

CASE STUDY



**Excited, Enthusiastic and Engaged!
SEN Pupils from Epinay School
achieve with Netmedia's
Learning Platform**



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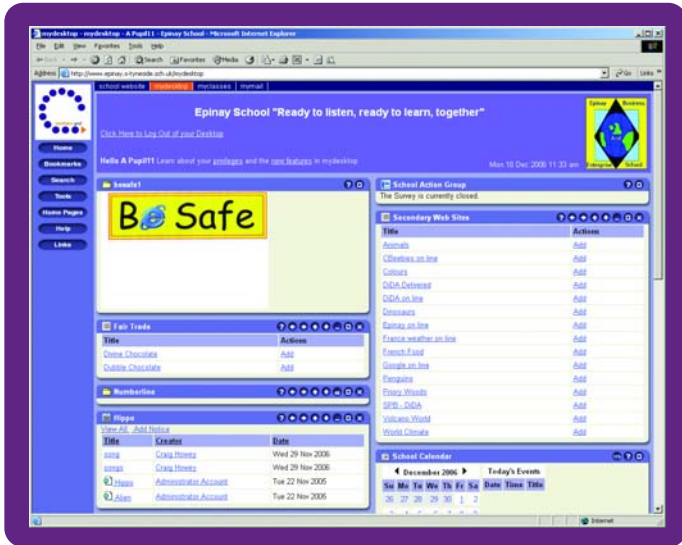
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Netmedia is pleased
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'Becta Learning Platform
Services Framework Supplier.'



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Epinau School and their use of Netmedia's Learning Platform



Epinau School's MyDesktop

Epinau Business and Enterprise College is a special school for pupils aged 4 - 17 with moderate learning difficulties based in Jarrow, South Tyneside. The school have been using Netmedia Education's Learning Platform, available through the Northern Grid deployment, for two years. Epinau was the first special school to be awarded Business and Enterprise status and have recently been awarded the 'Future Visions' award by the Specialist Schools Trust, praised for its use of ICT and creativity, including their use of the Netmedia Learning Platform.

With the support of Norman Tait, head of Epinau's ICT, the school has reached a staggering achievement: **100% of pupils regularly log on to their Learning Platform's 'MyDesktop'**. Mr. Tait has been a strong proponent of the Learning Platform as he has seen the positive impact it can have when used appropriately with pupils with special educational needs.

Pupils receive differentiated access, with usage and rights increasing as the pupils move through the years. Within primary, each class will start with a single class log-in, with each pupil logging in separately but with the same details. Once pupils reach Year 7, they are provided with individual accounts to the platform along with MyMail accounts. However, at this level, passwords are still set by the school. From Year 8 onwards, pupils are given more independence. They learn to change their passwords and personalise their 'MyDesktop' (such as changing "skins" or adding their favourite football team's website). This differentiated approach ensures pupils are confident before they move on to the next level of use and are not frustrated when given access to tools outside of their ability range.

Currently the Learning Platform is used primarily in ICT lessons, in order that the students can focus on the development of their ICT skills. Over time and with frequent use, the pupils have become increasingly familiar and confident with the basics of the Learning Platform. **Pupils are keen to go on to the Learning Platform to complete activities during free time.**

Focus and Repetition = Building skills, confidence and independence

One noticeable result of using the Learning Platform is the **increased confidence** many of these pupils developed. Limitations in Literacy and Numeracy skills can be minimised within the platform with simple links to access new documents, webpages and the like. This enables the pupils to learn ICT skills without being held back.

Within a lesson, the pupils have been observed logging on to their 'MyDesktop' and 'MyClasses' with ease and correctly selecting the

class and file, as assigned by the teacher. The design of 'MyClasses' is created and managed by the teacher, so they can ensure it is a clutter-free workspace. A simple design encourages the children to focus on the task at hand or a particular lesson objective without distraction, a challenge commonly faced by teachers with special needs pupils.

A class discussion was also opened using the 'Discussion Forum' property, which all **the pupils responded to enthusiastically** reflecting a real-life situation familiar to them. They did not need to worry about their use of literacy and spelling within the discussion forum with many of them typing in 'text speech'.

Another element of the Learning Platform is that it enables pupils to practice skills in a different environment, allowing numerous repetitions to aid learning. This is particularly pertinent in a special school where a learning objective will have to be taught in a number of different ways in order for it to be reinforced and 'remembered'.

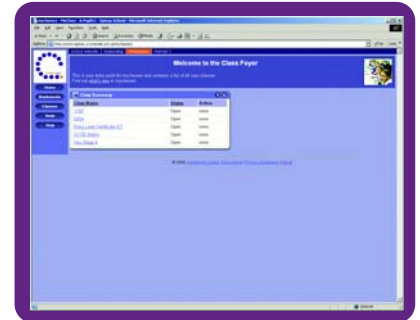
As a result, the pupils at Epinau School have developed the ability to work more independently using ICT. The Learning Platform enhances their performance, despite limitations in literacy or numeracy. Pupils feel rewarded, as **they can achieve in ways that would not necessarily be possible** without the Learning Platform. Moreover the enthusiasm that the pupils show for the platform is testament to their enjoyment of working in it.

Looking to the future at Epinau

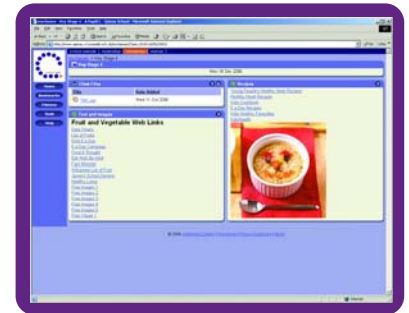
Following on from the success of using 'MyDesktop' and 'MyClasses' within ICT, the school is now looking to roll the platform out to other subjects. Increased use of the Learning Platform has been built into the school's five-year ICT plan and using the Learning Platform across the whole school has already started with small tasks such as the school council elections being held on the platform. Two volunteer staff members will now be working with Mr. Tait to implement the Learning Platform within their subject areas. As the children are now familiar with the functionality of the platform they will be able to move their skills across to another subject with ease.

"Using the Netmedia Learning Platform has enabled our pupils to extend their skills and build their confidence, by enabling to access resources on the Internet that would otherwise have been difficult for them to locate. It enables them to see clearly the progression through a unit of work and enhances their view of how the tasks relate to their learning and progress. The learning platform has also helped to improve communications and information distribution through the school, and with its deployment to governors and our parent teacher committee it is beginning to have benefits there too."

Mr. Norman Tait, Head of ICT Epinau Business and Enterprise College (Special School), South Tyneside



MyClasses class foyer



An example of a class within MyClasses