

## REPORT ON LA CO-ORDINATED STUDY VISIT TO BADAJOZ

### Summary Profile

Local Authority:	Gateshead
LA Visit Leader:	Liz Gleave <a href="mailto:lizgleave@gateshead.gov.uk">lizgleave@gateshead.gov.uk</a>
Title of Visit:	Effective Use of ICT
Provider:	Best Practice Network
Country / Region visited:	Badajoz, Spain
Types of schools visited:	Primary, secondary and special
Age of students observed:	3 - 18

#### **Purpose of visit:**

- To develop an understanding of the Spanish educational system
- To observe the use of ICT in the classroom
- To investigate resources used – both hardware and software

#### **The intended aims of the visit:**

- To gain an insight into a different educational system
- To observe and share best practice in the use of ICT
- To reflect on observations and compare teaching and learning styles in ICT between Spain and UK
- To build up a bank of accessible resources for use in the classroom and to share with colleagues
- To foster links with other schools

#### **The expected outcomes of the visit:**

- Increased awareness of different methods of delivering ICT
- Ability to adapt and transfer strategies in our own schools
- Better knowledge of ICT resources

#### **How aims and outcomes were identified and recorded:**

- Planning meetings in the UK prior to the visit
- Notes taken on visits through observation, photographs, video and discussion with teachers and pupils
- Final report on return to UK

**Report on the experience:**

Each visit has been recorded as an individual case study.

**Monday 7 April 2008 - Badajoz****Introduction to the Spanish Education System**

At Badajoz's Teachers Resource Centre (TRC) the advisors gave us an insight to the language curriculum in schools and their proposals for the future - including a possible return exchange to Gateshead. It amazed us to learn that 95% of children begin learning English at the age of 3 and most continue up to the age of 18. A recent initiative has a number of students learning at least one other language (mainly French) with others adding a third. Very few take up Portuguese despite being 5km from the border. This is mainly due to teacher expertise. Students have at least 2 hours extracurricular lessons delivered in a language other than Spanish. These tend to be in science or humanities.

Teachers are in the process of developing an online course for all ages to encourage further language learning (including 18-30 group!)

Our final talk at the TRC was about the ICT structure and resources within the region. They currently have 70,000 computers in school (1 per 2 pupils) with plans to extend this to one computer per child in the next two years. To make more effective use of financial budget, all software used is open source.

Staff are encouraged to develop their own resources and can be awarded grants of up to 18,000 euros to do so. Every teacher is provided with a computer and they are planning to provide free home Internet access for all teachers. All schools have an IWB with plans to increase this further.

Our first school visit was to the primary school attached to the TRC. They said this was a very old school - all of 50 years!

**Visit 1 – City Centre Primary School (Emma Pickering)****A Whole School Approach to Support and Encourage Reading Using ICT**

During our first Primary School visit we found out about a whole school project developed to promote reading for the pupils aged 3-12.

The annual project which runs from Christmas to the end of April, begins with the selection of a book which is appropriate for the whole age range, is of interest to the pupils and has a film version which the school requests Santa Claus delivers to the pupils. The book is studied at both school and home, books are bought for the school library based on the story theme and a carnival is held during which all pupils and staff dress as characters from the book.

The project is supported throughout by the use of NeoBook, a presentation program from Linux. The program is used to present texts, which may be unavailable, to support younger pupil and pupils with SEN, songs, activities, poetry and is also used for the

hugely anticipated a top secret final contest for all pupils aged 6-12 (with differentiated support) at the end of the project. Mosca, the reading fly, presents questions which use the pupils' audio, visual and kinaesthetic skills, practised throughout the project. The pupils thoroughly enjoy the project and each receives a diploma for their hard work.

### **Tuesday 8 April 2008 - Azuaga**

Azuaga has about 8,000 inhabitants. Their school system consists of one nursery school, one primary school, two secondary schools, one adult education and one special school.

#### **Visit 1 - Special School (Colin Carr)**

This is a very small all age generic special school who use different commercial and teacher written programs to enhance learning and encourage development. Multi sensory disabilities are levelled through ICT to develop language and speech.

In one example a hyperactive pupil was able to use the computer to link specific icons, which enabled her to keep on task and make progress. A second pupil who was only able to communicate through eye movement was, with the support of a teacher, able to select colours to answer the questions posed by the computer programme.

The school is in the process of transferring to a new purpose built building that will expand their physical space and allow more students to access this vital provision. On the computer front, the school are planning to upgrade to touch screens to enable greater development.

#### **Visit 2 – Secondary School (Susan Turton)**

This is a 12-18 secondary school with just over 500 students and our focus was on the use of ICT to teach maths and English.

In the maths lesson, the year 13 students were again sitting two students per computer but the room only had a blackboard for the teacher to write instructions on. However, he was able to control and demonstrate on the students' computers using GNUlinux. The teacher had also set up a web site in Lycos that was password protected and this was used by students to submit digital work. He demonstrated how students could use two software programs to help solve equations and manipulate data. The first program was on their computers - WX-Maxima and was used within the school network. The second piece of software was online - WIVIS and used by the students at home.

The English lesson proved a big hit with the younger Gateshead teachers. The teacher demonstrated an innovative use of the projector, as she had no white board. Instead, a large patch of plain wall solved the problem.

The first activity was a revision of a previous lesson where students were given a series of photographs and were asked to give a title and use sentences (in English) to describe the photos. Mind mapping software was used to build a bank of adjectives for each photo.

Her main task was based around a scene from 'Sex in the City' and demonstrated the importance of intonation in language. Students were allocated characters and had to read from the script (displayed on the improvised white board - the wall) in preparation for dubbing the actual scene on the DVD. After a number of run throughs (and a few mishaps with the technology), the students had a number of opportunities to read aloud the text whilst the scene was being played. Each time they did this, their language improved.

One of the main problems with using technology in this school was that the students stayed in their room and the teacher did the moving around. This meant time was lost at the beginning of every lesson setting up and distributing resources. However, the teacher always prepared a short starter to ensure pupil learning was continuous throughout.

### **Visit 3 – Secondary School (S Turton)**

Here we saw how ICT was used for the teaching of Art and an actual ICT lesson.

The art/ICT teacher has three main focus areas:-

- 1 Language improvement through films and industry - students had to produce their own short movie
- 2 Photography - students took and prepared an exhibition of black and white photographs using the school's developing lab
- 3 Publicity and marketing - using office software (mainly presentation) to produce marketing for a business

The ICT lesson proved to be very interesting with two activities going on. The majority of the class were using Audacity to independently produce and develop their own mobile ring tones. This allowed creativity on the part of the pupils.

The remaining students were manipulating their own digital images again allowing creativity and independent learning to take place. These images were combined to produce a digital collage that was used as a background for marketing material. The ICT teacher later gave an overview of the changes that were taking place and variety of open source resources available on various websites.

### **Visit 4 – Primary School (Kelly Lewis and Katherine Calvert)**

We visited a preschool for 3-6 year olds - the only one in the area of Azuaga. It is not compulsory education but 450 children in this town attend. There is one computer in every class and a small ICT suite. This is used to teach the ICT curriculum and for ICT after school clubs.

Children used a program called JClick to enhance learning in ICT as well as English vocabulary and memory. The school is very keen to involve parents and invite them to use the ICT suite two mornings a week so they can see what programs their children use at school. All the students were confident in their use of technology including

logging onto the machines and selecting the appropriate software. They were not in the least bit distracted by our presence unlike the older students earlier in the day.

From here we moved to our final visit of the day.

### **Visit 5 – Primary School (Kelly Lewis and Katherine Calvert)**

This is the only primary school in the town of Azuaga and has 570 pupils (more than twice the size of our average primary school in Gateshead).

There are 3 ICT suites in the school and one interactive whiteboard.

We observed an after school ICT club and saw children working on a program called Squeak which combines paint skills and animation. The students were eager to complete the tasks and there were definite signs of differentiation through outcome.

Following this lesson we moved to another group who were using the programme JClick. This program is used to teach 3 units; English, PE and Spanish. The teacher uses this programme to moderate and set tasks relating to the current unit of work. The children worked through the tasks independently and obviously enjoyed them.

A number of teachers at this school are part of a working party developing resources with JClick and if the Junta is happy with the outcome, the resources will be made available to other schools via the region's website. As in the UK, the major developmental problem is a lack of time within the working day to meet, plan and prepare the resources. The group tended to meet after school and work late. However, they had a positive view of the software and the benefits to the students were obvious and worth the effort.

After our final school visit, we had a very personal (the only visitors) tour of the town folk museum then a walk up to the 16<sup>th</sup> century church.

We had a fabulous day in Azuaga and left absolutely laden with gifts and mementoes of our visits. A number of them have been specially made for us on an individual basis and also included a selection of students' work. The teaching staff were very enthusiastic and keen to keep in touch. Ideas passed around included emails between students to develop language skills and writing for a purpose.

### **Wed 9 April 2008**

#### **Visit 1 – Primary School (Lee Connor)**

Our first visit of the day was to a primary school which was built after the Spanish civil war. Castuera was basically flattened as it formed the boundary between two conflicting factions. Set in a town with a population of 7000, the school had approximately 200 children on its roll, with 61 in the Nursery section and 130 in the Primary range. Within the town itself there were several other schools, with a pre-primary, two primaries, two secondary schools, an adult school, and one special school.

This school was involved in a European project with schools from Denmark, Romania and Italy and they were very interested and keen on establishing links with as many foreign schools as possible. We also discussed their environmental project with them, which had been ongoing within the school for the previous 6 years and focuses on such things as pollution and recycling around the world.

Our first visit was to a class of 5 year olds who had been learning English since they were 3 years old. They had very enthusiastic teachers and we were treated to renditions of English nursery rhymes. They stared in wonder when we broke into 'Head, shoulders, knees and toes'. Kelly and Katherine also performed a song they use with their early years classes.

In terms of ICT use within the school, we observed a Year 6 English lesson which used ICT throughout. The class consisted of 12 children, and had 19 computers, with a portable Interactive Whiteboard also in use. The teacher was using the JClic program, focusing on irregular verbs in English, and learning about the Geographical aspects of the United Kingdom through map work.

Children were invited to the front of the class to highlight particular rivers, lakes, and countries on the IWB, which was closely followed by independent work on their individual computers (word searches and labelling maps). This seemed to be a much more structured lesson in place today, with recognisable features such as oral starters and a plenary.

We then observed a PE lesson using ICT. The beginning of it was based on the previous day's lesson and focused on the children's jumping technique using the video recording the teacher had made. He went through several jumps and highlighted good aspects and areas for improvement, through pausing and whole class discussion.

The teacher then introduced a new unit of work to the children - Basketball. Using the IWB, he presented an image of a basketball court to the children and also a list of the rules and how to play it properly.

He went through the zones of the court with the children, and invited children to the front to label it on the IWB. All the children were engaged and on task with no problems in terms of behaviour and discipline.

The children were motivated by the use of the IWB and it was put to effective use throughout the lesson.

A very productive morning for all!

### **TRC – Castuera**

We returned to the Teachers Resource Centre and had a demonstration of their VLE with various free software packages and completed resources. The teachers make very

good use of this to find out about available training, sign up for courses and any government (local and national) initiatives.

There followed a shared discussion explaining how ICT was used in schools across all keystages in Gateshead. This will form the main article for their next ICT publication.

The weblog ([www.ictgateshead.org/TIPD](http://www.ictgateshead.org/TIPD)) is promoting significant discussion and interest. Our host is keen for all teachers we meet to have the address and they have all have been invited to comment - especially in Spanish. It is hoped that the teachers will share the weblog with students to motivate and enrich their language skills.

### **Visit 2 – Secondary School – Zalmea de la Serena (Colin Carr)**

The age range of the pupils is 12-16 and 16-18 (600 in total) the school was completed in 2006 with European funding and covers a large country area with pupils travelling by bus from all parts of the district. Pupils have the option of weekly booster classes and we were invited to view an ICT Design lesson.

The teacher controls the class computers using GNU/Linux and set an appropriate task in computer design using a QCAD on Windows and Linux. This is a multifunction program that enables pupils to design in layers and included line, shape, space, colour and measurement.

The pupils were set an appropriate task and worked in pairs to complete.

The second part of the visit included a school pupil and teacher ICT video production. The subject was the local region over the last 2000 years and was excellent both in content and production.

Finally we were all given a school-produced calendar that was the latest ICT led multi subject production. Once again the final product was excellent.

### **Thursday 10 April 2008**

We were picked up at 8.00 am and taken via a very scenic route to Burguillos del Cerro - 84 km south east of Badajoz. The countryside around here is more like the north of England with rolling hills and lots of trees. There are more animals such as sheep in this area. However, the trees are olive rather than our native species.

### **Visit 1 - Secondary School (Colin Carr)**

The school, which opened in 2002, is in very rural area and provides education to 122 students in the 12-16 age range only due to the socio-economic background of the area. Students wishing to proceed past compulsory education have to travel to larger towns. The head teacher explained that due to the type of students in this rural part of the country their education is focused on vocational rather than academic education.

After a wonderful reception in the staff room (this was the first one that closely resembled a UK staff room) we were given a full description by the head teacher about the use of GNU/Linux 2006.

This software allows the teacher to have full control of individual computers within a room from a centralised PC. An upgrade is due shortly that will enable even greater coverage/access including the Internet.

The school is working very closely with the local council to establish a WiFi link with the community so that pupils who have or borrow a computer can access their school folders enabling them to carry out their set work and it will also give parents the opportunity to view the results and be able to have contact with the teachers. This whole project is available through Moodle and will greatly enhance the distance learning programs available to students.

We finished the visit with a very detailed discussion comparing the Gateshead schools systems and the systems available to schools in Spain.

The headteacher was very interested in the ICT facilities available in Whickham School, the software used and the access to the system via Ranger and the VLE.

As with all the schools, the teachers were very interested in the Eees PC, its cost and software. Their next step is to provide a pupil:computer ratio of 1:1 but current plans indicate that this will be achieved by attaching two keyboards and two mice to each CPU unit rather than each student having a computer to themselves.

### **Visit 2 – Special School (Susan Holmes)**

Our final visit was to an SEN school for children aged between 6 and 21 years.

The school is a light and airy two storey building holding 56 pupils, 15 teachers, 13 assistants and many physiotherapists and other specialists.

The facilities included a high-tech multi-sensory room, a library, ICT suite, vegetable garden, gym and a transition room where children learn life skills to encourage independent living, as well as a number of ordinary classrooms.

Between the ages of 6 and 16 the children's learning is dictated by the curriculum. Older students spend the last 5 years at school developing skills for independent living and inclusion within society. Once a week children enjoy the facilities of the local swimming pool to improve their fine and gross motor skills as well as their posture. It also gives student the opportunity to mix with people outside their school life.

In the ICT suite we were shown a presentation of poetry by a student, using Open Office, a tool used to improve reading, writing and communication skills. Presentations were also shown displaying the skills of the physiotherapists, communication technologies and interactions between the special school and other local schools. The

Linux run computer system is adapted for the children's abilities and levels ie large, colourful icons and appropriate literature. JClic was also demonstrated indicating the use of icons to assist children's phonics, reading, writing and typing skills. We finally had experience of a 'Spanish school dinner'. The traditional fish and pasta soup, roast pork and potatoes followed by strawberries and cream. The school had a very child-centred and family orientated ethos with all staff working as a team towards a common goal - including the kitchen staff!

### **Friday 11 April 2008**

#### **Visit 1 - Merida Teacher's Resource Centre (Rachel Heaney)**

The Glenn Doman programme is used to introduce and develop reading skills in young children.

This method of teaching is introduced to children at 18 months old and continued throughout the childhood development stages. The programme involves using a series of vocabulary flashcards to familiarise children with word recognition. The cards must be shown to the child at a fast speed and the vocabulary read clearly. This is rehearsed 3 times a day, 5 times a week. Repetition is a key factor in this process for it to be delivered correctly and successfully. The following stages include an increase in the vocabulary lists and then the introduction to short simple sentences. Parents and carers are also encouraged to continue the process at home with their children.

The Children's Resource Centre in Merida has researched this programme and has created and adapted a programme application to show the flashcards on an interactive whiteboard with audio resources for use in primary schools. A support website for this programme can be viewed at [www.cpmerida.juntaextremadura.net](http://www.cpmerida.juntaextremadura.net). There is a forum available to read and write comments concerning the Doman Method.

The Children's Resource Centre has worked on this programme for 3 years and is continually adding new resources to develop it further. For example, adding picture books, poems, short stories, videos etc. Adaptations of the programme have also been developed for the introduction to reading a modern foreign language using a word flashcard accompanied with a picture flashcard for complete comprehension.

#### **Time for our presentation!**

We hadn't planned for this and earlier in the week had had to send an emergency email request for the official Raising Achievement presentation background. We'd also scoured the net looking for suitable iconic Gateshead images (not the car park)! Anyway, we were raring to go and being filmed!

Liz started off explaining the education system in England and Gateshead and how compulsory education has its key stages. Although we'd planned for a brief presentation, we hadn't taken translating time and questions into account so kept trying to speed up.

Kelly and Susan Holmes explained the basis of early years and primary school whilst I explained about secondary and post 16. This led Liz onto explaining about testing, Dryden and CPD. I rounded things off with an explanation of the CLCs and ICT in education in general. There was certainly interest in the Functional Skills:ICT aspect. The audience were then shown the weblog, relevant weblinks and the EeePC. We could have spent all day showing what we were doing in Gateshead but things had to be curtailed for the final, formal closing speeches.

### **Evaluation: Summary of key Educational Outcomes:**

#### **Professional development of teachers:**

All teachers benefited from:

- the experience of observing ICT practice in a variety of different schools (primary, secondary, special) and time to reflect on their own practice in comparison
- the knowledge of a different educational system where the transition to secondary education is at 12 years old and the learning of English in Spanish schools begins from the age of 3
- understanding how the Spanish government has funded ICT resources for schools – the ‘one computer for every two pupils’ policy with a plan to increase this to ‘one computer per pupil’
- CPD support ensuring every teacher has an entitlement where credits are recorded – it was compulsory to accumulate credit over a given time period
- Strategies in the use of ICT to enhance pupil learning

#### **Contribution to pupil achievement:**

Teachers will be able to:

- Access to software used in Spanish schools which can universally support pupil learning
- Share recommended websites and VLEs
- Adapt their teaching and learning styles in light of the experiences gained

#### **Dissemination proposals:**

- Weblog to be completed on a daily basis
- Report on Gateshead’s Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)
- Individual teachers presentation within schools and LA
- Feedback to ICT networks
- Galleries and/or rolling display of images available online (attached to weblog and report on VLE)
- Rolling display of images in Dryden PDC

#### **Proposals for developments and continuing links:**

- Numerous email addresses for links were received. At the time of writing this report teachers are planning to establish contacts in Spain.
- Investigate possibility of return exchange visit.
- Add to already established weblog.

### **Appendix: General advice for others visiting**

- Make sure you check the itinerary so that you have sufficient gifts for hosts and schools visited. Don't take your full luggage allowance as gifts received can be numerous and heavy.
- Set up a weblog in advance on a centralised LA website (eg CLC) and have links from individual school sites for widespread observations and comments – publicise well in advance.
- Be prepared to describe English education system – a prepared PowerPoint presentation would be useful – also copies of promotional DVDs, videos of schools, CLCs, etc.
- Write up brief reports each day. We took a small laptop which was used to record each day's evaluations on the mini-bus on return journeys – extremely useful. When Internet access is available (eg hotel, schools, teacher's centres) it is then very quick and easy to copy across to the weblog and publish.
- Check out dress codes in schools in advance – don't assume all schools follow the same code
- Meal times can vary considerably – be prepared eg emergency chocolate bars