Immersive Learning Spaces and 1:1 access

About St Wilfrid’s
St Wilfrid’s Church of England Academy is a high attaining co-educational day school and sixth form providing a faith-led education for 11-18 year olds living in the Diocese of Blackburn, Lancashire. St Wilfrid’s converted to become an academy in August 2011 and is larger than an average-sized secondary school with 1,540 pupils.

The Philosophy
In 2011, Kirsty Coomber, Assistant Principal, conducted research into the impact of environment and ICT on learning. Her findings confirmed that IT should be used to inspire, rather than merely capture learning, and it should foster independent, literate, engaged learners with an appetite for learning which continues beyond the classroom. She concluded that 1:1 access to devices and immersive learning spaces were key strategies to this vision (described more fully in the book “Creativity and Critical Thinking”, part written by Kirsty).

Engaging teachers
Kirsty also oversees CPD provision. In May 2013 the school launched the new approach to 118 teaching staff, and in June they purchased iPads for the teaching staff. Several teachers attended Harrogate Grammar School’s iPad for Learning Conference. Working closely with the Tablet Academy has also proved to be an essential ingredient for success through ongoing post-deployment training and assistance for teaching staff.

“Working with the e-Learning Foundation has been an important part of our success story in relation to the launch of 1:1 devices. Initially they guided us through what was a daunting process of research, navigating us through financial and logistical issues.

They facilitated opportunities for discussions and directed us to schools where excellent practice was evident in relation to the effective use of 1:1 devices. Their support and branding at our launch evenings enabled us to confidently talk about a project which was innovative, questioned traditional teaching and engaged parents so they had a greater understanding of how technology could change the learning process.”

Kirsty Coomber
Assistant Principal

Making learning engaging
In July, Kirsty worked on a project with the Tablet Academy to use the iPad to make learning and problem-solving more engaging and motivating through a Crime Scene investigation. The resulting video is now shown to parents at all the launch events: http://youtu.be/pFaCz2KlsPI

Role of the e-Learning Foundation
Kirsty approached the-Learning Foundation for advice on how St Wilfrid’s could plan and fund a sustainable and equitable 1:1 learning programme. In September 2013 the school started the parental consultation process and ran a series of launch events, which were a great success with the majority of parents agreeing to support the programme through voluntary donations that were processed and collected by the e-Learning Foundation for the school.
Latest developments
After the successful launch of their 1:1 programme, the school leadership team invested heavily in their learning environment, IT provision, and infrastructure. They began to challenge established planning conventions and the way technology was being used, with a focus on how they could maximise the space within the Academy.

In November, iPads were given out to pupils in KS3, and building work started on the immersive learning space. In January 2014 the immersive classroom environment was officially opened. The purpose is to act as a catalyst to help staff re-evaluate their pedagogy and ensure that learners are active, can establish meaning through dialogue, and are fully engrossed in lessons. This, together with the opening of the iSpace and Mac Suite, will provide excellent learning opportunities for all in the Academy.

St. Wilfrid’s is now at the forefront of using technology to enhance the learning experience of its students.

Facts and Figures
St. Wilfrid’s C of E Academy
Duckworth Street, Blackburn
Lancashire BB2 2JR
Phone: 01254 604000

- Principal: Catherine Huddlestone
- Assistant Principal: Kirsty Coomber
- Finance Manager: Ann Mitchell
- Students from Year 7: 1,540
- Free School Meals: 9%
- Current OFSTED 2013: Good

Contact us:
www.e-learningfoundation.com
info@e-learningfoundation.com
Charity No. 1086306