

Space-age classroom comes to village school

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Innovative learning environment unveiled at ground-breaking primary school in rural Devon

70 pupils, two teachers, four support staff, as well as a PC for every pupil.

Pushing the boundaries in the classroom isn't new to Broadclyst Community Primary School, but with the help of leading interior design consultancy 'fruition', the school is taking teaching concepts to new heights. While the school has successfully taught up to 50 pupils per class for some while, September 2006 has seen the introduction of a new super-size auditorium style classroom that is providing the ultimate learning environment for up to 70 pupils at a time – a first in the UK.

Key to the success of the project is its state of the art multi-media format, which allows each child continuous access to a networked PC with Internet connection. In place of traditional Blackboards are three large format digital projection screens at the front of the auditorium-style classroom. Complete with widescreen projection systems, surround sound and a plethora of audio and visual teaching aids, this is set to be the classroom of tomorrow.

With the combination of state of the art audiovisual systems and intrinsically networked IT equipment the new classroom offers pupils the very best opportunities for learning. Alongside the technology and IT equipment the Devon based interior design company 'fruition' has created a space that inspires both the mind and senses of the pupils.

Already recognised in the Southwest for its innovative work with educational interiors, 'fruition' was approached to assist in the layout and interior scheme of the new classroom, with the aim of maximising the learning potential of each pupil. "The basic premise is that this classroom should be able to provide a totally flexible and inspiring experience capable of transporting a child's imagination and ambition to anywhere in the universe at any time in history" Explains Mark Green, director of fruition.

Commenting on the school's innovative approach to learning, headteacher Peter Hicks says: "At Broadclyst we aim to provide our children with the very best facilities and learning environments possible.

The new classroom is inspirational and takes teaching to another level, the children and staff are benefiting enormously and we are all impressed with the flexibility it is allowing us. A great deal of effort has been made by all of those involved to ensure that this really is a classroom of the future".

Interior design company 'fruition' is currently leading the first wave of schools to utilise colour theory across the South West region. Expert in the direct effect of colour on human behaviour, the company takes a scientific approach to creating interiors within educational premises. Its reputation as leading colour consultants for the education sector has been steadily growing since it first developed a colour palette for the interior of Homelands Primary School in Torquay in 2001, which met with great

acclaim and led to a clamour of Primary, Secondary schools and Colleges wanting the same positive impact on their learning and behaviour environments.

Mark Green, founder of fruition, comments on recent schools projects “Pupils take greater care of their environment when they feel an emotional link to it – and this has long-term benefits,” he says. “Our research has shown that environment influences pupils’ behaviour and thus their learning habits. Our aim is to encourage a positive, rich, and healthful environment for students to learn in”

Editorial notes:

Broadclyst: Established in 1810, Broadclyst Community Primary School is one of England’s oldest primary schools. It is also among its most technologically advanced and effective, with standardized scores that are well above the national average and visionary leaders who are committed to using information technology to equip students for the world within which they will live, work, and play. The school has a strong reputation for handling children with extreme special needs: children excluded from other schools often excel at Broadclyst. The widespread use of computers has helped Broadclyst develop an innovative curriculum in which 45 to 50 students and 5 or 6 teachers currently work together in an open room. The new 70-pupil classroom is the next step in this unusual approach to teaching. Broadclyst is one of only three schools nationwide to have received the Government accolade ‘School of the Future’.

Fruition: Devon-based commercial design company fruition specialises in interior design for the education, retail and leisure industries and is especially recognised for its research into human response to colour, which it utilises to maximise pupils’ levels of concentration and behaviour at school.

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