

# Case study



## St Paul's Catholic Primary School

### Embedding interactive whiteboard technology in the foundation curriculum

It has been predicted that by 2012 interactive whiteboards will have an 80% classroom penetration (Futuresource 2008). Surprisingly only 2% of these are used to support the teaching of foundation stage children.

Two specialist schools and a primary school in Wirral have investigated the challenges faced when using interactive whiteboards with foundation stage children and as a result have identified some solutions. The two leaders of the project were Ben Cribb, Director of Technology Specialism at St Anselm's College and Upton Hall School and Debbie Weeden, Deputy Headteacher, ICT Leader and experienced foundation teacher at St Paul's Catholic Primary School. St Paul's school is located on the Beechwood Estate in Prenton, Birkenhead in an area which faces many challenges. However in recent years the school has successfully improved standards through hard work and a forward thinking approach.

The school was very aware of the effectiveness of interactive whiteboards in teaching, although prior to the study, it had not experienced working with foundation stage children with this type of technology. They then invested in a SMART Board™ interactive whiteboard and embarked on a project to find effective ways of embedding the technology into teaching the foundation curriculum.

In St. Paul's previous Ofsted report numeracy was highlighted as an area in need of improvement therefore Ben and Debbie's first objective was to use the technology to help the foundation children access numeracy.

#### Challenge

St. Paul's Catholic Primary School aimed to identify whether interactive whiteboards are appropriate for use with foundation children.

#### SMART solution

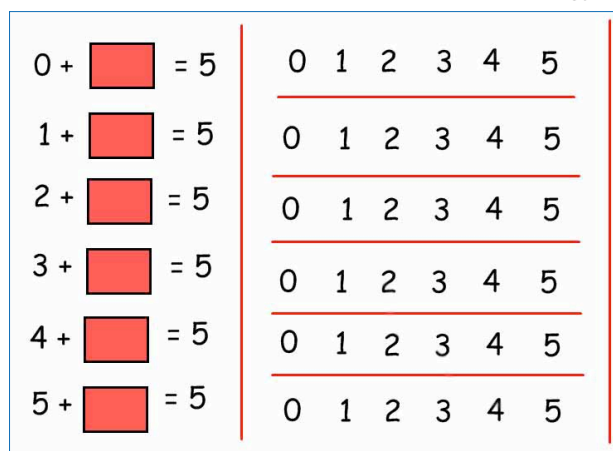
SMART Board™ interactive whiteboard.

#### Result

Once they had developed the finer motor skills required to interact with the technology, the learning benefits were outstanding.

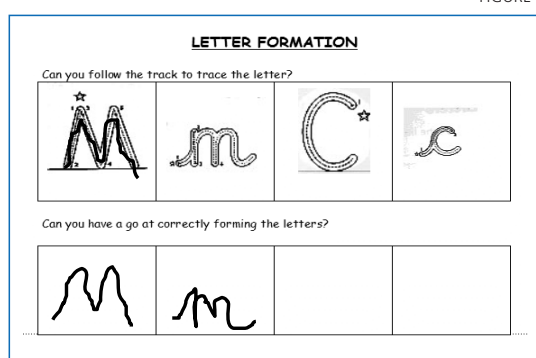
After planning the lesson in the morning Debbie then delivered the lessons while Ben observed and together they reviewed the progress. Debbie expands; "We knew that if we used the technology fully we would be able to bring visual, auditory and kinaesthetic aspects to all learning activities to meet the different learning styles of the pupils. You can never underestimate the wow factor that a SMART Board interactive whiteboard brings to the class. The children were instantly engaged."

Taking one 'addition skill' lesson as an example, the team created the page illustrated in figure one using the SMART Notebook™ software that comes with the SMART Board. The children were invited up to drag and drop the correct number in each line to complete the addition sum on the left. For each line, the correct answer (for example, in the top line 'five') was ordered 'to front' while all the other numbers were ordered 'to back' so only the correct answer would appear on the surface of the shaded box.



After spending some time developing and delivering the maths activities, they moved to include literacy skills. In the session illustrated in figure two, the challenge of under-developed motor skills became even more evident. When writing letters some children with lower fine motor control found keeping contact with the whiteboard throughout the letter formation difficult. There was a concern that if this was not addressed a frustration and lack of interest amongst the pupils may occur.

Having learned that the only way to address such difficulties is to practise them, Debbie and Ben built literacy activities based on developing letter formation (Figure two). They also had to address the problem of limitation on pupil involvement. To address this concern they would select pupils to demonstrate the skills to their peers, and organised the day so that pupils would take it in turns to complete tasks while their peers took part in other activities.



At this age they are not frightened to explore and with every step of progress they saw an increased motivation to learn more. "A whole world of self exploration developed around the SMART Board. It became an independent learning base of the classroom, with self assessment clearly being adopted," summarises Debbie.

Once they had developed the finer motor skills required to interact with the technology the learning benefits were outstanding. From demonstrating an understanding of numbers, to developing fine motor control, the investment in the technology proved to be highly appropriate to foundation learning.

"A whole world of self exploration developed around the SMART Board. It became an independent learning base of the classroom, with self assessment clearly being adopted."

**Debbie Weeden**  
Deputy Headteacher and  
ICT Leader  
St. Paul's Catholic 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), Barrier 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](http://www.smarttech.com).

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