

# 21st Century Lessons shaping up nicely at Picklenash Primary School



## Implement innovative initiatives - Wake And Shake!

Forward thinking Primary School in Gloucester is using Hitachi interactive whiteboards to enhance teaching across the curriculum and to implement innovative initiatives such as Wake And Shake!

### Busting students' potential

At the heart of teaching lies the commitment to encourage every child to realise their potential in the personal, social, intellectual and physical aspects of school life. The modern school constantly looks at ways to develop its pupils to be good students, but also healthy and happy individuals and responsible members of the community. So it is with Picklenash Primary School in Gloucester which was praised by OFSTED for both its secure and happy teaching environment and its strong commitment to standards.

As part of its ongoing commitment to provide a well rounded education, Picklenash began to look into interactive whiteboards as a way of creating a range of new and interesting learning opportunities for both pupils and teachers. The school felt that the user friendly nature of interactive whiteboards would allow even the most

technophobic of teachers to feel at ease in using them in the classroom to enhance lessons. In turn, the pupils would be able to enjoy many of the well documented benefits of the interactive whiteboard, including absorbing more information more easily, becoming more actively involved in the learning process and being able to work collaboratively.

Having made the decision, the school embarked on a comprehensive review of products from the major players in the interactive whiteboard market. At the end of the three month long review process, the school decided to introduce Hitachi whiteboards into every classroom, and a Hitachi projector in the main hall.

"We chose Hitachi for several different reasons," said Amy Voss, PE Coordinator at Picklenash. "Hitachi provided us with the leading technology we were looking for and all the reassurances that a big brand offers, at a price that we could afford. Finance is an important part of running any school and the Hitachi package represented real value for money."

Picklenash's close links to the community also played a part in the decision process. "Choosing Hitachi allowed us to employ local people to install the kit and teach us all how to use it. We are very much a community school and we felt really positive about involving local people in the project, as opposed to bringing in engineers from a large company, which we felt may have been a little clinical," she continued.

### Realising the Benefits

"It's a well known fact that interactive whiteboards can be highly motivating for children, but we believed that the real benefits lay in integrating them innovatively. Don't get me wrong, one of the things we love about the interactive whiteboards is the ability to save notes from one lesson to another instead of constantly wiping them away, but we knew that it would be a terrible waste to use them as old fashioned whiteboards. We really wanted to use the technology to its full potential," she said.

This being the case, the school didn't only want to use the interactive whiteboard to enhance lessons across the curriculum, but also to

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support a number of innovative projects. The first of these was the introduction of Wake and Shake workshops throughout the school. Wake and Shake is an initiative designed to help schools hit their targets for physical activity and health and involves simple, repetitive aerobic exercises set to music. The school is currently using the Hitachi whiteboards to display the exercises that children and teachers follow in their classrooms every afternoon.

“The common perception of technology is that it encourages children to be sedentary, so we really liked the fact that the interactive whiteboard was so crucial to the success of a Wake and Shake, and that the children and teachers have great fun,” said A. Voss. “The whiteboards have enabled us to get all parts of the school involved at once, and consequently Wake and Shake has been quickly become an accepted part of school life.”

The school has seen a real benefit to implementing the Wake and Shake programme, including improved fitness, greater concentration and positive feedback from both pupils and teachers. However, Picklenash’s plans for the interactive whiteboard don’t end with Wake and Shake. They now plan to integrate the technology into the school’s Comenius project activities. Comenius is an international project designed to create important foundations for international understanding, cooperation, harmony and friendship through partnerships with schools across the world. Picklenash has partner schools in four different European countries and has welcomed

language assistants from Spain and Poland to work at the school for six month periods, and to live at parents’ houses.

“We are really committed to Comenius and our activities so far have really helped extend and enhance the education of our pupils. The interactive whiteboard will allow us to take it one step further as, providing our partner school has the technology, we will be able to video-conference international schools and share work and ideas in a real context and in real time. This is going to be an exciting experience for all pupils involved, which we hope will provide them with a powerful insight into each others communities that it is simply not possible to get from ‘normal’ lessons,” Voss said.

The introduction of the whiteboards at Picklenash has also improved the variety and content of standard lessons across the curriculum. “Every subject benefits from the interactive whiteboard. For example, in ICT we no longer have to have pupils crowding around one screen for a demonstration, in maths the class can play numeracy games, in English we can access resources from the internet that we can use as part of the lesson... the list goes on. Suffice it to say that the interactive whiteboard has quickly become an integral part of teaching at Picklenash and the teachers love it because the kids are so enthusiastic about it. I have even heard it described as a Godsend!”

These benefits have led Picklenash to credit the Hitachi whiteboard with improved standards and attainment across the board. Its benefits extend

beyond enriched lessons and collaborative projects however. “We have certainly experienced benefits that we weren’t expecting, such as reduced time getting children ‘on task’. The start of every lesson is no longer necessarily about handing out books or worksheets and this really gets the children focussed and settled far quicker.”

This has led to the associated benefit of reduced photocopying. “Like many other schools, we are committed to reducing waste and recycling. The interactive whiteboard has supported this by helping us save a substantial amount of paper – a queue to get to the photocopier, once so common, is now virtually a thing of the past.”

“In terms of using interactive whiteboards to create exciting, fun lessons that engage the kids and help them learn, the sky’s the limit. Any school using an interactive whiteboard as a glorified whiteboard is missing out on so many brilliant opportunities. They can lend so much to lessons, the clarity of colour and definition on our Hitachi whiteboards is fantastic and this, together with the content we can access, really helps to keep the children more focussed and interested. At Picklenash I know that we will continue to look at ways to integrate the interactive whiteboard into our teaching and everyday life of the school,” Voss concluded.

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