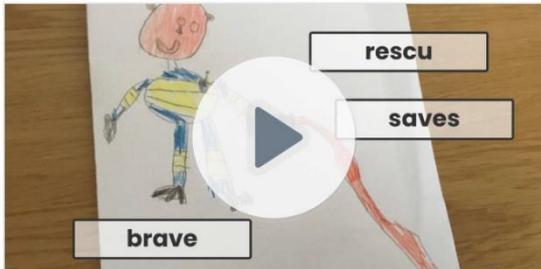


Remote Learning with Seesaw

Little did we think that when we first started using Seesaw 4 years ago that it would become invaluable when presented with the unpredictable and unprecedented situation of home schooling the majority of our school population.

Fortunately, as a school which embraces technology, we were already familiar with both Seesaw and Google Classroom as platforms for online learning. A quick staff meeting later, and we had emerged with a plan for supporting pupils during lockdown. Pupils would leave school with a home learning pack of resources and teachers were going to start posting activities online in Seesaw. As in every school across the county, we had a couple of frantic days preparing home learning packs and ensuring QR codes and passwords to access home learning went home with the children when the schools closed to the majority of pupils.

If you haven't come across Seesaw before, it is a digital platform in which students can "show what they know" using photos, videos, drawings, text, PDFs, and links. Each student has its own private journal and nothing is shared without teacher approval.



Character Description

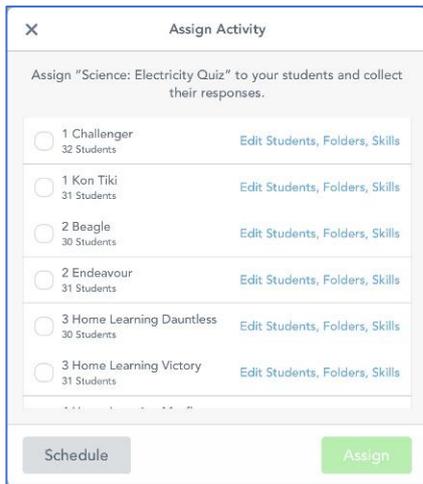
1. Take a  of your character.
2. Use the **T** to write some features of your character.
3. Use the  to describe your character.

One of the nicest things about using Seesaw is how easy it is to use to communicate with pupils. On the first day of lockdown it was overwhelming to see pupils already logging on, keen to show their teacher what they had achieved or simply to

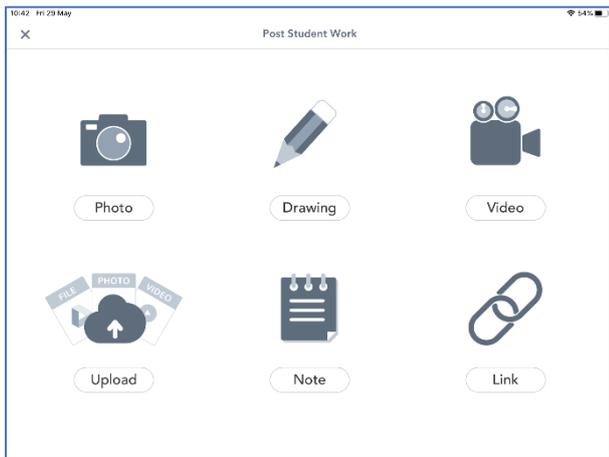
ask their teacher how they were and to communicate their own feelings to their teacher. Teachers used the platform to share stories and positive messages. The pupils have a real ownership of the platform as messages and work often came through directly to the pupils on their own devices. What a contrast to some schools where the only information was a constant barrage of emails to parents, many of whom were too busy trying to work themselves to make sense of their children's curriculum too.

As is a common theme with technology in schools, one of the most challenging aspects is to get all the staff to embrace it. I have to say that in this challenging time our staff were absolutely amazing and really rose to the challenge, even those who I could barely get to pick up an iPad prior to COVID-19! Staff feedback on Seesaw has been really positive as you can see;

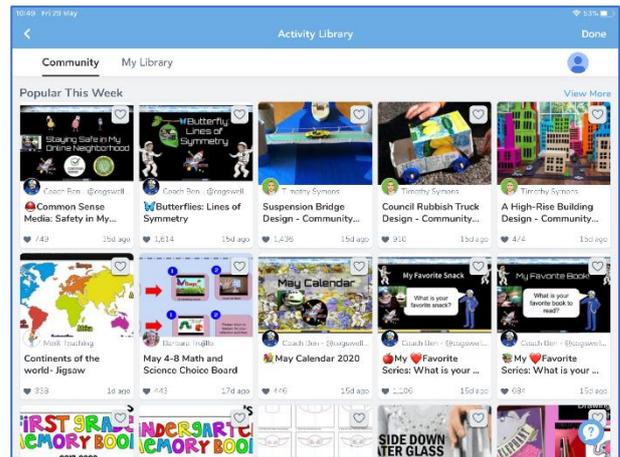
- 'It has improved my confidence and IT skills.'
- 'It is very easy to use to create a whole range of activities and set work including visual resources.'
- 'You can differentiate tasks between different students and abilities meaning activities can be tailored to individual educational needs.'
- 'Enables teachers to record instructions via the video or microphone tool so that children can access tasks more easily, particularly disadvantaged children such as children with SEND or EAL.'
- 'I really appreciate the scheduling feature as it allows users to create and assign activities when you have time and fit it into your timetable.'



Accessibility of online learning for students was our priority. Seesaw was excellent for this as you can use it on pretty much any device. It works brilliantly on mobile platforms and you can log in via the web on other devices. Seesaw's inbuilt tools are intuitive to use and allow children a voice regardless of their abilities.

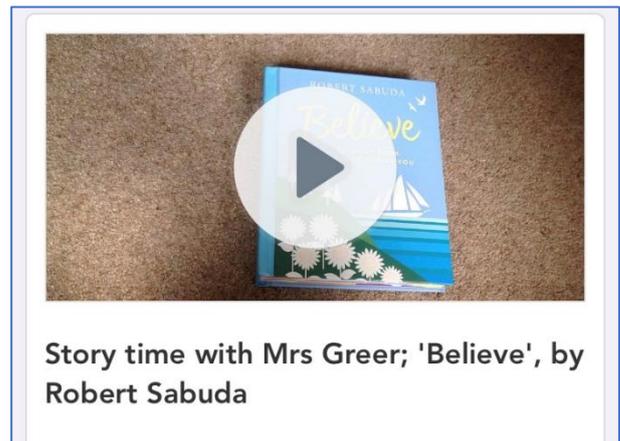


The activities aspect is brilliant as there is already a massive bank of activities you can choose from in the Seesaw activity library and it is easy to create your own or adapt existing activities for your class.



Seesaw is really flexible as pupils can respond to activities in a variety of ways. It uses clear picture icons to guide the user and enables a range of media to be recorded directly in the application or to be uploaded to it. Throughout the school we had a whole range of responses to tasks including text, diagrams, videos, pictures, photographs and voice recordings.

If there is one aspect we enjoyed the most it was seeing all the lovely work the children have achieved and hearing their voices. Story time has been lovely too, with many teachers and the headteacher enjoying sharing stories with the children via the platform. This has been popular with the children and many of them responded with lovely messages to the teachers.



Of course, it hasn't all been a walk in the park. The way that we have used and scheduled activities has changed throughout the epidemic as we adapted to ensure we were providing a range of activities and pupils in all classes were getting a

similar experience. It has definitely been a learning curve for us all to identify what are the most successful and useful types of activities for teachers and parents. As with all teaching and learning we have learnt from our experiences and improved our practise.

One of the biggest challenges we have faced over the last few months is pupils' access to technology. We are very aware we have many households whose only access has been via a smartphone and we have encouraged those households to complete activities on paper and upload the pictures rather than complete work on a tiny screen. All pupils have also been given access to learning through additional paper packs where required and the school has even delivered those to families (along with school dinners) where families were shielding or unable to get to the school to collect.

One solution to ease the technology divide has been the loan of iPads to households of pupils in Year 5 and 6 who had poor access to technology. This has helped those pupils immensely. If only we had enough iPads for everyone! Our headteacher has also raised the issue both locally and nationally of providing Wi-Fi for low income families. Many American companies have done this during the crisis, and it is a shame that the internet giants in the UK didn't rise to that challenge.

The whole experience has left many of us pondering the role of remote learning in the future. In my opinion, remote learning doesn't replicate the many benefits of face to face teaching, but it has been an essential tool when schools were closed to pupils and should play an important role in 'normal' schooling in the future. Technology is a fantastic tool to support classroom teaching, and I hope that teachers will now be a lot more confident in utilising it effectively.

We can also develop the role of technology in the home school partnership to enable parents to understand and aid their children's learning further. For example, sharing videos of maths methodology or good examples of work so that parents know what they are aiming for. I have

already had requests from children that homework should continue to be set on Seesaw once we return to full time schooling so that 'fun learning activities can continue!'

This kind of integrated learning is the future and the sooner we can get children and parents to embrace it the better. We want the skills we teach at school today to prepare children for the ever-increasing online communication and collaboration required in the workplace. Seesaw is already a great tool for helping us to achieve this and it's improving all the time.

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