

We-Learn

Alcester High School Technology College, Alcester Focus on: Maths

"The Tablet is great, I wouldn't teach a class without one. It's like a portable interactive whiteboard, which I can pick up and use to teach from anywhere in the room without having to turn my back on the students to write on the board. Having my lessons ready prepared on the Tablet means every minute of the lesson can be used effectively, allowing us to spend more time on practice questions and in-depth examples."

Ian Hollis, Head of Maths



Introduction of We-Learn equipment

Ian had taken part in a Microsoft Innovative Teachers project using smartboards for two years before We-Learn was introduced to the school, which meant he already had a good knowledge of ICT and a bank of teaching resources ready-prepared which he could use immediately with We-Learn. He had seen early Tablets during the Microsoft project and had spotted their potential.

The Tablets have become indispensable and the school network can be accessed through them, allowing teachers to use one computer in and out of school, for preparing their classes as well as for non-teaching tasks such as drawing up school reports.



Fortnightly departmental meetings include a regular training session so that maths teachers can share resources or tips on use of We-Learn, meaning that they can apply the information immediately to the following week's lesson preparation. As part of the whole school ICT strategy, Ian also has five periods on

timetable that are dedicated to ICT development. This is generally used for mentoring other members of the department, or staff in other departments.

We-Learn in action

We-Learn is used extensively in the department. For complex areas of the curriculum, such as solving linear equations, Ian has developed specific resources to use with the class. These include a spreadsheet which has calculations built-in so that different questions can be obtained at a mouseclick and so that the answers will always be whole numbers. The formula is hidden by colouring it in the same colour as the background. Buttons are built-in using macros so that pupils can 'press to reveal answer' or 'press to hide answer'.

About the school

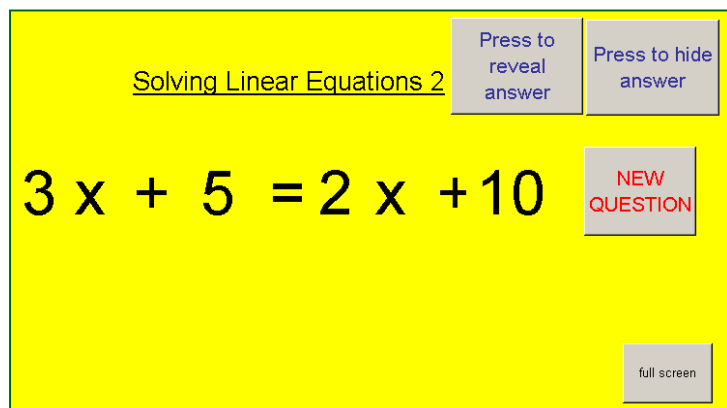
Alcester is a high school with specialist Technology College status gained in 1998 and Music and ICT gained in 2006. It has 826 boys and girls between 11 and 16 years old on roll.

All five teachers in the maths department are using We-Learn Tablets to differing extents with all classes across Key Stages 3 and 4. Pupils study maths for six lessons a fortnight.

The equipment is also used for taking pupils through past exam papers: the PDF documents are projected onto the whiteboard and teachers can make notes on the whiteboard to annotate the documents, to illustrate to pupils how to lay out the answers, for example. It was previously hard to share the papers with pupils effectively.

When resources are produced using Microsoft applications such as Word and Excel, the Tablet allows teachers and pupils to annotate the documents by using the Tablet's pen to draw onto the documents on-screen for the rest of the class to see. Teachers can choose to write on the documents in a virtual highlighter, ballpoint or felt-tip, making it far more interesting and interactive than a static document.

Pupils' comments: "Wow, how much is one of these Tablets?"
"The lessons go really quickly now"



Solving Linear Equations 2

$$3x + 5 = 2x + 10$$

Press to reveal answer Press to hide answer

NEW QUESTION

full screen

Considerations

The school gained Technology College status in 1998 and this along with the use of We-Learn equipment has improved the use of ICT in teaching and learning across the whole school. At the 2005 Ofsted inspection one of the maths teachers was observed and complimented on her use of the We-Learn equipment. The Ofsted report noted that, "the school makes very good use of ICT to support and enrich teaching and learning throughout the curriculum".

Benefits

- ❑ The Tablet helps all children to play an active part in the class. Some pupils don't like to stand at the front of the class to write on the board but will happily attempt exercises at their desk using the Tablet for the whole class to see.
- ❑ The pace of lessons is now quicker, avoiding 'dead time' of writing material onto the whiteboard.
- ❑ Pupil results at grade C and above have improved 22% in the last three years (to 67% in 2005)
- ❑ The Tablet means the teacher doesn't have to turn his back on the class to write on the board

Next Steps

The department has come a very long way in its use of ICT in 18 months and is currently exploring how to use specialist maths software such as Geometer's Sketchpad and Autograph. They also aim to allocate homework and resources to students via the Internet and the We-Learn portal and for students to return their homework via the portal. Electronic access for students would also allow pupils to submit their coursework to teachers during the holidays so that teachers could annotate their work, and highlight queries or areas that required revision.

Tips

- Project documents onto a whiteboard and write on the whiteboard with a marker when you wish to annotate non-Microsoft documents such as Adobe Acrobat PDFs.
- Ensure each teacher, not each classroom, has their own Tablet so that staff can use the Tablets at home and can load the week's lesson plans onto their own Tablet.
- Back-up lesson plans onto the Tablet and a USB stick, in case one fails.
- Turn the Tablet pen upside down to use it as a rubber to correct mistakes or remove annotations
- Use RM Tutor in 'Demo' phase so that you can write annotations directly onto the Tablet for projection to the class
- Encourage colleagues to persist with their use of We-Learn and share resources with less ICT-literate colleagues to encourage them