

# Abbey Hill Academy



## Autumn Term Newsletter

December 2024

Volume: 30



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# Principals Welcome

Written by James Newman

Welcome to the 2024 autumn edition of the Abbey Hill Academy newsletter.

As the year draws to a close and the Christmas holiday season approaches, I want to take a moment to reflect on the past term. As always it has been one of growth, learning and fun within our wonderful school community and I hope this shines through this newsletter.

I am delighted to announce the excellent news that we have achieved the National Autism Society's Autism Accreditation Specialist Advanced Award. We would like to thank all of our parents and students for sharing their views of our provisions in such a positive way and the continual support you offer us. This award is at a higher level than we have previously achieved and we are delighted that the hard work from all within the Abbey Hill community is formally recognised.

We have also achieved the healthy school award. Again, this recognises the ongoing work we carry out to help develop our students' physical, emotional and mental health and is an achievement that we are very proud of.

This holiday season reminds us of the importance of kindness, generosity, and togetherness. I am proud of how our students, staff, parents, and carers show these values every day through small gestures that make a big difference to others.

I would finally like to thank all members of the Abbey Hill community for your continued support and for making our school such a vibrant, caring and happy place to be and I look forward to continuing this throughout 2025

Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Warm regards

James

# 7JH

# 10AP

Written by James Harrison

Since starting Abbey Hill Academy in September 2024, I have been really pleased with how 7JH have settled in. Whilst starting a new school can be scary and daunting for some people, the group have formed good friendships with students in the tutor group and wider Abbey Hill community. The tutor group have a positive approach to lessons and students are keen to develop new and existing skills. This is acknowledged through the number of Abbey Tickets the group have accumulated so far this academic year. As a tutor group, each student has contributed to raise a total of close to 20,000 Abbey Tickets!

I look forward to seeing how the students will grow and develop into life at Abbey Hill Academy as we continue our educational journey.

Written by Andy Pearson

This term our tutor group have completed an effective transition to a new setting in the Asher Annex and more significantly into Year 10. Students have really risen to the challenges of the Key Stage 4 curriculum starting accredited work in individual subjects that will result in qualifications that they will achieve by the end of Year 11.

Students have settled well into the options structure on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons following their passions and interests to develop knowledge and life skills in adventure, art GCSE, computing, food, sport, product design, performing arts, photography and hair & beauty.

Highlights of this term have included working as a team and social time in tutor group.

As a tutor team we are proud of the way that the group have gelled and anticipate continued progress.



# gkp visit Whitby

Written by Kathryn Palmer

*As part of the Year 9 'Gothic Fiction' English scheme of work, gkp went to Whitby to experience the setting of the novel 'Dracula'. Our journey there was suitably gothic as a thick fog descended just as we arrived. This added to the spooky atmosphere and everyone was excited to explore the story's setting for real.*



*Whilst in Whitby, we visited the famous steps, the old church and listened to an extract of the story where Dracula transforms into a huge black dog. The students learned about what inspired the novel's author, Bram Stoker, over one hundred years ago and how the story continues to interest readers from all over the world.*



*After we climbed all 199 steps, the group enjoyed freshly cooked local fish and chips and watched the graceful ships and greedy gulls in the historic harbour. When it was time to go home, everyone noticed a big black dog in the carpark and wondered if Dracula would try to follow us home!*



# 5AB Celebrations

Written by Amanda Burns

*This term we have been learning all about celebrations.*

*We have had a wonderful term celebrating Autumn by getting out and about on our bus and spending time in the Autumn sun.*

*We have celebrated Halloween with our own Spooktakular sensory assembly.*

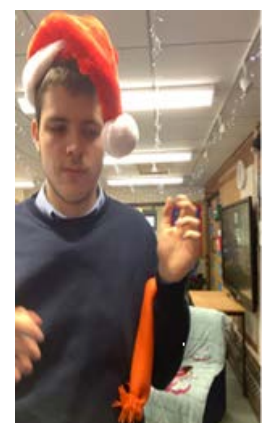
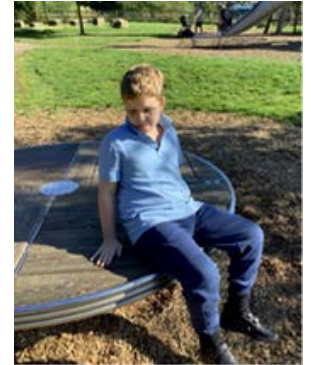
*We celebrated Pudsey day with Pudsey splatting and a wee party.*

*We loved learning about Diwali and have had stories, music and tasted some Diwali treats!!*

*We are now in full swing for our Christmas celebrations. We have been out Christmas shopping, making gifts and cards and practising for our Christmas assembly.*

*Everyone has worked really hard and we are so proud of the way our new students have settled in.*

*Happy Christmas to everyone from all of us in 5AB xxx*





# 10AB News

Written by Alison Brumwell

10AB have had a fantastic transition from Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 4. All of the students are really enjoying their Option Choices, some have had to switch, but that has been ok, it takes time to figure out what we enjoy doing. The students on Adventure are shocked by how far they have to walk, but they are really enjoying themselves. Cookery students are making a variety of different foods. Hair and beauty produces a variety of hairstyles. Expressive arts students are being expressive, most of the students are in the choir and have appeared on stage at the Christmas Concert. They are looking forward to going to the Pantomime with Ed. Computers and Sports are also proving to be great fun.

## Ormesby Hall

As part of the English curriculum, 10AB visited Ormesby Hall in Middlesbrough. It was a fantastic day out. The students were able to explore the stately home and to see how the 'rich' family lived. We explored all the living areas, the bedrooms, the kitchen and the laundry. Everyone had a go at ironing, using the old metal irons. After lunch, the students explored the grounds and played in the park.



Christmas trip to Panto and McDonalds.



# Abbey Hill at North Shore

Written by Rebecca Batey

*We have expanded... again!*

*We are delighted to report that our provision here at North Shore has grown and we now have 3 classes of wonderful students. We are really enjoying getting to know our new starters. Our current students have welcomed the new year 7 pupils, showing them the way. We also have welcomed new staff to the North Shore family, everyone has settled really well and we are enjoying our time together.*



*Hello Yellow, World Mental Health Day 2024. On World Mental Health Day, celebrated on October 10th, our school community came together in a meaningful way to promote awareness and understanding of mental health issues. This year, our students proudly wore yellow ribbons, a symbol of hope and support for mental health awareness. Throughout the day, children engaged in discussions and activities focused on managing and maintaining positive mental health. They explored topics such as coping strategies, the importance of emotional well-being, and ways to support one another. Our aim was to create an open environment where students feel comfortable sharing their feelings and seeking help when needed. We encourage you to continue these important conversations at home.*





# Abbey Hill at North Shore

Written by Rebecca Batey

## Sponsored Reindeer Ramble

We are thrilled to share that our students participated in the Reindeer Ramble, a sponsored event in our local community that took place on Friday, December 13th. This festive occasion brought together students, staff and some enthusiastic supporters for a joyful walk that celebrated the holiday spirit.

Our students embraced the opportunity to engage with their peers while promoting physical activity and community involvement. Many of them gathered sponsorships to support residential trips for our students showcasing their commitment to making a positive impact. We want to extend a heartfelt thank you to the parents who supported their children in this endeavour, whether through sponsorships or joining us for the event. Your participation helped create a wonderful atmosphere of holiday cheer and togetherness! We are proud of our students for their enthusiasm and spirit during the Reindeer Ramble, well done everyone!





# Abbey Hill at North Shore

Written by Rebecca Batey

## Aladdin at Christmas

Students and staff had a fantastic time at the Middlesbrough College rendition of Aladdin on Tuesday 17th December. It was a hilarious show and we all thoroughly enjoyed it!



## Diwali Day

We are delighted to share that our students recently participated in a vibrant celebration of Diwali, engaging in a variety of activities that highlighted the beauty and traditions of this festival of lights. Throughout the day, students immersed themselves in arts and crafts, creating beautiful decorations and artwork that reflect the spirit of Diwali.

In addition to crafting, our students enjoyed dancing, learning traditional moves that brought joy and energy to the festivities. The day culminated in a delicious party feast, where everyone shared a range of flavoured naan breads prepared by our Year 10 students. It was heart-warming to see our students come together to celebrate, learn, and appreciate the rich cultural heritage associated with Diwali.



# Abbey Hill at North Shore

Written by Rebecca Batey

## Sparkles Markets

Our students have been busy creating some items to sell at the markets in Stockton town centre on Friday 6th December. Our Year 10 students represented us at the markets selling the items to the public in their own wooden lodge! Business was brisk and almost all of our products sold out within 2 hours! The team took £124.30, the profits of which will go towards our tutor rewards.



## Year 10 Vocational Subjects

We are excited to share that our Year 10 students have made a fantastic start to their upper school vocational subjects, 'Food, Drink, Hospitality' and 'Photography.' They have also started their Open Awards, focussing on independent living skills. Students are particularly enjoying the practical aspects of these courses, where they can apply their creativity and skills in real-world scenarios.

It's wonderful to see their enthusiasm and engagement as they dive into hands-on activities, preparing delicious dishes and capturing stunning images. We look forward to seeing their continued growth and creativity in these subjects!





# Abbey Hill at North Shore

Written by Rebecca Batey

## North Shore Student President Inauguration

We are pleased to share that our students had the wonderful opportunity to attend the North Shore Student President inauguration on Friday, December 6th.



The event was both inspiring and celebratory, as students listened to insightful speeches and watched the elected representatives receive their awards. After the ceremony, everyone enjoyed a delightful gathering with food and drinks, fostering a sense of community and celebration.



It was a great experience for our students to witness leadership in action and be part of such a meaningful occasion.





# Updates

## North Shore Youth Club

Written by Rebecca Batey

We are excited to remind you about our After School Youth Club, which takes place every Monday! This engaging program is a fantastic opportunity for our students to socialise, make new friends, and enjoy a variety of fun activities in a safe and welcoming environment. Each week, students immerse themselves in arts and crafts, play games, and even get creative by making their own snacks and drinks. We also host film time, where they can unwind and enjoy some great movies together.

The Youth Club is open to all North Shore students and runs every Monday until 4:45 PM. Please remember that students must be collected from North Shore at the end of the session. The cost to participate is £10 per week. We encourage all students to join in on the fun and make the most of this wonderful opportunity to connect with their peers!

## Computing

Written by James Harrison

Students at Abbey Hill Academy have started Computing brilliantly this academic year. We have been learning a range of subjects including computer components and their functions, digital literacy, digital communications and databases.

Students have been engaged in their learning and are keen to explore the different ways we can use computer software to complete tasks. It is clear that students are keen to develop skills in the subject and have an interest in using computers as we move forward in a digital world.

As we move towards the Christmas period, please remain safe online and make sure any suspicious activities you experience on a computer, you tell someone about it.

# KS3 Design Technology

Written by Paul Greaves

In Year 7 pupils have been learning about different materials and how to use a range of tools and equipment. They have designed and made a pencil holder using recycled material. They personalised their product with a design on the laser cutter.



Year 8 pupils have been learning about different types of plastics and their properties. They are presently forming thermoplastics and designing and making a monster Pod shape.



In Year 9 pupils have been learning about designing products that amplify sound and have produced passive amplifiers. They have designed the speaker covers using a CAD package and produced these on the laser cutter.



# KS4 Design Technology

Written by Paul Greaves



In KS4, pupils are presently working on their Entry Level qualifications in Product Design. They have designed and modelled a product of their choice using a range of materials and have used CAD (computer aided design) to produce virtual models. They are now using a range of tools and equipment to make their product in the workshop.





# SMSc and RRS

Written by Catherine Jackson

## SRSS—Rights respecting School Award

UNICEF UK works with schools in the UK to create safe and inspiring places to learn, where children are respected, their talents are nurtured and they are able to thrive. The Rights Respecting Schools Award embeds these values in daily school life and gives children the best chance to lead happy, healthy lives and to be responsible, active citizens. Abbey Hill is a gold award winning school.



We have an amazing group of Rights Respecting Schools Ambassadors who meet frequently to look at how we can implement the UNICEF articles into school life. In our first meetings students chose three charity events: Christmas Shoebox appeal, Raffle to raise money to buy water filters for crisis use, food bank collection for local families.



## Article 31—Children have the right to Play

Our shoe box appeal saw 25 amazing boxes being donated via the Samaritans Purse Charity. These will be given to children around the world to ensure they have a gift, including toys, clothes and toiletries this Christmas.

Article 24—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.

During Diwali, we raffled an amazing Indian elephant. The total raised was £112 which was donated to the charity Grifaid. They supply filters to developing nations, to countries and regions that are suffering from the effects of war or catastrophic natural disasters.



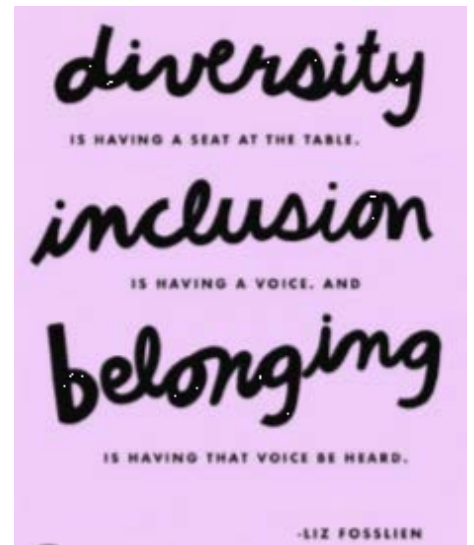
For the Christmas appeal, the ambassadors decided to collect food for our hamper appeal. Students collected an amazing amount of food that has been made into hampers and will be distributed to ensure local families have an enjoyable Christmas.

If you can think of a children's charity—local, national or international the ambassadors could support, please pass on the details.

# PSHE, Careers and Enterprise

Written by Lynsey Thornton

In PSHE, we have warmly welcomed our Year 7 students, where they have begun exploring the themes of positive friendships and diversity.



Our Year 8 and 9 students have engaged in important discussions around mental health and well-being. As part of this, they participated in a yoga and mindfulness session led by Kalma Life, which was well-received. Additionally, our whole school community came together to celebrate World Mental Health Day, reinforcing our commitment to supporting mental health for all students.







# Abbey Hill Football Team

*Written by Simon O'Farrell*

*Abbey Hill team have had a fantastic start to the season. Over 35 boys and girls have represent the school in competitive matches so far.*



*We have played a number of schools in the local area and the students have played brilliantly. We have won a couple of matches against Hopewood and Beverley. The teamwork and attitude from all involved was great to see.*

*Some notable performances have been:*

- Jamie Williamson (11CJ) for some wonderful goal keeping*
- Lucas McReddie (10JO) for brilliant all round play*
- Emaliya Lofthouse (9ER) for her tackling and team work*
- Ayaan Brown (9CG) for scoring 4 goals in one game*
- Lewis Bowes (10AP) for his dribbling and passing skills*

# Healthy School Accreditation

Written by Melissa Fisher



*Abbey Hill Academy is officially a Healthy School!*

*On 26th November 2024 we had our Healthy School accreditation visit from Eve Connor McGill (Health Education and Relationship manager) and some other key members from Stockton on Tees Local Authority. The visitors were given a very warm welcome by students from both the Stephenson and Walker buildings and soon got into the Abbey Hill spirit by being asked to perform the Can-Can within their first 10 minutes on site!*

*The aim of the visit, was to see if there was evidence that we were looking to see if Abbey Hill Academy had met the criteria for the award which has an enhanced single focus on health, well-being and resilience. The framework is aligned to a "whole school approach" model that includes links to the teaching, curriculum and learning, pupil voice and support for staff well-being.*

*The aim of the Healthy Schools Toolkit is to provide benchmarks for excellence and is aligned to the OFSTED criteria. It covers four key components. The first two, nutrition and oral health and physical activity are stand-alone criteria. The last two components, resilience and social, emotional health and well-being are judged on how well our broad and balanced curriculum inspires pupils to learn, promotes resilience and supports social and emotional learning.*

*The evidence we submitted, alongside staff contributions and pupil voice gained during their visit, was taken to panel the next day, and we were thrilled to discover that we had been successful and we are now one of the 16 Healthy School accredited provisions across Stockton on Tees.*

# Communication at Abbey Hill

Written by Kate Reader (Speech and Language Therapist)



*At this term we have started a new lunchtime club: Chatty Tuesdays! This is a club for Talker users to get together with others who communicate in the same way. Talkers are usually Ipads or tablets with specialist communication software. The software can be operated in different ways, depending on the needs of the child e.g. touch or eye gaze tracking.*

*At Chatty Tuesdays, we play games, draw, and have a good old chat using our Talkers!*

*We have also benefitted from the kind donation of trial Talker software for three of our Ipads, from communication software companies Smartbox UK and Tobii Dynavox. This enables us to try out Talkers with more children, to see whether referral for their own device might be helpful.*



*If you think a Talker might help your child communicate, please get in touch with our Speech and Language Therapist, Kate Reader. You can email Kate on [kate.reader@horizonstrust.org.uk](mailto:kate.reader@horizonstrust.org.uk) or phone 01642 677113.*





# Curriculum Developments

## Assessment in the Semi-formal and Informal curricular

Written by Andy Pearson

This term at Abbey Hill we have introduced an app called EFL (Evidence for Learning). It allows us to gather evidence of our students' progress that will help us plan their next steps in learning. This will then allow us share photos with parents to highlight the wonderful things that our students do. It also allows parents and carers to comment on their learning.



The power of Evidence for Learning was demonstrated recently at a regional conference. Schools where EFL is established presented how it has transformed practices and engagement with parents/carers

Find out more at <https://www.evidenceforlearning.net/eflinaction/>

EFL has been launched to parents and carers of students in semi-formal and informal classes at the end of the autumn term. A how to guide has been posted on the school website.

<https://abbeyhill.horizonstrust.org.uk/file/abbey/efl-family-app-how-to-guide-39144.pdf>

The majority of parents/carers of students in the semi-formal and informal curricular have agreed to be involved and have received an email confirming their account details.

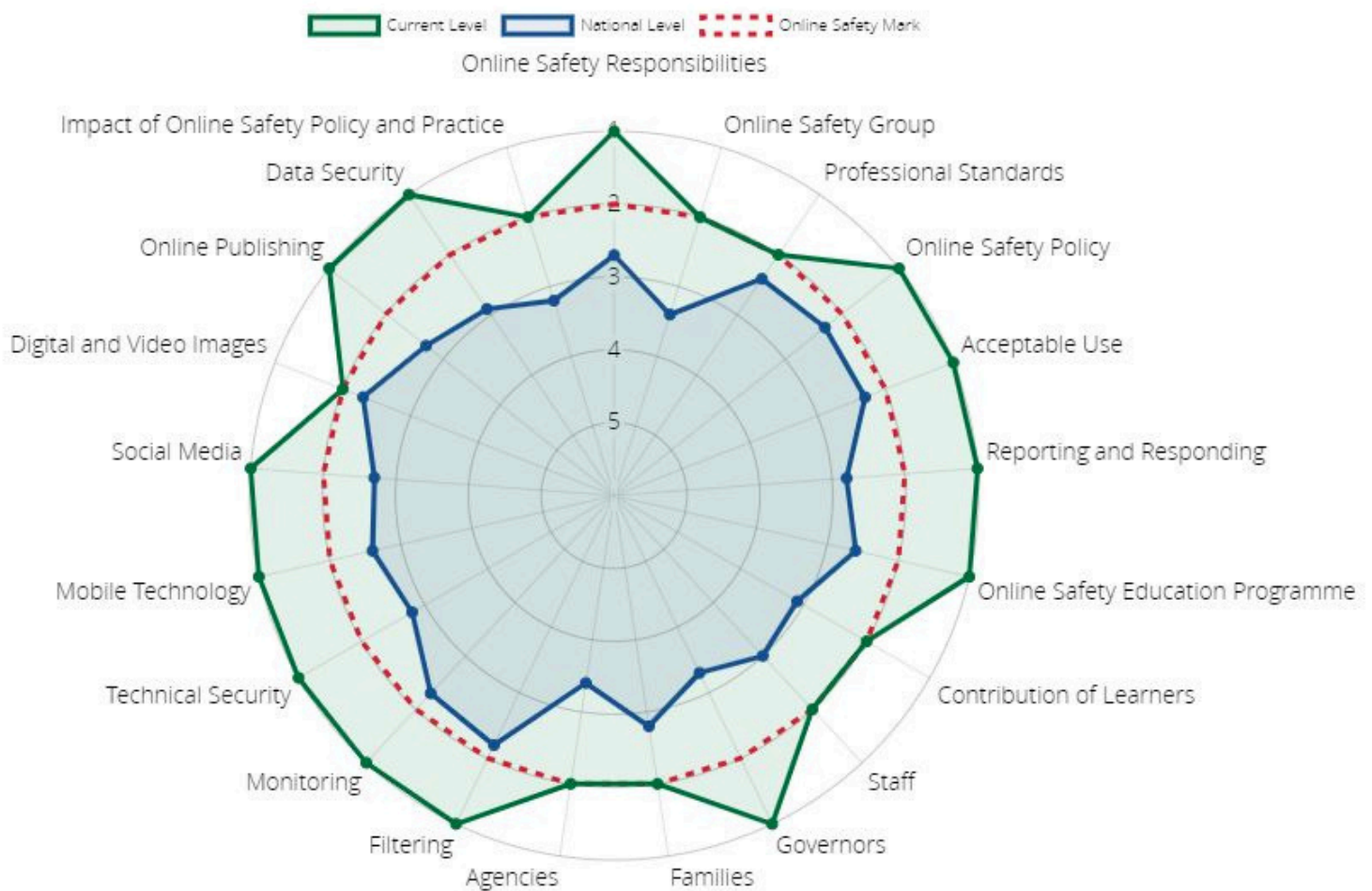
We look forward to using this app to develop parental engagement in learning further and encourage parents & carers to contact school if they have any questions. Feedback is greatly appreciated.

# Safety Online

Written by Andy Pearson

Online Safety plays an important role in the curriculum and is of paramount concern. Abbey Hill as part of Horizons Trust has made significant progress towards achieving the Online Safety Mark accreditation for ongoing good practice. Abbey Hill is working beyond the national level as illustrated in the chart below.

Given the continually developing nature of the digital world there is an action plan in place to signpost what we need to do next as an academy. This is reflected in the teaching of e-safety in the Formal and Semi-Formal curricular.



In 2025 we wish to continue this level of engagement, updating parents and carers about new developments and providing support for any e-safety concerns at home. Please do not hesitate to contact school through your child's form tutor or reception.



# Outdoor Learning autumn term





# Snapshots of autumn term



# Christmas at Abbey Hill

