clothing and immersed themselves into their culture, dancing and listening to music and legends. Pupils then created their own ‘dream catchers’, choosing the colours and materials they wanted to use whilst working on their fine motor skills. Great work, P11!

*reflected in a  
stream*



## Promoting physical and mental well-being through a choice of activities during leisure and

Developing team sport participation, learning about the rules and scoring systems of



Developing a sense of team spirit.

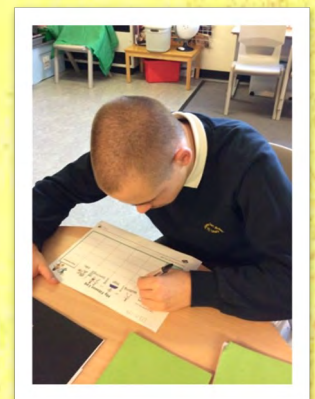
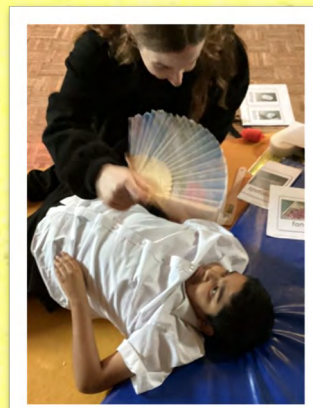
### Sport and Leisure activities on the Secondary site.

Improving concentration and coordination by using the ‘ACTIVALL’ board.



Participating in chosen dance and fitness videos.

Tac-Pac relaxation and sensory anticipation through music.



Producing a personal fitness log to track own fitness and celebrating improvements with peers.



# DAILY MILE PARTICIPATION



It has been great to see pupils at the Primary and Secondary site embrace their 'Daily Mile' with such enthusiasm and determination. The pupils have participated in their own individual way. Even the animals from Larkin Farm have joined in to make it a truly motivating and fun experience!



Students in the FE Department decided to play some Mini Golf on their daily walk. It was such fun.

Primary pupils have been supporting one another during their Daily Mile. They have loved this morning routine and met up with other classes on the playground. Pupils cheered one another on and have developed new relationships within the school community.







During this term, P5 have been working hard to develop their independence and confidence on the farm when working with small animals. The pupils have been following step by step sequences to clean and re-bed their hutch, as well as refilling their water and food.

Over the weeks, the children's confidence has developed and they are now independently following the sequence and collecting the resources they need, working to achieve a small animal care AQA award.



*“The school farm offers diverse opportunities, including developing independence, taking responsibility and extensive work related skills.”*

Ofsted, 2023

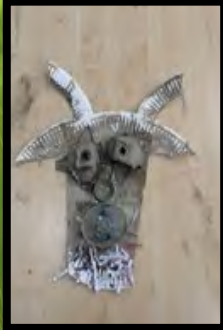
## Farm Curriculum

Our Farm Curriculum is focused on topics and key skills that are exciting and interesting for pupils, supporting them to work towards the skills that they need to be able to complete a range of jobs, and learn about different animals and how to care for them. It provides a cross curricular approach to learning and informs the wider National Curriculum in school by providing a practical aspect to learning.

One way we enrich our curriculum is by having Theme Days. We recently held a 'Challenge Day', which was great fun and very educational.

**FS/KS1**

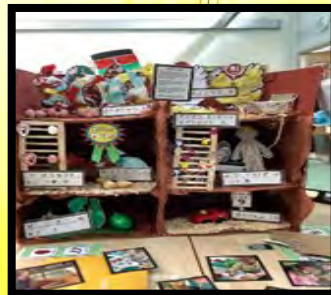
Can you make a farm animal from some junk materials and decorate it? Can you choose the colours they are and make the noise they make?



**KS2&3**

Can you make some interesting fact books about the animals on Larkin Farm?

Can you include what breed they are, what they eat, where they originate from, what are their habits, any interesting facts?



**KS4 & 5**

Can you make Larkin farm animals out of fruit and vegetables? Ask yourself these questions: How many legs do they have? What features do they have? What vegetable or fruit could be the body? What could you use for their eyes/ears?







We were thrilled for a group of our Secondary pupils to be able to attend the Living Land Event this year, at the Detling Showground, on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2023. This is a big, free event and lots of schools visit, so it was a very busy day. We set off from school at 9.30am and were able to explore six different areas around the showground. We visited the 'Touch and Taste' area first, where we learnt about how butter is made, how bees make honey, how apples and pears are pressed to make juice and we even had a taste! We used our senses to touch and feel different grains and look at some unusual vegetables and fruit.

We then moved onto the animal section, where we saw cows being milked and learnt about this process. We saw and touched calves, sheep and lamb, and we met a baby alpaca that was only 4 weeks old, and a very friendly pig called 'Dafney'. We watched a bird of prey show, which was incredible to see these birds in flight, and saw lots of huge machinery that is used in farming. We not only learnt about the factual elements of farming, but we also practised our social skills, how to be patient and how to navigate around the site using a timetable and map.

We had a fantastic day and everyone enjoyed being part of the big event! Next year, we hope to participate again and become even more involved, with a group of our Young Farmers showing our animals. We can't wait!





# Supporting Learning Through Educational Visits

To enhance S2's learning about pond life, the way that rivers are formed and the different animals that live around a river and a pond, the class decided to visit Riverside Country Park. Whilst there, the class looked at the river and the different things that you find on the river, for example: boats, birds and even the odd fish in the water. We then looked at the pond and noticed that there were dragonflies hovering above the water. The pupils were able to also identify lily pads and other pond life that they had learnt about in class. Going on visits helps to reinforce the learning that they have learnt about in the classroom in a fun and engaging way.



*“All pupils benefit from extensive, considered wider learning experiences.”*

Ofsted, 2023

## Visits to Canterbury



This term, some pupils from FE2 and FE3 have made their first transition visits to their Post 19+ Education placement, Canterbury College.

On their first visit, there were some nervous faces! However, after they had a tour, met some of their future tutors and visited the refectory for lunch, they were feeling much more comfortable. They were particularly excited to see some familiar faces of old friends from the years gone by.

On the pupils' second visit, they went into the groups that they will be working in and experienced a day in the life of a college student! One of the groups worked in the Library and the others participated in a sensory based lesson.

The pupils are looking forward to more visits in Term 6, where they will be working towards developing more independence and relying less on the Abbey Court supervising adults, building new relationships with their new teaching staff and other students.



## Off Site Swimming

KS2 access weekly swimming sessions at Strood Sports Centre. They have been working incredibly hard to develop their swimming skills and have achieved a range of awards, including the 'Learn to Swim 1 Award'. They have been practising lots of different swimming techniques, such as swimming on their fronts, backs and pushing themselves away from the edge of the pool. All pupils have also worked well to develop their independence skills. We all say or sign 'hello' to the receptionists, and pupils get changed with minimal support. Each pupil will also take their belongings to the lockers and locate them afterwards! Well done, Key Stage 2! Keep swimming!



During Spring Term, P1 have been looking at different traditional tales.

The pupils were able to go on educational visits that linked to the different tales. The first place they visited was Morrisons supermarket, where they bought ingredients for porridge: oats, milk and toppings, including chocolate chips. This was because they had been learning about the tale, 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears'. The pupils then made the porridge the next day for snack.



The following week, the pupils focused on the story, 'Jack and the Beanstalk', and visited a garden centre to look at all the plants. They then chose some beans to try and grow back in class as part of their Science lesson. The pupils have enjoyed exploring the different places on educational visits and this has helped to cement their learning of the traditional tales.



# The Naughty Fox

On Wednesday 10th and Thursday the 11th May, the Toucan Theatre visited us in our Drama studio to perform 'The Naughty Fox'.

Pupils were immersed in a multi-sensory storytelling of a naughty fox that had to learn how to share with his friends.

The performance was interactive, engaging and highly enjoyable.

Pupils had to use their senses throughout the show and demonstrated sharing with their friends whilst enjoying the immersive atmosphere of the performance.

Thank you, Toucan Theatre, for this amazing experience!

*“Other experiences [...]*

*contribute strongly to social and cultural development”.*

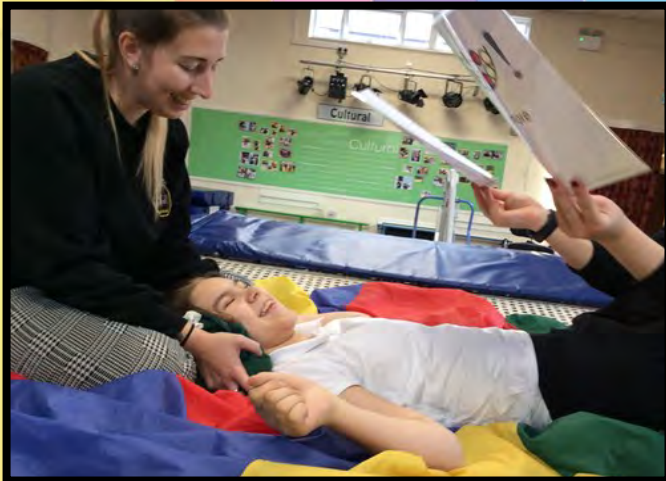
Ofsted, 2023





# Rebound Therapy

Pupils across the Primary and Secondary Departments participate in regular Rebound Therapy sessions. Rebound Therapy is fun for all ages and abilities.



Rebound Therapy was founded in the UK in 1972 and pupils' progress is recorded using the Winstrada development programme. Some of the many benefits for our pupils undergoing Rebound Therapy are:

- Cardio-respiratory
- Muscle tone
- Building confidence
- Postural mechanism
- Kinaesthetic awareness



Pupils are given the choice of what activities they would like to participate in, as well as if they would like 'more' or to 'stop', helping to develop language skills and give them choices. Rebound Therapy helps improve both high and low muscle tone. It has been wonderful to see the pupils initiating bouncing with some adult support.



# Tonto

Tonto is the school's horse simulator that provides therapeutic riding and an equine interaction experience. Tonto also provides a sensory experience which enables a broad range of new stimuli to be introduced.

Important benefits to Tonto are:

- Relationship building
- Horse grooming/cleaning
- Improving fine motor skills
- Balance and gross motor coordination
- Improving muscle tone
- Transferring and behaviour.

Tonto can also further support with learning in curricular subjects. For example; in German, pupils learn the words for colours - this is then extended when pupils are on Tonto, saying the German words for the colour it says!

*“Tonto’, the much-loved horse simulator, enables pupils to extend physical, social and linguistic skills within a familiar, supported environment.”*  
*Ofsted 2023*





# ABBEY COURT EXPLORER SCOUTS

## Farming Activity Badge



The Scouts are working on 'Section 2. Smallholders', on the Farming Activity badge.

The Scouts have been preparing and growing vegetables, plants and flowers at the farm.



They did lots of weeding....



emptying then weeds onto the compost heap...



lots of watering...



looked at plants and learnt about looking after them...

then, enjoyed seeing the plants growing! The scouts will next record the results by measuring plants, for example.



Great team work, Scouts!



# A Love For Literacy

Key Stage 4 and 5 have been exploring different aspects of Literature, through e-books, paperback and sensory stories. They have achieved this through reading as part of a group, allowing others to take turns, and guided reading as a whole class, each reading the same story and working together to understand the plot.

The students at Abbey Court have thoroughly enjoyed exploring different genres of text and working as part of a team.



*“A love for literature and a culture for reading are apparent throughout the school.”*

Ofsted, 2023



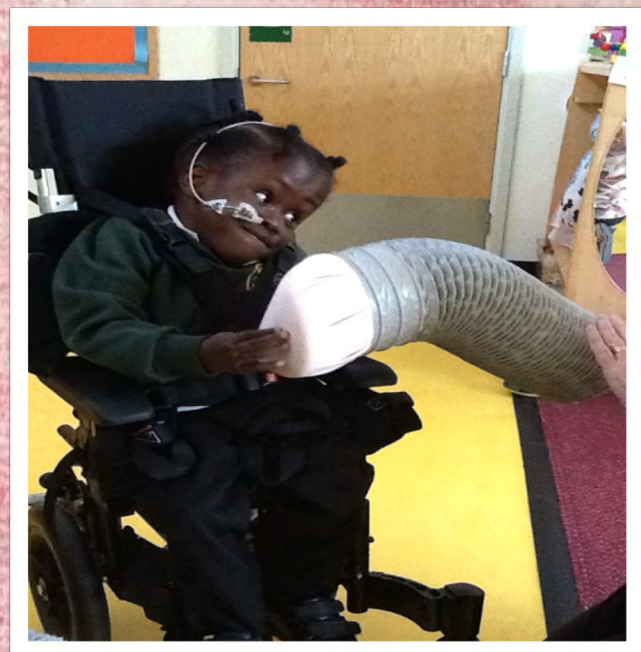
# Engagement Group

This term, during our Engagement Group sessions, we have been learning and exploring sensory elements of stories. Sensory stories are appropriate for all learners in school and enable them to access stories in many different ways, rather than just auditory involvement.



The Engagement Group focuses on key elements such as: exploration, realisation, responsiveness, curiosity, discovery, anticipation, persistence, initiation and investigation.

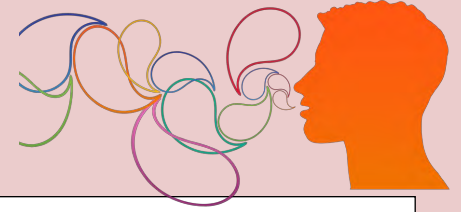
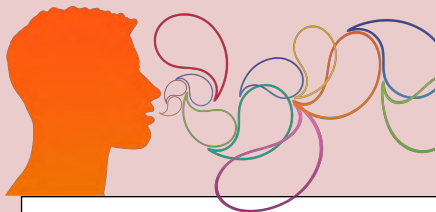
Sensory stories use repetition to build children's confidence as they learn from stimuli. They provide children with opportunities to fine tune their responses.



## WHAT IS A SENSORY STORY?

A sensory story is usually quite short, with each sentence of the story being accompanied by a sensory experience to help bring the story to life.





In the FE Department, we have been working on our communication skills. We have been reading the comic book, ‘The Duke of Wellington’, in the Library and the students have enjoyed this. We have been preparing for adulthood and learning how to work in a group, turn taking and listening to our peers. As well as reading, we have also been identifying key elements within each page. This is a fantastic way for students to use their different communication methods, each taking turns to raise their hand and communicate what they have noticed, remembering not to over talk their peers. Each student has also had the opportunity to collect the books and hand them out to their peers, which helps to promote their independence.

### What is a Communication Group?

A communication group helps children to develop their listening, attention, understanding and speaking skills. It can also provide the following:

- Providing a way for all group members to generate ideas and to be heard.
- Improve social skills and confidence.
- Encouraging everyone to make decisions as a group;
- Building rapport with one another.
- Mutual respect and understanding among group members.





Let's talk  
Makaton

# The Focus For Term 5 Is Our Curriculum Offer



Literacy



Numeracy



Science



Music



Art



PE

## School

Makaton Sign



School

### What is Makaton?

*Makaton is a unique language programme that uses symbols, signs and speech to enable people to communicate. It supports the development of essential communication skills, such as attention and listening, comprehension, memory, recall and organisation of language and expression.*

## Teacher

Makaton Sign



Teacher



# ONLINE CONTENT

## 10 tips to keep your children safe online

The internet has transformed the ability to access content. Many apps that children use are dependent on user-generated content which can encourage freedom of expression, imagination and creativity. However, due to the sheer volume uploaded every day, it can be difficult for platforms to regulate and moderate everything, which means that disturbing or distressing images, videos or audio clips can slip through the net. That's why we've created this guide to provide parents and carers with some useful tips on keeping children safe online.



### 1 MONITOR VIEWING HABITS

Whilst most apps have moderation tools, inappropriate content can still slip through the net.



### 2 CHECK ONLINE CONTENT

Understand what's being shared or what seems to be 'trending' at the moment.



### 3 CHECK AGE-RATINGS

Make sure they are old enough to use the app and meet the recommended age-limit.



### 4 CHANGE PRIVACY SETTINGS

Make accounts private and set content filters and parental controls where possible.



### 5 SPEND TIME ON THE APP

Get used to how apps work, what content is available and what your child likes to watch.



### 6 LET CHILDREN KNOW YOU'RE THERE

Ensure they know that there is support and advice available to them if they need it.



### 7 ENCOURAGE CRITICAL THINKING

Talk about what people might post online and why some posts could cause distress.



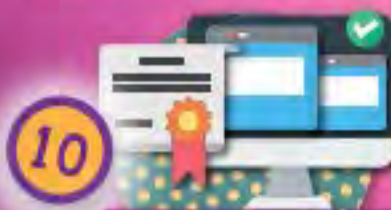
### 8 LEARN HOW TO REPORT & BLOCK

Always make sure that children know how to use the reporting tools on social media apps.



### 9 KEEP AN OPEN DIALOGUE

If a child sees distressing material online, listen to their concerns, empathise and offer reassurance.

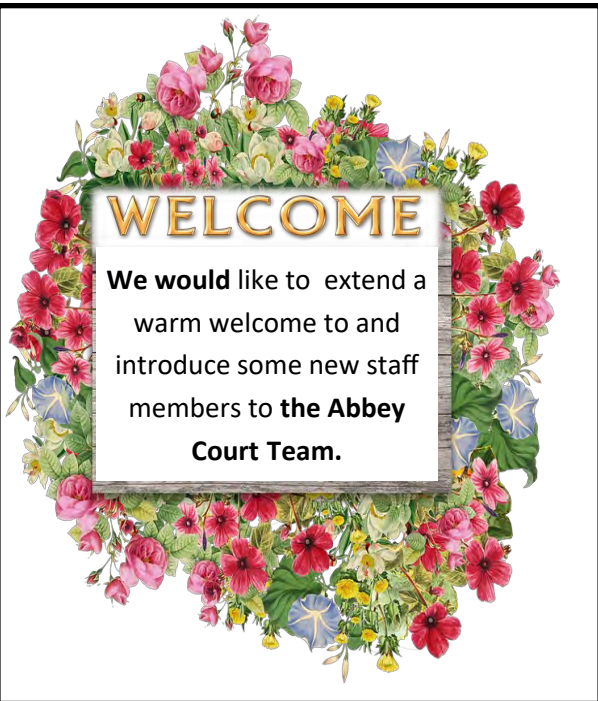


### 10 SEEK FURTHER SUPPORT

If a child has been affected by something they've seen online, seek support from your school's safeguarding lead.

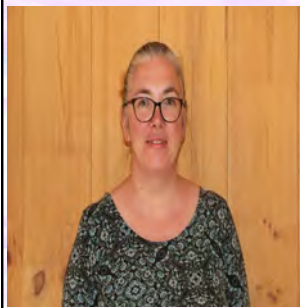




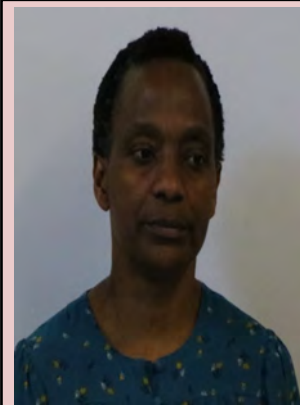


**WELCOME**

We would like to extend a warm welcome to and introduce some new staff members to the **Abbey Court Team.**



Debra Frayne joined Abbey Court as a Teaching Assistant in class P9. Debra is married with two sons that like adventures. As a family, they have a love of all things Marvel and Starwars, and in her spare time she loves nothing more than to crochet.

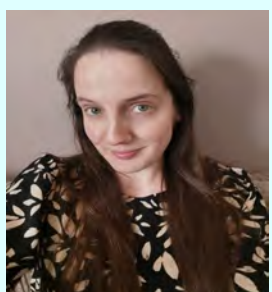


Sibusisiwe Livhi joined Abbey Court School as a Teaching Assistant in FE3. Sibusisiwe is a Zimbabwean, by origin. She has more than 20 years of teaching experience. She came to the UK in 2021 to further her studies. She obtained a Masters of Arts in Special Educational Needs at the University of East London. She is enjoying working at Abbey Court School as a Teaching Assistant. She has realised that the child-centred approach is essential with the support of every stakeholder.



Karen Maher joined Abbey Court as a Teaching Assistant in FE1. Karen is originally from Wales, but has lived in Medway for 20 years. She has 3 teenage boys, but only 1 still at home. Karen has a passion for beehives and all things vintage, especially clothes and music. In her free time, Karen loves to dance and attend northern soul/mod/50s/60s/70s events.

Jade Russel joined Abbey Court as a Teaching Assistant in S1. In her spare time, Jade enjoys ice skating, going for walks and visiting her local farm. Jade has always wanted to work in education and is excited to start her journey at Abbey Court.



Teresa McCann joined Abbey Court School as a Teaching Assistant in S6. Teresa has worked in a care environment for more than 20 years, and has worked to gain an NVQ2 & 3. Teresa has enjoyed her time at Abbey Court so far and feels she has been welcomed so kindly. Teresa has three children and four grandchildren and in her free time she enjoys baking and tending to her garden.

**TERM DATES**

**LAST DAY OF TERM: -**  
**Friday, 26th May 2023 for Nursery –P11 & S1, S2, S9 & FE1- FE3**

**Last Day of Term: -**  
**Tuesday 23rd May 2023 for S3–S8**

**LATE SPRING BREAK:-**  
**Monday, 29th May 2023 to**  
**Friday, 2nd June 2023**

**CHILDREN RETURN TO SCHOOL:-**  
**Monday 5th June 2023**



# Abbey Court School's new Secondary build is now finished!

We are looking forward to welcoming S1-S8 to the new Secondary site, after half term.

We are sure you will agree, from the photos, that the new building was worth the wait!

*“Abbey Court provides an inspirational physical and emotional environment in which pupils thrive and enjoy their education.”*

**Ofsted, 2023**







Abbey Court School Trust  
Introduces...



Funds raised through your adoption will go towards the welfare of the animals and upkeep of Larkin Farm making sure our furry and feathery friends have everything they need ▼

Larkin Farm and the animals we look after at the Rural Activity Centre provide the pupils at Abbey Court School with unique learning and life experiences, helping them gain a wealth

Please download an application form from the school website: <https://www.abbeycourt.medway.sch.uk/abbey-court-school-trust/fundraising/>

# Larkin Farm Adopt an Animal

Larkin Farm "Adopt an Animal" scheme whereby members can adopt the farm animal of their choice!

## Who will you choose to adopt?



...in support of Larkin Farm at



Abbey Court School



Ideal Christmas or birthday present!!

As part of your annual membership, you will receive our

### Standard Adoption Pack

- including:
- 1 x Adoption Certificate
- 1 x Photo of your chosen animal
- 1 x Animal Factsheet
- 1 x Handmade Knitted Toy or A Keyring
- Spring, Summer & Autumn updates from the farm

A personalised birthday card from your animal  
An invite to our community open days at Larkin Farm



# Siblings Page

## Guess Who?

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10

1 - Green  
2 - Brown  
3 - Red  
4 - Blue

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## Spring

B U D S  
D A F F O D I L S  
F L O W E R S  
G R A S S  
R A I N

R A I N B O W  
S E E D S  
S P R I N G  
T U L I P S  
U M B R E L L A

R A I N B O W D J A C P

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