



SUCCESS STORY

ACTIVPRIMARY SOFTWARE TRANSFORMS HITACHI WHITEBOARDS

Broadwater Church of England First and Middle School in Worthing, West Sussex

Janet Sharp has been teaching for 27 years and has seen the classroom evolve enormously over this time. A lady who thrives on challenges, she took on Broadwater, a school in special measures five years ago, and has transformed results. Broadwater reached 'outstanding' status in 2005. Today she is looking to excel beyond outstanding and saw technology in the classroom as a tool to enable this.

THE CHALLENGE

Janet explains, "We have undertaken a big initiative this year to develop our creative use of the whiteboards. Generally, teachers were only using them as ordinary whiteboards – getting up a fresh page and writing on the board. This worked well for us but we knew there was more we could get out of them to really ignite the children's attention. We couldn't afford to replace our boards, we replaced the software."

In September last year the school switched over to Promethean's Activprimary software, whilst retaining their Hitachi boards. Promethean's Margaret Allen visited the school and carried out one day's training. "We were provided with some outstanding training by Promethean and following a brief overview of the software, the staff quickly realised that it is immensely powerful. It has enabled us to prepare materials that we had previously been unable to develop," the head teacher said. Support was then arranged for teachers on an individual and small group basis. This ensured that each teacher was provided for at their point of need. In addition the way Activprimary version 3 has been developed makes it incredibly easy for teachers to use.



TRAINING SESSIONS

Following the original training session Promethean re-visited the school to ensure teachers had mastered the basics. Janet commented, “More recently we had a training session in which teachers were given a very wide range of strategies for developing creativity using the interactive whiteboards. This was rather like sending a spark into a pile of tissue paper – the staff were so taken with the range of activities, that teaching, and consequently learning, has been transformed. This has helped to raise already good teaching towards outstanding, and frequently children are heard in class to ‘gasp’ during their learning.”

Broadwater Church of England School set itself a target in January that by the end of the year 50% of lessons would use the IWB in a way other than as a white surface. However, by the end of January the target was exceeded with 55% of lessons using the whiteboards with Promethean software in more imaginative, creative ways. An 80% increase in one term.

CREATIVE APPROACH

This creative approach is shared amongst the staff. Janet explained; “all flipcharts are saved on the school server. We have two classes per year group and now teachers can easily share lesson plans and flipcharts. They’re there for next year too of course. We put a link into planning that gives teachers instant access to flipcharts and materials and there is a host of other flipcharts available free to download on Prometheanplanet.com, providing us all with more curriculum ideas.”

Janet went on to say, “Behaviour in school is very good anyway, but children are hugely more engaged. I was in a lesson yesterday and the children were just fascinated – in a maths lesson on subtraction! The teacher had set up a problem where the answer magically appears using a fun reveal tool and they couldn’t believe their eyes.”

WORTH EVERY PENNY

“It’s made such a difference and been worth every penny. Training is crucial – it was absolutely value for money. If I went to another school as head and they had non-Promethean boards I would say we need to get Promethean software and the training. Of all the things we’ve done at the school the addition of Activprimary software has had the biggest impact.”

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