

**CASE STUDY**



## **And the student becomes the master...**

*Cascading the Learning Platform throughout the school by letting the pupils lead the way.*



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**Moggerhanger Lower School** is a small rural school in **Bedfordshire**. With only 3 mixed-age classes in the school they were initially a little apprehensive about whether they would have the time to implement a Learning Platform. However, it is precisely the small size of this school that has helped them successfully introduce their Learning Platform and ensure this is used throughout the whole school.

### Training and support: Getting the necessary skills

**Sarah Thomson, ICT Co-ordinator at the school**, has always known that training and support specific to their circumstances would be essential if the Learning Platform was to succeed in their school. The initial training session run by the team at Netmedia exceeded her expectations. As well as providing practical ideas on how to use the Learning Platform, the trainer made sure these were tailored specifically to the needs of a small school. This session was a vital introduction to the Learning Platform as it made sure staff were aware of the functionality, gave them the basic skills to get started and highlighted the ways the Learning Platform can be used within school.

Summarising the training Sarah comments, *"I have been extremely pleased with the training that has been provided to my staff on the use of the Learning Platform. Graham Ofler and other members of the team have always been flexible and conscientious and have ensured that all of the learning my team has received has been tailored specifically to the needs of our school and our individual team members. The trainer was informative and gave us practical and useful tips to help us get the Learning Platform up and running in our school."*

### Using pupils to lead development

After this initial session Sarah decided the most effective way to get wide coverage of Learning Platform use was for the pupils to lead the development. With a Learning Platform tailored for them with information they had suggested, pupils would feel involved and so more likely to engage with the Platform. Sarah's Year 3 / 4 class were the first pupils selected as they are the oldest in the school and the easiest with which to incorporate the Learning Platform into lessons.

A two-stage approach was decided upon for introducing the Learning Platform to pupils. After an initial introduction to MyDesktop and Properties, pupils were asked to decide what they would like to see on their MyDesktop accounts. Pupils suggested a variety of Properties, including a 'Newsround' Property so they could stay up-to-date with the news, 'Art of the day', weather and links to their favourite films and bands. These tailored Properties were so successful in engaging pupils that other Properties were soon requested. The School Council now have their own area as well as some of the after-school clubs such as 'Art Club' and 'Lego Club'. The school are also looking into providing these clubs with the management rights to maintain their own Properties. Pupils were also encouraged to personalise their Learning Platform, to organise the Properties as they wanted and choose their own themes.

The second stage was to introduce more curriculum-based information. Through taking a topic-based approach to the Learning Platform it provided a simple and easy way for pupils to become familiar with accessing work and resources. All the information, activities and work for topics such as 'Mexico', 'Film Week' and 'World War II' were set up within a MyClasses page. This provided a single point of contact for all resources – pupils were able to carry on with their learning out of school, furthering their skills in using the Learning Platform.

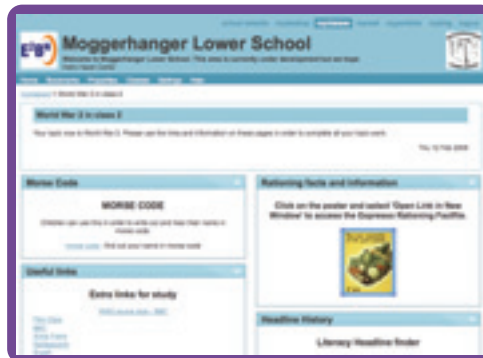
Sarah relied upon Netmedia's online '**Knowledge Exchange**' for extra support. She was able to get valuable ideas on Properties to include within her own classes by looking at the example classes within the Knowledge Exchange area. The Learning Platform 'How-to Guides' were also extensively used as *"these excellent resources mean you have a step-by-step approach to building different areas of the Learning Platform."*

### Developing pupils as mentors

The pupils took to the Learning Platform instantly and were soon at ease logging-in, accessing Properties and finding the information that they needed. As a result, Sarah decided to take an unusual approach by getting pupils to introduce the Learning Platform to the schools' Teaching Assistants and to provide Learning Platform training.



Pupils started off by showing the teaching assistants how to access MyMail, the Learning Platform email system, as using a familiar process such as email seemed to be a good introduction to the Learning Platform. They then showed them how to access MyDesktop, how to use the Properties, and how to personalise the Desktop.



Finally, they assisted them in creating Classes, which would assist Teaching Assistants in supporting the teaching staff. For example, one of the Teaching Assistants is running a class based on a school visit to 'Grafham Water Sports Centre' to provide an opportunity for follow-up work based on that visit.



The success of the pupils providing the training has also been extended to a buddy system between the Year 4 and Reception year pupils. Providing them with this opportunity has also enabled them to develop important skills such as working with others.

### Looking to the future – extending use outside of school

The next stage for Moggerhanger Lower School is to provide Governors with access to their own area. The reason for this is twofold. To enable the Governors to see what the Learning Platform is and the various ways this is being used within school, and to provide them with their own area where they can interact, communicate and access useful information.

The success of the Learning Platform within school means that they will also be setting up a homework club in school for pupils to ensure that they all have fair access to the Learning Platform. As this teaching tool is being used increasingly in school, it is important that pupils have enough opportunity to be able to complete their homework. This also means parents can be sure that their children are safe.

### In conclusion ...

So what is the secret of their success? Moggerhanger Lower School have taken a very individual approach to using the Learning Platform within their school. They have tailored this specifically to their circumstances and Sarah has also taken full advantage of the training and support offered by Netmedia to ensure that the staff have all the skills and information necessary to use the Learning Platform effectively. Sarah recommends schools *"get as much training from Netmedia as you can, this is priceless and can offer so much support. Collaboration and sharing is also key, speak to other schools near you and if possible match up teachers year by year to share good practice."*

Finally Moggerhanger have made pupils central to the introduction of the Learning Platform at their school. This approach has resulted in a student population that is engaged, interested and are excited about using the Learning Platform.