

Southwater Infant Academy | Christie Cavallo

“When we started we didn’t know just how significant eTwinning was going to be in our development as a school” Sue Winn (Headteacher, Southwater Infant Academy)

About the School

Southwater Infant Academy, rated ‘Outstanding’ by Ofsted, is a vibrant and innovative example of primary education situated in a rural environment near Horsham, West Sussex.

About the Project

The aim of their project is to “extend playground games”, taking a PE theme and integrating the skills that two of the teachers, Sally and Hannah, could offer. The children first worked together in teams, deciding which skills they wanted to teach their partners. They then wrote the rules and invented the games. Knowledge and skills have not only been shared between partnership schools, but also with peers in other classes, informally in the playground, making this a true learning experience. Part of the impact has been recording the differences in what the pupils see as games and play. For some pupils it was discovering that games could be played in the playground without specific equipment. There has also been the added bonus of more general cultural exchange, learnt through looking at images and video from schools in the eTwinning partnership.

ICT has played an important role as the tool by which these ideas are exchanged. The children have used videos, digital images, and presentation software. They have learnt how to take a good photograph by thinking beforehand about composition and looking critically at those sent to them. Finding a way to present their work to other people has become second nature, as well as making group and individual decisions on how to proceed with a task through problem solving. The overall evaluation of the project was executed through letters to their partnership school. In learning how to present information in this way, the children in Year 1 demonstrated skills usually acquired in Year 2.

Sally Friend and Hannah Smith say: *“eTwinning has given us a different tool to use to bring learning to life for our pupils”*.

One of Sue Winn’s original concerns was that the school’s ICT equipment was not being fully utilised. The introduction of eTwinning projects has meant that this equipment is being well used and there is now a strong argument that can be put to the school governors about increasing the amount of equipment to meet demand and the importance of replacing worn out stock.

The work being carried out at Southwater is disseminated to the community through the Southwater News. Sue Winn has also presented her experience using the local network of Headteachers.

The Benefits of eTwinning

All are in agreement that eTwinning has given teachers confidence and promoted a culture of sharing. As teaching staff they have learnt about eTwinning together and they are now more likely to share their everyday concerns and celebrate their successes. When asked how she would regard an interviewee with eTwinning experience, Sue Winn thought that having eTwinning experience immediately implied a specific skill set that could give an advantage when applying for a teaching post.

Winner of the 2012 European Quality Label

