

Connected Learning

Case Study

Glenwood Primary School, Belfast

Year 5 ICL Pilot

Background

Glenwood Primary School is a large inner city school in Belfast involved a wide variety of curriculum initiatives, including, The Enriched Curriculum, Digital Curriculum, Linguistic Phonics, Comet project, ICT accreditation, Assessment for Learning, Primary Movement and Pupil Profile. Currently our Pupil Numbers are 448.

ICL

We chose 'Once Upon a Time' as we felt that the focus of this ICL would engage children's imagination through the stimulus of stories.

Planning

We created activities based on topics suggested and expanded them to cover all curriculum areas including RE and PE. We thought about the skills we wanted our children to learn and capabilities we would like them to develop throughout the project. This enabled us to start the planning process for the ICL.

The planning didn't take long. The main learning intentions were already stated within the ICL. Seeing the planning document on one sheet was excellent, as we always knew where we were going. We also created weekly plans to include planning for home learning and differentiation. These plans also enabled us to focus on the skills and capabilities that we wished our children to achieve. This preparation was vital to our success.

Starting Points

Our main starting point with the children was asking them about books. Children were given opportunities through "think, pair, share" time to talk to each other about their favourite books

and present their findings to the class. We then asked the children to go home and talk to their parents/grandparents about their favourite books as children.

This activity, "My First Book Memory", was a great success with children bringing in their first books, writing about them and presenting their book reports to the class. We also engaged this enthusiasm by creating art activities. We celebrated World Book Day and this provided the children with opportunities to be creative and take part in role-play activities.

Development

We focused on two main stories: 'Jack and the Beanstalk', a traditional fairy tale and 'Finn Mac Cool', an Irish legend. These giant tales were a great stimulus for communicating ideas through the arts and through ICT.

We looked at the theme of beginnings and endings through both Personal Development and The World Around Us. The ICL had suggested talking about death – this initially daunted us however we decided to try it out using 'Fred' by Posy Simmons to talk about it. We used circle time as a forum to talk about how death made us feel. The emotional maturity that our children displayed really surprised us. The children were able to reflect on poor Fred and talk about their feelings when they lose someone they love.

From this we moved on to look at lifecycles. We encouraged pupils to investigate at home, in the library and through ICT, the lifecycles of frogs, butterflies and humans. We looked at books, created slide shows and even made a large lifecycle of the butterfly for the classroom. We talked about these lifecycles in groups and tried to empathise with the hardships and emotions these animals go through during their lives. The children then reflected this through creative writing (My Life as a butterfly/My life as a frog). The standard of writing was exceptional and the use of emotional language was fantastic.

Evaluation

Teachers

- Planning time was of great benefit to digest what we had to do.
- The use of the Assessment For Learning techniques were fundamental to teaching the skills and capabilities.

Children

- The children loved the taking part in the ICL, they learnt how to present their work, work collaboratively, be creative and make connections.
- They loved reading to other children and taking part in dramatic performances of Jack and the Beanstalk, Finn Mac Cool and David and Goliath.
- They also enjoyed participating in peer assessment.

Parental involvement

- Children were asked to retell stories that they heard in school to parents. The parents were then asked to comment on how well the storyteller told the story. Both children and parents loved this activity. It gave parents the opportunity to find out what was happening during the school day and take an active role in their learning.