



## A pedagogical philosophy of passion and positivity...

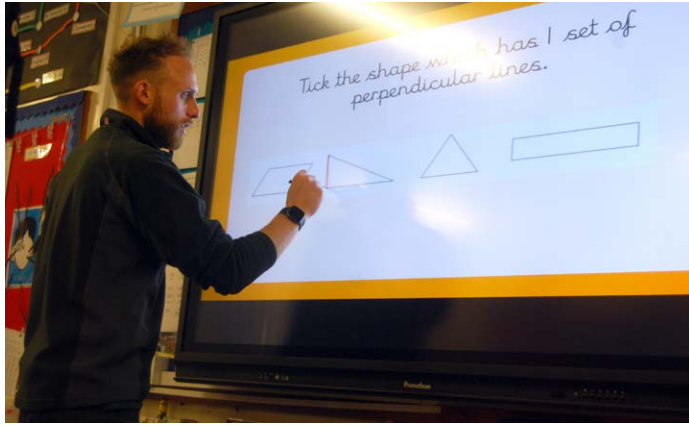
Truly believing that all students deserve the very best start in life, Spire Junior School in Derbyshire has an ethos that is centred around improving student outcomes and transforming learning opportunities.

Prioritising student wellbeing and encouraging class-wide participation through interactive technology, Assistant Head and Year 6 Teacher, Alex Bramley, talks us through the importance of positivity and innovation in the classroom...

### Aligning curriculum priorities with the ActivPanel

Being one of the lucky winners to receive an ActivPanel in Promethean's nationwide competition, Classroom Stories, Alex's innovative streak hasn't stopped there...

With an authentic-outcomes driven curriculum, Spire Junior School challenges its students to work creatively, whilst deepening knowledge and understanding through engaging and enriching experiences. All students are encouraged to work



towards an end-goal and are immersed in exciting projects that have been designed to expand their horizons and as a result, the teachers use the tools and equipment at their disposal to make learning as interesting and engaging as possible.

*“Students learn best when they have memorable experiences, fun whilst learning or enjoy taking part in tasks.”*

Alex Bramley

“As a teacher, I truly believe that positivity and fun should be a fundamental part of each curriculum lesson. The teacher plays a pivotal role, not only in student understanding, but also in the way a student feels about their learning and how they engage with it, because of this I always try to make learning interesting and engaging. Students learn best when they have memorable experiences, fun whilst learning or enjoy taking part in tasks. This method of stimulating curiosity is a core part of my teaching philosophy,” Alex explained.

At Spire Junior School, teachers are supported and inspired to use their intuition, take risks and create innovative experiences. Using classroom technology and having a sense of freedom, teachers are motivated to find new ways of delivering engaging and dynamic lessons.

“At Spire Junior School, we are always learning and adapting our teaching methods to provide the best classroom experiences for our students. Communicating with our colleagues on social media, we are continually sharing and receiving best practice advice on technology use in lessons to fuel discussion and interactivity,” continued Alex.

Designed specifically for education, the Promethean ActivPanel has proven instrumental in supporting Alex to transform his classroom environment into a connected hub of interactivity.

The functionality of the ActivPanel has enabled teachers at the school to embed further technological experiences into the classroom in a streamlined and effective way. Allowing students to interact with their learning, the ActivPanel has enabled Alex to introduce fun and interesting ways to learn different topics and inspire peer-to-peer collaboration and understanding.

“We regularly initiate split screen challenges in which we’ll have two groups of students who will form a team to complete tasks, such as long division, faster than the other. This competitiveness encourages the students to work together and the ActivPanel perfectly facilitates this. They also sometimes compete with me and we record

the results for social media to share with other educators, I’m not ashamed to admit that they often beat me,” commented Alex.



## Innovation away from the classroom

Playing a significant role in the learning space over the last year, technology was instrumental at Spire Junior School to support students when adjusting to learning from home, maintaining communication between teachers and encouraging wellbeing breaks.

With vibrant classrooms that are environments that bolster student participation and the discussion of ideas, the absence of this social element posed a risk to student wellbeing. To navigate these challenges, Spire Junior School made it its mission to support regular communication between students. Organising Zoom meetings for students to chat to each other and school-assemblies that helped to boost morale, the school encouraged conversation, involvement and visibility between students and teachers. Coming up with Through the Keyhole style tours of classrooms and getting teachers to take part in Bushtucker Trials, students

and teachers were made to feel involved in school-wide activities despite the physical distance between them.

With technology at the heart of his traditional classroom activities, Alex also ensured he kept up the interaction level when students were learning away from the classroom.



“Although unable to use my ActivPanel to the level we were used to, the ActivPanel and accompanying technology formed an integral part of our distance learning strategy. If I was in the classroom, I would record myself on my phone delivering a lesson using the technology. If I was at home, I was able to use Promethean’s lesson delivery software, ActivInspire to deliver lessons digitally. Using my prepared lesson content, I saved valuable time in the hybrid process and as a result, students were presented with tools they recognised. The platform also has a screen recording functionality, which established the grounds of my teaching methods. Using ActivInspire Screen Recorder, I was able to record my screen and talk students through the key learning points of the lesson as I would usually do in the classroom,” continued Alex.

Engagement has naturally been an issue for students when learning away from the classroom, but Spire Junior School has continued to innovate and inspire students wherever they are.

Spending a lot of time on digital devices, whether that be for educational or enjoyment purposes, Spire Junior School encouraged distance between screens and promoted daily exercise using educational driven tasks.



Such tasks included Alex's own innovative idea, 'Lamppost Orienteering', that took students out in the fresh air to fulfil curriculum requirements such as number recognition, problem solving, maths, map reading skills and coding.

"'Lamppost Orienteering' was created by taking a screengrab of a map, which detailed the local area around the school. I then walked the area and selected a series of lampposts and their corresponding numbers to use, before lacing dots on the map and recording the codes for the answer

sheet. These were then shared with the students to go and find the correct answers and codes. This not only helped students to bolster their coding and number skills, but also gave them a new and interesting task to participate in whilst also getting outside in the fresh air.

"Innovation and creating interesting tasks is a fundamental part of my job as a teacher. With students back in the classroom full time, I am looking forward to embracing technology even further and continuing to drive engagement through positive attitudes and exciting lesson delivery," concluded Alex.

Forming the backbone of its pedagogical philosophy, technology and positivity are transforming the learning environment for both teachers and students. Using tools that have been designed for the learning space, coupled with a determination to enhance student outcomes, Spire Junior School's support of its teachers to inspire new and innovative learning experiences has revolutionised lesson delivery and use of technology within the classroom.

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*Alex Bramley*



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