

Blended Learning Journey and Learning Difficulties



Insight into the Journey - Shelley Farnham

We never thought this would happen, within five days we went from full operations to reduction in service provision for key workers children.

Ponteland Primary School is situated in the heart of the attractive village of Ponteland not far from Newcastle-upon-Tyne. The school serves a diverse community, attracting pupils from the local area and villages. The school is a non-selective community primary school providing education, emotional wellbeing and an environment where children thrive.

A key focus is the provision of inclusive support to children from Year 1 - Year 6 who are not making age-related progress and struggling with curricular maths. The range of needs for these children vary from severely struggling, to children with mild-learning difficulties and some with co-occurring SEN conditions. The school's caring ethos extends to ensuring that we maximise each child's potential.

At school our children within the maths intervention groups, looked forward every few days to work with both the tactile and online activities on Dynamo Maths. However, the government announcement of school closure meant that this was not possible and we needed to plan on how best to continue supporting our children.

The lockdown announcement meant that we had to change swiftly to enable parents to support children remotely. Luckily, we

were able to continue using Dynamo Maths, which is a specialist Maths Intervention and catch-up program with a hybrid of pedagogies; lesson plans and ICT activities; digital activities that are personalised to target areas where children need support.

Our first approach was to simply send parents the login details and allow children and parents to access the specialist resource from home. This brought about many salient benefits, of which I think the most important has been the confidence of the parents in providing support to children during the lockdown.

The parents took the use of resources in their stride, we saw some fairly consistent activity in the usage at home and this helped maintain children's progress. The programme was set up to help each child at the correct level, based on their assessments in school.

This personalised approach from assessment to intervention and the targeted adaptive process is embedded within the program. The personalised **intervention was seamlessly transported inside the households** of many children with the use of login. The roles had shifted and our conversations with parents began on the plans and vision for ensuring that during this lockdown period, no child should be left behind.

Our initial fear was that parents may need IT support, but only a few calls came in to request

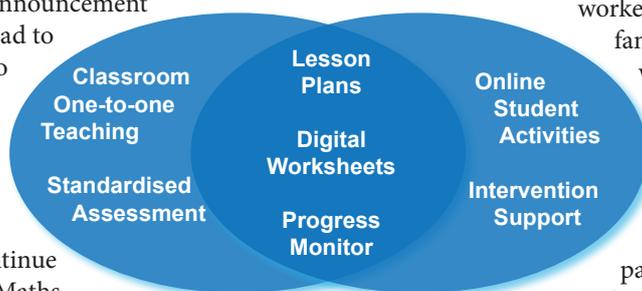


forgotten passwords. A few requested some guidance on how to assist their children with certain tasks but on the whole the transition was simple. Because the children were so familiar with using the programme in school, they were able to be quite independent in many instances doing this at home.

Further, the use of the same resource in school for the key worker children during lockdown provided a bridge of familiarity and the new norm of school work. They were able to use Dynamo throughout their time at school which meant that they kept practising and improving their skills too.

As we journey back to the opening of the schools, I think the future is bright and we will be looking at using the new approach that strengthens the partnership approach between the school, children and parents. The ability to use these types of learning programmes in school and at home is a great way to bridge the gap between home and school and help parents understand the role they can play if their child is struggling at school and be more involved in their learning.

We were indeed very fortunate to have had a specialist resource for children who were not making age-related progress. It was very beneficial to offer them this resource to use at home over this time.



Shelley Farnham,
SEN Support Assistant,
Ponteland Primary School