

# Promethean Help Parkside Secondary School Embraces Collaborative Technology

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### The Challenge

Information Communication Technology (ICT) has fast become an integral part of school life, so when Parkside Secondary School, Willington, was invited by Durham LEA to take part in a four year government Test Bed scheme to establish the positive impact of ICT in learning environments, there was little pause for thought.

Out of just three Test Beds in the country, the Durham LEA project embraces an interactive solution. Encompassing Parkside, eight of its feeder primary schools, a nursery and a special school, the Durham Test Bed was set to benefit from ICT implementation on a scale never seen before in education

Armed with the funding that would make this ICT conceptualisation a reality, Dave Shield, Deputy Head of Parkside and his colleagues began to investigate how they could best implement a fully interactive strategy in the school. Dave comments: "When we were initially approached by the LEA to be part of the project, we were of course very excited. It was clear from the outset that being involved with a project of this nature would open up greater opportunities for our pupils."



# Parkside Secondary School



## The Promethean Solution

Before Parkside School became involved with the Durham Test Bed, only a single interactive whiteboard was in use within the school. In embracing a fully interactive solution, Durham LEA made a conscious decision to work with a supplier who could provide not just an interactive whiteboard system, but a fully integrated solution. This objective led Durham LEA to turn to leading education ICT supplier Promethean; Dave describes why Parkside was more than happy with this decision: "Having had an interactive whiteboard in the school, we were aware of how it could enhance pupils' learning. What we didn't realise before working with Promethean, was that technology existed which could bring a whole classroom alive."

In just four weeks, an interactive whiteboard was installed in every classroom at Parkside – a total of 47 Promethean ACTIVboards. In addition, each classroom was given an ACTIVVote system, the remote device that can be used whenever a whole group response is required. Every teacher was also provided with an ACTIVslate, the A5 graphic tablet that can operate the ACTIVboard from anywhere in the classroom. So in less than one month a whole school implementation was achieved, Dave gives his insight into the experience: "Not only was the installation itself a huge task, we also undertook it during term time! Thanks to a lot of goodwill from staff and pupils, we made it work. Within a week even the teachers who had been a bit sceptical about the whole thing were able to produce a higher level of quality lessons to pupils. This was partly to do with the fact that one and a half hour's training was sufficient enough for us to get the ACTIVboards up, running and being used effectively."

## The Benefits

The scale of interactive technology being embraced by Parkside School is groundbreaking. In particular, the adoption of a truly collaborative environment by implementing Promethean's ACTIVslate and ACTIVVote, has brought great rewards for both teachers and pupils alike. Dave explains: "The ACTIVVote as a teaching tool has huge potential. It enables a higher level of pupil involvement in

a vast array of discussion activities, ensuring every one of the pupils is engaged. It is the one piece of kit that has the single biggest impact on a question and answer session and it is this that demonstrates to the teacher how well a topic has been understood."

According to Dave, the potential of ACTIVVote does not end there: "Where previously you might have had a single child who consistently contributed to a class discussion, now everyone has to get involved. ACTIVVote enables you to wait until the very last person has given their answer – for teaching that is a very powerful tool. It also has implications for peer pressure and bullying. As a rule, pupils tend to answer the same way as their friend – using ACTIVVote means we can be sure their answer is their own. And for the quieter pupils in a class, it gives them a voice they never had before."

The impact of the use of ACTIVslate has been just as influential at Parkside, Dave explains: "Pupils are able to contribute to the information on the board without leaving their seat. This break down of a physical boundary between pupils and the front of the class has resulted in a greater amount of interaction and sharing of ideas. As pupils are able to conceptualise their ideas on the ACTIVboard using ACTIVslate, their interaction is taken a step further than just being verbalised. The added benefit of this is that their classroom input can be saved in a flipchart and returned to in a different lesson."

## The Future

The use of Promethean's technology is still in its infancy at Parkside School, but the benefits of an interactive learning environment are already far reaching. In terms of the school's role in the Durham Test Bed, these benefits are set to be further enhanced. Dave summarises: "As primary aged pupils move up from the feeder schools next year, we will start to see the benefit of using the Promethean solution throughout the LEA as the transition between primary and secondary education will be made smoother. It has also become clear that pupils nowadays want to see dynamic lessons and they want life to be interesting and exciting – here at Parkside we're proud that we can now give them that."

## “About Promethean”

Promethean is dedicated to the development and supply of ICT solutions as teaching tools in the classroom to accelerate learning gains across the whole curriculum.

Promethean systems create an interactive teaching environment that enables multimedia delivery to whole groups.

A UK manufacturer, Promethean offers full installation, full system training, hot-line support

by telephone and e-mail, in-field support and repair. We provide the complete solution to education, distance and flexible learning, collaborative working and training.

### Solutions include:

ACTIVboard Interactive Whiteboards, ACTIVstudio multimedia software and ACTIVision video-conferencing systems.

Wide format displays for data and video and all encompassing solutions for presentations.



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