

Camelsdale First School Email Project, YR, Autumn 2000

Background to the project

Last year a Y3 child was absent for 3 weeks due to an accident. During this time, regular email correspondence took place between him and his classmates and, as a school, we began to realise a little of the potential of such school/home communication. In the first newsletter to go out in the new academic year we asked parents to let the school have an email address, if they have one. They could write it on a reply slip to be handed back in at school, or better still, they could email their child's class so that we would know their address from the message received. In my YR class this has developed into quite a project and has proved extremely enjoyable and worthwhile.

Development of the Project in Pandas Class (YR)

As the first messages began to arrive from parents I took to checking the email with the children as part of first registration and during our regular 'Snack and Chat' session immediately after first break. I now have a system whereby the class helper's for that day do this for me, enabling all to have a turn over each 3 week period. The following are examples of some of these early messages.

Dear Pandas

My son Jack has just joined your class this week for the first time, and he has told me how much fun he has with you all! I hope you all are enjoying yourselves too.

I have included a picture of Thomas the Tank Engine. He has a web site <http://www.thomasthetankengine.com/>

Perhaps Jack or the class would like to send me an email sometime.

Have a lovely day and say hello to Jack for me.

Alastair Hamilton

P.S. I will have a look at your web site later on today...

Hello Seton and classmates,
did you all have a good lunch?
Have a fun afternoon.
From Lesley, Seton's mum

Hi Mum

I'm having a lovely time. Its fun. There's a lot of bricks. I got a sticker on my jumper from Mrs Palmer because I did a picture of the whole city waking up.
Love from Seton

Emily was particularly delighted when both her parents replied to her first message within half an hour!

Hello!

I was just playing in the home corner. I was the mummy. Danielle was the five year one and Daniel was dressed up as the policeman. It was good.

I've had a lovely day today.

Hugs and kisses

Emily

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Dear Emily

Hello - it's mummy here. I've just got back to my desk and found your letter. This is the nicest e-mail I have had today and I am very happy to hear from you!

I will see you later - remember I will pick you up from Benedicte's house
love Mummy

Emily

Nice to hear you've been having fun on the computer

Daddy

Messages from Abroad

The next development came when Matthew's Dad went on a business trip abroad:-

Hi Matthew and all you Pandas

Daddy here, working very hard down here after an 11hr long flight over.

Yesterday we saw some whales, what a fantastic sight to see !!, They were SOUTHERN RIGHT WHALES apparently and one was only 100 yds from the beach!.

More news later, hope your ear is now well.

Love from

Daddy

PS and hi to Mrs Carter too!

Matthew says thank you for writing, Daddy.

My ear is nearly better. We are going to get changed and do PE later.

Have a nice day,

Love from Matthew

The children naturally wanted to know where these messages were coming from and so I introduced them to the globe which I always have hanging in my classroom. There was a delightful moment when a new message was received from abroad and one of the children instantly swung round to look at the globe, with an excited call of, "Show us where it is!". We have now received Emails from various family members in South Africa, Switzerland, Florida and Australia. One mother who does not have Internet access herself gave the class Email address to her sister in Australia:-

Hello, Polly - Hope this makes it as I don't know if I got your address right
- mummy didn't tell me if it was big or little letters.

Lots of love, Aunty Melly.

Hello Aunty Melly
Are you having a nice time at Australia at your house?
I'm doing maths activities now - I like doing the multilink bricks best.
Love from Polly
xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Messages Within School

To make sure that every child could feel part of this work we were able to have children sending emails within the school, either to the Headteacher, or to one of my classroom assistants who does clerical work at a networked computer in the staffroom during some afternoons. In this way, by half term every child has now sent an email. Here is an example of such an interchange between the class and the Head:-

Dear Pandas,

Thank you for your letter and for
the lovely picture.

Perhaps you could draw a picture
of this week's assembly music....a
clown dancing in clogs at a
ballet~ how funny!

From Mrs Palmer xx

Hello Mrs Palmer
I have done you a picture of the clown with the clogs. Shall I bring it to you
tomorrow?
Love from Lonita

tutorial by email the following day. One mother was proud to send us her first ever email, having decided that, if her 4 year old could do it then so could she!

Evaluation of the Project

This project has evolved rather than having been tightly planned, but it has been well worth finding the time for within a tight timetable. Benefits can be seen with 3 separate FS Areas of Learning.

In Language and Literacy it has provided opportunities for children to observe the writing process on a computer, to decide upon what they want to say in a message and to be involved in the reading of messages received. It has provided Grace with a most enjoyable way of practising her early writing skills on the computer, and one that has kept the interest of one so young for week after week.

In Personal, Social and Emotional Development the children are aware of their parent's interest in their school activities and that their parents are still thinking about them even while apart. The continued contact with 2 fathers who have been away on business trips has served a very real purpose in keeping the children in touch with the absent parent.

In Knowledge and Understand of the World there has been the purposeful introduction to the globe as well as all the ICT learning. There is a developing understanding of the process of emailing which I have described in terms of the creation of a message on our computer, the sending of that message to a bigger computer called a server, the collection of that message by the recipient when they check their email. They have no more problem accepting this than they do with using a telephone to talk to Granny. A wealth of computer language has been introduced to them: double click, select, scroll down, space bar, shift key, return key, Send and Receive etc.. The children have taken to adding strings of kisses to the end of their messages (very Early Years!) and so have experienced the fact that if you hold a key down it continues to repeat its action. This will undoubtedly help these children with their early Word Processing as achieving just one output for each key hit often proves quite a hurdle to be overcome.

ICT moves on at such a rate that we all have to be open to continually learning more in this area. With this project there has been clear evidence that the children, the parents and myself have all found opportunities to learn.

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