

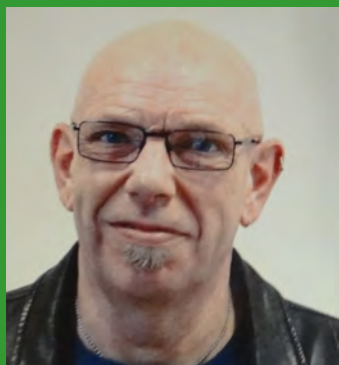


Abbey Court **MATTERS**

Autumn Term 2 2024 Issue 387 Circulation 1115



MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNORS



**Dave Lane,
Co-opted
Governor**

Hello all,

Christmas is a wonderful time of year at Abbey Court School, with so much going on for our children to be involved in.

I was lucky enough to attend the Christmas jumper fashion show last month and to see all the children dancing down the hall in their jumpers and shirts. Carols on the Farm always gives us the chance for everyone to come together, and show us the true meaning of Christmas.

Christmas is not always an easy time for everyone, with some facing difficult times. The school has a great community inside and out, and we can and do carry that forward wherever we can with support.

I feel very privileged to be part of this community. The children always teach me something new when I visit, and I look forward to another year of learning from our children.

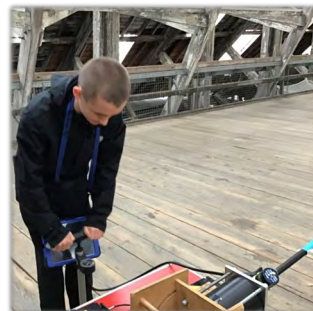
I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Kind Regards, Dave.

This term, the governors:

- ◇ Held a Full Governing Body and Finance Committee Meeting on 26th November
- ◇ Received a presentation on Mental Health and Wellbeing, and Pupil Voice
- ◇ Completed school finance monitoring
- ◇ Undertook a tour of the Cliffe Road site
- ◇ Attended a staff briefing

Chatham Dockyard



On 30th October, pupils from Key Stages 3 and 4 visited Chatham Historic Dockyard, as part of their Discovery Project.

The pupils had a fun packed day building and launching rockets at a warship! They worked in pairs with adult support to roll, tape and stick their rocket together, before pumping air into a tube and pressing the 'fire' button to launch their rocket. There was lots of laughter, and it was quite competitive, too!

The pupils enjoyed seeing the ships in the dry docks. They went on to the Ropery, where they used the twisting machines and lots of their energy to make their own piece of rope. The rope was bought back to school and it is hoped it can be made into a lead for our pygmy goats on Larkin Farm. A lasting reminder of a wonderful day at the Historic Dockyard!

Many thanks to everyone at the Dockyard for their support on the day; we felt very well looked after. The staff were very excited too, as it was an unexpected 'Call the Midwife' filming day!





Farm Theme Day



Primary classes enjoyed an 'Autumn and the Environment' farm theme day. Foundation Stage made 'journey sticks'. As they moved to each animal enclosure, pupils looked for sensory items such as feathers, wool, straw and animal feed to add to their journey stick. They also collected different coloured autumn leaves to make a rainbow back in class.

Key Stage 1 were busy moving around the green areas of the farm, collecting a range of natural items that they saw along the way to make a journey crown. The pupils picked up lavender, leaves, sticks and even grass to add to their crowns. They then collected a range of shapes and coloured leaves, and were able to make some leaf animals from their natural materials.

In Key Stage 2, pupils made a photo journey of significant things they walked past whilst in the natural areas of the farm. They collected a range of different coloured, shaped and sized leaves. They used an identification sheet to identify the tree the leaf came from, and then made tree artwork back in their classroom. They even made some fantastic leaf rubbings too.

All of the pupils enjoyed being outdoors and learning through nature. They enjoyed watching leaves falling from the trees and listening to Autumn songs and poems.



Autumn Leaves

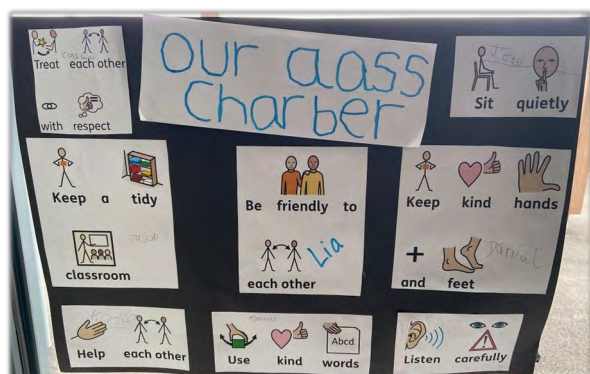


P8 have loved observing the different seasonal changes that have been happening around us. We have used time in our farm slots to explore these changes. We have collected leaves and looked at how their colours have changed and explored the different colours we can see.

P8 have noticed that lots of the leaves have fallen off the trees and are now on the ground. We listened to the sounds the leaves made when we walked over them and kicked them into the air. Pupils also used a leaf identification sheet to try and identify what kind of tree the leaves had come from.



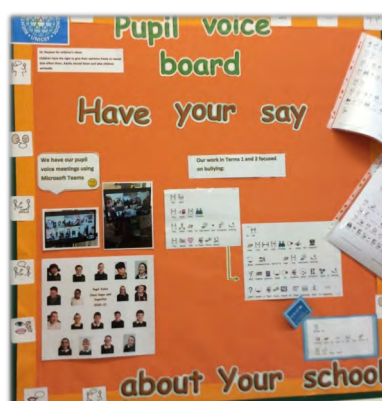
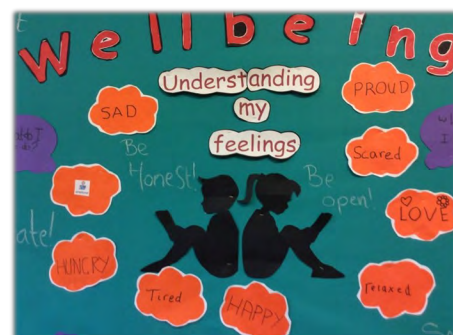
Rights Respecting Schools Award



Abbey Court School is proud to hold the UNICEF Rights Respecting School Gold Award. This is an award that recognises the school's 'commitment and achievement in developing a rights respecting community promoting active global citizenship. Teaching and learning *about, through and for rights* is embedded and sustainable.' The school is reassessed by UNICEF every three years, to ensure that we are still meeting the award's expected high standards.

On Monday 11th November 2024, two of UNICEF's professional advisers visited the school to carry out their assessment. During the visit, the assessors carried out learning walks across the school; met with staff, parents and governors; attended Pupil Voice meetings at Primary, Secondary and Further Education. They also explored the wide range of evidence provided by the school to show how we support learning about, and advocating for, children's rights. It was wonderful to hear about the positive impact of this on children, their families and the local community, and the day was a real celebration of how Abbey Court puts children's rights at the heart of everything we do!

We are eagerly awaiting the final decision and reaccreditation report from UNICEF, and look forward to sharing this with you soon!



Parent Events



Thank you to all the parents that attended our events this term:

- ♦ **EAL Coffee Morning:** It was a pleasure to host parents at Abbey Court School for our termly EAL coffee morning.
- ♦ **Further Education Coffee Morning:** Students raised £104 by preparing and selling cakes, coffees and wreaths. The pupils are voting for the charity that they would like to donate the money to.
- ♦ **SALT Parent Workshop:** We spoke about 'objects of reference' as a useful communication tool. It was lovely to see lots of new parents alongside some regulars!
- ♦ **Parent Voice:** The school's Emotional Literacy Support Assistant shared information about her role, some of the resources she uses, and how the school supports Mental Health and Wellbeing.
- ♦ **Share and Learn Sessions:** Parents joined in learning sessions, where pupils showcased their skills.



Remembrance Day



This term, Abbey Court Explorer Scouts have been learning and talking about what they know about Remembrance Day. The Scouts worked together to make their own poppy wreaths, and invited the Secondary site pupils to join them in sharing their assembly.

There are lots of exciting badges that the Scouts are working towards, one of which is a fundraising badge for the 'Poppy Appeal'. The Scouts sold poppies to raise money, and reminded people of how important it is to remember those who have lost their lives through war and conflict.

Language of the Term

Our 'Language of the Term' was the Tamil language.

We had the pleasure of welcoming Mr Chandrarajah and Ms Kishanthan to our school.

The primary pupils listened to a story about two cats and a monkey in the Tamil language, whilst the secondary pupils cooked some traditional Sri Lankan dishes.



Interfaith Week



This term, we also had the opportunity to celebrate Interfaith Week.

We learnt about the main religions of the world, their symbols and what they are characterised by.

Each class had the chance to create artwork to show what they had learnt.

The main aim was to show our pupils that, even with different beliefs, we can all live together in harmony.



Year 6 Residential



At the end of November, pupils from year 6 enjoyed a one-night residential sleepover at school.



We all had a fantastic time, starting off with a disco swim, followed by dinner, karaoke, and then a movie night with hot chocolate before we slept in the hall.

Thank you to all the pupils and staff who participated in this memorable experience—what fun we all had!



Farm AQAs

Pupils from S1 have been developing the skills required to achieve the AQA award linked to caring for animals on Larkin Farm.

Each week, pupils have completed tasks such as learning how to handle and groom small animals with a range of adult support. In addition, they have explored and prepared food, along with feeding the animals. This helps our pupils to be less fearful of the animals, and gets the animals used to the pupils, too.

They have recently been supported to put on the pygmy goat leads, and learnt to walk with them in preparation for being shown at events across the year by our Young Farmers.

Well done S1—you have all worked hard to achieve this AQA.

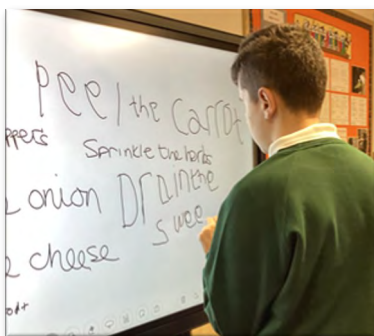


Pasta Project

S9 have worked on a pasta project in Food Technology lessons this term.

Pupils started by researching different pasta types and sauce recipes. They followed a homemade pasta recipe and explored using a pasta machine to make a variety of pasta. Next, S9 decided what ingredients they wanted to use for their pasta dish and the winning vote went to...fusilli pasta! Pupils wrote their shopping lists and went on an educational visit to Morisons to get the ingredients for their dish. S9 went to the polytunnel on the farm to explore the aroma of different herbs, and chose to use oregano in our tomato pasta sauce recipe. Pupils developed their skills and techniques when peeling, grating and chopping different vegetables.

S9 worked fantastically as a team to create their homemade tomato pasta dish, which was enjoyed by all! We can't wait to find out what we will be making next!



Pizzeria

The pupils in the Secondary Department have been exploring the concept of 'farm to fork'. The farm polytunnel had a 'pizza garden' for the pupils to tend to, which included herbs, tomatoes, peppers and many other vegetables. The pupils in Key Stage 3 and 4 researched and investigated different types of pizza, and planned how to make their own class pizzas.

It was great to see so many parents come to taste our different pizzas and vote for their favourite.

There were some very brave volunteers who tried to toss some pizza dough!

Well done to S5, who were voted the winners!



Is your child registered for **SCHOOL MILK?**

Child **UNDER 5**

Every child under the age of five is entitled to free school milk. Simply register your child online.



Child **OVER 5**

Every child over the age of five is entitled to milk at a subsidised cost of around £20 per term. Register your child and pay online.

Children in receipt of benefits-based free school meals are eligible for free school milk. Speak to the school for further information.

Free milk for under 5s is funded by the Department of Health and milk for over 5s is subsidised by DEFRA.

REGISTER YOUR CHILD TODAY

Register online
www.coolmilk.com



Need help?
Send us a message
at www.coolmilk.com/contact
or give us a call on **0800 321 3248**



FIND US ON SOCIAL MEDIA - SEARCH COOLMILKSCHEME

Medications Administered at School

For pupils that require daily/emergency meds at school:

- Please return the completed and signed Medication Permission Form.
- Please send in a new supply of medication in the original pharmacy package, with a prescription label attached.
- Please supply the appropriate syringe or spoon for your child's medication.
- Please refer to the patient information leaflet, as some medications will expire after opening, sooner than the expiry date on the box.
- For medications administered by gastrostomy: please ensure an enteral syringe for each medication is supplied every 2 weeks, along with a 60ml syringe for flushes and a new extension tube.

Thank you. We hope you all have a safe and enjoyable break!



Key Stage 3 and 4 Horseriding

Each week, a group of pupils attend horseriding lessons at the Arrow Riding Centre.

The pupils cope really well when wearing their riding hats, and follow direction from a trained riding instructor. They have learnt to mount and dismount a horse safely. They have been developing their steering skills by moving their reins in the correct direction, and some have attempted to use their knees to steer, too. Over the term, they have also been walking and stopping their ponies on command.

The most recent sessions have been using those skills as part of a walk through the woods. It was fantastic to see the pupils riding in an outdoor setting and putting their new found skills to the test. Well done everyone, and thank you for the team at Arrow – including their fabulous volunteers.



Visit to Church



S10 visited St Philip and St James' Church in Upnor.

We explored some of the key features of the church, including the font, pulpit, altar, lectern, organ and war memorial. We particularly liked the embroidered kneeling cushions and the stained-glass windows. During the visit, we listened to the sound of the organ playing and walked along the aisle to the wedding song.

This educational visit enabled us to have a real-life experience of the learning that had taken place in class during RE lessons, about churches.



Toucan Theatre

This term, Toucan Theatre collaborated with Abbey Court on an exciting new project funded by the Arts Council. Pupils took part in multi-sensory theatre workshops to create SEND and PMLD storytelling of a new show, 'The Noisy Dinosaur'!

We explored what dinosaurs looked like, where they lived, how they behaved and the noises they made. The workshops gave us opportunities to explore, create and immerse ourselves in storytelling and performance.

Next year, Toucan Theatre will return to Abbey Court to perform 'The Noisy Dinosaur', so that our school can see the impact we had on the creation and design of the show.





ABBHEY COURT TRUST



Abbey Court School Charitable Trust supports and fundraises for the school and community. We want to help enhance the facilities and education on offer to all of the pupils at Abbey Court.

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. If you would like to help us achieve our goal, please do get in touch.

Lottery

Tickets are £10 per ticket, and you can purchase as many tickets as you like.

The prizes are:

- **1st prize - £40**
- **2nd prize - £20**
- **3rd prize - £10**
- **With an additional prize of £100 to be won in December**

There are 10 draws per year, and your ticket will be placed in each of the 10 draws.

Please sign up for the lottery in June or July in order to be a part of the next school year's lottery draws.



Thank You!

We would like to thank:

The Gallagher Group, who generously donated £1,500.

Everyone who came to and supported the Christmas Jumper Fashion Show. We raised a brilliant £423.86.

Our fabulous animal adoption knitters. Please let us know if you would like to help too.

Everyone who came along to Carols on the Farm. We raised over £1000!

Animal Adoption



Funds raised through the scheme 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 provide the pupils at Abbey Court School with unique learning and life experiences, helping them gain a wealth of key skills.

Please contact office@abbeycourt.medway.sch.uk if you would like an application pack.



A Message from Jean Kerr, Vice Chair of Abbey Court Trust

What is so exciting about being involved in Abbey Court School is that, for our young people every Christmas, it is the very best they ever had. It is all about memories made.

The whole experience of what happens in the school community leading up to this Christmas time creates these memories, whether it be the wonderful Christmas Jumper Show, Carols on the Farm, or all the work done in different classrooms. There is the utter joy that I feel when I see the children enjoying their Christmas lunch or going home from school clutching their Christmas crafts or wearing their Christmas hats.

Just remember the farm staff who will still be working throughout the Christmas break for animals who, just like children, still need feeding and being cared for.

Registered Charity Number: 1160511

Silver Coin Race



In Term 1, parents and pupils were asked to send in any spare silver coins that they had, with a 'Silver Coin Race Competition' being held on the last day of term. Coins were put onto metre strips of card and then laid in long lines on the farm court yard.

The winners were:

- The primary department, with a total of 62 metres combined!
- The primary class with the longest strip was P7, with a total of 36 metres.
- The secondary class with the longest strip was S9, with a total of 7 metres.
- Tate in primary and his family raised a whopping £145.75!
- Ellamae in secondary and her family raised a brilliant £57.50.



Thank you to everyone who donated. We raised an amazing £587.05!

39

100

168

Trust Lottery Draw

173

40

12



Would you like to purchase Lottery Gift Vouchers for friends or family?

Cost: £10 per lottery ball number.

How it works: Each ball is entered into all 10 of the academic year's draws, so there are 10 opportunities to win!



Second Trust Lottery Draw on Friday 18th October 2024:

First prize of £40 — Jane Heyes

Second prize of £20 - Neil Howie

Third prize of £10 — Zoe Silvester

Third Trust Lottery Draw on Friday 29th November 2024:

First prize of £40 — Rae Cook

Second prize of £20 — David and Jean Park

Third prize of £10 — Graham Jenner

Congratulations to all of the lucky winners!

Learning in the Community

This term, P3 have gone into the community on some educational visits. We have been to Time Christmas and Morrisons.

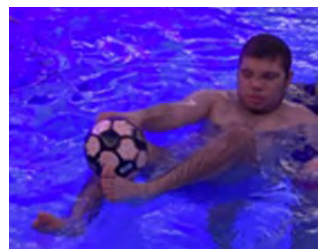
In Time Christmas, we learnt about different celebrations. We were able to explore different decorations, feel the Christmas trees and watch the light displays – which we absolutely loved!

In Morrisons, we practised pushing a trolley, adding items to our basket and handing over money to the cashier.

We all did so well and can't wait to go on our next educational visit soon!



Football Theme Day



In November, pupils across the school undertook a Football Theme Day.

Pupils completed a range of activities to learn about football, watched clips of 'Match of the Day', and undertook football-based games that focused on teamwork and learning the skills of football.

The students in Further Education learnt about the diet and fitness plans that footballers have to follow.

The next sports themed day will be based on the Six Nations Rugby competition in February.

Key Stage 3 Choir

The Key Stage 3 choir have been working hard since September to practice and learn some new songs. The pupils have used symbols and Makaton signing to help to learn these songs.

We have enjoyed the opportunity to sing Christmas Carols at Morrisons, Strood to raise money for both the school and their charity partner, Marie Curie Cancer Care. The pupils represented the school outstandingly, thanking the public for their donations, and singing in full voice.

The choir attended the Medway Music Association Carol Concert at Rochester Cathedral on 5th December. The pupils in the choir joined with pupils from other local Medway schools to sing a mix of traditional and modern carols. The pupils watched and followed a conductor, and joined in enthusiastically. Each school was allocated a reading to deliver to help narrate the Christmas story and introduce the songs.

The pupils engaged fully with the experience and were in awe of the beautiful backdrop of the cathedral.



Jazz Music

In S8, we have been learning all about jazz music!

We started by listening to different jazz music and identifying the instruments used. We then explored the instruments and tried to play them. We also learned about a famous jazz player called Louis Armstrong, who was a trumpeter and singer who sang 'It's a Wonderful World'. We continued our learning by improvising our playing, like they do in jazz.

It was great to be creative and perform our own pieces of music.



Christingle



A Christingle begins with an orange...

On Tuesday 10th of December in school, and on Wednesday 11th at All Saints Church, all primary pupils had the opportunity to attend a Christingle service.

The pupils made their own Christingles in class and took these to the services, where they learnt about Christingle and what it means.

The orange represents the world, the red ribbon symbolises the love and blood of Christ, the sweets and dried fruit represent all of God's creations, and the lit candle represents Jesus' light in the world, bringing hope to people living in darkness.

The pupils engaged well, singing our Christingle songs and lighting their candles for a moment of reflection. Well done to all the pupils and many thanks to the church for leading the services!



Christmas Cakes!



During Term 2, S6 made their own Christmas cakes to take home, but with a slight twist. Instead of cooking them in a cake tin, we made them in baked bean tins!

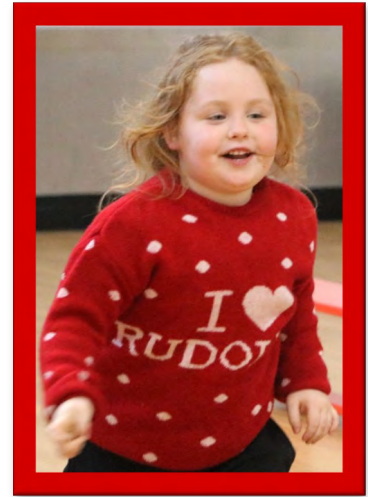
We used a symbolized ingredient list to ensure we had the correct measurements and all of the ingredients. We also used a symbolised sequence list to help us follow the stages of the recipe. S6 learnt health and safety precautions, such as washing our hands and tying long hair back.

We prepared our tins by drawing a circle shape around the tin on baking paper, and then cut a long rectangular piece of baking paper to grease the tin. We practised using weighing scales to measure the correct amount. There were numerous spoon skills required, including creaming, mixing and scooping.

All of S6 worked hard to create a product they were proud to send home!



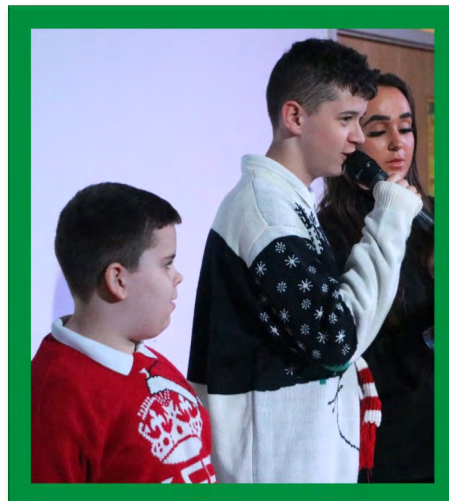
Christmas Jumper Fashion Show



On 14th November, Abbey Court held its annual Christmas Jumper Fashion Show!

Two pupils enthusiastically introduced their peers, who danced, smiled and waved down the cat walk, proudly showing off their Christmas jumpers to the clapping cheering audience.

Thank you to everyone who came to support the pupils and school, and who helped create such a fabulous atmosphere.



The Nativity

This year, the primary pupils at Abbey Court performed the Christmas Nativity. Children attended rehearsals every day throughout December to familiarise themselves with the Nativity, taking part in activities that would help transfer skills into their performance.

Children enjoyed a variety of activities; singing and signing; roleplaying; prop and costume design; grooming and leading farm animals; reading lines; playing instruments and dancing!

We performed to families on the 17th December and it was fantastic! We are all very proud of our performance and were excited to share our hard work with everyone that attended.



Carols on the Farm



On 15th December, we held our annual 'Carols on the Farm' event.

Although it was a chilly evening, the festivities and warm glow of the Christmas lights were magical.

Canon Jean Kerr told the nativity story, with the help of the Salvation Army band, Opus 32 choir and of course, the farm animals.

The carol service was followed by a festive market, where we sold items such as wreaths made by pupils.

This year, 'Father Christmas' came along to add to the festivities too!

Thankyou to the Abbey Court and District Young Farmers, the Salvation Army, Opus 32 choir, all the volunteers, and everyone who supported this wonderful event.



Secondary Christmas Market

Over the last few weeks leading up to Christmas, the secondary pupils have been exploring Christmas Markets. The pupils were given opportunities to take virtual tours, and look at photographs of markets and items that could be bought there. In classes, the pupils worked together to select products to make and sell at the Abbey Court Christmas Market on Monday 16th December. All classes from S1 – S10 set up a stall and worked to sell their items.

It was fantastic to see so many parents attend and appreciate the hard work each class had put into planning and making Christmas items as part of an enterprise scheme. The market concluded with carols, led by the Key Stage 3 choir, and refreshments in the hall.

The pupils have been thinking about what they would like to use their profits for. In class, discussions have been focused around having visitors and performers come into school, as well as treat days such as movie day or beach day.

Thank you for supporting this event; we will let you know what we spend our profits on.



Siblings Page

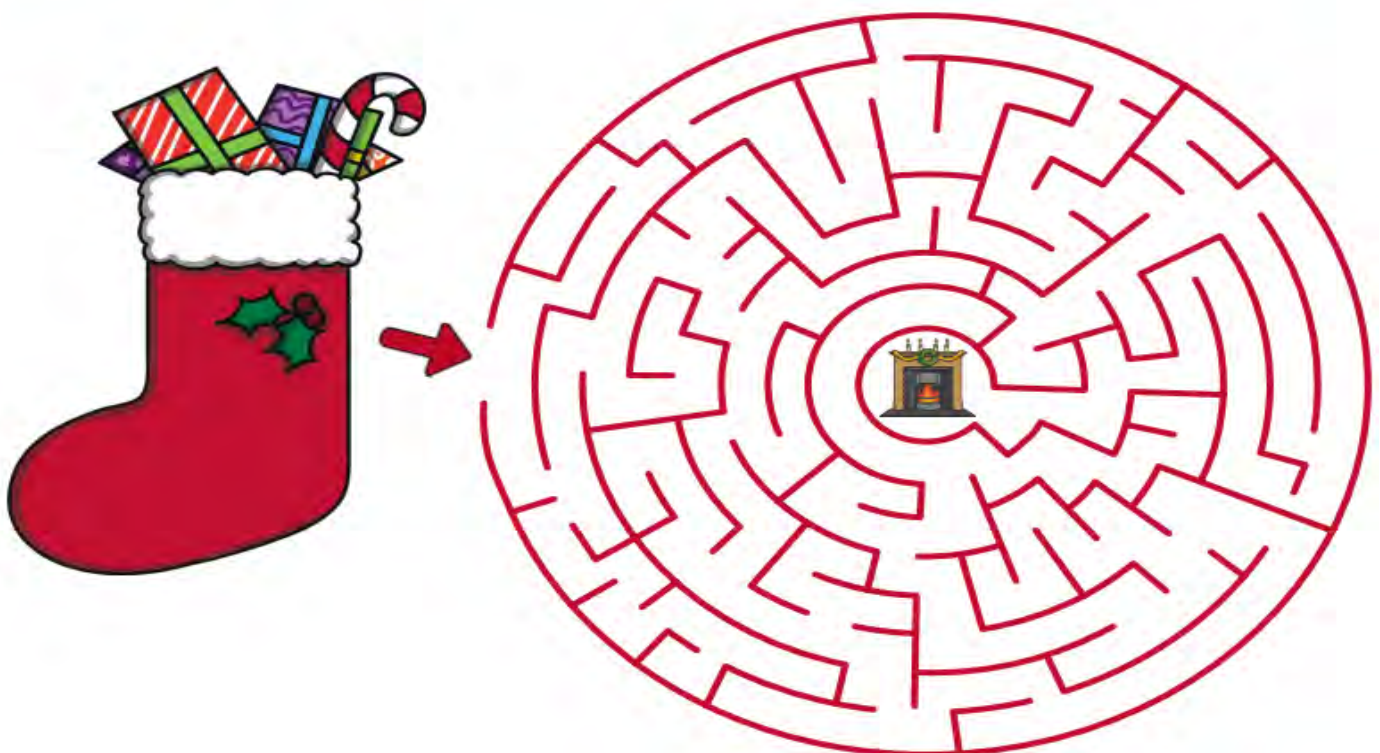
Spot The Difference

There are 5 differences in the pictures below, can you find them?



Christmas Stocking Maze

Can you put the Christmas stocking back up above the fireplace?





Let's talk Makaton



Below is a list of Makaton signs.

Please share these with your family and friends to enable them to communicate with your child.

Please remember to use your dominant hand and also say the word along with signing it.

Christmas Tree



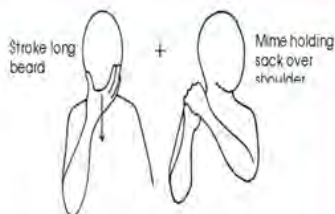
Church



Sleigh



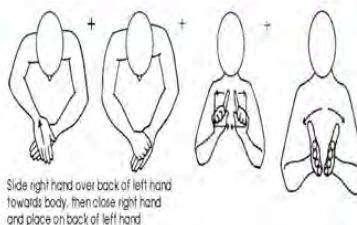
Father Christmas



Reindeer

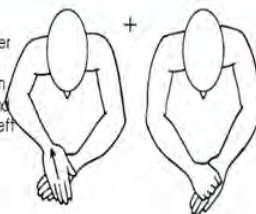


Christmas Card

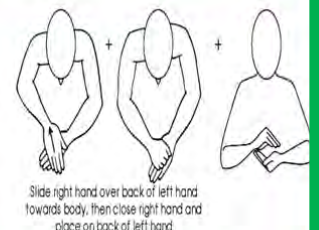


Christmas

Slide right hand over back of left hand towards body, then close right hand and place on back of left hand



Christmas Pudding



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.



Communication Corner

Visual Supports



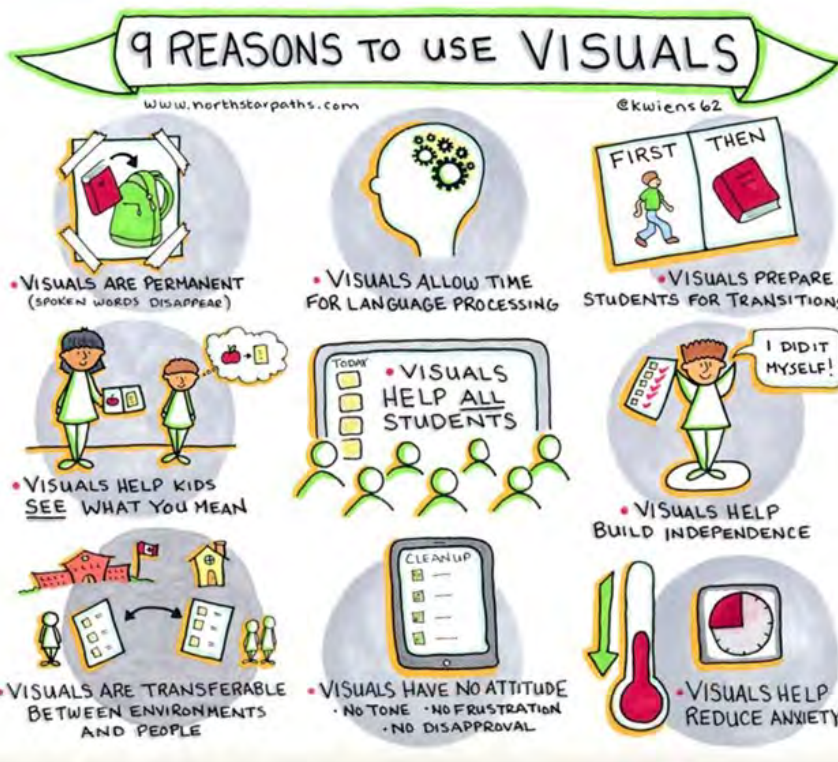
Lynsey Cook

We all use visual supports throughout our days to support our understanding.

They are an effective way to stop repeating ourselves when it comes to supporting a pupil to do a task. When we repeat ourselves verbally, we extend the pupils' processing time, which can lead to frustration.



Kelly Ann Ralph



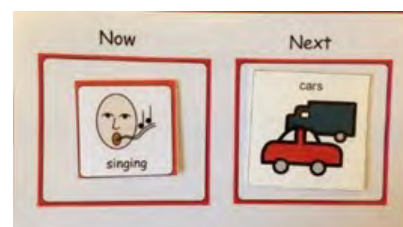
We use a range of visual supports in school to help pupils to understand and follow routines:

- ◆ Objects of Reference
- ◆ Symbols, photos and written words
- ◆ Lists, sequencing cards
- ◆ Communication boards and books
- ◆ 'Now and Next' boards
- ◆ TEACCH Approach
- ◆ Visual Timetables.

Object of reference example:



Now and Next board example:



Visual supports also promote independence skills, such as providing a shopping list to follow, sequencing the steps to prepare a meal, and following an individual timetable to know what is happening next.

The following link is to a YouTube animation that explains visual supports in a great way!

<https://youtu.be/s1eZ7h6u3JM>

As always, if you have any questions or want more information about anything, please contact me via the contact book or the office.



WELCOME TO OUR NEW STAFF!



Ben Shaw— Caretaker

I'm looking forward to getting to know everyone. My hobby is football: I watch Maidstone United nearly every week. That does not mean I'm good at football though!



Hannah Wright— Farm Assistant

Hi, my name is Hannah and I have recently joined the team on Larkin Farm.

My hobbies include riding my horses and working on my tractor.



Good Bye!

We are sorry to say goodbye to Alex Scott (teacher), Devon Barnwell (TA), Joanna Mroczka (EAL Assistant) and Elizabeth Murray (Catering Assistant). We wish them well for the future. We would also like to wish Glenda Faulkner and Dennis Clarke a very happy retirement!

PE and Swimming Kits

Don't forget to send in your child's PE kits and swimming kits. Thank you!

Any special talents?

Do any of our lovely parents/carers have any hidden talents they would like to share? You could be a master knitter, baker or have a passion for card making. Please let the office know if you do.

Unwanted School Uniform

Has your child outgrown their old school uniform? If so, please consider donating it to the school, so that other children can benefit from it.

Hydropool

We said that we would tell you how often the hydropool was out of action. This term, there have been four occasions when one of our two hydropools has been out of use.

Term Dates

Friday 20th December 2024	Last day of term
Monday 23rd December 2024 to Friday 3rd January 2025	Christmas Break
Monday 6th January 2025	Inset Day
Tuesday 7th January 2025	Children return to school