



SCHOOL SPOTLIGHT: FREETHORPE COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL, NORFOLK

## DISCOVERY EDUCATION: SUPPORTING STEM LEARNING

Freethorpe Community Primary School uses Discovery Education Coding and Discovery Education Espresso to bring learning to life - especially in STEM subjects. Teacher and Science Co-ordinator Sue Hooper explains how.

### A WHOLE SCHOOL RESOURCE

We've used Discovery Education Espresso for many years after first seeing it in action at the Bett Education Technology Show in London. It's now used throughout the school in every class from Reception to Year 6. Our teachers use the digital resources and video content to support learning in every subject, with a focus on STEM.

### INTRODUCING SCIENCE CONCEPTS

As Science and Computing Co-ordinator, I use Espresso mainly in these subjects. The platform has lots of curriculum-matched science videos. I find these useful as they introduce the children to key scientific concepts and the correct vocabulary. The videos are short, engaging and easy-to-access. They can be used across key stages and appeal to every age group.

### EMBEDDING LEARNING

Science lessons at Freethorpe are always very practical. Our topic this term is Properties and Changes of Materials, with planning as our investigative focus. A recent investigation was into the electrical conductivity of materials using a simple circuit and a bulb. The children placed different materials into the circuit to see if the bulb would light up. We sourced a video in Espresso about Electrical Conductors and Insulators and used this after the experiment as a plenary. It was a great way of reinforcing the investigation and embedding scientific learning.

### ONLINE SAFETY

I often use Espresso in my Computing lessons. Espresso has lots of content to support the KS2 Curriculum for Online Safety, including some helpful videos about Fake News, which

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develop children's digital literacy skills. I use these resources to help meet the National Curriculum in these important areas. The videos are a great prompt for discussion about the different topics. They often spark debate, with pupils agreeing or disagreeing with what they see. This leads to the children describing their own experiences which generates further teaching points.

#### TEACHING CODING

We use Discovery Education Coding to introduce the children to block coding. It is engaging for all pupils. Each lesson starts simply, but then allows the pupils to progress at their own rate. I put the children into pairs to work on the activities, which is especially important when it comes to designing games. They really need to think about the aim of the game and how they will know if they have won before they start coding. This leads to lots of discussion! At the end of the lesson everyone gets the opportunity to move around the classroom and try out each other's games. This gives an immediate purpose to the activity.

#### TEACHING THE NEWS

Aside from supporting STEM learning, we use Espresso across the curriculum. The weekly

News Bites service is particularly popular with the children and is used throughout the school. The videos are current, relevant and very accessible, explaining important events in a simple way. We feel it's important for children to know what's happening in the world and Espresso delivers that. Plus, as teachers we know that the content is appropriate – it doesn't need vetting. Recently Year 6 watched a News Bites story about children campaigning for plastic toys to be removed from children's fast food meals. The class were very pleased that Burger King have now changed their policy but surprised and concerned that McDonald's reply was that toys could be swapped for fruit. It led to a lot of discussion and some constructive argument!

#### A 'GO TO RESOURCE'

We like Discovery Education because the videos are short and accessible, it covers the National Curriculum and links into every subject. The interactive activities can be used in several ways: as a whole class, in groups or individually. Espresso works across every age range in the school, and it's very relevant. It's my 'go to' resource at the start of a topic or if I want to revise an area.