

Case study



Gladstone Park Primary School

Gladstone Park Primary School in Willesden Green, London, has a roll of over 560 children, from Nursery to year six. Located in a mixed community, the school is well resourced to provide an up-to-date dynamic education for its children.

Gladstone Park school realises that appropriate modern technology is essential for teachers to teach to the high standards expected in today's learning environment. Using technology can change the way we learn. It offers flexibility and creativity in learning, and motivates children to learn. However, it can remove teacher's control over the learning situation. When each child has their own computer to work on, it is a challenge to keep each child on task and focused on the desired learning outcome. For these reasons Gladstone Park invested in SynchronEyes classroom management software for the 30 computers in the ICT suite. The software, from SMART Technologies, allows teachers to monitor each pupil's screen (as thumbnails), chat online with individuals or groups, block off target activity, and when necessary lock computers.

Julie Metcalfe, ICT co-ordinator at Gladstone Park explains the challenge that this introduced. "Every teacher is aware of how difficult it is to gain a child's attention when they are on task on the computer. When we had the children working in pairs on each computer it was easier. In general one of the children in the pair would divert their attention back to me, leading the other to follow suit. Having a computer per child increased the difficulty for teachers of gaining their attention."

Having SynchronEyes classroom management software puts control back into the teacher's hands by locking out the activity that is drawing their attention away from the teacher, or posting up the 'eyes to front' request on each child's screen. The teaching staff liked the control aspect of SynchronEyes. Having visibility of what each child is doing on their computer at any one time puts the teacher back in control of the class. The 'Magic Lock' button is a must in terms of eSafety. Despite the internet opening up a world of learning

Challenge

To keep each child using a computer focussed on the desired learning outcome.

SMART solution

SynchronEyes™ classroom management software.

Result

SynchronEyes classroom management software sparks communication through ICT. It promotes discussion, keeps the children on task and ensures teachers have the tools to manage effective learning.

we all know it also invites danger to children. "In line with the acceptable use policy, we teach our children to act responsibly on the internet and they know that they can't go on websites without permission but, occasionally one may become distracted by an inappropriate site. If someone has navigated away from the websites that they should be looking at, the Magic Lock button means I can lock them out for two minutes. They are then called up to the front of the class to discuss and understand what they have done is unacceptable. Once we have had a discussion their computer can be unlocked and work can continue" says Julie.

At first this was the school's main application of SynchronEyes however, as its understanding of its functionality broadened Gladstone Park School began to see SynchronEyes less as a classroom control system and more as a learning support tool. Julie explains; "At first we just used SynchronEyes as a classroom management tool but when we began to use it as a learning delivery tool we noticed that lessons became more 'pacey'. The lessons developed a rhythm – children were on task and moved on quickly to the next point. This actually excited the children as there is never a need for down time while I fight for one child's attention."

Having a view of the activity on each child's computer also gives every teacher the ability to personalise the learning experience. In the instance of a child having difficulty with a particular task, the teacher can take control of their computer from their own PC all without the other children knowing. This is particularly helpful with opening up a website, giving advice on getting started or simply sending comments of support and encouragement. Even in situations where a learning support assistant is present in a class, additional support can be offered by the teacher to any child who needs personalised guidance.

"Asking key stage one children to type in URL addresses to access appropriate websites often results in errors"; explains Julie. "Just one space or letter typed incorrectly causes endless problems. It is too time consuming to type the web link on each of the 30 computers but with SynchronEyes appropriate web links can be sent with one click to a group or to the whole class."

SynchronEyes also gives teachers the ability to broadcast out information to the whole class or specific groups within the class. Broadcasting the image on one child's computer out to the other children as an example of best practice, gives the other children more idea of the learning objective. Alternatively it can serve as the catalyst for discussion and inspiration.

Gladstone Park runs a "Three Stars and a Wish" peer assessment criteria across the school. Julie provides an example of how this assessment scheme was applied to learning and managed through SynchronEyes. "Our Three Stars and a Wish peer assessment criteria works perfectly with SynchronEyes. From my computer at the front of the class I can see thumbnail views of each child's monitor. Having identified one child's work as an example of good or interesting work for discussion, I can select their screen and instantly display it on the SMART Board™ interactive whiteboard for all to see. The children are then invited to constructively and positively assess the work with three stars and a wish. Recently a year five class were in a lesson on designing religious buildings. Each child was engrossed in using various software applications to create their building design. Temporarily locking out the other children's computers with an 'eyes to the front' request, one child's design was selected and displayed for all to see. The children then offered their thoughts and ideas on the design. The three stars may have been, 'I really like the shape,' 'the roof is a great colour,' and 'the statues make the entrance really stand out.' The wish may have been that it would have looked better if it had been designed in Photoshop rather than Microsoft® PowerPoint®." Gladstone Park manages self assessment in the same way.

'The question and answer feature of SynchronEyes adds a perfect end to any lesson. Questions can be sent out to the children to ensure they have all understood the learning objective or to survey the class' opinion on a particular issue that has been investigated.'

Julie Metcalf
ICT Co-ordinator
Gladstone Park Primary School

About SMART

SMART Technologies Inc. is both the industry pioneer and global education market segment leader in easy-to-use interactive whiteboards and other group collaboration tools. The award-winning SMART Board interactive whiteboard is the most widely installed interactive whiteboard in the world.

Many school jurisdictions have standardised on the product, which is used to provide interactive learning opportunities and enhance student achievement in more than 450,000 classrooms spanning every U.S. state, every Canadian province, every Local Authority in the UK and in more than 100 countries worldwide. SMART products also include interactive pen displays, interactive digital signage, wireless slates and software. Using SMART products, groups can access and share the information they need to meet, teach, train and present. SMART's education customers include New York City Board of Education (U.S.), Oxford University (UK), Kobe City Board of Education (Japan), Barnier Public School (Australia), University of Ottawa (Canada), United World College (Singapore), Stephen-Hawking-Schule Neckargemuend (Germany), Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind (U.S.) and Harvard University (U.S.).

SMART is a private company founded in 1987. Employing more than 900 people, SMART is headquartered in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, with assembly facilities in Ottawa, and offices in Bonn, Tokyo, China, New York City and Washington, DC. SMART has been issued and maintains a broad portfolio of patents with numerous U.S., Canadian and other patents pending. In 1992 SMART formed a strategic alliance with Intel® Corporation that resulted in joint product development and marketing efforts, and Intel's equity ownership in the company. SMART products are sold through dealers across North America and distributors worldwide. For more information, visit www.smarttech.com.

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