

# espresso

education

## St. Aidan's CE First School Success Story

### Teaching English using Espresso



*"Espresso is brilliant, it has video clips and activities linked to just about everything you would want, saving a huge amount of planning time! It is so important to me because it is my main resource that I use for all subjects and lessons. Being able to have access to all the videos and resources as a whole class is outstanding."*

Ms. Clare Thomas, ICT Co-ordinator, St. Aidan's CE First School



The most important aspect of any resource for St. Aidan's CE First School is its cross-curricular potential, and it was this that first attracted them to Espresso. The school purchased Espresso after seeing their second demonstration having been impressed at how much content had been added in a short time. The teachers at St Aidan's believe that in comparison to other resources there is no better service than Espresso for cross-curricular coverage.

## Cross-curricular literacy

It is rare for a literacy lesson at St. Aidan's to appear as one to the pupils. The teachers' aims are to make every lesson as cross-curricular as possible and link it to other objectives that need to be taught. Like many teachers at the school, **ICT Co-ordinator Clare Thomas** likes to add a multimedia aspect to her lessons and will often introduce pupils to a lesson's theme with a video clip from Espresso to promote discussion. Once the pupils grasp the theme it will be focused on more heavily and dissected so that they can produce their own work.

Clare explains how Espresso's video-rich resources lend themselves to her pupils' learning:

*"The videos focus the children, nowadays they are living in such a multimedia orientated society that without such resources the children wouldn't be as responsive. They remember video items much more than something they've read."*

Clare regularly uses videos from Espresso's *Assemblies*, *News Bites* archive, Geography and PSHE modules. In one lesson, Clare and her Year 4 and 5s investigated the arguments for and against leaving your car at home when getting to school. Pupils watched videos from our Geography modules to introduce them to this debate and to stimulate their own views. As the subject is one that personally affects them, all the children embraced it. They were then fired up to write an argument for or against a certain mode of transport in a follow up lesson.

This topic was ideal to then relate to global warming issues and Clare managed to find further videos about an *Electric Car* (in D&T) and *Eco-friendly Cars* (*News Bites* archive) to expand on this debate. Discussion erupted between pupils and was consolidated by a worksheet Clare had designed allowing them to write down their differing arguments. As a result the children were were practising listening, speaking and writing skills throughout this lesson.



Clare built further on this theme by showing a video from Espresso's *News Bites* archive called *Cycling to School*. Once again this provoked loud discussion as all children decided they wanted a cycle path for their school. Suggestions were then made as to how pupils might put their argument across to the school's decision makers.

St. Aidan's has also used Espresso's History resources to teach literacy successfully and find them very inspirational for the children. During a study on Africa an exercise was given to write a biography on Nelson Mandela. The *Learning Path* in the *Black History Collection* module and the *Life Stories: Nelson Mandela* equipped the children to work on researching his life in independent work.



### A selection of author resources available on Espresso

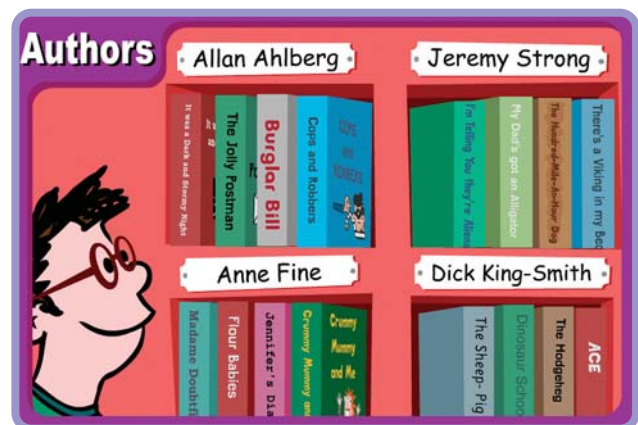
	Videos	Books	Activities	Biography
<b>Allan Ahlberg</b>	18	4	4	✓
<b>Anne Fine</b>	22	1	4	✓
<b>Dick King-Smith</b>	14	2	4	✓
<b>Jeremy Strong</b>	28	1	4	✓
<b>Laurence &amp; Catherine Anholt</b>	24	3	5	✓

### The importance of English

In addition to using the other subjects to teach English, St. Aidan's still make full use of Espresso's specific English resources:

- Ideas for writing discussed by authors such as Dick King Smith in the *Authors* module have proved a simple way of assisting the children with their own ideas and helping them to understand the writing process.

- *Think and Discuss: Characters and Characterisation* resources on Vincent Van Gogh are extensively used when learning about characterisation and linking this with stories. This activity includes videos on his life, art and the book *Camille and the Sunflowers* by Laurence Anholt. The questions that follow the videos help the children to discuss aspects of characterisation by using the book as an example. The questions then direct the children to describing their own characteristics and of those around them. *Think and Discuss* activities such as this one have proved invaluable for promoting class discussion and are used by many St. Aidan's teachers.



- *Story Starts* in KS1 provides an engaging way to link multimedia and creative writing together and is also a firm favourite with teachers to give children inspiration for their stories.
- Every aspect of the *Poetry Workshop* module is used and the videos make excellent starting points from which the children can write their own poems. Clare explains:

*“Modules such as this one have taken the hard work away from teachers as they don’t always need to take the children out of the classroom to inspire their poetry anymore, Espresso can do that for them.”*

## Functionality and flexibility

St. Aidan’s find Espresso’s videos particularly effective in class because:

- They can easily search for a topic, save results onto a memory stick and then search through them at home.
- They can pause, rewind and easily repeat videos to emphasise certain points and allow the children time to take in the information.
- They can be easily exported into the Smartboard notebook software by dragging them, giving teachers endless possibilities to make their own resources.
- They can also take snapshots while the videos are playing and then export them into blank documents on the Smartboard for use in extension activities.

## Visual literacy

In common with many schools, visual literacy is a skill that St. Aidan’s are keen to develop and they are impressed that Espresso’s resources have been adapted to help them do this. Espresso’s functionality allows teachers to remove a video’s pictures or sound, is a vital tool that allows children to concentrate on watching or listening to the video.

Since having access to Espresso’s video clips and multimedia resources at St. Aidan’s, the children’s writing has developed enormously. Staff plan to incorporate more speaking, listening and drama into their literacy lessons and Espresso will continue to be an integral part of these developments. Clare sums up her feeling on Espresso’s impact,

*“I couldn’t be without it now, and in fact I wouldn’t move to a school that didn’t have Espresso.”*

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