



SCHOOL SPOTLIGHT: ST. OSWALD'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL, WIGAN

HELPING EVERY CHILD ACHIEVE WITH DISCOVERY EDUCATION CODING

Martyn Ode, Level 3 Teaching Assistant and Computing Lead at St Oswald's Catholic Primary School in Wigan, shares his experience of teaching with Discovery Education Coding.

CODING FOR KS1 AND KS2

We've been using Discovery Education Coding for five years, and Discovery Education Espresso for even longer. As the lead teacher for Computing I needed a resource to use in every class across every year group. Discovery Education Coding does that. It engages pupils of all ages.

ENHANCING COMPUTING LESSONS

Each class has weekly designated computing time, and Discovery Education Coding is a big part of this. I like the step-by-step lessons and videos which introduce the children to block coding, and then allow them to create their own games and apps. I'm passionate about the internet and technology and it's great to see the children using screens in such a positive way. The content really engages them.

ENGAGING ALL ABILITIES

Discovery Education Coding is brilliant for pupils of all abilities. We don't need to differentiate our teaching or put the children into ability groups. The content is very accessible and encourages pupils to

work together. I love the sense of pride that our lower ability pupils feel when they create something amazing. Some of these children might struggle to approach a written task in English or Maths, but the visual instructions in coding are more accessible. Every child matters and coding allows every child to achieve!

OFFLINE CODING ACTIVITIES

I often use offline coding activities to bring computing concepts to life. There are lots of great examples of these in the lesson plans. The Jam Sandwich Algorithm is a favourite. To help the children understand that all computer programs are a sequence of instructions, I ask them to write an algorithm which programs me to prepare a jam sandwich. I make the sandwich in class according to their instructions. It's great fun and they learn from their mistakes – or bugs – as we go along. I've also asked the children to create their own dance by writing an algorithm to map out each move. They use tiddlywinks to represent the dancers and debug the choreography before performing it for real.

Start your pupils' coding journey today.
Visit www.discoveryeducation.co.uk/coding

BUILDING CROSS CURRICULAR SKILLS

Discovery Education Coding helps our pupils to build lots of different skills. It's totally cross curricular. Their computational thinking skills have improved as has their ability to focus. Many pupils find it easier to concentrate on screens than books. Coding just engages them. It's also great for teamwork. You'd imagine that coding is something pupils might do on their own, but I always encourage the children to work in groups. They write the code and then work together to debug and fine tune their game or app. Peer feedback helps them to improve. There's nothing better than when they put together the instructions for a game and click 'Run' to watch the finished product. They are so excited by what they have achieved!

BOOSTING NUMERACY

As well as boosting computational skills and focus, Discovery Education Coding helps our pupils with maths. The whole process of programming builds skills in counting, calculation, position, direction and more. The game timers also help the children to learn about time. I'll often ask them to convert seconds to minutes, or to explain how the timer is working.

ENCOURAGING TEACHER CONFIDENCE

Teaching primary coding can be daunting, but Discovery Education Coding really simplifies things. The videos are so helpful for teachers. You can watch the clips to get up to speed before you deliver each lesson. Our teachers have been surprised at how quickly they have picked it up. It has really improved their confidence as non-computing specialists. They can just switch on their laptop and be ready to deliver a coding lesson.

PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

Coding is such an important skill. Technology has changed dramatically and as teachers we need to prepare children because they are the programmers of the future. I love to see how positively they react in coding lessons and I get emotional when I see what they can achieve. The best thing for me about Discovery Education Coding is that it covers all abilities. It's 100% child friendly and grabs every pupil's attention. It lets them believe: "I can do this!"