

INSANELY GREAT!

Netherfield Primary School

Assistant Head Nadeem Shah explains how iPad is helping to engage students at an inclusive urban primary school.

Netherfield Primary School are always looking for new ways to engage and motivate their young pupils. After providing staff with iPad devices in December 2012, the school joined our e7 Project in January 2013, and soon found that their Foundation and Nurture groups benefitted hugely from working with iPad.

"If children aren't engaging with ICT because the technology that we're using is obsolete, then the learning across the curriculum can be at a disadvantage. We obviously want to keep up to date so kids are engaged and involved with new technologies as they happen," Netherfield's Assistant Head Nadeem Shah explained when asked why his school decided to embark on an ambitious iPad rollout.

Helping staff get to grips with iPad

After stumbling across the e7 Project at an ICT for education event ("one of the teachers mentioned that they were having an iPad rollout and that some of the Jigsaw24 team were present, so in our inimitable style we decided to crash the party and see if any more were going!"), they made the decision to invest in 18 iPad devices for staff in December 2012, so that the faculty would be prepared for the arrival of the 40 e7 trial devices in January 2013.

"When we had the whole school iPad training session [from Jigsaw24] it was just so fun," said Nadeem. "The laughter in the staff room was fantastic, and the staff engaged very much straight away. Giving them that time to go away and get familiar with the iPad first meant that they were able to engage fully with the learning on the devices in the term that followed. It was absolutely the right decision to make."

One of the key benefits of getting the teaching staff comfortable with iPad early on was that it allowed them to explore the App Store and discover apps that they thought would support their students. "Because we were able to give staff the opportunity to try out iPad over the holidays, they found some fantastic stuff app-wise that we were able to install, and as the weeks and months progressed we would have regular weekly meetings where staff would talk about apps that they'd found and recommend that we should roll them out."



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Nadeem Shah, Assistant Head, Netherfield Primary School



Working with...

Netherfield
Primary School

In a nutshell...

Who are Netherfield Primary School?

An inclusive urban primary school in the East Midlands, Netherfield are an Investors in Pupils school, and use a range of teaching techniques to help all their students achieve their potential.

What did they need?

A way to trial iPad in their classrooms to see which groups of pupils they'd work best with, and if staff would be comfortable using them to support learning.

How did we help?

Netherfield joined our e7 Project, a free 1:1 iPad trial that gives schools access to 40 iPad devices for a term, so that they can be sure that iPad is the right tool for their classrooms.

What were the benefits?

- Increased engagement from pupils, both during home learning and in the classroom.
- More opportunities for staff to tailor classroom activities to children's individual learning goals.
- Improved WiFi capacity and coverage across the school.



Preparing for the scheme

Ahead of their e7 deployment, Netherfield asked us to come and do a WiFi survey at their school in order to make sure that their network would be able to handle all the new devices. “We’re really glad we did it because it brought up some blips and some gaps, as well as some over-use of the WiFi – where the access points were too close and the signals were bouncing off each other. We had a bit of a redeployment and moved around some of the access points, and it made a big difference.” Despite not investing in any extra hardware or changing their WiFi supplier, Netherfield were able to achieve much more balanced WiFi coverage, giving them the coverage and capacity they needed to support iPad throughout the school.

Handing out the devices to students

Typically, e7 Project deployments consist of 40 iPad devices that are distributed between staff and students on a 1:1 basis. However, Netherfield chose to have 16 of their tablets based with a Foundation class of 3-5 year olds, with another eight in their Nurture group, which aims to help SEBD pupils re-integrate into the mainstream curriculum. The final 16 were then available to all classes as a bookable resource. (“They were out in every class, all the time. We had to create a separate log out book for the iPad because they were being used so often and so positively,” said Nadeem).

Foundation students had their iPad set locked into learning-specific apps by teachers, while the older students were able to have more self directed interaction with iPad to tie in with their wider SEAL curriculum.

“What has been particularly good for us has been being able to target specific aspects [of apps] to pupils’ individual learning”, explained Nadeem. “So if a whole class is doing something, you can tailor the apps to suit their individual needs and learning gaps. It’s not just, ‘Right kids, you’re all going on this program; they might be going on different apps, or they might be going to different aspects of the same app to hit their individual needs, which is perfect for us. The opportunities that pupils may have had to switch off in a classroom, which led to negative behaviours, become much less of an occurrence because they’re engaged in their learning full time.”

Parents have also been quick to get involved in the scheme, with some of the top app recommendations coming from pupils who have access to Apple devices at home. “The kids are coming in saying ‘We’ve downloaded this app at home, Sir, have a look at this one, it’ll be great for what we’re doing at the moment’, so the home learning is being engaged [by the scheme] as well.”

After the e7 trial...

“We were just delighted with the project and long may it continue!” said Nadeem. “Our Regional e7 Manager, Chris, was always at the end of the phone. I’d often call him or send him an email at nine, ten o’clock at night, expecting him to pick it up the next morning, and nine times out of ten I’d get a reply within a couple of minutes. And he was local, so if there was an issue we couldn’t handle digitally he would pop in. The support was always to hand, prompt and of a very high standard.”

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For more information about the e7 Project or integrating iPad in your school, get in touch with us on the details below.

