

21st century classroom

Oli White of Whizz Education explains how to make the most of your whiteboard, getting started with simple exercises, progressing to software which maps the national curriculum



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I can actually remember the first time I ever saw a computer, never mind used one or even owned one. Times have changed and today's children can't remember a time before computers. It is a part of their everyday lives and their desire to embrace and interact with technology is as natural to them as playing conkers was to me as a child.

Over 60 per cent of schools in the UK use whiteboard technology in their classrooms. Of the many benefits that whiteboards afford, the most important for children at key stage 1 is that advanced concepts from across the curriculum can be presented in an interactive, fun and engaging

way. Imagine the whiteboard as constantly changing. A book that reacts with the child's answers; you never have to rub anything out and once you harness that interest, it can go on and on to new subjects and new lessons.

Many teachers have told us that this way of interactive learning has a positive impact on a children's future learning.

Imagine a child learning a core subject like maths. The whiteboard, and interactive learning as a whole, presents key stage 1 concepts such as measuring, weights and addition as a game.

A child can approach the whiteboard and literally move items from one side of the board to the other, physically (though

virtually) filling a glass, adding two bricks to a pile and then counting the total – having a real experience through technology to increase their understanding. For teachers a key benefit is that the software is designed to teach the national curriculum and because the lessons are stored on your computer they can be used again.

Whiteboards bridge the gap between the exercise book and the sand pit, using a tool so familiar to the child that they learn with the same level of enthusiasm usually reserved for the playground.

Getting started with a whiteboard

Most of the companies that provide whiteboards will usually provide some propriety software pre-installed when the whiteboard was purchased. Free software for basic whiteboard usage can be found on sites like www.smarttech.com/support to get you started. These tools, although basic, allow you to begin drawing shapes on the whiteboard. They also allow you to manipulate the board. To familiarise children, seat them in front of the whiteboard. Ask them to raise their hand if they know how to draw a triangle. Move onto a pre prepared presentation (created in PowerPoint, for example) which shows a triangle.

Ask a child to then draw a picture of a triangle on the whiteboard. Save the child's drawing of the triangle into the presentation replacing the pre-prepared triangle with the

