

Sandringham School delivers advanced learning experiences with 3M Simply Interactive

Sandringham School in Frimley, Surrey has extended its computer-aided learning facilities to reach the school's smallest classroom by installing the 3M SCP716 short-throw Simply Interactive projector. The system allows almost any plain wall to become an interactive computer screen, and is also tough, versatile and easy to use.

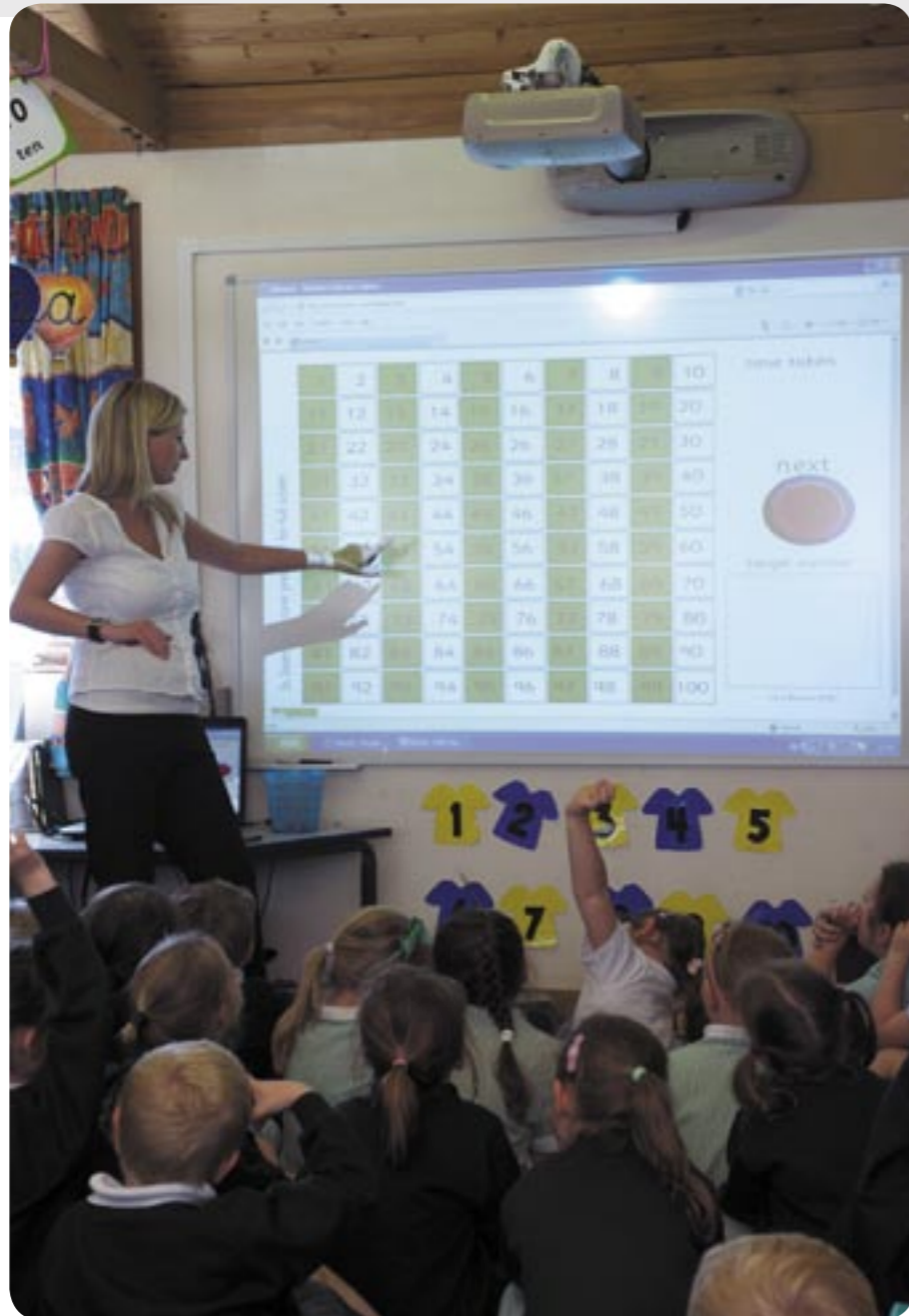
SCP716 Simply Interactive

Interactive computer-aided learning has quickly become central to teaching at all levels, from reception to further education. Among the many benefits of having an interactive screen in the classroom, even very young children can participate actively in lessons, practice working collaboratively with their peers and begin acquiring valuable computer skills from an early age. In addition, teachers have been able to enhance their lessons by incorporating rich content from a variety of sources, such as graphics from other programs, scanned images, video clips or resources taken from the internet.

By allowing a plain wall to be used as an interactive computer screen, 3M Simply Interactive projectors can help schools make more of these advantages for a relatively low outlay. When connected to a computer's USB and VGA ports, the system provides the capabilities of an interactive white board. A DVD player or camcorder can also be connected, to playback movies or video taking advantage of the system's built-in 2x20W speaker system. The system is easy to set up, and also allows very young children to interact with the screen without risk of damaging the equipment.

Meeting school objectives

Sandringham School, which has children aged from four to seven years, is committed to delivering the best possible learning opportunities for its pupils. Among the facilities the school has invested in, interactive whiteboards are installed in almost every classroom. In fact, the main hall and one classroom reckoned to be too small to have an interactive whiteboard were the only



areas not to be equipped. When the opportunity to acquire extra resources arose, the school governors identified super close projection as a potential solution for the small room.

Jessica Gower, a teacher at Sandringham School, explains that the school was keen to have the extra flexibility to present computer-aided lessons in the small room, and to install an interactive screen in the main hall. "The projection system in

the hall allows us to present much more representative information during parents' workshops, which we use to keep parents up to date with their children's learning," she says.

The school believes in involving the parents in their children's education, and frequently invites parents to presentations on subjects such as ICT and numeracy. "We can now build our workshops around the same learning platforms that we use

in the classrooms, and integrate these with interesting presentations to give parents a clearer understanding of the learning experiences their children are enjoying. We also use the hall projector to present information to the children during assemblies, such as the words for each hymn while it is being sung."

When the hall is being used for other purposes, such as indoor sports, the folding wall mount allows the system to be stored out of the way and protected against damage.

Overcoming limitations

By installing one of the new systems in its smallest classroom, which is mainly used for four-to-five year olds, Sandringham School is able to increase interactive learning opportunities for the youngest children. This is possible because the SCP716 projector with 3M Super Close Projection technology can project the same size image from 40 inches as a conventional projector does from 10 feet away. "We can now deliver the same learning opportunities in this room as in any other, which gives us extra flexibility to utilise the resources we have available," says Jessica Gower, who often teaches in the small classroom.

Being able to project the interactive features against a plain wall also allows the teacher to position the "screen" at a lower height, to enable the youngest and smallest children to do exercises such as handwriting, drawing and basic ICT. Another aspect of particular value in subjects such as ICT is the ability for teachers to demonstrate how to accomplish a required task, which the children can then copy immediately to confirm that they understand.

Into action

Jessica Gower and her colleagues have found the system very easy to use. The computer is connected and the system configures its internal software automatically. The user calibrates the screen, on the first use only, by touching points in the screen area using the interactive pen. The system is then ready for action, using the pen to control mouse functions as well as all writing and drawing actions. This contrasts with some types of conventional interactive white boards that use different pens for different colours. These can be difficult to manage, especially for very young users.

Using the pen, teachers and children can call up features, interact with programs on the computer, annotate content using the powerful annotation tools native to Windows PCs, and quickly connect

to the internet for additional tools and resources. The teachers are also able to use the projector to show DVDs to the children, either as an additional source of educational material or purely for entertainment.

The projector was installed and its Simply Interactive features demonstration. "Once up and running it has proved very easy to use," confirms Jessica Gower. "For a comparatively low outlay, we can now deliver enhanced learning experiences to all of our children, in any lesson, anywhere in the school; even in the room we had previously thought too small for interactive equipment."

The results achieved at Sandringham School show how 3M's Simply Interactive and Super Close Projection are able to overcome traditional limitations such as budgetary constraints and small room sizes, which often prevent schools and colleges – as well as small businesses – from realising the full benefits of computerised interactive learning.

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