



When Barley Croft Primary School in Leicester decided to adopt WebPlay as a key tool in the school's pioneering programme for improving outcomes for children with behavioural problems, they were overwhelmed by the results.

Having already participated in WebPlay for two years, acting deputy head teacher Brian Bardsley's experience made him think that the programme might also have a role to play in supporting 'hard to teach' children.

The year six class taking part in WebPlay had twelve children with behaviour difficulties. Many were in their third or fourth different school, behind with their learning and at severe risk of exclusion.

'Our experience is that WebPlay enables children to develop their ICT skills within a fun environment,' explains Brian Bardsley. 'We originally ran the programme as a trial with one class and then with both year five classes. The results made us think that we might be able to use WebPlay to help us engage specifically with children with behaviour problems.'

The idea was to use WebPlay as a 'reward scheme', running alongside the main WebPlay programme. If the children had worked well during other sessions – for example, during literacy and numeracy sessions in the morning – they were able to extend the time they spent on WebPlay by working on the programme at lunchtime. Offering alternative activities in the lunch break also helped reduce problems during what can often be the most difficult period of the day for children with behaviour difficulties.

The school was overwhelmed by the results. The programme resulted in dramatic changes to the children's behaviour and concentration levels and there were no exclusions at all during the year. Eight of the 'hard to teach' group became the most prolific users of WebPlay in the whole of the two classes, particularly enjoying sending 'stickies' and downloading information and pictures.

Academically, these children had not been expected to reach national standards but by the end of the school year most had indeed reached national expectations - many rising more than two grades - and Barley Croft School received its best ever key stage two results.

While WebPlay operated as just one of the tools used by the school to support these children, the programme was considered to be a particularly important part of the 'tool box', in the way that it was able to have an impact upon children's behaviour throughout the school day.

'They have achieved huge leaps in their development,' says Brian Bardsley. 'Most importantly, WebPlay has helped us give our children an opportunity to achieve as they progress to secondary school and beyond.'