

StarBoard

Lesson 5

Geography - World Map

FX Duo popular at Poplars Farm

No turning back for Bradford primary school.

Poplars Farm Primary School already used interactive whiteboards. But when the Hitachi FX Duo hit the market, an excited phone call from their technical-support company forced a rethink on spending priorities.

Poplars Farm Primary School, two miles outside Bradford city centre, is a mixed, non-denominational school. It's a one-form-entry establishment that caters for 26 nursery children and 210 main-school children, drawn from 11 different nationalities.

Since 2003, Poplars Farm had accumulated six household-name interactive whiteboards. But Head Teacher Peter Sumpter was unhappy about the placement of dry-wipe boards alongside the IWB's as it used, much needed display space. Says Peter: "The interactive boards have been a revelation in classrooms but the pen-only operation of most boards has proved expensive and inefficient. The pens don't stand up to the wear and tear of primary-school use. And at £40 a throw to replace them, that's a big factor.



HITACHI
Inspire the Next



"I'd already started to look at alternatives when I took a phone call from a very excited Kevin at our network support company, InnoSys Limited. The new Hitachi FX Duo had been released and Kevin said I just had to take a look at it."

So, in late 2007, Peter attended a demonstration and awareness-raising day in Leeds. He was impressed that the board came with dry-wipe ability, plus the choice of pen, stylus or finger operation.

But the versatility didn't end there.

"The board can be split into two halves – great for team games and creating a healthy competitive environment, great for stimulating bots!," says Peter.

"You can also video conference. This is ideal for our school, with having just one class per school year. I could see that we could video conference between two classrooms, which is very useful. I placed an order with InnoSys right away."

Peter has since set out plans to link with another school in Bradford and possibly a further school in Leeds. With new links with schools abroad this could even cross continents. "The Government has a big push at the minute for co-operative schools, so this could be a big help," says Peter. "If we video conference with other schools using the webcam, we can train together, tap into each other's strengths and share lesson plans."

In January 2008, Peter attended the BETT show (the world's largest educational technology event) to look at other options. But he came away even more convinced that Hitachi's new board led the field.

"We've only one right now, but we're looking to budget for others, although we're planning to use Hitachi's Chameleon application to convert the other boards to Hitachi software," says Peter.

When Peter places more orders, they'll be through Kevin Wardale from InnoSys. Kevin says: "When we're installing whiteboards, we're always asked about the old dry-wipe boards. Teachers always love to write on them, so that's a big advantage with the Duo. It's also a very large board with lots of white space and the teachers find the software very easy to grasp."

The FX Duo is already a big hit among the staff and children. Teacher Laura George is a convert: "The Hitachi board is more flexible than others. It's easier to manipulate the software, and the ability to highlight and annotate without switching to other programmes is a big help." And Year 4 pupil Asim says:

"It's much better than the other one. The pen used to get broken or lost, but now I can use my finger."

Peter acknowledges that it's still early days, but some applications have been immediately apparent. "I can highlight glaciation features for Year 6 from a photo on the Internet, draw around them and then use them as a field sketch later," he says. "The kids love the inbuilt protractor and ruler, too. You can draw a line, shape or angle and the board automatically corrects your flaws."

Other advantages are less obvious: "The short-throw projector is amazing. It's very close to the board, so your shadow's not on the screen. The other boards are short-throw too, but still a noticeable distance away. With the FX Duo, you can present from anywhere without projecting a shadow. There's no going back now."

You can find out more about Hitachi interactive whiteboards at: www.uk.hitachisoftinteractive.com



ED-A101 Ultra Short Throw LCD Projector

Hitachi Software Engineering UK (Ltd)
Interactive Media Solutions Division
Hillgate House, 26 Old Bailey
London EC4M 7HW, United Kingdom
Tel: +44 (0)20 7246 6868
Fax: +44 (0)20 7246 6860
Email: sales@hitachi-software.co.uk

Hitachi Software Engineering France S.A.S
Interactive Media Solutions Division
Tel: +33 (0)153 827 600
Fax: +33 (0)153 827 619
Email: starboard@hitachi-eu.com

Hitachi Software Engineering Europe AG
Interactive Media Solutions Division
Tel: +49 (0)30 8877 2600
Fax: +49 (0)30 8877 2610
Email: starboard@hitachisoft.de