



CASE STUDY:

Burnt Oak Junior School

How primary schools can transform their pupils' digital learning experience.





How primary schools can transform their pupils' digital learning experience.

By giving children the challenge of creating a digital newspaper, two educators have helped primary school pupils develop critical skills for their future. Find out how the launch of a popular 'Journalism Club' gave pupils an opportunity to learn and successfully use professional software.



Meet Peter Barrett and Lorraine Smith from Burnt Oak Junior School.

Meet Lorraine Smith and Peter Barrett from Burnt Oak Junior School.

Lorraine Smith, a teaching assistant and Journalism Club Lead, and Peter Barrett, the school's Computing Leader, have both been at the forefront of using industry-standard technology on various innovative digital projects at Burnt Oak Junior School in Sidcup, Kent.

They share the educational ethos that you shouldn't place limits on children's learning, no matter the subject, their age, or their ability, and in computing and technology specifically, you simply don't know how capable children are, unless you let them try new things. As it turns out, they're pretty incredible.

The school's 2018 Ofsted report specifically mentions that pupils are developing sophisticated technology skills, very effectively. This is backed by a supportive headteacher who wants to create an environment in which children can explore and be creative, and who gives a resounding "yes" to introducing new technologies and methods of digital learning.

The path from using lots of different resources to one collection of professional software.

In the summer of 2018, Lorraine launched a child-led digital newspaper, the 'Burnt Oak Buzz', with the intention of giving pupils a platform to celebrate their voice. It also introduced them to journalism, with the aim of boosting digital skills such as photography, illustration, animation, coding and film.

Within the first month of launch, Lorraine recognised a need for software that the children could use to put the newspaper together – from concept to publication. During the first few months, as the children wrote, filmed and recorded the content, Lorraine collated their work into the final document. But, in her words, "I knew the children could put the newspaper together themselves from beginning to end. I needed some way of facilitating that for them so they could create and learn and drive it forwards, independently. I wanted to put them at the centre of the work. But it was more than that, it was about them taking on more senior roles. I knew they could take on that level of responsibility, mentor and support each other, and edit their own work, if we had the right tools."

Lorraine started looking for a solution and discovered Adobe Creative Cloud. While advanced for primary school pupils, she thought it would be ideal. Around this time, the local newspaper visited the Journalism Club and mentioned that they use Adobe InDesign and Photoshop, and, as Lorraine says, "I knew for sure that the children could use it too. I knew they would be more than able to use this professional software and produce outstanding results."

How a timely intervention paved the way for a boost in digital creativity across the school.

Then, in April 2019, came some good news – LGfL offered all their member schools free Adobe Creative Cloud licenses. Plus, the opportunity to easily purchase additional licenses. This meant Burnt Oak was in a position to acquire enough licenses, not only for Journalism Club but, for the whole school. Peter could also use the software in his computing lessons and other teachers could integrate it into their lessons too.

Journalism Club started using Adobe InDesign straightaway. After their first hour's session, everyone had learnt the basics. Lorraine says, "Once the children understood the process, they ran with it and everyone had created something. They were challenged and out of their comfort zone, but this was great because it meant they were also learning. From then, they started creating Burnt Oak Buzz in InDesign. There's no better way to let children experience things than by simply giving them the tools they need to learn. Giving them the opportunity to learn technical skills and letting them collaborate to produce something exceptional. They did everything – the whole production line for Burnt Oak Buzz."

Peter agrees, saying, "When I started teaching Adobe Photoshop in computing lessons, I quickly realised that I actually needed to take a step back as the children were working things out for themselves, based on software they already had knowledge of. They were teaching each other, and that's what teaching computing is about. What struck me was how easily the children just got on with it and did lessons on it for others. I know we can underestimate children, but every time we use it, I'm amazed by what they can do with Photoshop."

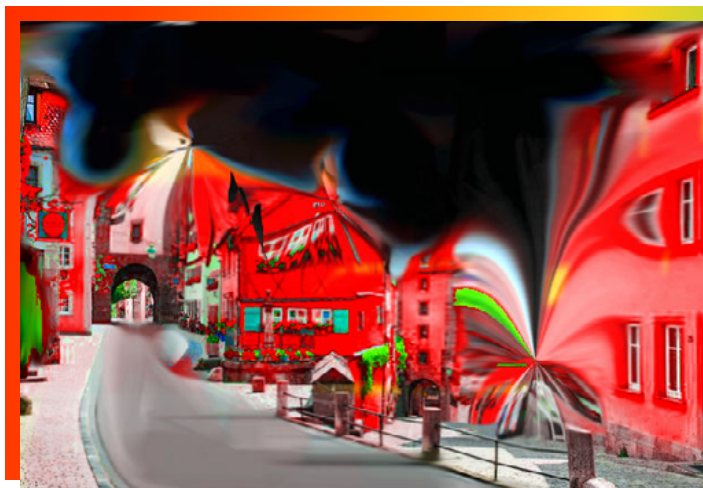
And parents are amazed because they're using the same software at work as their children are using at school!"

Other teachers in the school use Adobe Spark on handheld devices in their classrooms – and pupils picked this up straightaway too. Peter says, "Our teachers quickly became aware that Spark wasn't something that needed to be added to their lessons, it's something that's a natural part of their lessons – they could integrate it immediately. Teachers are very on board with Spark, especially for topic-based digital learning, and it became part of their lessons really easily."

It's not just technical skills that children are learning with Adobe and Journalism Club. As Lorraine says, "We're facilitating a way of thinking, an open-mindedness, a will to try. They know that things don't always work out, that you can work towards something, but it might go wrong, you might make mistakes, but that's ok. We're teaching them resilience, to keep trying and coming back for more."

Why all primary school teachers can use professional software (even if you think you can't).

Peter acknowledges that the digital level of learning at Burnt Oak could sound intimidating to teachers who aren't particularly tech-savvy, for those who might think they couldn't achieve it. If that sounds like you, he has a message. "For people who read this and think, 'Well, I couldn't do that,' or 'I couldn't teach that in my primary school,' you needn't be afraid. Initially, I actually knew very little about some of the new software that I teach! But the children find out and I learn with them. I promise you'll be amazed at what children can do and how they teach each other. Teachers with low levels of technical skills can still do this, because the children have got the technical skills – and that's ok."



Created by Year 4 student aged 8 at Burnt Oak Junior School!

"Using Adobe Creative Cloud has opened up exciting opportunities for our children's digital learning. They've excelled in the new creative roles and opportunities that this software provides."

Lorraine Smith, a teaching assistant and Journalism Club Lead.

The power of digital creativity and how it improves soft skills.

Peter has noticed how his pupils' soft skills have enhanced as a direct result of using Adobe software in his classroom. He says, "Cooperation is definitely stronger. I see one child discover a new way of doing something, or functionality they haven't seen before, and they'll tell others about it, so they can learn too. There's a lot more cooperation and feeling part of a group. And there's so much depth to Adobe products that there are a lot of new things to find out."

Lorraine adds, "There's better collaboration too. I'm seeing documents that different children have produced in InDesign stitched together using Acrobat. That's another thing I love about Adobe – the different products complement each other, so you can use one and you'll find the same or similar functionality in another."

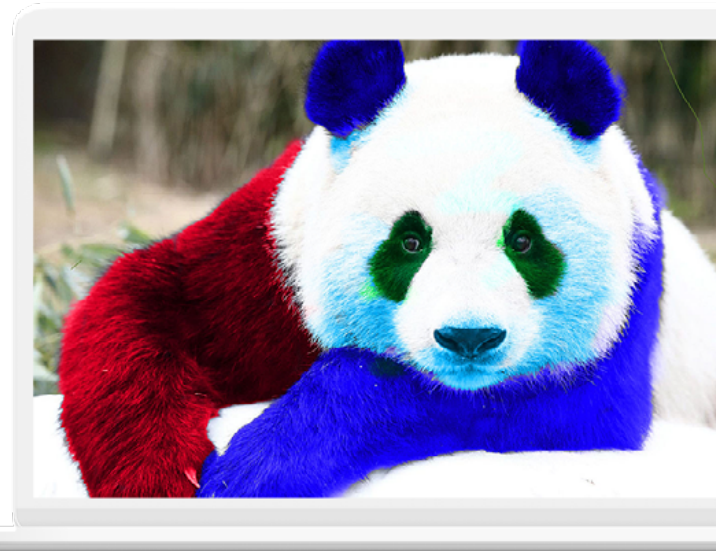


"One of great things about teaching with Adobe Creative Cloud is that you can give children these tools, open them up to possibility and let them lead, and they will achieve something remarkable."

Peter Barrett, Computing Leader.



Adobe and the Adobe logo are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Adobe in the United States and/or other countries. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners. ©2020 Adobe Systems Incorporated. All rights reserved.



Created by Year 6 student age 10 at Burnt Oak Junior School!

What's next?

Following huge praise for the upgraded Burnt Oak Buzz from parents, staff, and of course the children, Lorraine has found that more and more people want to be involved. She puts it down to the fact that, "It's about creativity and communication, but also because children are leading it and are asking to learn about technology they don't know how to use yet. They have really creative ideas and they're empowered to move forwards with them."

Since schools have been in lockdown, Lorraine and Peter have been upskilling by learning new Adobe products such as Character Animator and Illustrator, and say, "We know we can take this back and use them with the children. Character Animator is next!"

About Adobe Creative Cloud

[Adobe Creative Cloud is a collection of more than 20 desktop and mobile apps and services](#)

for photography, design, video, web, animation and more.

About Adobe Spark

[Adobe Spark is a free educational tool](#)

For making presentations, graphics, posters, videos, webpages and more.