

Auchenblae Primary School

Learning on the move



“...the use of the SMART Notebook SE software bracelet has been really successful. The children are getting a real buzz from developing the skills they see their teachers using, and are really enjoying it.”

Mrs Elsie Young, Head teacher,
Auchenblae Primary School

A small village in rural Aberdeenshire may seem an unlikely setting for an educational revolution. But Auchenblae Primary School has been quietly pushing back the boundaries in the use of interactive learning technology, and is now leading the way in linking school and home work with its successful piloting of the innovative SMART Notebook SE software bracelet, which brings new mobility to learning.

Led by pioneering Head teacher Elsie Young, the school has 93 children in four classes, plus 25 in the adjacent

nursery school. Set in pleasant forested countryside, the school roll is rising as more and more people are attracted to the area, and there is a strong community spirit with parents heavily involved in school activities and raising funds. “A high proportion of parents are professional people, and we are fortunate that we have low unemployment in the area,” says Elsie Young. “Everyone is keen to be involved and take responsibility and has a ‘just get on and do it’ attitude – and ICT is integral to this.”

Embedding SMART learning

As a former Local Authority trainer, Elsie has a lot of experience and knowledge of interactive learning technology – and an infectious enthusiasm for using it in more and more imaginative ways across the curriculum. As a result, the use of SMART technology is increasingly embedded in the everyday life of the school. Auchenblae has a SMART Board™ interactive whiteboard in every classroom, and the budget to get one for the nursery school. “I do assemblies on a laptop and the SMART Board interactive whiteboard, and our whole school self-evaluation is done on SMART Notebook software,” says Elsie. “All the staff see the value in what we’re doing with the SMART Boards interactive

whiteboards and are keen to give it a go!”

As well as her day-to-day responsibilities, Elsie is also a representative for GLOW, the world’s first national intranet for education that aims to transform education delivery in Scotland by breaking geographical and social barriers and allow joined-up working the length and breadth of the country. “GLOW will enable sharing and collaboration, and support individualised learning,” she explains, “and when offered the opportunity I was keen to try SMART Notebook SE software bracelet as it supports these aims.”

Piloting the SMART Notebook SE software bracelet

As the authorised distributor for SMART Technologies in the UK, Steljes is always on the lookout for innovative use of SMART products and opportunities to develop best practice use of technology in real school settings. With its desire to experiment and push back the boundaries of technology, Auchenblae Primary School was the natural choice to test this innovative product. “I’ve known the local Steljes Education Development Consultant professionally for many years, and I was delighted to help when we were

asked to participate in a pilot of the bracelet," says Elsie. "Although it's still quite early days, the use of the bracelets has been really successful. The children are getting a real buzz from developing the skills they see their teachers using, and are really enjoying it."

Like all the best technology, SMART Notebook SE software bracelet is deceptively simple yet highly effective. A convenient rubber wristband with a USB slot, the bracelet enables pupils to take the software and their files with them wherever they go. That means they can complete their homework or projects on any computer, whether it's in the classroom, the ICT suite or at home.

The Auchenblae pilot started off mainly with 10-11 year-olds testing the bracelets, and now 9 year-olds are using them as well. "We're still experimenting to see what we can do," says Elsie. "Some children are set specific tasks, and more and more are using them voluntarily and learning more tricks."

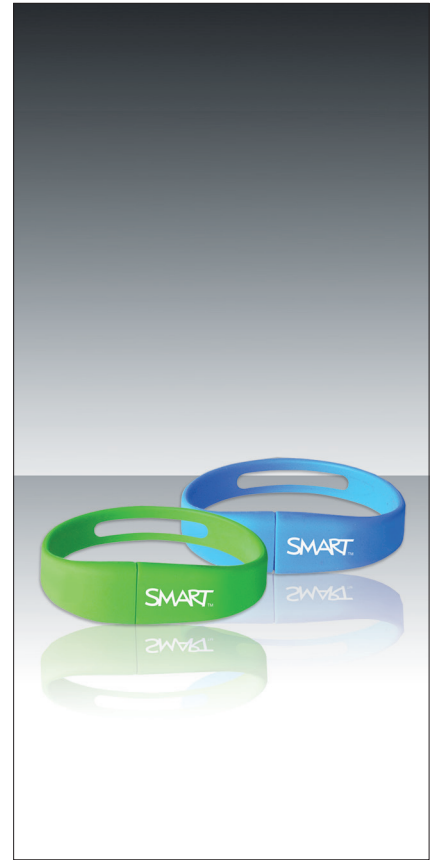
The bracelets are proving particularly useful in helping SFL (Support for Learning) pupils who use them on their own or with their teacher. "The interactivity is a major benefit, and really helps personalised learning," Elsie explains. "We plan to experiment more, using them with MP3 players, for example, to help children to read by hearing and recording things. We're also using

them in role play to help the children develop their life skills."

Developing future generations

As well as the obvious educational benefits, the pilot has also provided invaluable feedback on the physical properties of the product for Steljes to pass on to SMART as they develop the next generation of products. Some pupils suggested a Velcro fastener to get over the bracelet being too tight for some wrists and too loose for others. Most of the children said they'd like a wider choice of colours, and some way of personalising their bracelets—somewhere to put their name, or perhaps a small pocket to contain a photo.

"It's important to us to try these new products as soon as they become available and to share best practice, as the only way to get the best out of technologies like SMART Board interactive whiteboards and SMART Notebook software is to see it in action to understand what's possible," concludes Elsie. "We're constantly striving to consolidate what we're already doing and then move on to the next level to keep pushing interactive learning forward."



"We plan to experiment more, using them with MP3 players, for example, to help children to read by hearing and recording things. We're also using them in role play to help the children develop their life skills."

Mrs Elsie Young, Head teacher,
Auchenblae Primary School

TECHNOLOGY WITH PURPOSE

steljes•

Steljes Ltd

UK and Ireland distributor for SMART Technologies
info@steljes.co.uk
08450 724 800
www.mysmartspaces.co.uk