



## Northern Grid / BECTA Video conferencing Project

### Background:

**Name of school:** The Oak Tree Primary School

**Location:** Stockton LA. The school is situated in an area of high deprivation.

**Size:** Pupils 450, staff 50

**Type:** Primary

**Equipment:** Existing Polycom camera, which is being used in a joint partnership with Durham University for ITT students.

**Context:** To develop the areas of ICT and to provide our children with wider opportunities through the curriculum. To establish multi-cultural links with areas outside of our LA.

### Technical installation and set up:

#### **Type of equipment used:**

Polycom PVX videoconferencing software

Logitech Quick Cam 5000 web cam with built in microphone.

Speakers, standalone microphone, laptop, networked.

There were issues with installing the software onto our networked PCs at school; therefore it was installed onto 1 laptop.

#### **Layout and location of video conferencing area:**

The staff room has been used and 1 classroom with the laptop being moved between the rooms.

Seating was arranged so that all children were visible on the screen, group size of 25 used.

#### **Problems encountered and solutions developed with the above:**

The conference had to be initiated by us at Oak Tree due to technical issues at the partner school: they use click-to-meet, and were unsure of the dialling number needed for our system.



## Video Conferencing Partners:

**Who:** North Harringay Primary School, Inner London

**Where:** National

**How contacted:** NG introduction through the London Grid

**Other communication channels apart from the video conference:** email links and possible face-to-face visits

**Other schools or other institutions:** Primary School with approx. 480 pupils of diverse cultural backgrounds, including Somalian, Turkish, Polish. The school is 6 miles from the centre of London and has no grass playgrounds.

## What you did:

**Curriculum focus:** The original focus was for our ICT e-mail topic in Y3/4. The children were given a 'real-life' e-mail buddy. This then developed into raising their awareness and understanding of children from other cultures through Video Conference sessions.

**How the activity fits to work pupils are already doing:** Children had already covered many e-mail skills through the topic.

**Actual VC Activity:** For the children to get to know one another and give a brief overview of school life and vice versa. For many of the children it was their first VC so we used it as an opportunity to talk through protocol of using VC.

**Aims and objectives of the conference(s):** To test the equipment, for children to become familiar with the process of VC.

**What the teacher / other educational colleagues did:** Both schools prepared questions and information to share with the other school.

**What the pupils did:** Children read through questions and prepared answers. Some children sent e-mails (some went through, some did not).

## Evidence of Activity:

**Written** - copies of e-mails

**Video** - no

**Photographs** - yes

**Tapes** - no



## **Use of the personal portal desktop - myclasses facility:**

**How was this facility used as part of the project:** It wasn't!

**Any issues / problems with this aspect of the project.**

**If you didn't use the facility please say why:** As the school we conferenced with had no access to 'myclasses' we saw no point in using it.

## **Overall conclusions from the project so far:**

### **Positives and negatives:**

#### **Positives**

- Experience for the children
- A link (hopefully long term) has been established between the 2 schools
- The children had a real context for their ICT e-mail work

#### **Negatives**

- Quality of the sound was not good
- Due to not having a fixed point for the VC equipment the conference had to be moved at the last minute

**What would you do differently if starting the project now:** Use a smaller group of children and consider other microphone options.

### **Reactions of those involved locally and remotely:**

**Staff** - very exciting learning tool, looking forward to future opportunities with them and others

**Pupils** - 'It was great! They are very different to us and their school sounds like fun!'

'When are we video conferencing again?'

'It's strange seeing ourselves on the screen!'

## **Future developments:**

### **Where do you see your VC activity going in the future?**

Short term: Getting children used to the VC equipment through internal VCs

Long term: Links with Europe, more national and regional links, links through specific curriculum areas.