

Promoting School Teams

Introduction

At Croft Junior School in Nuneaton, Y6 students used Honeycomb to promote their football and netball teams, and provide members and supporters with information.

School

The school is larger than average and pupils come from mainly White British backgrounds. A very small number of pupils who have Urdu, Nepalese or Dutch as their first language are in the early stages of learning English. Attainment on entry is average and the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, which until recently was well above average, is falling and is now closer to the national average. The headteacher took up appointment in September 2005.

The curriculum is satisfactory with improving links between subjects to provide interest and motivation for pupils. There is a good range of visits and visitors that enrich pupils' classroom experience. The planning of work to improve literacy skills is improving though there are not enough opportunities to develop writing skills. The range of optional activities outside the classroom is good and the level of involvement by pupils is extensive, especially in physical activities. (OFSTED January 2007)



Pupils

Six Y6 students were chosen to participate in the project; three boys from the football team and three girls from the netball team. These children have good Literacy skills and particularly good ICT capabilities, hopefully ensuring that they could work independently of teachers or advisers.

Teacher

Lynne Jones, a Y6 teacher and ICT Coordinator, is currently working closely with the ICT Development Service in Warwickshire to help Croft Junior School become an exemplar school for hardware. Lynne managed the Honeycomb project and was closely involved in what the children did.

An E-Learning Adviser from Warwickshire LA (either Vivien Bailey or Emma Arkill), regularly supported the children although they were able to work independently when required. Adult input was needed to convert files and to save multimedia to the shared area for the children to access. An adult was sometimes needed to keep the children on track and to make sure that what they were creating was suitable, demonstrated a high level of Literacy and fulfilled e-safety requirements.

Why they were keen

It is the reputation and values of Softease that encouraged Lynne to agree to trial Honeycomb. They use Textease across the school with all of the children and Lynne was keen to try another Softease product which would also tie in with her commitment to setting up a school website.

What they did

"We've been taking pictures... and videoing things... and we've learned how to use a text box and colour the text. We've done an internet blog of the matches and training sessions." Y6 pupil.

The school has a strong commitment to providing after school clubs and it was felt that Scenario 4 would enable them to promote their good work.

The intention was that the children would add two blog entries a week, detailing their training, matches and other team news. They would be 'real' and cover



what had happened in the days prior to that blog entry being written. However, as the evenings became darker and weather turned wintry, matches were not being scheduled and training was affected. This resulted in the children, and adults working with them, becoming more creative about what might be included in the blogs.

The children were very much in control of the content of their site but were guided by the adults working with them. It was also made clear that a certain standard needed to be reached before work would be published. When the children had support from an adviser, more work with multimedia was completed, however the children were able to use the software independently.

Week 1 – Homepage - In threes, the children created a homepage for their club. The teacher had made photographs available on the shared area for the children to access. Children learned to use picture and video settings on the digital camera and they recorded sounds using the PC sound recorder. These were converted and uploaded.

Week 2 – Blog entries – An entry for matches and training that week and also one detailing any previous results. Videos, photographs and sound were used. The children suggested including interviews which they recorded independently during the week.

Week 3 – Blog entries – Proof reading of previous work and making suggestions to each other. Football training for that week. Skills videoed for a demonstration of skills entry and photographs taken for a meet the team entry.

Week 4 – Blog entries – Surveys of the teams were completed by the children before the session and the charting widget was used. Previous blog entries were finished off. Everything was read for accuracy and e-safety and then published by the teacher.

When they did it

For the duration of the pilot project, the Y6 children were released from their lessons on Monday and Friday afternoons. They worked on PCs in the school library area and occasionally on the more powerful machines in the ICT suite. Photographs and video recordings were taken during club training sessions after school on Mondays and Tuesdays, either by a teacher, adviser or one of the participants. The children were encouraged to organise interviews with coaches and players during the week and



arrange to record these so they would be ready for converting and adding to Honeycomb on a Friday.

"We interviewed our two netball coaches, Miss Ladd and Miss Richardson, and to organise it we asked them when we could do it on a lunch time or break time. And we wrote down some questions together to sort it out and then we interviewed them. But when we actually put it on the page, we had to put a little warning sign saying it goes on for 5 minutes and something seconds as it went on for quite a long time." Y6 Pupil

Impact and benefits

Lynne felt that the children's prior experience with using Textease had an impact on how easily they became familiar with Honeycomb which she acknowledged as being an easy tool to use. The popularity of the software among the children using it was obvious and Lynne felt that this in part was down to the possibility of producing work instantly using a variety of different media. The children were proud of their work and very keen to share it with a wider audience.

"They want to get all the different types of medium on there and they definitely want to publish it so other children can see it." Lynne Jones

Learning

Using Honeycomb tied in well with ICT learning that the children were currently involved in. They have been creating multi-media presentations in ICT lessons including using sound recorders and USB microphones to record themselves, so carrying out interviews for Honeycomb was a natural and welcome extension of this learning. The children also thoroughly enjoyed learning to use the digital camera to take pictures and videos.

Lynne's insistence on a high standard of Literacy certainly improved the children's work and they showed a willingness to edit and improve. Emma Arkill noted that once the children understood those high standards, *"they began to take more care with their writing first time, which helped them to think about the correct spellings and grammar."*

Working in threes at times tested relationships and the improvement of social skills has definitely been a welcome consequence of using Honeycomb. Lynne suggested that *"a lot of them have had to learn to cooperate with each other."*

Top Tip!

"Involve the children in issues like checking for e-safety and deciding on expected standards as they will quickly be able to self-regulate if they understand what you are looking for - and your job will become easier!" Vivien Bailey



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