

Teacher Guide for this cross-curricular story

Part 1: Introducing Toby, our Digital Detective



Citizenship makes a feature of Toby. Toby is Cherry Court's young reporter. He uses his phone like a modern digital journalist, recording what happens in his community and sharing the stories he discovers.

Whenever something unusual happens, Toby goes to investigate. He uses his phone to:

- photograph the people, places and events he encounters;
- film short selfie video diary entries explaining what he is thinking;
- Share the story so that others can learn from it.

The finished investigation becomes the video children watch in class and the book they can read afterwards.

This makes the format ideal for classroom investigations. Children do not need to film long video sequences or become expert camera operators. Keeping the technology simple allows the emphasis to remain where it belongs—on careful observation, thoughtful investigation and clear communication.

Toby's phone is not the lesson. It is simply the modern equivalent of a notebook, pencil and camera combined into one device.

Toby's investigations encourage children to look carefully, ask questions, gather evidence and avoid jumping to conclusions.

By following the same approach, children can use digital technology to investigate their own school, neighbourhood and community, turning everyday observations into thoughtful digital stories.

Part 2: Our approach

Citizenship is a fundamental part of living in a community. Cherry Court citizenship curriculum covers the ground through stories that begin with a mystery.

The mystery is always: why isn't my world working out?

Toby talks directly to children. Children investigate alongside him.

They observe carefully, discuss possible explanations, test ideas and gradually discover the answer for themselves.

In our scheme, as the mystery unfolds, important curriculum ideas appear naturally. And children discover how they can help to solve everyday problems.

By the end of the story, children have not only learned something new, but have also practised the kind of thinking that helps people solve real problems in everyday life.

Part 3: Why our approach matters

Children meet problems every day, but they rarely think about the decisions behind what they see.

Most problems are not obvious. They are embedded in the struggle for life. And in many cases that means the struggle for making a living. So an important part of our Citizenship is preparing for the world of work.

If children are exposed to the world of work in a simple way at an early age, they will be in a much stronger position to succeed later on. We introduce this by allowing Toby and children to get involved in decisions.

A story helps children understand that successful businesses do much more than make good products. They also help customers notice, remember and enjoy what they are buying.

The story introduces enterprise in a positive, accessible way.

And – most important of all – our stories always have positive outcomes (happy endings)

Inspiring children for their future

Every Cherry Court mystery introduces children to people who make a valuable

contribution to their community.

The purpose is not to persuade children to choose a particular career. Instead, it is to help them recognise that successful communities depend on people with many different talents and skills.

As you discuss the story, encourage children to think beyond the mystery itself.

Ask questions such as:

- Who helped solve today's problem?
- What skills did they need?
- What personal qualities made them successful?
- How do they help other people?
- Could you imagine yourself enjoying work like this one day?

Children often hear a great deal about university and academic success. Cherry Court also celebrates practical skills, apprenticeships, crafts, public service, business, creativity and caring professions.

Every child has different strengths. Our aim is to help children discover that there are many worthwhile paths into adult life, and that whatever their talents, they have something valuable to contribute to their community.

About this story

This story introduces children to a question many adults rarely stop to ask: **how do we know whether everyday products really do what they claim?**

When Toby visits Emma, an apprentice at Swish Hair Salon, he is amazed by the huge number of bottles on the shelves. Emma knows how to use them, but when Toby asks what each one actually does, she realises she cannot explain.

Rather than guessing, Toby encourages Emma to investigate. This models an important principle that runs throughout Cherry Court. Good decisions begin by asking sensible questions and gathering evidence before reaching conclusions.

The mystery then introduces Jake, who uses his scientific knowledge together with AI to research the ingredients found in hair products. Children discover that AI is not a replacement for human thinking. Instead, it acts as a powerful research assistant that helps people find information more quickly. The quality of the answers still depends upon asking thoughtful questions and interpreting the evidence carefully.

As Jake explains the different ingredients, children begin to see that some products genuinely perform useful functions, while others may simply reflect fashion or marketing. This provides a gentle introduction to scientific thinking, consumer awareness and media literacy without encouraging cynicism. The aim is not to distrust advertising, but to understand why informed choices are important.

By the end of the story the salon has changed. There are fewer products, clearer explanations and customers understand what they are choosing. Emma also discovers something unexpected. She began hairdressing because she enjoyed styling hair, but she now realises that modern jobs often require a mixture of practical skills, science, technology and good communication.

Perhaps the most important message is that learning does not stop when somebody leaves school. Modern workplaces increasingly reward people who continue asking questions, developing new skills and understanding the reasons behind what they do.

Opportunities across the curriculum

Citizenship

Children explore why informed choices matter. They consider how evidence, honesty and clear explanations help people make good decisions as consumers and members of the community.

English

The mystery encourages prediction, discussion and inference. Children explain how Toby and Emma investigate the problem and justify their conclusions using evidence from the story.

Science

Children discover that everyday products contain ingredients with different purposes. They discuss simple ideas about materials, properties and why scientists test products before making claims about them.

Computing

The story introduces AI in a balanced and practical way. Children learn that AI can help people research information more quickly, but that humans still need to ask good questions and evaluate the answers.

Careers and Enterprise

Children discover that modern careers often combine practical skills with scientific understanding, digital technology and good communication. Emma's apprenticeship shows that learning continues throughout working life.

Media and Information Literacy

Children consider how advertising influences the choices people make. They learn why it is important to distinguish between evidence, opinion and persuasive marketing.

Before you begin

Ask the children:

- Have you ever wondered how everyday products actually work?
- Do you think expensive products are always better? Why?
- How do people decide which products to buy?
- Where do you think companies get the information they use in advertisements?

After watching

Ask children:

- Why did Toby ask Emma about the bottles?
- What surprised Emma about her own knowledge?
- How did Jake help them investigate the mystery?
- What did the story teach us about AI?
- Why did the salon change the way it displayed its products?
- Why is understanding something often more useful than simply following instructions?

Extending the learning

Invite children to become **Product Detectives**.

Ask them to choose an everyday product from home or school—for example toothpaste, shampoo, washing-up liquid, breakfast cereal or a packet of seeds.

Discuss:

- What is the product designed to do?
- What claims are made on the packaging?
- Which claims could be tested?
- What questions would you ask before deciding whether to buy it?
- Where might you find reliable information?

Finish by discussing how many modern jobs depend upon people who combine practical skills with scientific knowledge and digital technology. Emma's apprenticeship shows that successful careers increasingly involve asking good questions, continuing to learn and helping customers understand the choices they make.