

## Virtual Learning Environment

The government is looking for all schools to have a learning platform in place by 2010 and for all children to begin to build up an 'e-portfolio'. This is a huge undertaking and at Ermington we have worked with the other schools in the music specialism to source what we feel is the most appropriate VLE for primary aged children. We chose Its Learning and we are slowly introducing it in our school. The web address is: - [www.itslearning.com](http://www.itslearning.com)

As part of e-safety day all of the children received lessons on the safe use of the internet and they were shown how to access Its Learning at home for themselves and how to complete an online e-safety questionnaire placed on the VLE by Mr Davidson.

### **The following is an extract from BECTA – British Educational Communications and Technology Agency**

#### **What are the benefits of a learning platform?**

An effective learning platform that is embedded in the working practices of the school can offer a wide range of benefits to teachers, pupils, parents and at the same time support management and administration.

#### Practical benefits to teachers

An effective learning platform will enable teachers to:

- ♪ create and share teaching materials which can be accessed online, printed out or used with an interactive whiteboard
- ♪ put their resources online page by page, lesson plan by lesson plan, so colleagues can access them both in school and from home
- ♪ access a wide variety of learning materials that they can customise for the exact needs of their pupils
- ♪ access lesson plans from colleagues to support supply cover
- ♪ assess, monitor and track individual and group progress
- ♪ receive submissions of work from pupils in one area that is easy to manage
- ♪ manage their timetables, diary, email and discussions within personal desktop space
- ♪ increase their ICT competence and confidence.

#### Practical benefits to pupils

An effective learning platform will enable pupils to:

- ♪ access learning materials created by their teachers and others, outside lesson time and from locations such as the library and home
- ♪ store work and notes online for use in assignments, homework and revision, outside normal school hours
- ♪ work at their own pace and with a wider choice of learning styles, through a more personalised curriculum
- ♪ create an online portfolio, including digital photos and videos of performance as well as text
- ♪ improve their ICT skills and online management of materials
- ♪ submit homework and assignments for marking and assessment
- ♪ communicate by email and participate in live discussions and forums with other students and teachers.

#### Practical benefits to parents

An effective learning platform will enable parents and carers to:

- ♪ play a greater part in children's learning, where they have access to the learning platform from home
- ♪ support children in any learning which takes place outside school
- ♪ access their child's personal home page to keep track of their work and the curriculum
- ♪ view reports, and scores in assessment activities
- ♪ communicate effectively with teachers, school administrators and others supporting their child's learning
- ♪ engage with wider school issues through online communication tools
- ♪ become active partners with the school.

## Practical benefits for administration and management

An effective learning platform will:

- ♪ provide up-to-date management information on attainment
- ♪ track the progress of individuals and groups of children
- ♪ collate summative and formative assessments
- ♪ reduce the administrative burden on teachers by using transferable data
- ♪ enable communication within school and beyond, on a one-to-one, one-to-many, or many-to-many basis
- ♪ increase communication with parents.

**We are still at the very early stages** but Mr Davidson has put a huge amount of web-based resources on the VLE already and many of his Year 2 class are submitting work using it. It is a closed system and is currently only accessible by the children and staff of our school. There is the ability for children to message each other and their teachers and I have talked to all children about the most appropriate use of this. They have also been informed about the fact that the school can access all of the messages sent and received by the children and that their access may be suspended if they use it inappropriately and that parents will be informed. We can also monitor the amount of time that they are using the VLE. As parents we hope that you have accessed the safety resources on the Know It All CD that was sent home last term but if you have any concerns please come in and see Mr Davidson or myself. Mr Davidson will also be holding a parents evening after half term to demonstrate the potential of this resource.

At the moment children are very excited about the system and this is wonderful but we would like you to spend some time just going through the following code of conduct with your child.

## Responsible Use of The Virtual Learning Environment

- ♪ I will ask my parents permission before entering the VLE
- ♪ I will only use my own user name and password, which I will keep secret
- ♪ I will only send polite and sensible messages
- ♪ I will ask permission before opening a message from someone I do not know
- ♪ Any work I put on the VLE will be work that I would want my school and parents to see
- ♪ If I see anything I am unhappy with or I receive messages I do not like or make me feel uncomfortable, I will speak to my teacher immediately and forward the message to Mr Davidson
- ♪ I understand that the school will check my computer files and may monitor my usage of the VLE
- ♪ I understand that if I break these rules then my access may be suspended and my parents informed