



SCHOOL SPOTLIGHT: BRENTFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL, LONDON

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT – EMPOWERING TEACHERS AND PUPILS

Discovery Education has worked with Brentfield Primary School for three years, providing bespoke professional development to help staff use technology more confidently and effectively. Headteacher Paola Riddle and her colleagues explain how our partnership supports teaching and learning, empowering teachers and pupils in this thriving multicultural school.

ENGAGING EVERY CHILD

Brentfield is a large and diverse primary school with over 620 pupils and many EAL learners, as Paola Riddle explains.

“We have a high percentage of children from other countries who speak English as a second language. That makes our work even more challenging. But it’s lovely working here because it’s like being a citizen of the world.”

Recognising the power of technology to engage children – and especially EAL learners – the school’s Senior Leadership Team set out to infuse technology throughout the curriculum. They wanted to empower every teacher and TA to use technology

freely, so that students were given the best possible opportunities to learn and achieve.

Deputy Headteacher Julie Harvey explains:

“Children have different styles of learning, it’s about getting to every child, and technology helps us do that. It’s also important to have technology in the classroom for this generation because we need to prepare them.”

UPSKILLING EVERY TEACHER

The school entered into a partnership with Discovery Education, to provide a three-year bespoke professional development programme. The programme was designed to enable all staff to develop skills in using digital resources, and the school’s tablets, in their everyday teaching. It was also created to engage parents, particularly in relation to coding and online safety within the computing curriculum.

Julie Harvey says the programme is perfectly matched to Brentfield’s needs:

“The first time that we had a meeting with a representative from Discovery Education, it was all about what our school needed and the programme that has followed is absolutely tailored to our needs. The termly review meetings are an excellent source of feedback, helping us to evaluate, plan and measure impact.”

CREATING DIGITAL CHAMPIONS

In order to scale professional development across the school, several teachers are designated ‘Digital Champions’, receiving additional training to support colleagues. The group provide advice on using technology and integrating digital resources in lessons, as TA Andrew Dehn explains:

“I’m part of the Digital Champions group and we’ve had extensive training. It gives me more confidence when I am teaching the children.”

CURRICULUM MATCHED CONTENT

Helping teachers to feel comfortable with technology is just part of the story. Brentfield School’s partnership with Discovery Education also unlocks access to a vast library of resources, via the Discovery Education Espresso digital learning service. Closely mapped to the National Curriculum, Espresso’s videos and activities support teaching and learning as Julie Harvey explains:

“Through Discovery Education [Espresso] our teachers are able to pinpoint appropriate resources really quickly. We know that it is going to be at the appropriate level for the children and for the curriculum.”

Class teacher and ICT co-ordinator Zara Shabani share an example of finding dynamic content for a recent lesson:

“I was planning an RE lesson about Hanukkah and found what I needed on Discovery Education Espresso. There were quite a few resources and activities to incorporate into my lesson which was good.”

A PARTNERSHIP WITH IMPACT

Reflecting on the partnership, Brentfield Primary School’s senior leadership team describe Discovery Education as supportive, collaborative and unique in our long-term commitment to their success. It’s clear from lesson observations that teaching staff are more confident which in turn translates into a more dynamic classroom environment. Pupils are motivated, engaged and provide each other with peer-to-peer support.

Julie Harvey explains how the partnership empowers both teachers and pupils:

“Our work with Discovery Education has really upskilled our teachers in order to deliver better in the classroom. The progress has been significant. Interestingly, one of the benefits we’ve seen from increased teacher confidence in using technology is that students are working better together. There’s lots of collaboration and peer-to-peer support, and they aren’t so reliant on adults. In class you often see students helping each other get started with computers or tablets so they can all succeed.”