

Teacher Guide

The Mystery of the Famous Cheese

Part 1 – Our approach

Citizenship is not just another lesson to fit into an already busy timetable. It is a way of helping children understand the people, places and problems that surround them every day. Because of that, Cherry Court has been designed so that citizenship can become part of English, geography, history, science, design technology, computing and many other subjects whenever the opportunity naturally arises.

Our philosophy is summed up in one simple sentence that runs throughout Cherry Court:

Looking after our corner of the world.

We believe that citizenship begins close to home. Children first learn how families, neighbours, schools and communities work together. From there they begin to understand wider ideas such as democracy, responsibility, financial decision-making, sustainability and caring for the environment.

This local approach also links naturally with local studies. As children begin to notice the people and places around them, they become more observant, more curious and more interested in how their own community works. They begin to ask questions, spot problems and think about solutions.

Cherry Court has therefore been created as a believable town with believable people facing believable problems. The stories are calm, thoughtful and discussion-based rather than fast-moving or game-like. We believe this gives children time to observe carefully, think deeply and contribute their own ideas.

Each story is introduced by Toby, who is only a little older than the intended audience. Rather than acting as an expert, Toby acts as a friendly guide. He notices interesting things, asks sensible questions, sometimes gets things wrong and learns alongside the children. This makes him someone pupils can easily relate to.

Every Cherry Court story begins with a mystery. The mystery encourages children to ask questions, gather information and think carefully before reaching conclusions. The stories always end positively because we want children to leave each lesson believing that ordinary people really can improve their own communities.

Our quizzes simply check understanding and recall. They are not intended as tests of ability. The real learning comes through discussion, reflection and shared problem-solving.

You will also notice that many stories naturally combine several curriculum subjects. A citizenship story may also develop geographical understanding, historical thinking, scientific knowledge, literacy or financial awareness. This means the resources can often support learning in several lessons, helping you make the best use of valuable curriculum time.

Part 2 – Using the resources on this card

1. The video

Each card begins with a Toby story, usually lasting between five and nine minutes. This gives enough time for children to become interested in the characters, understand the problem and follow the thinking that leads towards a solution.

The stories are normally divided into four short sections.

Day 1 introduces the mystery and explores what is really happening.

Days 2, 3 and 4 gradually investigate possible solutions until the problem is resolved.

This structure encourages children to see that worthwhile solutions usually develop through observation, discussion, planning and perseverance rather than instant answers.

2. The book

The accompanying book follows the story closely and acts as both a reading resource and a reference.

It allows teachers to revisit important points, support literacy, encourage discussion, examine vocabulary and use extracts for guided or independent reading.

Because the book mirrors the video, children can move comfortably between visual and written learning.

3. The quiz

The quiz provides a simple opportunity to check understanding of the story.

Questions concentrate on recall and comprehension rather than assessment. They are intended to reinforce learning and encourage discussion rather than judge children's performance.

4. This Teacher Guide

Each Teacher Guide explains both the educational thinking behind Cherry Court and the specific learning opportunities provided by the individual story.

Part 3 – What children learn from this story

This story introduces children to an aspect of everyday life that many rarely think about – how local food reaches our tables and the challenges faced by the people who produce it.

At first, the mystery appears to belong to just one dairy farmer. Farmer Jones explains that although customers sometimes think food is expensive, the farmer receives only a small proportion of the final selling price. This provides a simple introduction to an important idea in financial literacy: the price we pay in a shop is not the same as the amount received by the producer. Between the farm and the customer lie transport, processing, packaging, distribution and retailing, all of which have costs.

Rather than trying to solve the problem immediately, Toby asks questions and listens carefully. This models an important approach to citizenship. Good solutions begin by understanding the problem rather than rushing to conclusions.

The story then widens its viewpoint. Toby visits a second farm with a completely different type of business. At first glance the problems appear unrelated. However, by comparing the experiences of both farmers, children gradually discover that many of the underlying issues are remarkably similar. This encourages pupils to compare evidence, recognise common themes and understand that looking at more than one point of view often leads to better decisions.

Another important idea emerges when Toby notices an old farm building that is no longer being used. Rather than seeing it simply as an old shed, he begins to see possibilities. Older buildings can have character, tell stories about the past and often provide opportunities for imaginative reuse. This introduces children to the ideas of conservation, sustainability and making the best use of existing resources instead of always building something new.

From these observations grows the idea of a shared farm shop. Instead of working separately, local farmers begin to cooperate. By selling directly to local people, they can receive a better return for their produce while offering customers fresh local food and a more enjoyable shopping experience.

The farm shop also becomes something more than a place to buy food. Simple displays and posters explain how farming works and celebrate local agriculture. This demonstrates that businesses can also educate their communities and help preserve local heritage. The same idea can easily be transferred into the classroom, where children might design their own farm information posters or small exhibitions.

Perhaps the most important message in the story is the value of cooperation. Neither farmer could solve the problem alone. By sharing ideas, making use of existing resources and working together, they create something that benefits themselves, their customers and the wider community. Throughout Cherry Court, children repeatedly discover that lasting solutions often come from cooperation rather than competition.

Part 4 – Opportunities across the curriculum

Although this is a citizenship resource, it also supports learning across several curriculum areas.

English

Children discuss ideas, explain opinions, ask thoughtful questions and develop subject vocabulary. The accompanying book also supports reading, comprehension, speaking and listening activities.

Geography

Children investigate how the countryside is used, why different farms specialise in different products and how local food travels from producer to consumer. The story also encourages children to think about the relationship between rural areas, towns and the communities they serve.

Science

Children learn about farming, food production, livestock, crops, seasonal change and the relationship between agriculture and the natural environment. The story provides opportunities to discuss where food comes from and how living things depend upon one another.

History

The story introduces the idea that older farm buildings and traditional farming methods form part of our local heritage. Children begin to appreciate that preserving historic features can strengthen community identity and help people understand how life has changed over time.

Design and Technology

Children consider how existing buildings can be adapted for new purposes. They evaluate practical ideas, solve design problems and explore how imaginative reuse can be both economical and environmentally responsible.

Financial Literacy

Children gain an early understanding of how money moves through a community. They discover that producers, transport companies, processors, wholesalers and retailers all play different roles within the supply chain. They also explore ideas of cooperation, adding value, reducing costs and creating sustainable local businesses.

Art and Design

The story provides opportunities for children to design posters, information panels and displays that explain farming to visitors. These activities combine visual communication with factual understanding and encourage children to think about how museums and visitor centres help educate the public.