

WOW Zone

Improving learning in and out of school with iPad and Mac

WOW Zone support the personal, social, educational and emotional development of more than 300 children every year. Armed with Mac and iPad, the project aims to raise the attainment and self-esteem of Wythenshawe's students, and have recently expanded their reach by becoming an Apple Regional Training Centre.

WOW Zone run a variety of creative and academic after-school programmes, and technology plays a key part in many of them, as teacher Lisa Whittaker explains: "We do video editing, eBook publishing, we do programming as part of the new computing curriculum and we also use the computers to give children access to educational games and software."

Helping children get access to new technology

Without a doubt, part of the appeal of using Mac computers and iPad is the 'wow factor' of giving the children access to something new, WOW Zone manager Andy Jordan tells us. "We knew Mac computers fitted with our ethos of being creative and thought it would be a good platform for the children – a lot of them didn't have access to Apple devices [outside the centre], but they take very quickly to using it and approach it very positively, it's very intuitive [to use] and they enjoy working on it because it's very creative."

"Giving them the opportunity to use something like iMovie, which looks a lot more professional than something like Windows Movie Maker, means they've been more proud of the things that they've created because they have a more professional feel," adds Lisa.



In a nutshell...

Who are they?

WOW Zone are a learning centre based in Wythenshawe, Manchester. They help students make creative use of the latest technology to enhance their learning and thrive in a positive environment.

What did they need?

A set of iPad for their students, plus training for their staff and help along the way to becoming an Apple Regional Training Centre.

How did we help?

As well as getting them the iPad set they needed, we provided Apple Professional Development training for WOW Zone's staff, and helped them set themselves up as an RTC.

What were the benefits?

- WOW Zone's students now have access to the latest creative technology.
- They're far better positioned to give tech advice to local teachers.
- By engaging more with other teachers, they're able to find more ways to engage with their students.

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**Andy Jordan, Manager,
WOW Zone**

After using Mac computers successfully for a number of years, WOW Zone's team decided to branch out into using iPad because, as Lisa told us, "having them really broadened the options of the programmes we're able to offer, especially when it comes to something like the computing curriculum and having access to apps like A.L.E.X and BeeBot. It's all about giving them access to the kind of apps that they wouldn't have at home."

"We'd had some mobile devices a few years ago, but iPad took it into a completely different sphere," Andy says. "They're so much more flexible, and the range of activities and software you can use is huge."

Increasing engagement across Key Stages

The WOW Zone team works with children from Key Stages 1, 2 and 3, so the adaptive, intuitive nature of iPad is a huge help. "I used iPad recently with a Year 2 class," explains assistant teacher Louise Zwanepoel. "They were taking pictures and editing them on iPad, which a lot of them hadn't used before, but they took to it straight away. As soon as we showed them how to access the camera they found it quite easy."

"And they found it quite easy to talk about what they'd done and explain to other children how they'd edited things – they picked up the language really quickly. Their teacher commented that one of the children didn't usually engage in lessons, but he really surprised us by getting on with the work and being consistently engaged."

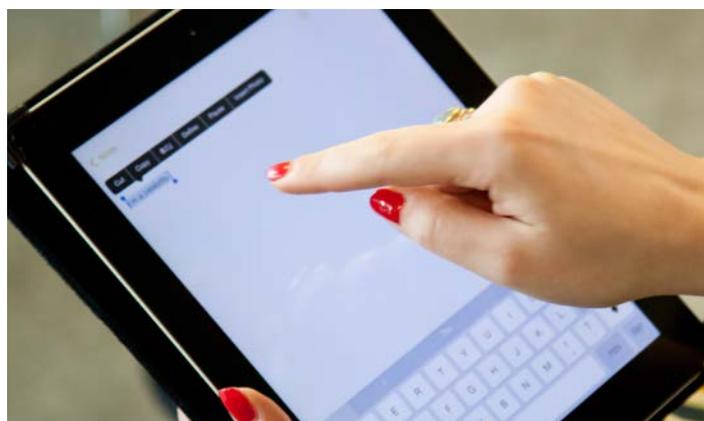
"And it's easy to move between age groups," Lisa adds. "I'd happily use the same technology with a Year 6 group, but just present it to them in a different way. A lot of the apps are really adaptable, and it's down to the language the teacher uses."



Becoming an Apple Regional Training Centre

WOW Zone were keen on becoming an RTC since the first time they saw iPad in use at BETT but, Andy tells us, "we were going through a restructuring and the time wasn't right. But this time, one of the people who manages our network spoke to Jigsaw24, who then suggested we try for RTC status."

"Very often schools will be marketed different products, but we have found that Jigsaw24 are not just supplying our hardware, they're providing a service, and supporting us. They're very education-orientated, so it's all about the methodology and the learning ethos – that's part of the deal, so it helps us to enable teachers to learn how to use equipment effectively and develop their own systems."



"I think we'd also seen a few instances locally where IT wasn't being covered as we think it should be," Louise adds. "We wanted to have an impact on schools around us, and become a learning hub that schools could come to for guidance. We're all qualified teachers and we've got the luxury of being at WOW Zone full time, so we thought maybe we could give something to local schools and help them."

Following an application process and a visit from Apple's own education team, WOW Zone are now officially an Apple Regional Training Centre, ready to spread the word about iPad and support local teachers in their adventures with new technology.

"This fits in really nicely with our delivering programmes for children, because by getting more engagement with teachers, we have the possibility of engaging more students," Andy explains. "And having worked closely with a number of schools, we know that many of them have a class set of iPad, but they readily admit to not knowing how to use them effectively across the curriculum."

To help change this, WOW Zone plan to offer courses focusing on the new computing curriculum, eBook publishing, animation and how to use iPad to best effect with different Key Stages. "Delivering the training does make us think about what's happening at the forefront of technology and what's happening at home," says Lisa. "There are things we find out when delivering the training that we can then use with our own children."

To find out more about iPad and Mac, get in touch on the details below.