



eTwinning School Teams

Case studies on teacher collaboration
through eTwinning



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1. Introduction

An eTwinning team is defined as two or more educational professionals (e.g. teachers, librarians) working together on eTwinning activities (one project vs. separate ones). This report looks into eTwinning teams in schools with the aim to better understand the different characteristics of the teams and the conditions in which they work. The report is intended to showcase interesting practices in relation to school teams and to inspire its readers to reflect on the different cases and conditions that exist.

The report is based on twenty-four case studies carried out by eTwinning National Support Services between May and June 2012. This report is comprised of two parts. In the first part of the report, we give a short overall analysis of the findings: the characteristics of teams, the conditions in which the teams exist, some of the incentives and obstacles. The second part of the report is comprised of fifteen case studies which illustrate how eTwinning teams work in practice. These case studies, with additional seven cases that have been used for the analysis, also exist on the eTwinning portal.

According to the TALIS study, teachers' co-operation implies teachers working together in groups or teams to improve educational processes and outcomes, but such professional collaboration¹ is still relatively rare (OECD, 2009). In this study, we consider eTwinning teams as part of a pedagogical innovation process that takes place in the school environment. Pedagogical innovation is comprised of many interactions among different factors of varying levels and is complex and gradual process. Forkosh-Baruch et al. (2008) define three levels of pedagogical innovation; namely that of assimilation, transition and transformation. As we will see from the examples of case studies, eTwinning teachers' co-operation with colleagues of the same school sometimes fits well with existing practices, requiring only minor changes in the school environment (level of assimilation), whereas sometimes, bigger changes are documented displaying more transitional or, at times, even a transformative level of the pedagogical innovation process.

¹ Professional collaboration is defined in OECD's TALIS (2009) study as part of teachers' cooperation. According to same study, co-operation among teachers can create opportunities for social and emotional support, exchange of ideas and practical advice that can thus enhance professionalism, feelings of self-efficacy and prevent stress and "burnout".

In this study, we focus on a subgroup of factors described in the above-mentioned study. Each of the case studies is described according to the same schema and focuses on the following factors:

- ▶ **Institutional factors and the organisational climate of the school.** The case studies start by describing the **“School Context”** and **“School's Innovation History”**. This part includes the school's vision with regards to ICT, internationalism and collaborative learning, and an account of the school's innovation history, e.g. how actively the school has sought for collaboration and development opportunities inside and outside of its own walls. Previous studies have shown that the longer and the richer the school's innovation history, the more teachers display expertise and cooperation in the application of the innovation (e.g. Nachmias et al. 2004).
- ▶ **Human factors** include roles within the school, e.g. school head, teachers, other staff, and roles outside of school, e.g. parents, other eTwinning teachers, eTwinning NSS, etc. In each case study, **“the eTwinning team”** is introduced as an attempt to describe the extent to which they are involved in the innovation process. Previous studies have shown that the more staff members and leading figures are involved, the expertise of teachers involved in the innovation grows, their commitment to one another becomes greater, and their collaboration increases (Nachmias et al. 2004).
- ▶ **Institutional factors** are also related to the organisation of learning, e.g. are cross curriculum and cross-age learning opportunities sought after and how flexible is the school timetable to organise pupils' and teachers' collaboration? In the case studies, these are described as part of **“Team activities”** and within the section **“Enablers and obstacles”**. Previous studies have shown that the more flexible and varied the organisation of teaching units, the more the relationships between teachers changed and the level of content innovation increased. A similar result was obtained with relation to allocation of learners to classes (e.g. Nachmias et al. 2004).
- ▶ Lastly, the case studies attempt to report on **“Impact of the eTwinning school team”** both on teachers work and on students, and outline their **“Plans for the future”**.

In the analysis and case study texts, we use the term **“lead teacher”** i.e., someone who emerges as having a central role among the team's organisation and work. Lead teachers act in teams, exhibit solidarity and play a clear role in the dissemination of the innovation. Previous studies have identified these leaders' motivation as a vital component of the stability of the innovation (e.g. Nachmias et al. 2004) and being one of the most affecting factors in ICT-supported pedagogic innovation (Forkosh-Baruch et al., 2008). Such accounts can also be read from our sample of case studies.

Case study methodology

The ***descriptive case study methodology*** was chosen to study eTwinning school teams. We took the methodological guideline from Yin (2009, p.4) “the more that your questions seek to explain some present circumstances (e.g., “how” or “why” some social phenomenon works), the more that the case study method will be relevant.” Case studies are specific, bounded example of a more general situation, described in sufficient detail and depth, as to allow others to identify with the case (Cohen et al., 2007).

The selection criteria for case studies was to look for inspiring cases, good practice and to celebrate some successful cases of eTwinning school teams, not to find a “regular” school with a “regular” eTwinning team. In no way do the case studies seek to generalise various factors of the existing eTwinning teams, or look for determining factors of such behaviour and practice (e.g., impact of teachers’ age range, subjects taught, gender, training programmes received), nor look for any causal links between such factors, behaviour and practices.

Existing instruments were used to guide the study (e.g. Nachmias et al. 2004; Forkosh-Baruch et al., 2008; Shear et al., 2010). A preliminary questionnaire and semi-structured interview grid were created to support school visits and interviews in obtaining an in-depth understanding of the conditions in which school teams work. This was part of the Central Support Service’s (CSS) monitoring tasks for 2012. Fifteen National Support Services (NSS) participated in the study, on voluntary bases.

The National Support Service in each participating country selected the schools for the case study. One example from each country was selected for this publication (15) and the remaining 9 studies are displayed on the website (Table 2). Two induction sessions for the NSS were organised (one online and one face to face meeting) by the CSS in early spring 2012, in order to familiarise the NSS with the work to be done at national level, how to use the grids and questionnaires and answer any questions. The results of the case studies were then sent to the CSS for final analysis.

Profile of the case study schools. Eight (8) schools within the case study sample were at the primary level and below (one pre-primary). Most schools were secondary schools (11), additionally; two were combined schools (one secondary and vocational, the other one with primary and secondary), one vocational school and one special education school (Table 2). Schools had a varied experience of eTwinning; some had participated in eTwinning since its inception in 2005, some were newcomers and there was a whole variety in-between. We focus on the latter issue more in 2.2.

2. Analysing the case studies

In this part, we give an overall analysis of the findings. We first look at the characteristics of eTwinning school teams; who initiated the team and what the leadership structure is; what size the team is and how long it has been functioning; and last, what the nature of the team's work is. We then look at the conditions in which the teams exist: here, we pay attention to previous innovation history of the school, as well as its vision and enumerate some incentives and obstacles that have emerged from this sample of case studies. Finally, we give some overarching concluding remarks which focus on common denominators.

To demonstrate the case, we sometimes group the cases or some findings together. Instead of mentioning the name of the school each time, we refer to the number allocated to each school as shown in Table 2. The number of school is displayed in brackets ().

2.1. The characteristics of an eTwinning team

2.1.1. The Initiator and leadership

To identify the model of the team, we looked at two different factors; first, who had initiated the team and then, what type of leadership structure did it have.

The Initiator of the team. Previous studies have identified that teacher-initiated teams could indicate the pioneering nature of such teams, whereas school management-initiated ones might indicate a more institutionalised “school wide” approach (Forkosh-Baruch et al., 2005). In our sample, we find that there are both teacher-initiated teams and school management-initiated teams. The teacher-initiated teams are more common (17/24), whereas we can consider 7 cases being school management-initiated teams. Only one of the school management-initiated teams (24) has adopted a whole-school approach towards eTwinning, another two examples exist (15, 19) among the teacher-initiated ones.

From our case studies, we have learned that many of the teams enjoy strong support from school management. Examples of such include the following: in five of school management-initiated teams, a person from the school management has an active role in the team (9, 11, 16, 21, 24). In another two teacher-initiated teams, the lead teacher later become part of the school management (3, 5). In two

cases, the school's deputy head is part of the eTwinning team management (5, 24). Other examples of school management support exist too, e.g. the school head started an "eTwinning working group" to support an on-going team (2) and in another case, the lead teacher is part of school's Quality Management Workgroup (14). Moreover, support from the school management was one of the main enablers for teams to exist and work in schools, a point which is further elaborated on in part 2.2.

Leadership. From the sample of eTwinning teams we can identify three different models of leadership: a leader-centered model, a distributed leadership model and a blended one. These models are related to how eTwinning project work is planned, organised and carried out in teams. In general, all the teams have some type of distribution of roles (e.g. coordinator, ICT person) and division of tasks (e.g. working on the portal, being in charge of Project Diary, supporting curriculum development, pedagogical activities, working alongside teachers, supporting pupils, encouraging new partnerships). Another observation from the cases studies is the inspiring and visionary role of the lead teacher, or in some cases even of two lead teachers (e.g. 2, 5, 9, 22), around whom the team's identity is built and whose sheer enthusiasm catches on to other members of the team, contributing to their participation.

Regarding the distribution of roles and tasks in teams, in leader-centered teams, the lead teacher is often the one who founds an eTwinning project in the school and then distributes tasks and roles according to skills and interests of the other team members. In case studies 1, 6, 11, 12 and 17 you can see examples of such arrangements.

Another model regarding eTwinning project work is seen in teams where more than one member initiates projects (e.g. 3, 7, 13), this model can be considered a blend between the leader-centered and the totally distributed models. Teams that we identify as blended models often have a very strong lead teacher, who epitomises the team but, due to distributed responsibilities, the team is not entirely dependent on one such person. Lastly, we also have teams that have a distributed leadership; in no: 2, 8, 16, 18 and 22 there are two or three teachers who take charge of coordinating and organising the bulk of the work.

The model of leadership is interesting in regards to; sustainability of team's existence, building up leadership capacity within a team and replacing a leadership gap if it appears. Consider the following cases: in no: 5, a retired teacher who intensively worked with the school team continues to contribute to its success, whereas in no: 2, the initial two-teacher team started in 2007 and currently, a second group of teachers has taken initiative, thereby sustaining the team's existence. Similarly in no: 9, the team had a revival in 2010, with a more teacher-led approach.

Table 1. Leadership structure and the initiators of teams

Leadership	Leader-centered	Blended model	Distributed
Teacher-initiated teams	1 Zweisprachiges Bundesgymnasium, AT	3 SOU Ekzarh Antim I, BG	2 Immaculata Instituut Oostmalle, BE
	6 Lycée Blériot, FR	7 1st high school of Ilioupolis, GR	8 Convent Primary School Listowel, IR
	12 Ek hagaskolan, SE	13 ZŠ Štefana Šmálka, Tvrdošín, SK	18 Verias, GR
	17 Gesamtschule Hardt, DE	14 Príncipe Felipe, ES	22 Gimnazjum nr 3 w Lublinie, PL
	23 CEIP San Sebastián, ES	19 Kindergarden F.Ili Cervi Opera, IT	
		20 IIS Machiavelli in Rome, IT	
		5 Dunant Grundschule, DE	
		15 Southwater, UK	
School management - initiated teams			
	4 Schule für Körper- und Mehrfachbehinderte SKB, CH	9 Ada Negri in Paina di Giussano, IT	16 Grubergasse, AT
	10 JP Thijsse College, NL	21 Da Vinci in Figline Valdarno, IT	
	11 Szkoła Podstawowa nr 1, Bogatynia, PL	24 Shawlands, UK	

2.1.2. The timespan and size of the team

The length of existence of the team, henceforth referred as the timespan, as well as its size, offer interesting insights into teams in schools. From our case study sample, we can see that some of the teams are at a very early stage, still formulating whereas, in other cases, teams are already an established part of the school's organisation and practices (Table 1).

Timespan. The timespan of the team is sometimes difficult to gauge. In some cases, the team evolved rather organically, which makes it hard to establish the starting date and the length of its existence. For the purposes of this study, we can rather safely estimate that about 2/3 of the teams in our sample are about two years old or younger (about one year: 4, 7, 8, 10, 13, 16, 17, 23; about 2 years 1, 6, 12, 14, 18, 20, 21). Interestingly, the short lifespan does not always indicate the team's level of maturity. Where some of the teams, in their first years, are still small and just starting to take shape (e.g. 4, 10, 23), there are others that already seem well-established. The latter is most likely due to the fact that the school had an earlier eTwinning history or that it was the teachers' collaborative culture that facilitated the inception of the team (e.g. 1, 13, 14, 20, 21).

On the other hand, we have teams in our sample that have already existed for a long period of time; three years and more (2, 5, 9, 11, 15, 19, 24). There are interesting characteristics in these teams. First of all, all these teams are a well-established part of the school structure. Actually, in cases no: 15, 24 and 19, all the teachers of the school are considered as "part of the team" representing the whole-school approach. Cases no: 5, 9 and 11, represent the team approach where the team's existence is an integral part of the senior management's vision.

Size. The size of the team can similarly be difficult to estimate; on the one hand, there are teams that are well-established with a core group of members who all have a clear role within the group (e.g. 2, 7, 8, 12, 14, 16). On the other hand, there are teams that are comprised of a core group, sometimes one or two people, who have a loosely defined group of people around them, willing to help and contribute whenever needed, or whenever it is suitable for them (e.g. 7, 11, 20, 22). Thirdly, we can see a growth in some groups; the lead teacher had first worked solo for a period of time, and only later had the team evolved around him/her (e.g. 1, 3, 5, 6, 9, 13, 17, 21). Finally, a very interesting aspect of team size is "invisible eTwinners". They are clearly part of the team in a school and work on eTwinning activities. However, they are not registered eTwinners and therefore they are not visible on the eTwinning portal (e.g. 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 11, 21).

2.1.3. Orientation: cross-curriculum and cross-age

Most eTwinning teams in our sample work in a cross-curricular manner, also crossing the age groups, meaning that the members of the team work with different subject matters and with different age groups

of pupils (10/24). It's not necessarily the case that all projects are conducted in such manner. Quite a few of the teams stated that they only work in a cross-curricular manner, teaching pupils of the same age group (8/24). In one school, the team was composed of teachers in the English department (14), and in some schools, teams also worked cross-phase, i.e. including teachers and pupils from primary up to secondary schools (e.g. 1, 2, 3). An element is found in no: 14 which enabled students from a large school to meet each other through the eTwinning team's work, when they normally would not mix in such a way.

2.2. Conditions

2.2.1. Innovation history

The organisational climate in a school includes the school's vision and goals for internationalism, school collaboration, the use of ICT, to mention but a few. An additional factor is the innovation history of the school; this means the past involvement in innovations and the school's openness. Examples include; participation in local or international school partnership programmes (e.g. Comenius Partnerships), national or regional programmes for school collaboration and collaboration with organisations/entities outside the school. Based on existing literature, one can hypothesise that the previous rich innovation history either includes, or sets, a favourable ground for an eTwinning team to emerge.

In the sample of case studies, the majority of schools were involved in the Comenius Partnership actions at the time of the case study interviews (16/24). Case studies show evidence that 11 schools had previous Comenius involvement before starting eTwinning (1, 4, 5, 6, 10, 14, 17, 18, 19, 21, 24). Interestingly, in 5 cases there is evidence that involvement in the Comenius Partnership programme took place at the same time as, or during, eTwinning (3, 11, 12, 13, 20). In cases no: 3 and 12, the interviewees noted that eTwinning was also the start of a new era.

Eight schools did not have involvement in the Comenius Partnership action (2, 7, 8, 9, 15, 16, 22 and 23). In many of these cases, we can also find interesting examples of local, regional, national, and, at times, also of international school collaborations and other previous innovation history. Interestingly for the case no: 9, eTwinning marked the start of a new era of international collaboration. Also, for schools 15, 16 and 22, eTwinning seems to have established a more international outlook (e.g. no: 15 found that, as a result of team activity, there was an increase in interest of all staff in European activities).

Finally, related to school innovation history in general, an interesting remark can be made about schools collaborating with institutes or entities outside the school, in the other words, breaking down the barrier between the school and the community. Some inspiring examples exist in the accounts of a rich innovation history, e.g. collaboration with the local teacher training institute/University of

Chichester (15); the Academic Berlin Orchestra performed in the school hall with 70 musicians - 10 adults and 60 children as part of a music project (5); the local media is invited to some final project activities (e.g. theatre plays) to get them popularised (3) and in various cases, Parents' Association or local school board are also frequently involved in the projects (e.g. 1, 7).

2.2.2. Incentives and enablers

From the case studies it becomes evident that, as members of a larger organisation such as a school, eTwinning team members derive important benefits from being part of the eTwinning team, including access to resources (e.g. human, social, physical & virtual ones); access to information and professional development; as well as social and psychological rewards such as recognition and status. The following themes emerge that can be considered as enablers for eTwinning teams in schools.

Access to professional development and information:

- ▶ The chance to participate in face-to-face training and seminars at national and European level was greatly appreciated and is documented in many cases, as was the number of skills that teachers gained from these training opportunities.
- ▶ Other forms of professional development exist, building on peer-training opportunities: e.g. eTwinning is used as a type of training for new teachers (20); newly qualified teachers have learned how to work as a team (9); an in-house academy, where eTwinning is taught to other colleagues (10); Training offered by the lead teacher to help others skill up (15).
- ▶ Support and guidance of the National Support System was often mentioned as a facilitating factor

Access to resources:

- ▶ Flexible schedules and class scheduling. In some schools, eTwinning was included in the annual school plan or otherwise made part of the curriculum. Teachers also appreciated that they were able to do their eTwinning project during teaching hours.
- ▶ Budget allocations were mentioned, but not very often. In some cases the eTwinning co-ordinator had financial support, for example, through Comenius funding or other sources of external money. In other cases, teachers were allocated extra school calendar hours to manage their organisational work without affecting their teaching hours.

- ▶ Regular meetings. Some teams had agreed on regular meetings, although often team teachers met informally. Some cases mention extra hours for eTwinning co-ordination.
- ▶ A comfortable space to meet. Access to a space where the eTwinning team could have their meetings and carry out some of the planning work was well appreciated.
- ▶ Good ICT resources and ICT facilities.

Social and psychological rewards, such as recognition and status:

- ▶ Virtually each case study expresses the importance of the school management's support on the eTwinning team and its activities.
- ▶ Recognition through Quality Labels at school (local) level, but also at National and European level.
- ▶ The interest of parents and family members of the children in the school's and team activities, e.g. at the beginning of the school year, the project was illustrated to parents, who were constantly informed and sometimes got involved in the European climate of the school (9). In one case, it was noted that the main motivation of the teachers was external recognition from the parents of the pupils and the National Support Service or the Central Support Service (3).
- ▶ Motivation of the lead teacher and the overall motivation of the teachers who contributed to the team work.
- ▶ A friendly and supportive atmosphere in the school: a creative environment in the school that supported new ideas, openness and collaboration.
- ▶ An appreciation of international linking and the teachers' motivation for contacts with the wider world.
- ▶ Social capital: experienced team members, but also external colleagues, e.g. the involvement of retired colleagues (5).

2.2.3. Obstacles

Obstacles for team work exist. Here we outline some institutional and human factors. It is good to note that similar obstacles are often mentioned in cases and studies that are related to the use of ICT in an educational context and to pedagogical innovation processes in general.

Institutional factors:

- ▶ **Time**-related issues are the most commonly mentioned obstacle for the team to co-operate. The reasons range from an inability to be flexible with class scheduling, to no time during the school day for meetings
- ▶ **Space** was often mentioned as an obstacle, in terms of finding a unique space for eTwinning work and shared resources, which impacted on the teachers' ability to do the project. In some cases also, split locations of school premises hindered the work of the school team.
- ▶ **Technology that doesn't work** covered issues related to the school infrastructure (e.g. insufficient technical equipment or technology available at the school is quite basic), to constraints set by the local authority (e.g. filtering of websites such as Skype) or the Internet supplier (e.g. problems with Internet speed) as well as the eTwinning portal (e.g. problems with TwinSpace)
- ▶ **Lack of official support** was mentioned in relation to a lack of pro-active support and **recognition** from the Local Authority, from the head teacher or in terms of institutional recognition.
- ▶ **Human resource related issues** set some obstacles for team's work, in terms of concerns about future staffing and cutbacks, or concerns about staff changes in the new school year. This was also mentioned in connection with the number of pupils that could be involved in a project.
- ▶ **Training needs** were mentioned, in general, and, in particular, with no supplied teacher substitution cover for professional development opportunities.
- ▶ **eTwinning getting lost in general Comenius work.** A school's international specialism can also overshadow some of its eTwinning work.

Human factors:

- **Others:** Difficulty of involving others in eTwinning project work, as opposed to doing the project work alone. A lack of motivation on behalf of non-eTwinning colleagues and somewhat uneasy relationships with other colleagues in the school was sometimes reported. Also language barriers were mentioned.

2.3. Concluding remarks

These case studies illustrate that a wide variety of eTwinning teams exist in European schools. Looking at the characteristics of eTwinning teams in schools, we find that there is no single team model that could be described as “one size fits all”. We observe differences in institutional factors, as well as in human factors: the teams have been initiated both by teachers themselves and by the school management, leadership models vary, as do the timespan and the size of the team. What has brought the teams to where they are now and can we find some common denominators across all cases?

We find that, in all cases, some sort of **support from the school management** has been crucial. Most important is the impact that this support has had on the time and space configurations in school, by allowing more flexible planning and implementation of the team’s work, both among teachers and while working with pupils and, at times, even with parents and other external stakeholders. Equally important is the management’s support in terms of rewarding and recognising teachers’ work. These accounts are important and worth taking note of.

Another common denominator that emerges from all the case studies is the rich account of **school innovation history**. We see differences in the case studies but, what is common to all is that eTwinning team is part of the school’s vision and it fits, in one way or another, with the process of innovation within the school. Two interesting issues arise related to this institutional factor. First of all, some of the cases have a very rich and varied history in school collaboration before turning to eTwinning, whereas other cases show that eTwinning was the first step for the school to start collaborating at a European level. The case studies therefore nicely illustrate that it is not the question “which came first?” that is important, but that different ways can all lead to the same goal.

Secondly, related to institutional factors, the case studies also illustrate eTwinning school teams being **at different levels of implementation**; some are very early on in their journey and the team is only taking shape, whereas other teams have already had a long history of co-operation and collaboration. This can be related to the context in the school, or to the overall goal of pedagogical innovation that the school is seeking after. What was previously known is that educational innovation usually is not a once-off event, but rather a complex process, evolving over time and involving



many participants (e.g. Forkosh-Baruch et al., 2008). Therefore, the case studies also illustrate that eTwinning activities performed by the team can have a place in the context of a school's pedagogical aspirations, either by fitting in with already existing practices and bringing only minor changes, or by introducing new practices with more radical, transformative innovation that brings major changes to its environment. The flexibility and applicability of eTwinning, in general, supports all levels of pedagogical innovation from assimilation to transition and transformation.

The third common denominator in all the case studies is **the role of the lead teacher** or sometimes two or more of them. These people keep inspiring others and their sheer enthusiasm seems almost contagious. The case studies underscore the existence of these personalities and their importance in bringing a “breath of fresh air” into schools. Previous studies have identified the leaders' motivation as a vital component of the stability of the innovation and being one of the most affecting factors in the ICT-supported pedagogic innovation. Therefore, paying attention as to how to retain such people within the school organisation is important (e.g. recognition, rewards), as important as it is to think how to sustain teams by building up leadership capacity and replacing a leadership gap if, and when, it appears.

To conclude, the case studies show interesting evidence of **different diffusion-of-innovation patterns** within schools. The lead teachers are not working alone, but there is a team of colleagues supporting them; in some cases a rather loose team and in other cases, a very well structured one.

This shows evidence that the innovation is catching on, that people who work in the vicinity of the lead teacher(s) are getting the “eTwinning virus”, which may lead to “pedagogical innovation”. Such cascading effects are known in networks. However, in an educational environment, the diffusion process of innovation is often a time-consuming one and dependant on the context. The importance of the context is effectively illustrated in our sample, varying from small teacher-initiated and leader-centered teams, to whole school approaches that were initiated by the school management.

The second point related to the process of innovation diffusion is the number of **“invisible” eTwinners**, the ones who work as part of the school team, but who are not registered on the eTwinning Portal. We called them “invisible”, since in terms of monitoring eTwinning activities, there is no evidence of their existence (e.g. they are not accounted for measures such as “eTwinning reach”; their participation in projects cannot be monitored through eTwinning management tools). Therefore, their involvement in the team activities is interesting, and should not be neglected because of their “invisibility”. On the contrary, it could be considered as a showcase of how the ripple effect spreads out, turning passive bystanders in schools into the ones who are most susceptible to the pedagogical virus.

A last point, on school teams in general and on “invisible” eTwinners in particular, is that the case studies provide us with evidence about the strong off-line existence of eTwinning activities at the local level, in this case, in schools with their extended stakeholders. eTwinning is called “the community for schools in Europe”. With this sample of case studies, we celebrate the fact that eTwinning can also seize local opportunities in schools, connecting the on-line community with the local one.

3. Case studies

1	Zweisprachiges Bundesgymnasium Oberwart, Austria (Secondary Education)	18
2	Immaculata Instituut Oostmalle, Belgium (Secondary Education)	24
3	SOU “Ekzarh Antim I”, Bulgaria (Primary & Secondary Education)	31
4	Schule für Körper- und Mehrfachbehinderte, Switzerland (Special Needs Education)	35
5	Dunant Grundschule, Germany (Primary Education)	40
6	Lycée Blériot, vocational school, France (Secondary Education)	46
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9	“Ada Negri” - part of I. C. “Don Rinaldo Beretta”, Italy (Primary Education)	61
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11	Szkoła Podstawowa nr 1, Poland (Primary Education)	71
12	Ekhagaskolan, Sweden (Lower Secondary Education)	77
13	ZŠ Štefana Šmálik, Slovakia (Primary school)	82
14	IES “Príncipe Felipe”, Spain (Secondary Education)	87
15	Southwater Infant Academy, UK (Primary Education)	93



1 Zweisprachiges Bundesgymnasium Oberwart (Secondary Education) Austria

School website: www.bg-oberwart.at

Twinning school profile: www.etwinning.net/en/pub/profile.cfm?f=1&l=de&n=139325

School context

“The numerous languages offered in our school reflect the microcosm of the city and district of Oberwart,” explains Martin Zsivkovits, the head teacher of Zweisprachiges Bundesgymnasium Oberwart, a secondary school in Austria. Established in 1992, the school has a special emphasis on acquiring and deepening pupils’ knowledge of a local minority language (e.g., Croatian or Hungarian) as well as promoting subjects such as ICT and instrumental music. The school has 43 teachers and approximately 250 pupils between the ages of 10 to 18 years. It is located in the district capital of Oberwart (population 7,000) in the federal state of Burgenland, near the Austrian-Hungarian border. For this reason, some of the schools teachers live in Hungary and commute daily to Austria. Other nearby schools include a primary school, Volksschule Oberwart, as well as a higher vocational school for tourism, Höhere Bundeslehranstalt Oberwart.

The school is split into two departments: the German-Hungarian department and the German-Croatian department, each with eight classes of pupils. Pupils’ families vary in their educational backgrounds but share an affinity for Hungarian and/or Croatian culture, history and language. The family-like atmosphere in the school facilitates projects that transcend different subject areas. The school strives for pupils, parents and teachers to cultivate an open dialogue to promote an exchange of opinions.

Since 2002, the school has had two ICT rooms with approximately fifty computers equipped with Internet access. There is also a laptop classroom and an additional 40 computers are distributed among all classrooms. The school has a total of 3 whiteboards, 2 in classrooms and 1 in the

library. From the first school year through to graduation, Information Technology is offered as an optional subject.

School innovation history

The school is involved in a number of national and international cooperation initiatives. Among them, a language assistant from Croatia will work at the school for the 2012-2013 school year. Due to the emphasis on languages, the focus of Europe-wide cooperation is greatly supported by the school's 21 Hungarian and 7 Croatian partner schools. A pupil exchange program was first introduced in 2000 and is now run on a regular basis. Furthermore the Socrates/Comenius project "Emotional Intelligence – An Educational Exchange" was carried out with a German partner school in the 2000-2001 school year. The school successfully takes part in regional and national competitions and maintains good contact with companies and associations.

The following examples underline the school's broad network:

- ▶ The "Offene Haus Oberwart" is a local art exhibition centre, which offers pupils the opportunity to showcase their artwork from school competitions.
- ▶ The school orchestra, as well as the Tamburizza group, organise joint performances in cooperation with partners from neighbouring towns, especially with the "Gymnasium Oberpullendorf" (a nearby secondary school).
- ▶ A stage play was developed and performed together with the "Josefinum, Neue Mittelschule Eberau" (another secondary school). In this case, the premises of a church served as venue for the performance.

Cooperation usually develops through enquiries from local associations and companies, as the school is well regarded. Exhibitions, concerts and plays additionally improve this positive image and thus, offers to collaborative are gratefully accepted. For the school, it appears to be a "win-win" situation.

The school has been actively involved in eight eTwinning projects, having been the co-founding partner of six of them. The projects are carried out mostly for pupils between the ages of 10 and 14 years and run approximately one school year. In 2011, the lead teacher was awarded the eTwinning National Quality Label (NQL) for her school for the project "On a cold winter night...". The project has been featured as an example of best practice at the regional event "Comenius/eTwinning focus Burgenland". While the school has a large network, eTwinning serves as an additional means to meet new partners both within Austria and beyond and to implement projects.

The eTwinning team

The idea of implementing eTwinning into the school came from its lead teacher, Christine Gyöngyös, when she registered in July 2005. In 2007, she founded her first eTwinning project and has since continued to contribute to the whole school's collaborative project work as well as its public relations activities. Alongside her position as the head of the school's eTwinning team, Gyöngyös is a librarian and teacher of German and ICT. In addition to considerable support from the head teacher, several teachers are actively involved in the projects on a regular basis. "Without the support of the school management, it would certainly not be possible to implement all my initiatives," notes the lead teacher. Four other teachers in the school are registered eTwinners: Claudia Michalek-Kornhofer (registered 03/2012), Natalija Maurer (registered 11/2011) and Sigrid Jankovits (registered 01/2012) are language and literature teachers, and Viktória Juhász (registered 03/2012) is a theology teacher. Furthermore, various other teachers, who are not registered on the eTwinning platform, are involved in the projects, for example, Renate Jusits is included in the projects as an arts teacher, Theresa Becha as a music and Croatian language teacher, and Linda Rasser as an English teacher. In addition to the teaching staff, the school custodian, secretaries and parents' association are frequently involved in project work.

This particular eTwinning team goes beyond not only the boundaries of school levels but also the boundaries of the school itself, as the lead teacher works very closely with the primary school lead teacher, Sonja Krutzler (registered 11/2011), and national eTwinning Quality Label winner and runner-up in the national eTwinning Prize, Marlene Rüter Gangol (registered 01/10). The relationship is seen as one big eTwinning team that has been working together for over a year.

As various ethnic groups and minorities live in Burgenland, many inhabitants speak Burgenland Croatian, a minority language from the region. The primary school lead teacher therefore describes one of the incentives for the joint initiative as follows: "Our motivation lies in carrying out projects with Croatian partners and is particularly supported by the intention to maintain the Croatian language and Croatian traditions in the region. A big support for our collaboration is the fact that Christine and I share this interest and that we are linked by a long and deep friendship which fortunately spreads to our pupils."

Team activities

The team meetings during school hours take place in the staff room and library, but participants mostly meet outside of school hours during their leisure time. The project activities themselves, however, are carried out during school hours during ICT, language (German, English, Croatian, Hungarian) and art classes. The activities and progress of the projects are presented regularly at school meetings.

Cooperation across age groups is particularly considered as very exciting and enriching, but also challenging. Project involvement of the lead teacher's pupils starts normally at 11 years old, while the primary school lead teacher works mostly with pupils who are 7 years old. As compulsory primary schools in Croatia are attended by pupils between the ages of 6 and 15 years, in a way, the two Austrian schools represent a single Croatian school. Two Croatian colleagues, Branka Lamza and Nives Posavec, from the "2. Osnovna Škola Čakovec" are involved in current project work.

The team meetings between the two lead teachers take place on fixed dates. Additionally they communicate by email. Preparations take place mostly outside of school hours. Information from partner schools on the TwinSpace is first analysed so that individual tasks and schedules for each team can be prepared. Furthermore a clear splitting of competences is determined. "Our strengths are particularly used so that we can work effectively and learn from



each other. For example, Sonja is responsible for the linguistic and didactic focus and I am responsible for the organisational and ICT one," explains the lead teacher.

The projects aim to offer a good combination of language and ICT learning. However, because one of the members is an art teacher, considerations about future drawing lessons, in view of the development of modern ICT tools was an additional project task for her. The joint project "Das schmeckt" ("That tastes good") deals, among other things, with the topic of cooking. Recipes were exchanged in the TwinSpace and integrated into exercises. Through collaborative puzzles, vocabulary was learned and sentences were formulated, until the finished recipes were created. On the parents' initiative, the recipes were tested during a joint cooking session.

As the lead teacher, Gyöngyös prefers long-term planning but spontaneous activities are also welcomed. For example, a film was produced during a pupils' meeting. Secondary school pupils were responsible for the planning and implementation, while the primary school pupils were the actors.

Enablers and obstacles in the school

Enablers

The teachers of both schools have permission from their school management to collaborate and execute joint pupil meetings. Both teams can count on the support of their head teacher. The joint goal to support Croatian culture and language in the region is perceived as important. Furthermore, the subsequent eTwinning Quality Labels awarded created a very positive image and brought additional support to both schools. The opportunity to work on multidisciplinary subjects across classrooms and schools are seen as very positive by all team members.

The focus on ICT becomes more prevalent as the average PC to pupil ratio is 1:3 between the laptop class and the three whiteboards in the school. The equipment is therefore perceived as an additional enabler.

Obstacles

The initiatives are very often planned outside school time, which means that the involved teachers work a lot in their spare time. The school management is not able to reward this extra work beyond an extra pat on the shoulder. Even after winning a Quality Label, it has not been easy to find additional teachers to join the project work. The implementation of new team members is difficult because colleagues do not always recognise its positive effects.

Impact of the eTwinning school team

Impact on teachers

As the project offers the teachers involved an opportunity to foster their own language and ICT skills, the project activities are also seen as professional development. Furthermore, the team enjoys thinking beyond borders, comparing the different school systems and questioning their own thinking patterns. These effects are seen as additional motivation and in some cases have led to the preparation of new teaching materials.

Impacts on pupils

The lead teacher noted a very positive effect on the pupils: "They often take on a leading role in the project groups, so that they learn how to deal with responsibility and guide others." The primary school lead teacher noted that, "the circumstance that pupils from another country are actively involved in the projects is a lot of fun for the pupils." The projects helped take away the shyness of collaborating with pupils from other countries and motivated them to take on international education experiences.

Effects in school

The school's image has improved through various reports in regional media about the eTwinning activities, especially due to the previous year's winning project. The awarding of the National eTwinning Quality Label created a great deal of positive attention within the school, which made it slightly easier to involve new teachers. An additional benefit is that the school is able to advertise that native-language partners are involved in class work.

Plans for the future

The professional development of teaching staff is supported by the school management and seen as a valuable opportunity to modernise teaching practices. To improve the ICT skills and knowledge of the TwinSpace, teachers are set to attend a Europe-wide eTwinning Professional Development Workshop (PDW).

Another goal is to further transport the positive image of the school into the media.

New team members will be recruited to have a larger team and share tasks and efforts will be made to have activities better linked to regular lessons. The lead teacher would also like to incorporate other languages, such as Hungarian, and foster additional projects in Croatian. The long-term goal is to build a strong team to start a Comenius School Partnership.

Conclusion

The initiatives of this school team show a clear “bottom-up” approach. In both schools, one single teacher registered to eTwinning, and eventually the project work disseminated into the whole school. National recognition from the Quality Label and the national prize was seen as very important since there is no way for the school management to give a special reward. Furthermore, the case study showed that eTwinning introduces the opportunity for different school levels to collaborate and the importance of school management support was clearly underlined.

Zweisprachiges Bundesgymnasium Oberwart's head teacher, Martin Zsivkovits, and lead teacher, Christine Gyöngyös, took part in the discussion with the Austrian NSS. The lead teacher at the nearby Volksschule Oberwart primary school, Sonja Krutzler (a member of the eTwinning team), was interviewed separately.



2 Immaculata Instituut Oostmalle (Secondary Education) Belgium

School website: www.immalle.be

Twinning school profile: www.etwinning.net/en/pub/profile.cfm?f=1&l=en&n=15894

School context

Immaculata Instituut is a small school in Oostmalle, a rural low-middle income community 30 km east of Antwerp. It is a secondary technical and vocational schools specialising in commercial education and information technology (IT), with classes offered in accountancy, commerce, IT, management assistance, languages, public relations, office management and fashion. There are 379 pupils (ages 12 to 18 years) and 70 staff members. According to the teachers it is a school with an open and friendly atmosphere.

The school is well equipped due to it being a school for commercial studies and IT. There are 250 computers resulting in a 2:1 pupil to computer ratio. Most computers are located in a computer room (80%) while most classrooms have at least one computer (primarily for lesson preparation) and the staffroom has seven computers. Additionally, there are three interactive whiteboards, four laptops and two tablets. Teachers can borrow the tablets to experiment with at home or in the classroom.

School innovation history

eTwinning was introduced in the school in 2007 by Bart Verswijvel and Christel Verheyen, both of whom still work in eTwinning, although not in the same school. At this time, there are seven teachers registered and active on the eTwinning Portal. Among six active projects, nine teachers are involved; six of whom are registered. Since 2011, the school has been working closely with a primary school located at the same campus. In the primary school, four teachers are registered (and active) and two projects are running.

In total, fourteen teachers and thirty-three projects have been registered since 2007. The school has earned eleven Quality Labels, nine European Quality Labels and two National eTwinning Awards. In total, four eTwinning Ambassadors have worked at the school and have been actively involved in many local and European events.

Even before eTwinning, the school had a tradition of collaborative projects with other schools. Thirty years ago, the school established a language project in Belgium with the French-speaking community of Libramont. The lead teacher was involved in this project from the start. The school also collaborates closely with a school in Kenya, and policy makers and teachers from Kenya have visited the school several times to explore its implementation of IT into subject areas. The school has also a school link with Peru through a project called Chispas Amazonicas. Additionally, the school collaborates with external partners in Belgium on a regular basis, e.g., internships programs, social institutions and info sessions with the VDAB (Flemish Agency for Employment and Training) and the CIS (Center for Educational Games). The school has been awarded several international prizes, such as a winner in the Global Junior Challenge in 2009, first prize for the Queen Paola Prize in 2010, and finalist of the Global Microsoft Innovative Teachers Awards in 2010.



The eTwinning team

The lead teacher, Marie-Leet Bens, is a French and art teacher with 30 years of experience for 14 to 18 years old pupils. As the lead teacher, she became involved in eTwinning after a workshop at the school. For her, “eTwinning was a ‘gift from heaven’”. I was instantly triggered by the idea of eTwinning, because I was already involved in a language project. eTwinning offers a very practical and authentic way of working. Pupils have direct contact with the language. After that first project, I went to an

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eTwinning conference in Prague. From then on, I wanted all of my classes to be involved in at least one eTwinning project or language exchange project.”

Ann Vermeiren, also a French teacher and the second lead teacher at the school, was inspired by Bens to get involved in eTwinning. She subsequently went to an eTwinning contact seminar in Maastricht in 2009 and has been involved ever since.

Over the last five years, at least twenty people from the school have been involved in eTwinning. Of the thirty-three projects, twenty-five were created by a single teacher, six by two teachers, one by three teachers and one by four teachers. Both lead teachers have become role models for their colleagues. As the head teacher, Eric Noyen, notes, “these teachers are the triggers; they involve all the other teachers and they get the eTwinning ball rolling throughout the school.”

Marc Meeus, a teacher at the connected primary school (11-12 year old pupils) said that, “without them we would not have considered starting with eTwinning. I have come a long way since IT is really not my thing. We are very lucky to have the [technical] support of these teachers. To start a project you really need a colleague who knows all the tools and who has experience with them.”

Roxanne Vermander, an English teacher - who works in a project with the lead teacher but is not yet registered - confirms this. “I have so much work; we organise many extra-curricular activities in this school. I will not start a project on my own, but if they ask me to participate I am glad to collaborate. Marie-Leet is a really good leader: she defines the project objectives and keeps it simple. She explains it to me in a very clear way, makes sure that we stick to the deadlines and, if needed, sends us emails to encourage us.”

Ann Geenen, also an English teacher, only teaches two hours per week which makes it difficult for her to start individual projects. The support of the two teachers is important for her, because, “they are much more advanced in eTwinning than me, they can teach me how to do certain activities or use tools.” Also the cross-curricular approach makes it very worthwhile for her. “We as language teachers are doing sort of the same things; it does not matter so much whether you teach English or French.”

According to Bert Cauwenberg, a maths teacher, “the projects actually deliver more results and direct feedback from the pupils than extra work for me, thanks to Ann Vermeiren. She collects – together with her pupils - all the data. I only have to process it. I have to do these kind of statistical exercises anyway so the pupils are very enthusiastic and motivated.”

In 2010, the head teacher and lead teachers set up an eTwinning ‘workgroup’. They meet two to three times per school year to promote eTwinning, support other teachers and highlight the international profile of the school.

The eTwinning team in Immaculata has grown 'bottom-up', but is strongly supported by its head teacher. The head teacher states that, "the story of new technology and social media will never stop and will keep evolving and the school has to participate in it. Therefore we have to keep the professional development of teachers up to date and integrate these new technologies in the school development plan. That is why I support the eTwinning projects. And that is also why the school provides a budget for infrastructure and new technologies. It is a bottom-up evolution. As a head teacher, I cannot impose new technologies or pedagogies on my teachers, they have to believe in them themselves."

Team activities

In May 2012 there were six projects active in the school: two led by a single teacher and four by a team of teachers. Examples of coordination and collaboration among teachers range from an English teacher allowing pupils to make presentations in English for the project during English lessons using the statistics teacher's expertise. "This is a good variation for the pupils: they do not only study theory but work on the computers for the project. It is also fun for me: sometimes I have to ask pupils for a translation in English, so this project helps me to improve my relationship with the pupils. It is also very motivating and interesting for me to work with colleagues from the language department." In some cases, pupils from the primary school (11-12 year olds) create stories and pictures and the pupils from secondary school (17 year olds) help them with the translation and uploading of the stories on the TwinBlog. The secondary school pupils regularly visit the primary school to teach and coach the younger pupils (e.g., tell stories, explain the project, etc.).

The IT coordinator of the school is a 'silent partner'. "As long as all the tools work, they do not need me." Teachers know they can count on her, but they try to manage themselves. The IT coordinator keeps track of the eTwinning projects through informal talks in the staffroom and the newsletter of the school.

The projects are supported by the head teacher and deputy head. The head teacher organises the eTwinning workgroup and follow-up. The deputy head teacher, Lief Anthonis, and the head teacher support the teachers with the practical organisation of the projects (e.g., changing the class schedules for project activities or training) and show great interest in the projects by attending some of the project activities.

Enablers and obstacles in the school

The team members meet each other informally in the staffroom during school hours to discuss their collaboration. Although there is a formal eTwinning workgroup there is no formal recognition or validation for the teachers. As the lead teacher notes, "there are no real rewards for setting up or participating in a project, only a 'pat on the shoulder' from the head teacher once in a while. But this is sufficient. The motivation and enthusiasm of the pupils is the most rewarding for me."

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All the teachers mention the support of the head teacher and deputy head teacher. Teachers know that the head teacher and deputy support them, and this is important to them. “All project activities are allowed and when we have to switch or even miss some classes it is never a problem.” According to the lead teacher, “the head teacher knows that you can implement the curriculum not only by using textbooks and that pupils have to move outside the classroom to learn.”

The friendly and open atmosphere at the school is also an enabler for eTwinning projects. The lead teacher notes that, “in this school teachers are not afraid to ask colleagues for help or to show their weaknesses. It is very easy to find support. The IT-coordinator is always available for help. We even involve our pupils in IT learning: they know some tools very well and are more advanced so they can teach us a lot.” Also, the IT coordinator finds that there is a collaborative spirit in the school: in the staffroom teachers help each other and learn to work with new tools from one another. “Because teachers might be afraid to ask questions in a ‘formal’ workshop, this informal way of learning works out very well.”

The head teacher stressed the importance of dissemination. “The lead teachers have to share their expertise with other teachers. They shouldn’t work on their ‘islands’.”

There is a tradition of organising internal training for teachers during lunch breaks. The IT coordinator, head teacher or teacher organise workshops or lectures regularly on specific themes. The importance of these internal training sessions may grow in the future as that there has been a budget cut for in-service training for teachers by the Ministry.

Pupils also motivate the teachers to start projects. As some teachers mentioned, it was the pupils who asked to start a project. Pupils are also presenting their projects to other pupils during project days or open school days.

A number of teachers have indicated that participating in an eTwinning Professional Development Workshop (PDW) or contact seminar was an important trigger for them to start a project. Teachers are encouraged to participate in these events by both the head teacher and deputy head teacher. As mentioned by the deputy head: “whenever colleagues comment on the participation in a European workshop, which means that this teacher will miss some classes, we as the head teachers always support and defend that teacher.”

Impact of the eTwinning school team

The wellbeing of the pupils is important for this school, says the deputy head teacher, which appears to be positively affected by its eTwinning projects. All teachers state that the improvement of motivation and learning is a great added value of eTwinning projects. The teacher from the primary school explains, “because my IT skills are not very good, I can ask pupils to help me. They are really proud when they can help. We see their skills grow. When they give a presentation now, you can see how much they have learned from the project.”

Also, contact with pupils from the secondary school has had a positive impact on the younger pupils at the primary school. They are no longer afraid of the ‘big’ secondary school and they have learned a lot from the older pupils. The collaboration between the teachers of both schools has also brought the teachers closer.

The teachers from the secondary school confirm that the eTwinning projects give a boost to the self-confidence of the pupils. “One of pupils said: ‘I am not going to share this at home, they will believe that I taught primary children in French and about IT. No! They will not believe that I did this’.” The lead teacher notes that, “the pupils also experienced that the partner schools had a different level of language knowledge. This was a positive experience. They were also very proud to show the partner schools what they had done in school that year. The show element is very important.”

Another language teacher, Martine Engelen, said that the projects have had a positive effect on her professional and personal development. “Collaboration is fun and enriching for teachers as well. I learn a lot from my colleagues.” The deputy head teacher confirms that she also sees teachers grow professionally. “A teacher who was once insecure and afraid is now one of the leading ladies



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of eTwinning. Before, she was afraid to speak to groups, and now she is giving presentations for large audiences in another language.”

The head teacher underlined the importance of eTwinning for the reputation of the school. “I want Immaculata and eTwinning in the future to be the same thing, to become a synonym. Immaculata Instituut is now more famous in Kenya than in Oostmalle. We want to change this. With eTwinning, we hope to get more publicity for the school in the region.”

Plans for the future

The head teacher would like to see eTwinning become even more integrated in the school. “There are lots of extra-curricular activities which put a lot of pressure on the normal teaching hours so we will have to integrate and combine even more in the future.”

The lead teacher plans to get more recognition for pupils’ efforts, “to show their work to other pupils in the school to recognise the added value of the projects. I want to take the projects even more ‘outside’ the classrooms.” For the next school year, she wants to involve more teachers in projects about ecology and sustainability. As the curriculum for the subjects ‘PAV’ (general project subjects) and ‘kantoor’ (office management) will be reformed by the Ministry next year, she notes that, “teachers have to know that there are many opportunities in eTwinning for delivering the new curriculum in another way”.

In terms of the future of eTwinning in general, she offers the following idea: “In the future it would be great to have one hour per week (free of teaching) so I could coordinate all the eTwinning work, because now I have a lot to do to organise all my projects. Also, it would be great to have a class-free moment for all teachers involved during school hours, so we could all meet and organise events together, e.g., a festive opening/closing for all eTwinning projects in September/June. At the moment, this is not possible because all the teachers involved have different teaching schedules and we are never able to find a common time to meet.”



3 **SOU “Ekzarh Antim I” Bulgaria** (Primary & Secondary Education)

School website: <http://antim1.com>

Twinning school profile: <http://www.etwinning.net/en/pub/profile.cfm?f=1&l=en&n=31124>

School context

SOU “Ekzarh Antim I” is a comprehensive school with primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education. The school is located in Kazanlak, an urban town in the Stara Zagora province. There are 114 staff members (96 teachers and 18 staff with other responsibilities) for 1167 pupils. The ratio of pupils per computers is 16:1, and all computers are available for pupils to use in computer labs and in the school library, all of which are connected via broadband Internet connection. The school has one interactive whiteboard in the school library and fourteen classrooms are equipped with multimedia projectors.

School innovation history

The school has rich history in the field of international cooperation. The school started working in eTwinning in 2006, while there were no computers in its premises and the teachers mostly worked from home their spare time. eTwinning is the first action that got the school started on developing international projects, which has led to a number of other international endeavours, including two Comenius Partnerships.

The school has run over thirty eTwinning projects, seventeen of which were founded by teachers from the school. The school has received eighteen National Quality Labels, eighteen European Quality Labels, and participated in the 2011 eTwinning Annual Conference in Budapest. There are over twenty registered teachers in the school (sixteen active teachers, one librarian and three to four inactive teachers). Most of the projects are cross curricular and include at least three teachers from the school. The workload is distributed evenly to encourage the richness of ideas when more than one teacher is involved.

Parents are sometimes involved in projects making decorations, models and material. Over the last few years, parents have shown more and more interest and are thus more involved.

The eTwinning team

The interview was conducted primarily with Natasha Dzhurkova, the school's lead teacher and deputy head teacher responsible for the primary education and music departments.

At first, there was no “team” in the school, only individual teacher initiatives. After discovering that more teachers were interested in eTwinning, the lead teacher decided to help everyone who wanted to register and start a project. The school team now has over twenty registered teachers.

The school team has been working together for two years and appears to work very well. While there is a distinctive role of the project coordinator, the roles in every project are assigned in accordance with the project theme, e.g., if a project is about traditional dancing, the music teacher deals with the musical layout while the IT teachers help with the online work. All project activities are uploaded on a special class website. Every teacher is responsible for setting up a website for his/her class.

The school team idea was initiated by the lead teacher who was the first to discover eTwinning and remains the coordinator of half of the projects. The school takes a bottom-up approach, as the school team is teacher-led; however, it is not without the support of the previous and present head teacher. At the time the interviews were conducted, a new head teacher had been appointed only two weeks prior but was already well aware of the work of the team and supported them in their activities. The former head teacher was also very supportive and recognised the school team as the “eTwinning Team”. The regional education inspectorate also supported the project activities since all types of schools documents have to be agreed upon.

A tangible outcome of the cooperation between the school staff is the high rate of interest in involving pupils. The school's motto is: “With us, Europe is closer.” There are many cases of pupils who have pointed out the project activities they have been working on in their CVs as valuable indicators of their international experience when applying to higher education institutions abroad.

Team activities

Younger teachers and teachers who have recently started working at the school are often curious about project activities and eager to participate. The lead teacher assists the teachers in registering on the eTwinning platform.

As many teachers in the school work on eTwinning projects, and thus teach different age groups and disciplines, cross-curricular projects are the most common. For example, many of the eTwinning projects include geography, history and literature, which has created further opportunities for collaboration not only with international partners but also with direct teachers and pupils in the school.

Some projects include pupils of different ages. In some, older pupils translate traditional fairy tales from different countries from English into Bulgarian, so that younger pupils can learn them. This approach helps older pupils to gain confidence in speaking to an audience and transferring skills. Most of the secondary school pupils work actively in the TwinSpaces of the projects. The teachers try to present the platform as a useful alternative to traditional social networking websites, which do not have the learning features of eTwinning.

The school carries out different activities with regards to the projects. Pupils' work is often presented to an audience in the form of a theatre play or photo exhibition. Some of the project activities include organising school trips (e.g., biology, geography trips), while others are carried out in the school library where pupils can use the computers and interactive whiteboard. The lead teacher pointed out that it is common to use the interactive whiteboard for activities in the TwinSpace.

Teachers in the team agree that it is somehow easier to work with pupils from the primary school. The children are very interested and like to work together. Their parents are also very helpful and participate in project activities by contributing most of the materials needed, e.g., decorations for theatre plays, mini models of famous sightseeing attractions, pictures, etc.

Most of the activities above are undertaken outside of school hours. In the approved curricula in Bulgaria, there is no time allocated for extra activities such as working on projects. This could be seen as a barrier, but on the other hand, when working after class and outside of official school hours, the teachers can work in eTwinning as long as they want, with as many pupils as they want.

Enablers and obstacles in the school

The teachers working in the team usually meet in the teachers' room, in the library or in the lead teacher's classroom. It is very hard to say that the team is prevented in any way from organising its meetings as only 5% of project activities are undertaken during class time. 65% of the time is spent with pupils during after-class exercises when different classes can collaborate on the same project topic. The remaining 30% of time is spent on teacher-to-teacher communication after hours.

The school has enough computers in its computer labs for all interested pupils to work on. All computers are connected to the Internet so that communication and collaboration with other partners is not an issue and the interactive whiteboard is used for TwinSpace activities. Fourteen rooms in the school – within the primary school's wing – have multimedia projectors. The aim is to get children acquainted with modern technology from their first years in school so that they may actively take part in collaborative projects later on.

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The head teacher provides general support for the teachers' eTwinning activities. She is not directly involved in the activities; however, all activities must be communicated to her before they are initiated.

There are also many teachers who are not registered in eTwinning who have expressed their interest in getting involved. Their main motivation is external recognition, i.e., from pupils' parents, the National Support Service and/or Central Support Service. It is very common for the local media to be invited to some final project activities (e.g., theatre plays). According to the lead teacher, teachers are "hungry" for international contact, projects and ideas; there is no specific monetary reward for working in eTwinning but there are some extra points for teachers who work on international projects, no matter the programme, when evaluating their work and calculating wages.

Impact of the eTwinning school team

Since the work in eTwinning is teamwork, all teachers experience the sharing of ideas and new teaching methods, the discussing of potential projects and the ease of joint lesson planning. Teamwork has led to the serendipitous promotion of the culture of collaboration, the improvement of teachers' ICT skills and the development of teachers' classroom management skills. Many teachers learn how to use and teach with multimedia and how to use contemporary ICT resources in their lessons. Easily observed is the spillover effect of eTwinning teamwork as best practices are easily and quickly spread around the team.

The team provides for a teacher-to-teacher support approach. Most of the time, the lead teacher acts as a mentor to other teachers who have less experience in eTwinning; however, many other team members also provide support to one another.

In regards to pupils, most acquire skills to work out multimedia presentations and use various types of software and web platforms as effective learning tools.

Plans for the future

Future plans include the registration of more teachers from the school on the eTwinning Portal to broaden the expertise and scope of the team. As the team grows, it also hopes to work on even more interesting and complicated projects in the framework of the future education programme, Erasmus for All.

In conclusion, the school team of SOU "Ekzarh Antim I" appears to be a good example of both a school team as well as a teacher-led team. On behalf of the NSS team, it was a pleasure to speak to people who find their own motivation in the project activities - even when there is no direct reward for it.



4 Schule für Körper- und Mehrfachbehinderte (Special Needs Education) Switzerland

School website: www.stadt-zuerich.ch/skb

Twinning school profile: <http://www.etwinning.net/en/pub/profile.cfm?f=1&l=en&n=126560>

School context

The Schule für Körper- und Mehrfachbehinderte (SKB) in Zurich is a special needs school (physical/multiple disabilities) for children and young adults between the ages of 5-20 years old. The SKB is part of the association of Zurich's special needs schools. There are two school sites in Zurich: the main school building for pupils 5-14 years old, as well as a shared facility within a regular school for the older pupils. In the main building, there are four divisions, all of which work closely together: education, care/assistance, therapy and transport (the school has its own transport service to bring the pupils to and from school each day). Coordination and collaboration is an ongoing and everyday subject, as each pupil needs his/her individual care and teaching as well as therapy, which the school offers in various approaches. In each classroom, there's at least one person from the care/assistance team present at any time in addition to the teacher. All in all, 127 staff members work at the SKB, 32 of whom are teachers. At the moment, 84 pupils attend the school, 47 of which are integrated in regular classes in Zurich.

In terms of the school's vision, Christoph Keller, the lead teacher of the project team, says the feeling of togetherness is very important. Cooperation between teachers, other staff members and pupils is a primary aim so that judgment is not passed on pupils based on their (lack of) academic skills. Everyone's dignity is respected no matter their limitations or disabilities. He emphasises that a school for disabled children doesn't have to be a "sad" place, as visitors often think. Disabled pupils are young people like their non-disabled peers, who also have difficult times as well as great moments. For him, a positive approach to everything is crucial, and respect is the foundation of his work. He tries to see conflict and problems as opportunities to learn.

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Equally asked about the school's most important values, the head teacher answers that the school's goal is for pupils to achieve as much autonomy as possible. The academic lessons should enable them to find their own sources of knowledge and prepare them to be an active part of society – which he notes is the same goal in every school, but with a different base. There are also a number of objectives concerning the relationship between the school and pupils' families. The head teacher sees projects such as the school's Comenius Partnership as a means of connecting with others, also within the school, as social relationships are especially difficult for many pupils in the school.

School innovation history

The SKB's eTwinning history began in November 2011 when the lead teacher participated in a kick-off meeting for all new beneficiaries of Comenius School Partnerships in Switzerland. The school had only just started a partnership and was completely new to the world of European school cooperation. As the NSS in Switzerland is part of the Comenius coordination team at the National Agency, eTwinning was presented to the beneficiaries and they learned about the possibilities it offers to Comenius project schools. The lead teacher decided to suggest to their project partners to use the platform as a tool in their project. They agreed, and just a few weeks after the kick-off meeting, the lead teacher participated in an eTwinning training event organised by the Swiss NSS. This experience made him the eTwinning "hub" in his school, although he still sees himself as a beginner – which is why he stayed in close contact with the NSS after the training.

In March 2012, an eTwinning workshop for the whole Comenius team at the school was organised, led by the NSS. The school now has six registered eTwinning teachers, including the head teacher. The lead teacher is still the most active of the six and keeps the others updated. So far, the eTwinning TwinSpace has not been made available to the pupils and is used solely by the teachers.

The eTwinning project "Spiele ohne Grenzen" ("Games without borders") is also a Comenius Partnership project, with partners from special needs schools in Salzburg (Austria) and Würzburg (Germany). The school's former head teacher knew the other two head teachers personally and was asked if he'd like to participate in a Comenius Partnership with his school. As Switzerland joined the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) in 2010, his decision to do so made the SKB one of the country's very first Comenius beneficiaries. Before that, the SKB didn't participate in any international cooperation. When Hans Lieberherr, the current school head, took over from his predecessor, he also took on the responsibility for the project. The first visits between the schools took place in the spring of 2012, and a final event is planned to take place in Zurich. The motivation to be part of a Comenius Partnership project has clearly come from the school management, the former head teacher, but contact with other schools have since become very valuable to the teachers themselves. Projects like this are seen as a chance to take the school's achievements into the public, avoiding that special needs schools become isolated islands.

Concerning innovative teaching, the school head says that it's a contradictory field as, by definition, teachers work in a future-oriented job but often tend to be a bit conservative and don't like to let go of old habits in order to try something new. He often hears things like, "we already have so many things to do; we don't have time to start another project!" As the school head, he shows them ways to combine new ideas with everyday work. For example: computers. A lot of the SKB's pupils require personal electronic aids, which their teachers are familiar with, to be able to take part in lessons; however, when it comes to using technology with eTwinning, it has been a challenge to convince the teachers. In his opinion, eTwinning hasn't become an important part of the Comenius Partnership project.

The eTwinning team

Christoph Keller, the interviewee and lead teacher of the project, is a very experienced teacher. He works with a class of physically disabled young adults who are about to enter the work force. In addition to his regular teaching hours, he is a mentor for support teachers working with disabled pupils who are integrated in regular classes in Zurich. In addition, since the SKB has become a partner in the Comenius Partnership project, he serves as a coordinator for the activities at his school. The team for the Comenius Partnership project was founded in October 2011, and this same team is now an eTwinning team, although an unusual one. The TwinSpace is not yet used as much more than a virtual store room where partners share documents and information. The lead teacher is thinking about starting a 'project within the project' using eTwinning. He knows that the pupils he'll be teaching in the coming school year will be able to use computers very well and that they like it, so he'll try and find a small group of pupils (and a teacher) at one of their partner schools to do a project online.

While the Comenius Partnership project was set up by the former head teacher, and is now managed by the new one, it does not necessarily mean that the management launches all projects at the SKB. The school head says he is very open to suggestions and ideas from the teachers and he tries to



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support them as best he can. Both the lead teacher and a colleague, Christoph Altherr, confirm this. Their motivation to be part of the project is to collaborate with other schools in Europe and broaden their perspectives.

Team activities

The team meets twice a month in the conference room, where they discuss the next steps and responsibilities for the different parts of the project. Everyone can add points to the agenda. In the beginning, the team was built of a group of about ten people from different departments interested in the project. Now, after nine months, it is a well-functioning team where each member has his/her own tasks. They first thought they would work in smaller groups on specific tasks, but in the end they decided to always have the full team meet. One day a month, the whole school is involved in an activity related to the project. As the subject is playing and games, the team often has all pupils and teachers meet in the schoolyard to play. When a group prepares to visit one of the partner schools, a small event is organised with information and signs of the Comenius Partnership project in the halls and classrooms.

The lead teacher is responsible for the organisation of the meetings and contact with partner schools. The head teacher, when asked about the motivation of team members, says that they are teachers who like challenges and are not scared to try something new. Unfortunately, most of them are not as interested in ICT and thus eTwinning remains a very small part of the project.

Enablers and obstacles in the school

The eTwinning activities are carried out outside of school time, but inside working hours. At the moment, there are no pupils directly involved, so it's a 'teachers only' project for the SKB. One of the big obstacles to using eTwinning in a more fruitful way is the fact that the teachers involved with the Comenius Partnership project aren't very interested in ICT. While they did have an eTwinning workshop at their school and some of them are fascinated by the possibilities eTwinning offers, they don't see it as a bigger part in their school work – apart from the lead teacher, who would like to start a 'project within the project.'

The distinct heterogeneity of the classes at the SKB is another aspect that makes project work difficult. While the teachers are used to working as a team and in an interdisciplinary way, they also have a lot of work to do and are not always keen on starting something new. The support from the head teacher - who also mentioned that school authorities are in favour of the SKB's project activities - is crucial for the team.

The school's ICT equipment is very good and quite new. There are at least three computers per classroom. The ratio of computers per pupils is not a useful measure in this school; however, several pupils have their own laptops because they need them to be adapted to their disabilities. The school is connected to Zurich's official school network, "Kits for Kids", which offers learning software and coordination tools for teachers. Christoph Altherr, who is a teacher at the SKB's secondary school department, says computers play a major role in his lessons.

Impact of the eTwinning school team

Team members share ideas and results during meetings, but as teamwork is crucial to the rest of the school's activities, this team is only one of many. While the impact compared to other collaborative activities may be small, the lead teacher assures that the impact is a positive one.

The whole school is involved in the Comenius Partnership project, yet eTwinning remains a "logistic" tool that other teachers don't know much about. That said, a new "Skype corner" has been set up in the school for the classes to go to and talk to their partners in Salzburg and Würzburg. Currently, they are investigating how this works for pupils who are unable to talk. This experience has shown that the teachers involved in the project do think of ICT as a means of facilitating communication between partners, but they are not yet sure about how intensely they will use eTwinning – even though they think it's a great thing. As the school is only just halfway through its Comenius Partnership project, it is possible that such impacts on the project will materialize in a later point.

Plans for the future

The SKB is in the middle of their Comenius Partnership project now and some team members, especially the lead teacher, are thinking about using eTwinning in a more active way, including involving their pupils. In any event, it is clear that the SKB teachers need support if they decide to go this way. The appointment of an eTwinning ambassador in Zurich is set to happen soon and once the new version of the TwinSpace is available, a workshop for all eTwinners in the region will take place.

The fact that eTwinning is seen merely an administrative tool in this project is likely due to its nature as a Comenius Partnership project and to the kind of schools involved. Even if the SKB uses computers and electronic devices in their everyday school life, not all teachers are comfortable with using ICT on a higher level. The lack of time is another point that keeps them from exploring eTwinning themselves and inviting their pupils into the TwinSpace, even if the atmosphere at the school would be very good and supportive of collaborative projects. That said, the door remains open to future eTwinning and/or Comenius Partnership activities at the school.



5 Dunant Grundschule (Primary Education) Germany

School website: <http://www.dunant-grundschule.cidsnet.de>

Twinning school profile: <http://www.etwinning.net/en/pub/profile.cfm?f=1&l=en&n=1128>

School context

The Dunant Grundschule located in Germany's capital Berlin is a primary school. There are 455 pupils from the first to sixth grades between the ages of 6-12 years. There are 63 staff members, including 45 teachers and an ICT coordinator who is responsible for the school's website, ICT workshops for teachers and technical support on projects like Comenius Partnerships or eTwinning. The school is technically very well equipped. The school has 88 computers (5 pupils: 1 computer). Regular school classes are in the morning and optional extracurricular classes are available in the afternoon. The school is named after the Swiss founder of the Red Cross, Henri Dunant.

School innovation history

Ronald Pieper-Leopold, the deputy head, introduced computer technology into the school in 1996. Together with Manfred Werner, the ICT coordinator and lead teacher for eTwinning and Comenius Partnership projects, he installed the school's very own server. Their goal was to connect the school as quickly as possible to new technology. They started the first European school partnership in 2001 - a Comenius Partnership project. Since then, each successful project followed another. "As we have been doing this for so long, the international school projects have become part of our school profile," says the deputy head. The school regularly applies for Comenius Partnership projects. Currently they are participating in their fourth Comenius Partnership project – all of which have also been implemented as eTwinning projects.

In 2011 there were seven active teachers and three retired volunteering teachers involved in eTwinning projects, although only three of them are registered on the eTwinning platform. In 2010 and 2011, the school received a National Quality Label and a European Quality Label. Additionally, the school was awarded a National eTwinning Prize in 2011. The lead teacher and one of the

retired teachers regularly take part in national and European eTwinning or Comenius Partnership conferences as well as local events organised by the Berlin education authority.

The school seeks an active exchange with the educational authority in Berlin and has applied to participate in its ICT pilot projects. The school was recently accepted to participate in the education authority's new project "Chalk free School" whereby all classrooms will be equipped with interactive whiteboards until 2014.

The eTwinning team

A core team manages all projects. Its members are Ronald Pieper-Leopold, the deputy head; Manfred Werner, the lead teacher; and retired teacher, Maike Howe. The three have been involved in the school's project work from the very its beginning in 2001. They formed a core team that assumes special management tasks in addition to project work. The retired teacher is responsible for the projects' budgets, the deputy head takes care of the applications for Comenius Partnership projects and the lead teacher is responsible for hardware, ICT and the implementation of eTwinning. "In the core team, we specialise in purpose; we are the contact persons for active teachers so that they may spend more time with their pupils and project work," explains the lead teacher.

The deputy head points out the importance of retired teachers' participation. "Three retired teachers support us with the school partnerships. This is an incredible relief for active teachers. They work on an honorary capacity." Retired teachers support the active teachers during classes, help during project exhibitions and accompany active teachers on school exchanges – all of which they pay out of their own pockets as volunteers.

One of the retired teachers, Maike Howe, took part in the very first school partnership in 2001 when she was still working at the school. Since her retirement in 2009 she agreed to continue to support project work. Though working as a volunteer, she says she benefits from team spirit and is highly motivated to learn from other European school systems and manage a school partnership using ICT. Though the Internet became only part of school communication at the end of her career, the 68 year-old never feared technology. "It was exciting for me from the beginning and since then I became acquainted with it. It is very important to communicate by email and to see what's new on the eTwinning platform. This is how to keep yourself up-to-date with today's developments."

Jasmin Tran, a young teacher who works on the current project "Footsteps for Peace", agrees with Howe. She has worked with the eTwinning platform from the beginning of the project in 2010. She uses the eTwinning forum as a tool to resolve open issues concerning her project with teaching colleagues abroad. The lead teacher keeps an eye on the forum so the young teacher

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doesn't need to look at the eTwinning platform every day. Whenever something is posted for her, he informs her. The lead teacher explains this makes the workload easier for everyone.

Gudrun König also collaborates on the project "Footsteps for Peace". She teaches German and social studies in the third grade. She arranged the first approach of her pupils with the partner class through a classic exchange of letters. "My pupils are in the third grade. Their command of English is too little to communicate on their own over the Internet. This is why we chose to post mail - so they could build their contact over time." Jasmin Tran's also chose to post mail for her pupils' first contact but continued to communicate online by email. Her pupils are in the fifth and sixth grades, between 11-12 years old. During these grades, school exchanges take place. The teachers, however, meet with all partner schools every three months in one of the participating countries. The school allows two teachers from the projects to travel and the costs are funded by the Comenius Partnership project.

Team activities

All projects are included in the regular school classes, says the deputy head, and the pupils work on them regardless of age. In addition, the deputy head tries to involve the parents' association and other out-of-school facilities. "We have won the Academic Berlin Orchestra over for taking part in a music project. One night, seventy musicians - ten adults and sixty children - performed in our hall." Teaching also takes place beyond the classroom. While working on a project, pupils visit exhibitions, and on Europe Day, pupils presented their school partnerships in a digital way to a Member of European Parliament (MEP). Recognition of the international school partnerships is of great importance to the deputy head; he would like the school to be known far beyond its borders. One reason for this effort is the decreasing number of pupils in Germany. Schools in general and primary schools are particularly under pressure to get new pupil registrations, especially at the primary school level. The more attractive the school, the more applications schools gain.

Project work also improves a sense of community among teachers. After every school exchange, teachers meet back in Germany for a private 'culinary get-together' and evaluate their journey. "The team spirit is strengthened by these meetings and we get to know each other better beyond boundaries of grades and subjects," teacher Bettina Hildebrand-Lange explains. She teaches art, German and social studies. Otherwise professional interaction takes only place within their grades at the school. Through the project work "Footsteps for Peace" the teachers Tran, Hildebrand-Lange and König have started to cooperate across class grades. All project teachers confirm that the interaction with their European colleagues has changed their view of their own professional work. Their own teaching methods have been reviewed, new ones have been made known and the European idea has been carried into their school.



Katharina Schulz who teaches music, art and German will start a new project in the 2012-2013 school year with the fifth and sixth grades. Fond of computer work, she especially looks forward to combining her subjects with ICT. "I'm interested in the virtual space of these platforms and can use my skills when we perform a play interactively." After a training course she started to use the interactive whiteboard for her music lessons. Though her classes are still taught by lecture, some things have changed. "I don't need to go to the music room to show an instrument. Now I can find pictures online via the interactive whiteboard and can play notes with the digital keyboard."

A fellow of the project is Ildiko Bikfalvi, a German, social studies, art, theatre and dance teacher. Her vested interest in the European exchange is due to her Hungarian roots and her own experiences with other cultures. She is curious to know how education takes place in other countries. "Maybe I can learn what to improve in my own work," she says. Though her first and second graders are very young, she would like them to be part of the project. "I would like to lay a motivational foundation for my younger pupils so that when they are 11 or 12 years old, they will be ready for a personal exchange with partner schools." It is no coincidence that the lead teacher has put the art as the focus of the upcoming project. "We purposely focused on these two colleagues and their subjects when devising the project. In this way, we are bringing new colleagues on board."

Enablers and obstacles in the school

Most teachers use already modern communication techniques. The Internet and modern ICT are part of their teaching thanks to a wealth of experience in digital school partnerships, the deputy

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head says. He also emphasises that they are fortunate to have an ICT coordinator who asks as a support to all teachers to solve problems quickly. “This helps to encourage teachers to get involved in new technologies and start a project with the luxury of an in-house ICT support.”

The core team meets regularly in its own project room. There is no fixed date to meet but during the beginning phase of a project, or before a school exchange starts, the core team and all project teachers meet to prepare.

As European school exchange is a flagship activity at Dunant Grundschule and highly supported by the school board, all teachers who join a project receive compensation hours in the first few months. “Through a reduction in work time, we would like to encourage and appreciate the engagement of the teachers,” the deputy head explains. Project work has taken on a ‘whole school approach’ over the last decade and often relies on Comenius funding to get started.

Impact of the eTwinning school team

All involved teachers agree that the interaction with their European colleagues is a benefit to their daily work, to the analysis of their own country's school system and to the improvement of their teaching structures and methods. Furthermore, they are motivated by the work. “The reason for our very good team spirit is deeply rooted in our inception. When we started the first project in 2001, all teachers were excited and fascinated by how ICT makes international school partnerships possible,” remembers the lead teacher. Beyond project work, many teachers foster friendships with their international partners, which has a spillover effect on other teachers who join or are thinking of joining.

All teachers agree that international school partnerships via ICT are very important in primary school. It is the only way to get first graders in contact with peers from other countries without having a compulsory school exchange. This digitally native generation is highly motivated when working on ICT projects and is astonished by its own results, which take place through digital communication.

Plans for the future

The primary school wants to continue working on European school exchange projects. As “Footsteps for Peace” closed at the end of the 2011 school year, the new project “Curtain up for European Talents” started seamlessly in 2012 due to exemplary project management. The lead teacher, deputy head and retired teacher work rigorously to keep the projects going and encourage more teachers to take part tailor the content to match interested teachers' qualifications.

In summary

A key role to easing the workload is a task-sharing system implemented which has successfully lessened the workload for the team and lead projects to high achievement and recognition levels. Outstanding is the involvement of the three retired teachers in project work and the core team; all three are as involved as active teachers even though they work voluntarily. This is an indicator of how project work creates a strong bond between retired and active teachers - as well as a strong team spirit.

Another key factor in the successful implementation of digital school partnerships is the position of an ICT coordinator; if any technical problem occurs teachers have a contact person who works with them directly to give “first ‘digital’ aid”. Technical barriers in the school hardly exist and the willingness to learn ICT is high among all teachers.

The efforts of the deputy head lead also play an important role in the school's success stories. In fact, he originally initialised international school partnerships through ICT in 2001 when he was a teacher himself at the school. In this way, their story stemmed from a truly teacher-driven project to a whole-school approach.



6 Lycée Blériot, vocational school (Secondary Education) France

School website: <http://www.lyc-bleriot-trappes.ac-versailles.fr/>

Twinning school profile: http://www.etwinning.net/en/pub/connect/browse_people_schools_and_pro/profile.cfm?f=1&l=de&n=38857#

School context

The Lycée des Métiers Louis Blériot, a secondary school, is situated in a disadvantaged area of Trappes, a town with over 30,000 inhabitants and a high rate of immigration about twenty kilometres southwest of Paris. The school has 350 pupils, including 89 girls. Two-thirds of the pupils live near the school and the rest over 20 km away. There are 80 people on staff, including about 50 teachers. The school has 3 computer labs.

Courses are offered for qualifications ranging from a vocational secondary school training certificate (CAP) to a vocational secondary school diploma (bac professionnel) in two sections (industrial and services). Since the start of the 2009 school year, an educational class for adolescents with cognitive disabilities has also been operational with an enrolment of 11 pupils.

The school suffers from an image problem and the number of pupils has been going down for the last few years. A third of the pupils of the school come from disadvantaged families, compared to 20% in the rest of the educational district.

School innovation history

There are a number of Leonardo and Comenius projects in the school run by the English and literature teacher, also an eTwinning Ambassador, with the aim of enabling some of the pupils to go to England this year. However, the school does not have strategic planning and implementation of European projects as such.

In 2012, the school had three registered teachers and seventeen eTwinning projects. In the early days of eTwinning, up to seven teachers from the Lycée Blériot had been registered on the programme, but none of them ran or participated in the projects. Their registration was motivated more by the possibility of having an insight into the proposed projects than by a desire to create one. Currently, the same teacher implements the projects and a small team of three other colleagues who participate without actually being registered supports her. In addition, the chief educational advisor and the school administrator have expressed their interest in contributing to the team.

The head teacher, who has been in charge of the school since 2011, had heard about eTwinning before his arrival. He is a former physical education (PE) teacher with a "macro" approach to teaching. He does not consider projects as isolated and individual elements. In his opinion, beyond the interest generated amongst the pupils, the projects are also real "driving forces" within the school. He explains that currently all of their European projects have had a positive impact on the school's image, especially during presentations in local schools. "The public realises that things are changing." He believes in personalised education that takes into account the pupil's personality. "We work on a subject and vary the tasks in accordance with the pupils." He also stresses that the project represents an effective way to use ICT in education, something that he really believes in. "Computing tools allow everyone to work at their own pace [...]. We must also provide subjects to work on [through computing] to those who want to do something, otherwise they will tune out."

The eTwinning team

An eTwinning team was established in 2010 and depending on the project, some changes apply. The lead teacher is Murièle Dejaune who teaches English and French. She discovered eTwinning during a teacher training session in 2006. She started her own project in 2007 before getting her colleagues involved. In five years, she has co-founded twelve of the seventeen school projects, and won five National Quality Labels and four European Quality Labels. She has taken part in three Professional Development Workshops and two eTwinning annual conferences. She is also an eTwinning ambassador.

Another member of the team is Annick Zerbini, a biotechnology teacher. She is in charge of the cooking classes and is interested in finding synergies between eTwinning project work and the curriculum she is implementing. For example, gastronomy fits well with her subject teaching goals. Lastly, there is the English assistant who supports the lead teacher for all of the English courses.

Occasional participants in the school team, who participated in team activities only once or twice, are a maths teacher, the plastic arts, history and geography teachers. In the 2011-2012 school year, the team worked on the project called "A Colourful World of Vegetables" with Turkey and France. Additionally, a Polish and a Croatian school joined the project. The eTwinning team for this project consists of the core teachers and three other colleagues also participate occasionally.

Team activities

There has been an established eTwinning team for almost three years. The team usually works on a common eTwinning project that calls for an interdisciplinary approach enabling the implementation of various activities. The English teacher recalls that it was the topic of the on-going project, "A Colourful World of Vegetables", which called for teamwork, since following recipes did not fall within her area of expertise. Moreover, calculating the measurements of ingredients gave the maths teacher the opportunity to motivate her pupils when faced with a very concrete problem-solving exercise.

To prepare the project work over the various classes, staff worked together to create a system that allowed pupils to cover a necessary concept with one teacher before employing their knowledge of it in the class of another. The teachers in the team estimated that this system worked well.

Enablers and obstacles in the school

The eTwinning team greatly appreciated that the project, its activities and all the timetables worked well together. They emphasise that the school head helped with their request to organise the timetable in a way that would facilitate teamwork. Colleagues were able to meet mainly during working hours in the staff room and computer labs. It was one of the most helpful factors. In fact, teachers claim that the main obstacle for this sort of collaborative work is the difficulty in being able to meet. The English assistant mentioned that in another school where she had worked, the incompatible timetables were the main obstacle for having an eTwinning project team.

The teachers are aware that the head teacher believes an eTwinning project represents a real asset for the school, testifying to the energy and enthusiasm of its teaching staff. However, at the same time, they also note that there is a lack of institutional recognition for work done within this project. "We feel that the head teacher is satisfied, but recognition ends there." They suggest that by awarding schools and staff with some sort of "label" to acknowledge the dedication and work of both management and teachers involved in eTwinning projects could be a step forward.

The maths teacher highlights the fact that the activities happened "at the right time of year." She also points out that the work she did for the project "fell within the required curriculum" and was carried out during class hours. This was not the case for all the teachers involved in the project, as some used extra hours to help pupils with their professional project to work on eTwinning. Moreover, another enabling factor was the small size of pupils who were involved in the project activities, no more than twelve pupils. The English assistant said, "I would not have been able to work with a class of 24. Pupils lack confidence and are not independent enough to work alone. Plus, support often needs to be tailored to the individual."



The school has three computer labs, one of which was used throughout the year exclusively for the eTwinning project. One of the teachers points out that being able to provide a pupil with a computer greatly facilitated the work. Moreover, a lab technician was present to instantly sort out any technical problems, which was well appreciated by the teachers. However, the team highlights a potential problem: if other projects are started in the school, there will probably be a shortage of facilities and rooms.

Even if the team there has been an established eTwinning team for almost three years in the school, it has not seen any growth in terms of involving new colleagues. The teachers emphasise that it is entirely possible for an eTwinning school project to bring together and involve several teachers, provided that the relationship between them is genuine.

Impact of the eTwinning school team

The impact of the eTwinning project team was tangible on the organisation of the studies for the pupils who participated in the project. All the activities took place during English classes, usually in a computing lab where the pupils worked alone or in pairs in front of a computer and were supported by both the teacher and the English assistant. Activities involved material taught by the biotechnology and geography teachers. Some of the activities included research on the geographic origin of the different fruits and vegetables, investigation on how they arrived to France, and creating quizzes and videos to be shared with their foreign schoolmates. At the School Open Day, the pupils had the opportunity to present their work to the visiting parents.

The interviewed teachers estimate that participating pupils were motivated by the project and really embraced it, which obviously made the eTwinning teaching staff's task easier. The English and French

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teacher says, "it invigorates my teaching. I see pupils work differently, they communicate with their European partners." As for the subject of proportionality, the maths teacher says, "they understood it better [working within the project] than they did the first time [during the regular classes], because it was presented in a different context." For her, eTwinning was, "a chance to go over the subject again with the pupils in a way that would motivate them."

As for the impact on teachers, the teacher who co-founded the project, and who now works almost exclusively with eTwinning, believes that it helped her to meet her colleagues regularly, to share teaching methods, and to discuss the pupils' work with staff from other subjects. However, for those who were involved only from time to time, the effects were less; eTwinning offers a break from their usual teaching practices and occasionally, it allowed them to use ICT more often and to work with colleagues.

The other colleagues in the school are made aware of the school's eTwinning projects via the school newsletter called "Bleriot Flash". The weekly school news coverage is intended to inform all of the teaching staff, parents and pupils about past and coming events. The vice-head teacher emails it to the teaching staff every week. It is also posted in several places in the school and available on the school's website. Promoting the concept of eTwinning amongst colleagues who have not yet dared to get involved is important. One of the new colleagues in the school says, "colleagues know that there will be an eTwinning event, but they do not necessarily know what it will be about. At first, I thought it concerned only the English teachers."

Conclusion and plans for the future

The team's project work was facilitated by the head teacher who arranges the timetables to give teachers the opportunity to work together. Dependable equipment and the lab technician's help were also crucial. Moreover, the teachers were happy that there were no predefined teams but they were free to choose the colleagues which whom to work. Finally, the presence of an experienced teacher – one who is familiar with eTwinning tools and who has already been in charge of distance-learning programmes – to act as a "driving force" behind the project represents a real asset.

Today, the existing team members express their willingness to continue to work together on eTwinning projects, and they wish to involve other colleagues, too. In the future, the lead teacher, who plays a very active role in eTwinning, plans to continue to set up new projects each year and in each class. Their motivation comes from the interest shown by the pupils and also from seeing them finally enjoying their work.



7 **1st High School of Ilioupolis** (Lower Secondary Education) **Greece**

School website: <http://1gym-ilioup.att.sch.gr>

Twinning school profile: http://www.etwinning.net/en/pub/connect/browse_people_schools_and_pro/profile.cfm?f=1&l=en&n=117089

School context

The 1st High School of Ilioupolis is the first of eight lower secondary schools in the municipality of Ilioupolis, a suburb at the feet of mountain Hymettus in the south-eastern part of metropolitan Athens.

The high school has 327 pupils between the ages of 13-15 years, 36 teachers and 4 staff members. The school is based in a very large building, which also houses a lyceum (higher secondary school) and a primary school. The facilities are comparatively large and spacious, e.g., an oversized schoolyard with basketball and volleyball courts, a handball court/mini soccer field surrounded by track, an indoor gymnasium and a large multi-purpose theatre. Although the above-mentioned facilities are shared with the lyceum, the high school has also its own school library, physics lab and computer lab.

The high school's ICT infrastructure appears to be marginally sufficient, comprising of networked PCs located mainly in the school's computer lab, with technical and availability issues. The pupil-computer ratio is 33:1.

The head teacher is fairly new to the school, having been appointed as the head teacher in September 2011. The school's eTwinners are newcomers, all of whom are women who teach a variety of subjects.

School innovation history

Although the school has no prior eTwinning history and the teachers haven't been involved in any eTwinning projects before, two of its four active eTwinning projects were founded by teachers from the school. There are five registered eTwinning teachers who get both regular and occasional

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help for their eTwinning projects from seven further colleagues (some of whom plan to register) as well as the head teacher.

The school has a history of non-funded, school or national programme-related bilateral school projects that aim to establish communication, collaboration and even partnerships with schools abroad. In 2008, in the context of two programmes - one on environmental studies and the other

on health education - a school visit to France funded by the pupils' parents was organised to explore the suburban forests of Paris and local eating habits, respectively. Based on the bilateral collaboration experience between the adjacent lyceum (higher secondary school) with Heerbeek College (in Best, The Netherlands) it was decided to develop collaboration at the high school (lower secondary)



level and evolve it into an eTwinning project including a pupil exchange. Similarly, internal school projects and development activities on health education seemed ready for the next level as well. With that, an eTwinning project about food was co-founded with Heerbeek College in The Netherlands.

Collaboration with organisations or entities outside the school has been incidental and rather limited; however, the school works closely with parents, the school's parent association and the local school board.

The eTwinning team

The main team is a group of four, consisting of the lead teacher, Panagiota Karampini, a classical languages, Latin & Greek, history, Greek language & literature teacher; , Anastasia Belogianni, an ICT teacher; Effi Efstathiou, a biology, chemistry and geography teacher; and, Efstathia Papanastasatou, a home economics and geography teacher. Mara Beretsou, a German language teacher, is also an eTwinner in the school; however she often works on her own as she focuses on a curricular approach to her German classes -rather than the core team's whole-school approach. The team took its first

shape in 2011, when the retiring head teacher suggested a bilateral collaboration at high school level (lower secondary) based on the upper secondary's experience with the school in The Netherlands. The first project was registered in September 2011.

The main team used from a cross-curricular approach involving almost all subject areas taught by the team members. This made it easier for everybody to incorporate eTwinning activities and work during class hours. However, a major issue was to find a common time to meet or complete work, especially during school hours, due to teaching schedule discrepancies and a strict school timetable. It quickly became evident that the team had to meet after school hours to organise, programme and distribute activities that could be done during class hours. On some occasions, cross-subject lessons were co-taught, i.e., the Greek language teacher used the computer lab along with the ICT teacher.

All team members, including the German teacher, initially collaborated closely to overcome any technical and administrative issues such as registering the school and themselves to the platform, learning how to use the TwinSpace and communicate with partners using ICT and the eTwinning platform.

Team activities

The German language teacher's goal has been to enhance her pupils' knowledge of German, by focusing primarily on German-speaking eTwinning projects integrated in the class curriculum. She considered all her pupils (in all grades, ages 13-15 years) as eTwinners and urges them through specific activities to make contact and communicate with pupils from partner schools, during and outside of school hours.

The main team's pupils (primarily from 8th grade classes, age 14 years) meet regularly with their teachers once a week and much of their work at home, using their personal computers and Internet connections. During school hours, curriculum-related work is implemented in class by the teachers. The highlight of the project was a pupil exchange in April 2012 when 16 pupils, 2 teachers and the head teacher from the Dutch school visited for one week. The Dutch pupils and teachers stayed at the Greek pupils' and teachers' homes and participated in classes and other events, such as: a special class on Greek history and culture, e.g., traditional Greek songs and dances performed by the pupils and a presentation of characteristic scenes from famous Greek movies; a special class on the "Summary of Iliad"; a posters presentation by the pupils made in art class; and a visit to the Marathon Museum. Other project events included a visit to an vineyard and an herbs-planting activity.

Enablers and obstacles in the school

One of the major obstacles was the high school's ICT infrastructure that seems to be marginally sufficient, comprised of 10 networked PCs in the computer lab, as well as 3 PCs for administrative and teacher preparation use, using a shared broadband connection provided by the Panhellenic School Network. Major technical problems and issues regarding the computer lab's infrastructure, that hindered the projects' smooth start and flow, were compensated by the ICT teacher's efforts to fix them. The pupils had to do a lot of ICT-related work at home using their personal computers and Internet access. Nevertheless, the local school board contributed to resolve the issues and replaced five older and non-usable PCs in April 2012. Additionally, due to the school's curriculum and timetable constraints, the computer lab and the school's video projector were not always available for eTwinning activities. For the purposes of the German-speaking eTwinning projects, a small classroom in the adjacent lyceum's building was claimed, where a separate commercial broadband internet connection has been installed and paid for by the German language teacher.

Another issue the team had to tackle was the fact that pupils' ICT skills were unevenly distributed. This was resolved through additional effort by the ICT teacher during her classes or by the team members, even between classes, and by engaging ICT-skilled pupils to help or lead other pupils.

In the beginning, several parents were reluctant to allow their children to communicate via Internet from home and/or unattended. They gradually changed their minds as (1) many teachers adopted and integrated the eTwinning project into their class work, and (2) it became clear that the eTwinning platform provided a secured environment. While initially inhibitors, parents became enablers, especially during the Dutch partners' visit.

The head teacher welcomed and encouraged eTwinning efforts from the beginning. She facilitated organisational and financial issues regarding the partners' visit in cooperation with the school board and city council and participated actively by teaching the special class on the "Summary of Iliad".

Worth mentioning is that the team didn't ask for any changes to the school's timetable, although it would be very helpful for them. Nor did they receive any free time from teaching or other incentives to do eTwinning-related work.

Impact of the eTwinning school team

The sheer amount of work and activities proposed was an ambitious and difficult task, which could only be tackled by a group of collaborating teachers who supported each other. In addition, the number of subject areas involved and the cross-curricular approach got many more pupils

interested and excited in participating in the project and class activities. The increased pupil motivation attracted also the attention of parents, whose initial reluctance turned into enthusiasm and active participation.

The team members complement each other technically, and due to mutual help and support, they improve their technical skills and promote the integration of ICT in their classroom teaching more easily and rapidly.

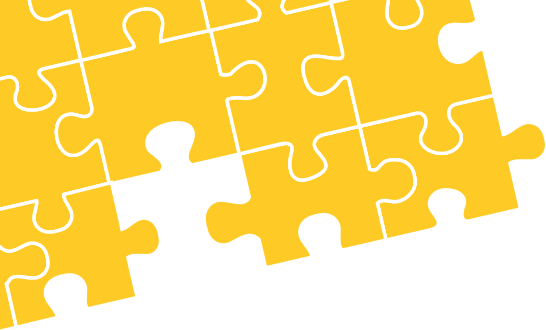
As stated by the home economics teacher, “the school team helped colleagues, as well as pupils, to become closer. This had a positive impact on our everyday or formal teaching activities and definitely motivated us. It’s given us joy in doing our jobs and learning from each other.”

Plans for the future

The main eTwinning team plans to continue its collaboration and teamwork in order to complete this year’s project in the next school year. It plans to close it with a visit of Greek pupils and teachers to The Netherlands.

While it is likely that some of the team members will not be appointed to stay at the school in the next school year, the school feels confident that the team will grow due the strong support that teachers have given it in general. If the current team splits and members end up being appointed in two or three different schools, they hope to continue to participate as partners in a common eTwinning project in order to work as a team again. Also, they will explore the possibility of a dedicated space or room in their school for eTwinning.

Encouraged by 2012’s eTwinning programme and team work success, the school is keen to also participate in European Schoolnet’s call for 160 schools to join pilot activities in inGenious, the European Commission’s joint funded project in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) education.



8 Convent Primary School Listowel (Primary Education) Ireland

School website: <http://conventprimarylistowel.scoilnet.ie/blog>

Twinning school profile: http://www.etwinning.net/en/pub/connect/browse_people_schools_and_pro/profile.cfm?f=1&l=en&n=106526

School Context

Convent Primary School Listowel, located in the southwest of Ireland, was opened in 1990. The school serves 240 children from junior infants to sixth class (aged 4-12 years). The school has a total of 22 staff and 250 pupils.

Listowel is a market town on the River Feale, 28 km from the county town, Tralee. The town is sometimes described as the "Literary Capital of Ireland". Listowel is deemed to be a very cultural town and the pupils in Convent Primary School are taught the tin whistle and accordion. They also learn Irish dancing and are involved in the Listowel Writers Week. Convent Primary School is a girls only catholic school. While the school has a catholic ethos, it also has due recognition of all other religions.

The school shares the same campus as the Nano Nagle School and it is the only mainstream primary school in Ireland to share a campus with a special needs school. Many joint activities are carried out together.

School innovation history

Convent Primary school is a dynamic school with involvement in the Our World Irish Aid Awards, Discover Primary Science Awards and the Green Flag Awards. A very active parents council exists within the school and very close links exist between the school and the community. Committees within the school include active health promotion and green schools.

While the school hasn't been involved in European collaborative projects prior to this, the school has been involved in collaboration with schools in Ireland and has developed strong links in the local community with various organisations. Convent Primary School has a very active school band and bands visit the school and perform. The pupils can participate in the school band from second to sixth class and the band performs annually at the Listowel Races and in the St. Patrick's Day Parade. All staff is involved in some activity with links with the local sports groups such as basketball and football. Anne O' Connor Brosnan, the vice head teacher, believes that eTwinning supports the school's mission statement. The pupils are learning about other countries and cultures and it is broadening their vision. The social element of the project is very important and with eTwinning there is an opportunity to learn more about the world. In the project 'Wonderful Legends', the pupils learned about legends from other countries.

According to the vice head teacher, the school didn't have the know-how on how to collaborate with schools in Europe until eTwinning. She believes that technology lends itself to doing things without huge costs.

The eTwinning team

Brenda Walsh, a learning support/resource teacher is the eTwinning lead teacher in the school. She is a founder of two eTwinning projects. She is the only teacher registered for eTwinning but has invited her colleague Mairéad Regan, teacher of third class, to the TwinSpace of 'Wonderful Legends'. The lead teacher initially heard about eTwinning at a Comenius In-service Training Course in Malta and upon her return decided to register for eTwinning. The lead teacher also participated in an eTwinning Multilateral Workshop in Sweden in 2011 for teachers from Sweden, Germany and Ireland. She also attended a local information workshop given by a National eTwinning Ambassador. The lead teacher has a very keen interest in ICT in education and is responsible for the school website. The lead teacher is also involved in Mission V, a programme that inspires and engages children in their learning through the use of game-based learning initiatives.

The third class teacher was keen to get involved to find out new teaching strategies. She said, "it is the culture of the school to get involved in different projects." From the lead teachers' point of view, it was the opportunity to try out something new. The lead teacher spoke with the head teacher of the school about her interest in pursuing an eTwinning project and then approached the third class teacher to find out if she was interested in getting involved. The third class teacher was very enthusiastic as well as the head teacher. The team has worked together successfully for 5 months.

The lead teacher found her Swedish partner, Karin, on the eTwinning Portal. When she successfully applied to attend the eTwinning Multilateral Workshop in Sweden in October 2011, she met with Karin. The individual team members bring different competencies to the team. The lead teacher concentrated

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on the ICT end of the project while the third class teacher focused on art and integrating the project across the curriculum – art, English and social, environmental and scientific education (SESE).

The lead teacher and third class teacher will report back to the school management team on completion of the eTwinning project with feedback. They will then decide if they will incorporate it in the school plans for the new school year and if other staff members are interested in joining. The vice head teacher already believes that, “this has been a successful venture.”

Team activities

The lead teacher and third class teacher work on the common eTwinning project ‘Wonderful Legends’. They work across different subject areas at the same grade level. The pupils work with their peers in the Swedish and German schools, demonstrating their work to their peers. Each country uses storyboards to tell their legends. “Not only did [the pupils] learn a foreign legend, but they also learned skills on the computer” notes the third class teacher.

Approximately 50% of the eTwinning team’s work is carried out during teaching hours while 50% is done outside of school hours on teachers’ own time. The latter is spent doing preparation work for the class. The primary school curriculum is very busy and it is necessary to prepare lesson plans outside of school hours.



The lead teacher and third class teacher discussed together how they were going to approach the storyboards. Initially the entire class took part in the same eTwinning tasks. However after a while, they felt that it would be better to create eight groups comprising of four pupils each. The pupils decided the sequence of the storyboard as well as doing artwork to depict the Swedish legends.

It is evident that a very good working relationship evolved between the two teachers. There is an eTwinning display area set up in a communal area of the school where everyone can see the progress of the project. Parents can see the work done by the pupils. The school organises a ‘Grandparents Day’ where the pupils can show their grandparents their work.

The lead teacher met with her partners at the eTwinning Multilateral Workshop in Sweden. The lead teacher believes it was very instrumental to the success of the project. She believes the theme of the project was also very age appropriate and proved to be very popular with the pupils.

Enablers and obstacles in the school

The team meets in the school staffroom. A vibrant creative atmosphere exists within the school where new activities are encouraged and a broad range of extra-curricular activities exists. "It is the culture of the school to get involved in different projects," explains the third class teacher.

The ICT facilities in the school are conducive to the success of the project. The lead teacher and third class teacher have an interactive whiteboard in their classroom and use a laptop trolley with 16 laptops. The school has a website and a blog which the lead teacher manages.

The school management team is very supportive of the idea of an eTwinning project and allowed the team some flexibility with their class timetable. The school supports discussions among the staff members about new teaching practices. The eTwinning team plan to showcase the project to the rest of the staff at an upcoming staff meeting. The school was very supportive of the lead teacher attending the Computers in Education Society of Ireland (CESI) Conference this year. The lead teacher also presented the eTwinning project at the ICT in Education Conference at Limerick Institute of Technology in 2012.

In terms of rewards, it was felt that it was a great way to find out new teaching strategies and to upskill. The third class teacher had used neither Skype prior to the project nor the software programme used for the storyboards. Both teachers are very motivated to continue upskilling and bring a new dimension to their teaching. School staff attends in-service training courses at the local education centre. Here many have done courses in ICT and a member of staff provides training in the school on interactive whiteboards during the summer as part of in-service training.

In terms of obstacles, resources are an issue as the school has lost the resource teacher for traveller pupils and the English language support teacher and up to an additional 2-3 resource teacher posts may be lost. Therefore it might prove more difficult to get involved in such projects as eTwinning in the future. Both the school management and the teachers felt that another obstacle was the lack of substitution cover available for teachers to attend eTwinning Professional Development Workshops. Also, at times there are problems with the school broadband connection and the Internet can be quite slow.

Class size was considered a barrier (32 pupils being too large a group) but the third class teacher and the lead teacher decided to split the class into 8 groups (4 pupils per group). The third class teacher concentrated on art and the lead teacher on the storyboard software.

Impact of the eTwinning school team

Since working with each other on 'Wonderful Legends', the eTwinning team shares ideas on effective teaching methods. They discuss the pupils' progress in the project, what works and what could be done better. It allows them to think more critically about the instructional practice at the school. The interactive whiteboard is now used in the classroom and the pupils chat online to their peers in Sweden. This was the first time that the third class teacher and the lead teacher worked together in the classroom and on a project. They did both observe each other's teaching methods in the classroom and found this beneficial. They both made time to meet in the staffroom to discuss the project plan. They both agreed that they would be happy to work with each other again. What really worked successfully was giving the pupils responsibility in the project, e.g., allowing pupils to use the digital cameras, do storyboard programming, decide on the sequence of the pictures for the storyboard themselves, or make podcasts of the legends. This allowed the pupils to take control and participate fully.

Since working on the eTwinning project, a culture of collaboration has grown among teachers. The vice head teacher actively monitors the progress of the project and the school management team is very supportive. The technology skills of the eTwinning team have improved and it has allowed them to integrate these skills into their classroom teaching. It has helped them to introduce new models of teaching and learning into the classroom. They believe that the pupils really enjoy the project, especially the interaction with their peers in Sweden. With Skype, they could see straight into the Swedish classroom and build up a rapport.

Plans for the future

The teachers plan on working together in the future – although this is dependent upon staff resources in the school. The eTwinning team believes that other staff members may register for eTwinning and start their own projects. All in all, eTwinning has been a very positive experience for this school.



9 “Ada Negri” - part of I. C. “Don Rinaldo Beretta” (Primary Education) **Italy**

School website: <http://www.icdonberettagiussano.it/>

Twinning school profile: <http://www.etwinning.net/it/pub/profile.cfm?f=1&l=it&n=3225>

School context

The primary school “Ada Negri” is a large school located in Paina, a small industrial village in the Municipality of Giussano near Milan. The school is part of a comprehensive institute named “Don Rinaldo Beretta” which includes three primary schools (Robbiano, Birone and Paina) and a middle school. In total, the institute has 1,100 pupils (2011-2012 school year), 326 of whom attend the primary school “Ada Negri” - the largest of the four schools - with 34 teachers and 5 attendants. The head teacher is shared across all four schools within the institute.

The primary school is located in a relatively new building with a lot of space. Despite the size and importance of the school, ICT tools are scarce. There is one computers lab but only some computers have an Internet connection. The ratio of pupils to computers is 22:1. The school has a good relationship with local authorities - such as the Municipality of Giussano, and the regional school office - which creates a good environment to expand the impact of initiatives such as eTwinning.

School innovation history

Since the very beginning of the eTwinning Action in 2005, the head teacher, Giuseppe Mariani, was attracted to eTwinning and saw it as potential for innovation at European level. His registration is one of the first Italian registrations on the Portal.



This aspect was especially important considering that the institute has not been involved in any other kind of European or international programme previously, e.g., the school has not been part of a Comenius Partnership. The head teacher simply chose eTwinning because he thought it was perfect for what he considered, and still considers, important for a 21st century school.

Since 2005, the school has developed several small interesting projects. At the time, the head teacher was the only registered eTwinner at the school, but in reality there was a large team of teachers working with pupils in the classes and using the head teacher's login details to work on the Desktop and TwinSpace. Only in 2010, thanks to the National Support Service, two of the teachers, Laura Cattaneo and Isabella Cattaneo, became registered themselves and began to use the Desktop with their own profiles. Other colleagues then followed their example.

After more than 20 founded projects and a few others as a partner school, some teachers at the school started to take more of leadership role. In particular, Laura Cattaneo became an Italian eTwinning ambassador in 2010. In 2011, the school received their second National Quality Label for the project "Happy friends". In 2012, "Turn off a game, turn on a book", a large cross-curricular project, involved many teachers as well as parents and the municipal administration. This was considered a "real school [team] project", as it involves the entire primary school population as 'stakeholders'.

The eTwinning team

The team is lead by the ambassador, Laura Cattaneo, although she shares her responsibility equally with her colleague, Isabella Cattaneo. The two have been working together in eTwinning

since the 2005-2006 school year, even if at the very beginning they were under the supervision of the head teacher. They worked initially in the same class which facilitated their teamwork: it was a natural choice to work together, working with the same pupils and in the same classroom. When they were assigned to different classes, their teamwork did not stop, and in fact, it was the impetus for new initiatives, such as the 'twinning' of the classes in the same school, with the mutual introduction of children, and the reason to develop common contents and common objectives for them as teachers. In 2010, the two started to work more independently, but always jointly, within eTwinning.

Other teachers are welcomed and encouraged to be involved in the team. Further members of the team include: Caterina Buccheri, a former special needs teacher, who now teaches English; Daniela Belluschi, a teacher of Italian, geography and history; as well as Cristina Longoni, Dolores Ciraci, Giuseppina Isabella Pronzato and Raffaella Motta. A total of nine teachers plus the head teacher are registered and active on the eTwinning Portal, covering a wide range of subjects.

The strength of the team clearly stems from the head teacher. He discovered the potentiality of eTwinning in 2005 and tried to involve all teachers in school-based projects, considering the school as a whole team. As most of the teachers are in their first teaching positions, they have learned how to work in team and that eTwinning is not something to do on one's own, but a good opportunity for the whole school to develop together. In this perspective, all the school's projects so far - from the most simple to the most complex - have always been developed as a team.

Team activities

Once the annual educational programme, together with learning objectives, is discussed and agreed upon, teachers then try to direct their work in eTwinning. There is a philosophy that permeates all decisions and activities in this team: when we work together, we share the joy but above all we are more ready to overcome all the difficulties, together.

Almost every month, all teachers involved meet to monitor the state of advancement of the project and talk about eTwinning in general. This is a good opportunity for the two teachers who lead the team to look around, to investigate what has been achieved, what has not, and brainstorm on future activities. For the other teachers, it is an occasion to present their difficulties and challenges, meet each other, and seek appropriate support from more expert colleagues.

The eTwinning activities are usually formalised also with the inclusion in the POF ("Piano dell'Offerta Formativa" – plan of the educational offer in the school). Moreover, the project is presented to parents in the first meeting of the year and they are involved and informed regularly about the European climate of the school.

ITALY

The open mindedness of the whole school has also made it possible for eTwinning to grow. One of the most important novelties of the 2011-2012 school year was the involvement of pupils as “little eTwinning ambassadors.” When they received the Polish flag from their peers in one project, they decided to bring it around to other classes to talk about their project, their friends and their exchange of activities – which was a great way to promote eTwinning to other teachers and pupils. All this has resulted in a whole school project, which involves not only a single class or individual teacher, but also a number of classes and teachers, each with her/his own role and with a degree of involvement appropriate to her/his experience.

This particular atmosphere has been ideal for a large eTwinning project, based on intensive interdisciplinary work involving Italian, music, art, drawing and computer science with pupils of all ages. The work of the team is based on the word ‘together’. There is the necessity to work together, even if some teachers have the specific task to work on the platform. The important thing is that the work behind the product is truly a shared effort by teachers and pupils.

Everyone in the school consider eTwinning as something useful that can be used to meet specific didactic needs. Teachers do not feel forced to produce a piece of work simply because it can be hosted in the TwinSpace. Rather, it is a matter of seeing which of the numerous tools available on the eTwinning platform best satisfies a specific need. As the head teacher notes, “eTwinning is nothing more, nothing less than school, work in eTwinning is school!”

Enablers and obstacles in the school

All teachers have access to a range of spaces where they can meet, both as an eTwinning team or in general, such as teacher rooms and computer labs. The organisational work of the team is carried out mostly outside teaching hours and is essentially in the hands of the lead teachers.

The team is strongly supported by the head teacher in all aspects. The rooms granted to eTwinning activities are very large, both from the point of view of time and space. The head teacher has also agreed to pay extra school calendar hours, approximately ten hours per month, to the two lead teachers who are then free to deal with their organisational work without affecting their teaching hours.

The attention the head teacher pays to eTwinning has been key to overcoming the scarce availability of new technologies in the school. The fact that pupils have but a few computers at their disposal, not all of which are connected to Internet, is a limit to their real involvement in the media activities of the project. Teachers must be creative and committed to coordinating the pupils’ work so that everyone can participate according to his/her skills and knowledge.

The individual participation of each teacher on the platform could be improved and extended beyond their pedagogical contributions to project work. Teamwork is such an essential part of project activities that the operation on the platform has been delegated almost entirely to two expert teachers. This may be a culture being carried over from the head teacher who used to operate on the Portal alone. As in the past, the NSS has taken action to correct this situation to support all teachers in using the platform on her/his own.

Impact of the eTwinning school team

Going from “I & me” to “we & us” - this is the added value of working in team. Teachers are able to see how sharing experiences enriches not only their professional lives but also their personal lives. eTwinning is the right “place” to do that. They share their skills and experiences, and even the most recent colleagues to join eTwinning from the school, despite their inexperience on the Portal, have been able to teach others, contribute their experiences and expertise, and help the team further grow together.

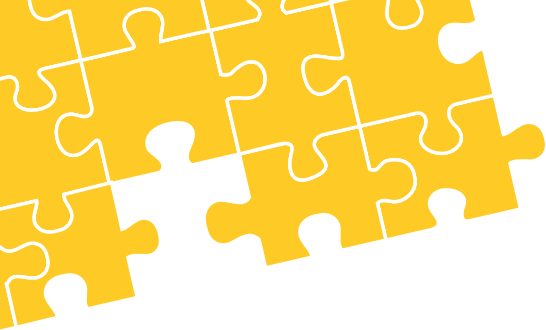
The international atmosphere created in the school thanks to eTwinning is a strong point for the head teacher, especially because from his perspective it is one of the reasons for which the school has been able to attract children even from neighbouring villages. Parents are conscious of what eTwinning is and appreciate the openness of the teachers – especially when it comes to learning a foreign language such as English.

Pupils consider their work in eTwinning to be a lot of fun. They don't even realize that they are learning in the process. For them, it is a new game every day, that allows them to demonstrate in a few minutes that they know European geography, differences between languages, traditions and dishes, legends and stories of different countries, etc. Families are aware of this and participate with enthusiasm in events linked to eTwinning.

Plans for the future

The long-term experience of eTwinning has been shared with the teachers' council from the other three school units and received with great interest which likely means that the model will be extended into the 2012-2013 school year.

Following the positive experiences that the school has been having, especially during the 2011-2012 school year, eTwinning teachers are keen to go forward and involve even more teachers actively. With the active support of the head teacher and the high availability of the two lead teachers, good eTwinning experiences in Paina di Giussano are sure to continue.



10 **Jac. P. Thijsse College** (Secondary Education) **The Netherlands**

School website: <http://www.jpthisse.nl>

Twinning school profile: http://www.etwinning.net/en/pub/connect/browse_people_schools_and_pro/profile.cfm?f=1&l=en&n=37040

School context

The JP Thijsse College in Castricum is a large school with over 2000 pupils in various levels of secondary education. Castricum is a medium-sized town in the province of Noord-Holland and serves a regional function; pupils come from all over the province, not just from Castricum.

There are approximately 200 staff members, of which 180 are teachers. The ratio of computers to pupils is 1:10. 90% of computers are available in computer labs and libraries while 10% are used in classrooms.

The school has several focus points: arts, science and internationalisation. The first two focus points have a longer history while the focus on internationalisation only became part of the curriculum two years ago. The mission and vision in the 2012 school plan outline that it is the school's responsibility to optimally prepare pupils for a society that is becoming more multicultural and international. The school should lay a foundation for its pupils to succeed in their continuing education and as world citizens. In addition to and as a part of this internationalisation, there is a very active bilingual education department that is accessible to pupils from all educational levels.

School innovation history

The school has a rich history of innovation. Yvette van Dijk, the deputy head teacher, explains that, "the head teacher has always encouraged teachers to express their ideas and, where pos-

sible, put them into practice.” Within this focus on internationalisation, the school is involved in a number of activities:

- ▶ Comenius School Partnerships
- ▶ School partner in England for bilingual education
- ▶ Bilingual education network: bilateral contact with a school in Darlington
- ▶ World school project (for 16-18 years olds of the highest educational level) for a profile assignment on world issues
- ▶ An international Dutch learning programme whereby pupils from around the world come to the school to take lessons in Dutch for one year. This activity stems from a rotary contact as well as through Youth for Understanding (YFU) and AFS pupil exchanges.

The school is in contact with a number of external organisations, such as:

- ▶ Science networks, art & culture agencies and educational institutes
- ▶ The International Business Cambridge exam (in English), traineeships at companies in The Netherlands and abroad (coordinated by the Economics department)

The school has a horizontal and vertical structure in which teachers are required to work together. There are six teams for junior and senior years and sections are organised by syllabus. The team leaders are made up of school management together with the head teacher and deputy head teachers. There are also thematic coordinators, e.g., internationalisation, bilingual education, science, social sciences, modern languages, sports, culture and ICT. These coordinators mainly work together in an informal setting. Coordinators assess their plans against the practice of section chairpersons, team leaders and colleagues.

Since the 2011-2012 academic year, there are so-called internationalisation experts at team level. In consultation with the internationalisation coordinator, these experts encourage teachers to take advantage of opportunities like eTwinning. Not all the experts are involved in eTwinning; others work on different internationalisation activities, such as Comenius Partnerships. Because this is a relatively new position, it is still too early to determine its effects. The deputy head teacher is convinced that this is a very important step in implementing internationalisation in the school.

The school has 35 registered eTwinners. Most are inactive, but plan to start using eTwinning. It has proven difficult to motivate these teachers. There are 6 registered projects in the school, organised by four active teachers, one of whom is a Comenius Assistant. Two teachers participated in a contact seminar in Lille, France, in June 2011 which resulted in two projects. The Dutch NSS organised an eTwinning study afternoon in the school and the internationalisation coordinator, Jan Hormann, taught two eTwinning courses in the 2011-2012 academic year. Since 2012, he has also been the eTwinning ambassador and has completed a nationally recognised course as an internationalisation coordinator.

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The school has a so-called JP Thijssen Academy. Eight times a year, teachers attend 3-4 modules, some of which are taught by colleagues. The professional development of each individual teacher is registered in a dossier so as to be part of their national professional development training.

The eTwinning team

Since the summer of 2011, there has been an eTwinning team in the school. The lead teacher is Jan Hormann, an English teacher and internationalisation coordinator. The team currently consists of three

active teachers - English, French and history teachers - who work independently of each other. Occasionally an English teacher is involved, e.g., to support the history teacher and help grade the pupils' assignments. Additionally, there is a Comenius Assistant (as part of the 2011-2012 academic year). Three further teachers have expressed an interest but are not yet active. The ICT coordinator is occasionally



involved in technical solutions for eTwinning projects. eTwinning is just a part of the larger internationalisation team which includes Comenius Partnerships and bilingual education. The internationalisation coordinator selects his own experts in conjunction with the deputy head teacher.

The biggest proportion of eTwinning work is done during class time (50%) or at other times as the teachers' responsibility (30%). The remaining (20%) is done in teachers' spare time. The team mostly interacts informally and there are one or two set meetings between the experts and the internationalisation coordinator during the academic year.

Team activities

The team has now been part of eTwinning projects for one academic year (2011-2012). Many things were tried and teachers learned a lot about what does and doesn't work in their school. In the history project called "Relics of World War 2 in our Region", the pupils mainly exchanged information and did not engage in deep collaboration as they separately took a bicycle tour along a number of remnants and monuments from the Second World War. The tour was documented

and pupils wrote a blog in the TwinSpace about the monuments or places they saw. The project is likely to be finalised with a Skype session.

In another project, pupils write collaborative short stories with schools from France and Germany: pupils write one paragraph of the story and then pass the story onto their partners in another country who then continue the story. The Comenius Assistant started the “Projet sur les traditions” project as a graduation assignment based on project kit (provided for by the Dutch NSS). She wrote a comprehensive project plan with a weekly schedule, an evaluation, clearly defined assignments and guidelines for interaction between pupils.

Enablers and obstacles in the school

The ICT facilities in the school are excellent; there are spacious computer rooms that can be used by all teachers. Also, institutional recognition in the form of a clear focus on internationalisation is in the mission and vision of the school. The internal JP Thijssen Academy for teachers gives teachers the opportunity to learn from each other and every year the lead teacher organises at least two workshops about eTwinning for colleagues.

Within the school there are clear opportunities to share new ideas about lessons with colleagues and school management. The deputy head teacher hopes to streamline initiatives so that they reinforce connections rather than create competition with each other. Teachers who want to pursue training outside the school are free to do so. Two teachers attended an eTwinning contact seminar which the team indicated to be of value and is in some cases rewarded.

In the Netherlands, there is no single educational authority that determines the school curriculum. The inspectorate inspects the quality of education, looks at progression numbers and pass percentages and occasionally sits in on lessons. Inspections cannot stipulate what the school must choose as its objectives or method. Hence, the inspectorate does not have any influence over eTwinning activities.

The teachers in the team are part of separate projects. Independent of each other, all team members point out that the scheduling and running of eTwinning is the most challenging. Over the past year, they found it difficult to coordinate with colleagues abroad. The teachers meet in the teachers' lounge and mainly talk to each other informally. Scheduling meetings is not always possible, but thankfully, the deputy head teacher considers informal contact as a positive development.

Teachers do not receive extra hours for eTwinning; however, internationalisation experts are in a higher pay scale. Over the past two years, the internationalisation coordinator saw his hours go from 200 to 107 in the next academic year due to cutbacks. This appears to contradict the emphasis placed on internationalisation in the school plan.

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The technical aspects of eTwinning are sometimes difficult and everything is new to the teachers. They try to familiarise themselves with these aspects, but it takes time and a real sense of enthusiasm. The team indicates that in the next academic year, it wants to compile a much clearer schedule in order to work better with European colleagues.

Impact of the eTwinning school team

As the team is still relatively new, the teachers are not yet able to indicate significant changes. They exchange experiences about eTwinning, but eTwinning was not the impetus for this exchange since a good culture of information exchange between teachers existed already before they became involved in eTwinning.

The team indicates that their ICT skills have improved and they have integrated ICT in their lessons more, e.g., they spend more time working in the computer room. This only applies to the lessons in which the projects are run. The teachers prefer to let their pupils use the computers during school time rather than at home. In terms of organisation, it means striking a balance between classroom and computer room time, being flexible when technical problems occur and learning to schedule time with European partners.

While the teachers found that they learned from what worked well, they especially learned from what didn't work well, especially in terms of clear deadlines project structure. The latter in particular was found to be very important for pupils, teachers and school staff alike. The spillover effect in the school has so far been minimal.

Plans for the future

eTwinning still needs to be given a clearer role within the internationalisation activities of the school. Expanding the eTwinning team with more members is one of the main ways in which the current team aims to achieve this, as well as by offering courses at the JP Thijsse Academy and making the results of the current projects a lot more visible. It would help if pupils could get to know their European partners better and collaborate more.

The intention is for internationalisation to become a standard part of teaching in the school. It appears that the school plan offers a good foundation for this but in practice, it needs to be more shaped and more anchored in the teachers' perspectives. It is a work in progress and it would be interesting to revisit the school five years from now to see to what extent eTwinning has been embedded by then.



11 Szkoła Podstawowa nr 1 (Primary Education) Poland

School website: <http://sp1-bogatynia.edu.pl/>

Twinning school profile: http://www.etwinning.net/en/pub/connect/browse_people_schools_and_pro/profile.cfm?f=1&l=en&n=5972

School Context

No. 1 Primary School is one of two primary schools in Bogatynia, a small town situated in a hilly, industrialised area. The majority of local residents work in the mining and power generation sector (a lignite mine and a power plant). Bogatynia is situated in a tri-border area, near the Czech Republic and Germany. Due to its location, the town collaborates with these countries in many ways, including education. For example, the school in Bogatynia closely cooperates with a municipal Zoo in Zittau (Germany), where biology classes are organised.

The school has 350 pupils, the majority of whom come from lower to middle income families. The school has a staff of 45, 30 of whom are teachers. The facility is well equipped with computers - 1 computer per 7 pupils - and Internet access. There is a computer lab and a mobile lab with 24 notebooks at pupils' disposal. In cooperation with other educational institutions in Poland, the school also runs an integration project to prevent the exclusion of children from marginalised groups entitled The Magic Power of Imagination.

School innovation history

In 2010, the school suffered from a large flood that struck the town of Bogatynia and neighbouring area. Paradoxically, due to the disaster the school was reequipped with the latest ICT devices received as a part of state aid and support provided by municipal authorities and private donors. The school now holds a mobile computer lab and some interactive whiteboards, which is not common in many state schools in Poland, especially those located in small towns.

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The school is under the patronage of the Klanza Association, an association for the development of pedagogy and teaching. Several teachers in the school undergo training thanks to its support as well as other associations. The school runs both eTwinning and Comenius Partnership projects, one of which was evaluated in 2011 as a top project.

eTwinning began with Marek Fularz, an IT teacher and deputy head teacher, who is an open-minded person interested in the latest in teaching development. In 2005, he attended the first eTwinning course and soon became a trainer, which led him to become an eTwinning ambassador in September 2008. He is the lead teacher at the school.

So far, eleven eTwinning projects have been implemented at the school, two of which were founded by the school. The school has been highly successful in eTwinning, as reflected in numerous awards, such as the European eTwinning Prize and six projects that received both the European and National Quality Labels.

Teachers have participated in PDWs and the eTwinning Conference on two occasions. They have also participated in numerous national and regional conferences and events.

Lucyna Borowska, an early education teacher with 28 years of experience notes that, “we have always sought novelties as well as teaching and methodological innovation. Marek Fularz has given us the ICT bug by organising two courses at our school. It is clear to us that these days every teacher must be ICT literate.”

Bożena Wojciechowska, the head teacher and Polish language teacher, talks about the school's mission. “I try to support and relieve some teachers from mundane tasks. Marek Fularz is definitely one of them and a driving force for innovation. The creative atmosphere he creates is why everybody is interested in participating in eTwinning. We provide our teachers with internal training, workshops and demonstrations. Peer observation is of great importance for teachers. Our school was the first in Poland to gain the patronage of an association for modern pedagogy (in 2002), and our teachers are members and trainers there. Due to such an approach, our school has already earned significant recognition in the region reflected by a number of applications for admission each year even from outside our district.”

The eTwinning team

Ideas for new projects or activities are mainly presented at staff meetings by the lead teacher. Teachers spontaneously volunteer to perform, develop and modify their conceptions, and cooperate with one another. He himself is responsible for ensuring technical feasibility and for managing organisational aspects. The lead teacher knows his team so well that he can easily assign them to specific tasks. Both his personality and performed function make other teachers eager to undertake new activities.

At present, two teachers are registered on the eTwinning platform; however, the number of teachers committed to the projects is larger as more teachers contribute to them. Interestingly, for the lead teacher, this is not a problem. “Only two of our teachers are registered in eTwinning which only proves that you don’t have to be registered to get involved in the activities.” In general, independence, openness and creativity are promoted in many ways at the school. Teachers devote time and effort to in-service training. As Lucyna Borowska says, “we invest in ourselves.”

The head teacher is determined to invest in the teachers’ skills development so that the pupils benefit from the best educational opportunities possible. She values and promotes like-minded teachers. The management allows for the modification of class schedules and the use of school resources. They are also permitted to attend conferences where they present their eTwinning experiences.

Team activities

Among several projects implemented at the school, the ‘Schoolvision’ project involves almost the whole school. More than 50 pupils from Bogatynia were involved during the last school year. “I have been very pleased with the latest competition. Children were really committed to the project and very active on our blog,” comments the deputy head teacher.

This activity involves other teachers, such as a theatre club teacher and early education teachers. A significant part of the animations shown in the project movie is a result of pupils’ programming classes run by IT teachers and positive comment writing is taught by both Polish and English teachers. Overall, almost all teachers get involved. Even if they are already occupied with other projects, they still willingly join the team to help.

School team members, together with their classes, carry out particular parts of the bigger picture, and depending on given tasks the core of the team may consist of teachers of various subjects.

Enablers and obstacles in the school

Teachers at the school have access to internal training in ICT, education and psychology. They form a very united and easily self-organised group. Time is the only obstacle for the team which they try to overcome by working both during and after school. They meet in the staffroom or in their private homes if needed. The lead teacher is very proud of the school team and their organisation; however, as he says: “I want people to be more and more creative, although some of them are afraid to take initiative, they simply prefer to be a part of a team, not a team leader. I think they just need more time and support to become self-confident and comfortable enough to lead an eTwinning project. Regardless, they form a perfect team as they willingly fulfil given tasks and modify and enrich them

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as much as they can.” The lead teacher supports the rest of the team in their work and challenges them by being quite demanding.

Foreign languages are also an issue. “Along with several other fellow teachers, I started to learn English in 2005. However, it is only I who persisted with it and can speak English now.” And it’s not that the teachers are reluctant to study English after all; quite the contrary. They all agree on the importance of it, however it requires time and commitment which sometimes is hard to combine with daily workloads. Several teachers will start English language classes this autumn.

The school management supports all activities related to the implementation of eTwinning projects in the required scope. As far as it is feasible, they reward teachers for their commitment with prizes and express their appreciation during informal meetings.

Parents are also committed to the process as they not only support their children in their tasks, but also help with recording and editing videos. Until this year, when the school received recording equipment, some parents arranged for access to a semi-professional studio. This alone was of significant importance to pupils who simply loved the event and each year eagerly participated in it.

Impact of the eTwinning school team

Organising a song competition, writing, recording and presentations promotes the development of teamwork. Rivalry is conducive to the development of a competitive spirit. Children and youth willingly participate in the project as it increases their interest in music and art. The most important, however, is independent work on the performance itself and related tasks that result in overcoming shyness and increasing curiosity.

Pupils acquire competences and proficiency in several fields, including communication. They become more open and do not worry about their language limitations. The development and improvement of language skills is combined with boosting their competences in the scope of usage of ICT tools. Moreover, they learn about partner countries and gain experience in international cooperation in a multicultural environment. Children become not only more self-confident but also complex- and prejudice-free citizens of Europe. They develop their interests in the field of culture and art, expand their inventiveness and creativity through teamwork and improve their organisational skills.

In general, teachers display enthusiasm and are active in various innovative educational activities. However, it can be said that eTwinning projects have played a major role in broadening their horizons and in promoting the desire to acquire knowledge and skills.



The school head teacher believes that the implementation of eTwinning projects integrates the school staff. Their cooperation on projects enables them to develop rapport and personal contacts and build mutual trust. "At our school, teachers are not afraid of management, which apparently happens at some other institutions. We create a friendly atmosphere here that is conducive to teachers' effective work. We are all on a first-name basis, which makes things easier and limits the distance. Definitely, eTwinning projects positively affect team spirit."

Local authorities in Bogatynia are sensitive to the quality of education and have taken notice of the school's recognition and awards in European competitions. This has raised the prestige of the school and is an important element of the municipality's financial policy.

Plans for the future and a conclusion

Following the latest editions of Schoolovision, the school has received very positive feedback from its partners. Schools mostly praised the teachers from Bogatynia for their enormous amount of work and the involvement of the whole school in doing the tasks.

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The deputy head teacher also hopes to encourage other teachers to take initiative and hatch a plan of fresh ideas: “The following year will be full of improvements and new activities which will master abilities required when carrying out eTwinning projects. Hopefully, teachers will have more faith in them because it goes without saying that the projects make both learning and teaching more active and attractive.”

The school aims to continue its project work in the coming years. They will also adopt new activities both in existing and future projects. Each year new partners, teachers and pupils join the team. Teachers, regardless of their language or computing skills, eagerly work and help one another, which, as a consequence, makes them a great team. They still intend to enhance their professional and ICT qualifications and abilities as they understand that the future of education belongs to new technologies and international cooperation.



12 Ekhagaskolan Sweden (Lower Secondary Education)

School website: <http://www.molndal.se/medborgare/utbildningochbarnomsorg/grundskola/ekhagaskolan.4.16eccd66132d06f521880009441.html>

Twinning school profile: http://www.etwinning.net/en/pub/connect/browse_people_schools_and_pro/profile.cfm?f=1&l=en&n=84257

School context

Ekhagaskolan is situated in the western part of Mölndal, a suburb of Gothenburg, the second largest city in Sweden. The school is run by the municipality of Mölndal and has roughly 280 pupils. They are 13–16 years of age and they are in grade seven to nine. Most of the pupils live in the surrounding neighbourhoods although some of them commute. The school has recently been renovated and updated with modern teaching technology.

The staff consists of 30 teachers and 3 other staff (2 counsellors and a librarian). The school also has a youth club, which is staffed and open afternoons and evenings during the weekdays. The ICT provision is excellent in the school and still improving. There are nodes for a Wi-Fi connection in all classrooms in the school. The ratio of pupils per computer varies between the different grades. The lower the grade, the lower the ratio of pupils per computer. All beginners in grade seven (the pupils are 13–14 years old) are given a laptop for their personal use during the three years at the school. This started in the 2011-2012 school year and will continue in the coming years. For the pupils in grade eight, the ratio is two pupils per computer and for the pupils in grade nine the ratio is five pupils per computer. All pupils can use computer labs, computers available in the classrooms or sets of laptops that can be wheeled into the classrooms.

All computers are connected to the Internet. IKT-Piloten (the ICT Pilot) is a project with the aim to enhance the pupils' use of ICT tools in the classroom. Tutors from the project visit the school and teach the pupils how to use different software.

School innovation history

Teachers from Ek Hagaskolan have founded one and participated in one eTwinning project. The project started as an eTwinning project but developed into a bilateral Comenius Partnership project. The lead teacher is of South American descent and Spanish is her mother tongue. The natural country for her to start an eTwinning project with was Spain. She found her partner in the Canary Islands and they founded the project "Classrooms without borders". She soon involved three more teachers at Ek Hagaskolan in the project: an English teacher, the art teacher and the home economics teacher.

The project was nominated to both the national and European competition, and the team was invited by the Swedish NSS to the annual eTwinning conference in Berlin in March 2012. In connection with the annual book fair in Gothenburg, the team took part in an eTwinning event organised by the Swedish NSS.

Apart from the eTwinning/bilateral Comenius Partnership project, the school has only participated in a school exchange with a Polish school. Their previous experience of international cooperation was therefore quite low.

The eTwinning team

The lead teacher is Claudia Valdivieso Ortiz, the school's Spanish teacher. The other team members are: Catarina Hellström, the English teacher, Maria Falk, the art teacher and Mia Sohlberg, the home economics teacher. Some of them are members of the local group for school development. This group consist of teachers and management and is supported both by school authorities and teacher unions.

They have been acting as an eTwinning team since the autumn of 2010, participating in the same eTwinning project. Initially the team met as a group around a common idea but they have developed more and more into a team. The lead teacher sent out an invitation to all her colleagues at the school and the three ladies who answered that they wanted to take part in a project formed the team. They complement each other in a constructive way as they work in the cross-curricular project. In the beginning the lead teacher took most of the initiatives and she was really the leading person within the project. After this first project and after having been together at the conference in Berlin, the other members feel that they are more part of the future eTwinning project they are planning to start.

In the current project they have been working in the same grade level but within different subject areas - Spanish, English, art and home economics.

Team activities

After the formation of the team, they began discussing the content and the pedagogical approach of the project. The first step was to make a list of themes for the project, such as recording radio programs about food, habits and culture. The pupils studied these themes in the different subjects (Spanish, English, art and home economics) and they also added music.

Cooperation between teachers wasn't very systematic. They met when they found time. This meant that they were able to have a meeting every third week to discuss the progress of the project and make plans for the upcoming weeks. Podcasts were made both in English and Spanish, and pictures and drawings as presentations were made in art class. To these were added texts in English and Spanish.

The lead teacher taught the other teachers how to use the technology for recording and editing sound files (they used Audacity) as they went along in the project. They also began using a wiki in the TwinSpace as a dictionary for useful words. Everybody could add a word in any of the three languages (Swedish, Spanish and English) and someone else could add the translation. This worked well in the beginning of the project but unfortunately the activity faded away.



The pupils had a lot of influence on the shaping of the project. They were involved in the decision making of what themes to use, what fields of interest to be explored and in the making of a survey. They were also offered to stay after school hours to use the TwinSpace chat to communicate with their peers in Spain. Some of the pupils took this opportunity to practice their language skills.

Enablers and obstacles in the school

The team has usually met in the staffroom to discuss matters of mutual interest. This does not appear to have been an obstacle but rather the best option for the team during school hours.

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The team sees itself as the eTwinners at the school and slowly more colleagues are showing an interest in what they do and some have also expressed an interest in participating. But the team is aware of the fact that a team cannot have too many participants, so they are more into offering support to other future teams at the school. The team hasn't been met with envy but rather with awe that they are willing to put some extra effort into their teaching.

Class schedules enable project work and a cross-curricular approach to teaching. The schedules are quite flexible both in terms of time and allocation of pupils into different working groups. There is also time in the school calendar for teachers to work and plan together.

One of the obstacles was the relatively low access to computers for the pupils involved in the project. They used computers that were wheeled into the classroom on a trolley. They were older computers and they didn't all work properly all the time. The team is confident that this will get better since, within a year or two, all pupils will have their own laptop.

The library and the computer lab were used frequently to compensate for the lack of laptops to all pupils involved in the eTwinning project. Home economics was a natural part of the project and these resources were used when suitable. When setting up the project the team were given counselling by one of the Swedish NSS members, especially in terms of understanding and using the TwinSpace.

The team said that their head teacher at the time for the project was supportive in theory and that she showcased their project and their work. But as soon as they asked for some compensation in terms of the extra time they put into the project or asked for some money, they found that the head teacher's interest in the project cooled off. The team expressed a disappointment about this. However, by the end of the project they think that the head teacher started to realise what the team had been able to do. She understood that the project really was a showcase and that the experiences of the team were important and of great value to the school.

The head teacher in this case did not appear to have been very supportive nor had she been an obstacle. The project has been initiated and driven by the teachers and therefore less vulnerable in terms of support from the school and the head teacher.

Impact of the eTwinning school team

The teachers are convinced that they can reach higher goals for their teaching and their subjects by using an eTwinning project. The fact that the pupils have a real audience to communicate with rather than "just" the teacher is very motivating for them. They have to be able to express themselves in such a way as to be understood by their peers in the other country. They often find that they know more Spanish and English than they thought they did. The pupils spoke and wrote

in a foreign language in a way they hadn't done before and about things that they had to a large extent decided themselves.

The project is mentioned in the school's website and is spoken about in meetings with parents.

For the teachers involved in the project it has been a means for their own in-service training, learning and using new ICT technology in a real teaching situation. For those who wanted new challenges and opportunities to practice new teaching methods, the project has been a useful setting. Besides becoming more skilled teachers, they have also had a lot of fun.

Plans for the future

The former head teacher has been in touch with the lead teachers and has invited her to come to the head teacher's new school to inform about eTwinning and to support that school in getting involved in eTwinning projects.

The team met teachers from a school in Catalonia at the annual eTwinning conference in Berlin in 2012. They plan to start a project together using cartoons as the main tool for communication, cartoons (made in art class) about food (in home economics) with text in Spanish and English. The pupils will be in grade seven and therefore will have their own laptop which will make things easier computer-wise.

The team will no doubt continue with a new project the coming school year and some colleagues have expressed an interest in starting eTwinning projects of their own. They will also continue with pod casting in Spanish and English. The German teacher wants to start her own project learning from the team and using the same technology.

The lead teacher has expressed an interest in becoming an eTwinning ambassador but due to her present workload she has decided to let her application rest a while. For the future, the school also has plans for a Comenius Partnership project.

To conclude the case study, it is clear that the teachers involved in the eTwinning project have made some significant progress as a team. In the beginning it was the enthusiasm of the lead teacher that set the project and the team in motion. The structural conditions at the school (computers, time tables, teachers planning time, etc.) made it possible to have a cross-curricular approach to the project and work as a team. Drawing from the experiences from this project, the team will have a solid base for their next eTwinning project.



13 ZŠ Štefana Šmálika Slovakia (Primary school)

School website: <http://zssmalika.edupage.org/>

Twinning school profile: http://www.etwinning.net/en/pub/connect/browse_people_schools_and_pro/profile.cfm?f=1&l=de&n=9116#

School context

Primary school Štefana Šmálika is located in the little town of Tvrdošín in the north of Slovakia. The town's population is roughly 10,000 and the town has two primary and three secondary schools. The church school Štefana Šmálika in Tvrdošín was founded in honour of Štefana Šmálika, a priest and historian. It is a small school with 286 pupils between the ages of 6 and 15 years, with 20 full-time and 4 part-time teachers.

Being a place of independence, creativity and modern forms of education, the school aims to provide its pupils with quality education. The school also offers a variety of extracurricular activities. Pupils can join a wide range of after-school clubs. Among the most popular ones are computers, sports, dancing, visual arts, folklore, cooking, English, Slovak and maths.

Pupils have at their disposal 2 computer labs with 37 computers, which are available to all of them at least once a week. The ratio of computers to pupils is 1:7. The school is equipped with 4 interactive whiteboards and other tools such as DVD players and data projectors.

School innovation history

Primary school Štefana Šmálika cooperates with local organisations and institutions. Together with the municipal office they organise public concerts, cultural events (e.g., a Christmas fair), drug prevention programs and the cleaning of school's surrounding. The district fire brigade organises workshops on how to prevent fires. They cooperate with the Special Pedagogic Counselling Centre in organising discussions connected with conflict and problem solving in the classroom, or helping

teachers in some special situations with troubled pupils. On several occasions, an open day for pupils' parents has been organised; however, the parents have shown little interest.

The school actively participates in all projects and competitions. The results in district and regional competitions are proof of teachers' and pupils' excellent work. The school participated in the national project (Infovek) which equipped all schools with the Internet and now schools have unlimited access to the Internet. The school also participated in national education projects that focused on transformation to modern school with new technologies and new teaching methods (Otvorená škola in 2005 and 2008 and Digitálni Štúrovci in 2006). Through these projects, the school has received funds to purchase additional technology, which however, is currently somewhat outdated.

The school engages in Comenius Partnerships (Neverending stories in 2010-2012) and has obtained financial resources from foreign grants to purchase equipment for a sciences lab. eTwinning project activities have been known in the school since 2005. Since then, 16 projects have been implemented. 19 teachers in the school are registered on the eTwinning Portal, but only 11 are presently active. One of the teachers is active as an eTwinning ambassador.

Work in eTwinning brought them one European and two national eTwinning prizes. 3 projects have been awarded with a European Quality Label and 8 projects have been awarded with the National Quality Label.

The eTwinning team

In the beginning, teachers started with small language projects. Later, with more experiences, some of the teachers created more sophisticated projects that worked across the curriculum, e.g., physics, ICT, environment or history, language and civics. These projects were realised individually by teachers. In the last few years, the school has been involved in a big project funded by European Structural Funds and Comenius Partnership project which led teachers to feel that they must change their work and start to cooperate more.

The eTwinning team was created towards the end of 2011. It includes a team of teachers (Slovak language, English language, biology, chemistry, physics and ICT), the head teacher, a Comenius assistant, a teacher-librarian and a teacher-network administrator. The physics and informatics teacher, Beáta Marasová, invited her colleagues to join the team since the planned activities for a new project required a wider cooperation. She is the school's lead teacher. Also, the colleagues liked the idea to start to work with a more experienced teacher, as some of them are beginners and prefer to join an existing project. Together they work on a project called "Zima, teplo, teplejšie, prihorieva" (Cold, hot, hotter) and "Skúmame teplo" (We investigate the heat). Some members of this team also run their own eTwinning projects.

Team activities

The team leader coordinated the team's work in the "Zima, teplo, teplejšie, prihorieva" project involving 12-13 years old pupils. The team meets as needed in the teachers' room, computer labs and also during events outside the school. Since eTwinning activities enjoy the management's support, the management frequently discusses international cooperation at their meetings and encourages teachers to join common activities.

The school programme allows for flexibility to synchronise project work across classroom schedules. The project work was carried out during class time, but roughly 10% of it was done by the teachers as part of club activities during after classes and another 10% during their free time. The project work covered several subject: physics, informatics, English, Slovak, chemistry and biology, and involved the cooperation of all these teachers. Although the working languages were three Slavic languages, the entire project blog was also translated into English.

Enablers and obstacles in the school

Since the school's atmosphere is relaxed and full of mutual support, it was easy to find helpful colleagues to share tasks within the team. Also, everyone was highly motivated to repeat the success of the previous school year since the 1st prize in the national round of eTwinning prizes was awarded to the lead teacher, Mrs. Marasová. The winning classroom was awarded with an excursion to the manufacturing plant, and the head teacher organised a visit to the European Parliament in Strasbourg, which the mayor of the town helped to finance. Teachers who are active in projects have the opportunity to participate in conferences and the head master emphasises the efforts of teachers when faced with new processes and tried to raise funds and sources for new technical equipment for classrooms. On the other hand, team members do not enjoy reduced teaching time, nor they receive money or a higher salary. But teachers are generally satisfied with the management's approach to their work.

The big problem, however, is considered to be the insufficient technical equipment in the school. The number of computers is not sufficient and the technology bought in previous years is now outdated. Equipment in other specialised classrooms is also lacking, even though some classrooms have been equipped with new pieces of technology from the structural funds project. In a questionnaire prepared within an initiative to support changes in the school, 58% of pupils state that they would like to use computers to carry out project work. The children enjoy 'fun learning,' field trips and ICT-based project work. Almost all teachers feel that all possibilities (features, equipment) are not used to their full potential (e.g. interactivity). Additionally, the teachers feel the need for additional training especially in regard to modern technologies, as most of them are not able to use these in teaching. The teachers would also like to attend training courses on communication skills, team management and pupil motivation.



The school has not developed sufficient cooperation with parents. They are unable to arouse their interest through regular contact, therefore the project team and the school management aims to change this. The parents will be informed about their children's activities and invited to school events by means of emails, website updates and personal invitations.

Impact of the eTwinning school team

There are several reasons why the teachers are part of the eTwinning team. The project work has brought the team members plenty of new experience in terms of pedagogical processes, social skills and the use of ICT. Michaela Gočálová, a teacher of Slovak language and literature shares her thoughts: "I am really glad about the cooperation in the current eTwinning project with a great pedagogue, Beátka Marasová, and her Polish and Czech partners. We truly enjoy combining Slovak with physics; we use folk sayings to monitor the weather and we record the results and compare them. According to our findings we can expect a hot but rainy summer. We are really looking forward to it!"

Also, combining individual subjects and creating common conjunctions in the educational content is interesting. For example, by combining physics, informatics, chemistry, Slovak and English, the pupils learn about heat from various points of view and search for information within a wider context with practical understanding. Martina Bednárová, a teacher of biology and chemistry notes, "I like the fact that we engage in many practical activities. I also like that we can use a single theme to combine several different subjects."

The teachers see their participation as something positive and as a new motivation to make changes in the teaching process. The teachers were also motivated to participate in the project because they

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wanted to change classical teaching processes. They wished to replace memorisation with active research and exploration, to change the classroom and school climate to one that is full of cooperation, creativity and open to new approaches. One of the goals was to change the attitude toward the generally disliked subjects, such as physics. Their own personal motivation to become better, for instance, at a foreign language, was also an important driver.

The pupils developed their learning, communication, personal, social and problem solving competences. Teachers also tried to lead pupils to fulfil the curriculum in a non-forceful way. In the project, the pupils explored heat and learned about phenomena related to temperature and heat through a number of experiments and measurements. They learned to discern between the physical quantities of heat and temperature. They explored and based on their experience they learned to explain physical phenomena such as melting, solidification, evaporation, boiling, condensation, sublimation and de-sublimation. The pupils talked about the project with great joy and enthusiasm. Classes have become more interesting for them and they very much wish to continue in the activities in the next school year. Comments from a few of the pupils: “I like that we conduct various experiments and communicate with friends from neighbouring countries” and “physics is better and more interesting for us now.”

Members of the team learned how to work together. There was strong feedback from pupils as well as NSS staff and the teachers felt that their work was meaningful. The teachers informed their colleagues, parents and the wider public about the project team’s work and results through email, articles in the local press, interviews in the media and presentations in conferences. Based on their experience and project results, a few other colleagues expressed an interest in joining an eTwinning team in the future.

Plans for the future and a conclusion

The school plans to engage again in a Comenius Partnership project as well as other international projects and cooperation. eTwinning helped the pedagogical staff fulfil their ideas about modern teaching processes and raised the school’s profile within the region. There is positive information about the school in the media and the successful eTwinners are invited to conferences and seminars to disseminate the good practice that they tried out themselves in their teaching.

The future of the school lies in its modernisation. Equipping the school with modern didactics and ICT, where new teaching processes allow pupils to learn to work in teams and exploit their knowledge in professional life and real-life situations, is key. They plan to enrich the curriculum with pupils’ experiences and ideas with a focus on modern technologies and their use in real life. Another important aspect is to have parents on board, by keeping them informed about the school’s activities, receiving their feedback and opinions on activities and the level of education provided, as well as their engagement in promoting the school’s reputation.



14 IES “Príncipe Felipe” Spain (Secondary Education)

School website: <http://ies.principefelipe.madrid.educa.madrid.org/>

Twinning school profile: <http://www.etwinning.net/en/pub/profile.cfm?f=1&l=es&n=62500#>

School context

IES “Príncipe Felipe” is a Secondary Education and Vocational Training school with 1860 pupils, located in the northwest-central area of Madrid, a highly populated area with a predominance of middle-class families. It is a large school, in a complex of five buildings, gardens and sport fields. The school, in its current status, is the result of the merging of two schools in 1997, both with the same name. One of them offered vocational training and the other secondary and upper-secondary education. All schooling options were not only kept, but also increased in 2001 with lower-secondary education (12-14 year-old pupils). Currently, it offers lower, mid and upper education (12-18 years), mid-grade vocational training (16+ years) and upper-grade vocational training (18+ years), as well as different special needs programmes.

Compared to the average ‘large’ Spanish secondary school, IES “Príncipe Felipe” has twice as many pupils, which allows it to have a much wider educational offer. In 2009, the school was appointed as a “Technological innovation secondary school” [Instituto de innovación tecnológica] by the regional administration, which implied a higher investment in technology equipment. Currently, some classrooms have one computer per pupil and twenty-two interactive whiteboards are available. The use of technology is highly integrated in the curriculum, including virtual classrooms based on a Moodle platform.

The number of applications for new pupils is usually higher than they can actually accept, which can be regarded as a sign of a well established reputation in the community, or even –mainly regarding vocational training – in the urban area of Madrid. According to the head teacher, the wide

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educational offer, the technological pedagogical approach, and the many projects the school is engaged in have a positive influence in this situation. It is also remarkable the good results usually obtained in external tests (as the University Access Tests –PAU–) and the many pupils awarded in local and regional educational competitions.

School innovation history

The school is open to collaboration with the rest of the educational community. Cultural associations, such as drama or music groups, are allowed to use the school facilities, either through mid- and long-term agreements or for occasional cases. The parents' association is also very active and collaborates and promotes the organisation of cultural activities as out-of-school activities, competitions, etc. An open doors day is organised annually, and it is usually a success among teachers, parents and pupils.

The school has a well-established tradition of participating in projects involving school teams, both at national and international level. This is one of the features, together with the technological approach and the educational offer, which helps the school be a preferred option for new pupils. At national level, the school has participated in a network for schools and educational institutions (ARCE), in the programme for out-of-school activities (Refuerza) and technological innovation plans. The school also participates in Comenius, Leonardo and Erasmus actions.

The school was registered in eTwinning in October 2009. Two projects have been developed so far and a third one has just started. Currently, 14 teachers at the school are registered, 7 of whom have participated in projects. Their first two projects were awarded with National Quality labels, which is a good record, considering that in Spain only around a 35% of the Quality Labels applications are approved.

José Guerrero, the school's head teacher, expressed that a key factor for such a constant involvement in projects was the creation of a quality management workgroup, formed by members of the teaching staff and members of the school management team. Among other functions, this group encourage teachers' participation in other programmes, propose actions and programmes to the teaching staff and tries to integrate teachers' own initiatives in the school's educational plan.

The case of the eTwinning team was one of the results of this "bottom-up" approach; here, it was the English department who decided to participate and then they communicated it to the head teacher. Participation in programmes mentioned above (ARCE, Refuerza, other European actions), which involve school teams, and the commitment of the whole school to develop a technological approach to teaching are some of the results of the work done by the quality management workgroup.



The eTwinning team

The coordinator of the school team (lead teacher) is Olga Paniagua, an English teacher with twenty-five years of experience, six of which she has spent at “Príncipe Felipe”. She was the first teacher who registered the school and has founded and developed two projects. The first one was “Life when you are 12 or 13”, together with Begoña Martínez, another English teacher at the same school and head of the English department. The success of this first experience led her to found a second one, “Culture and Friendship e-swap”, with the participation of all six teachers of the department, as well as the third project of the school, “Challenges and Possibilities”, which has just started.

The school team was an initiative of the lead teacher and it is made up of the six teachers of English, all of them giving classes in 1st year of secondary education (1.º ESO, 12 year-olds). Even if the lead teacher is not the head of the department, the rest as the team considers her as the coordinator. The teachers had some motivations to work as a team, but the lead teacher’s enthusiasm was the main one. In their own words, “we trust Olga and she was so enthusiastic that we knew it was going to work”. Apart from two teachers, the project was going to be their first one in eTwinning. It seems clear that this “contagious” positive attitude by the lead teacher was a key factor in the success of the experience, beyond any other consideration including institutional posts.

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The English department has a history of working together. They feel comfortable with discussing ideas and sharing practice. Therefore, the way the teaching responsibilities were distributed (i.e. all teach the same age group) allowed the team members to develop more efficient lesson plans. This also gave impetus for the coordinated work in eTwinning.

Team activities

Roles and functions had not been previously defined and were decided and refined as the project went along. There was an agreement to not force anyone, either teacher or pupil, to participate in the project. Everything should be done on a volunteer basis. First, the main lines of the project were explained, discussed and agreed, but a wide degree of autonomy was established. Depending of the different groups, either all pupils or only a part of them were involved. The final decision in every case was left to the teacher.

Though the lead teacher acted as the coordinator of the team, functions were distributed. For example, some members of the team other than the coordinator made the evaluation of the project. They decided to register the progress they were making in the Project Diary and turns were established to post new entries. At a certain moment of the project, they offered their British partner to assume the role of another member of the school team more than a partner at the other side of the line. The result was that, for certain functions, as the management of the Project Diary, all teachers behaved as one single team working in two different schools.

Regarding pupils, the same spirit applied: in a school as big as “Príncipe Felipe”, many of the Spanish pupils didn’t know each other. Social interaction activities were organised bearing in mind that it was not a question of Spain-meets-United Kingdom, but pupils from different groups meeting each other. From the point of view of the Spanish National Support Service, it must be pointed out that this approach regarding teachers and pupils was one of the most significant reasons that the project was awarded a National Quality Label.

The lead teacher estimated that 50% of the activities were developed in class and the other 50% at home. However, this was not an even distribution among all groups involved; it depended on how many pupils were involved in each case. When the whole group was participating, most of the activities were carried out during lesson times. When this was not the case, some of them were considered as “homework”. However, technology classrooms were available for pupils during break times, supervised by teachers of the team.

Enablers and obstacles in the school

One of the main obstacles to work as a team was to find time to meet. The lead teacher, the rest of the team and the head teacher gave the same answer and no other obstacle appeared during the interviews, apart from some references to lack of time.

One hour a week is assigned to department meetings, but several issues have to be dealt with during these and it is not enough time to discuss the project in detail. The lead teacher admits that the possibility of a more intense exchange of information might have enriched the project. The rest of the teachers agree with her, and they also agree in recognising that the school management team helps as much as possible, but that they are limited in what they can do due to little autonomy given in Spain to manage timetables and schedules in schools. This situation is worsened by the size of the school: quite often, the teachers were not even in the same building and in the short times between lessons it was not very common for them to be in the same teaching staff room. They used longer break periods and their free time to meet, though the most usual way of communication among them was email.

The head teacher admitted this situation and felt that all the measures he could take to help the team were not enough. The number of lessons per week imposed by regulations and the educational administration made very difficult to organise schedules so that teachers could have more meeting opportunities. Without being directly asked, he recognised and appreciated that the teachers were using their free time to work on the project.

The teachers, who, despite the impossibility of being provided with more time resources, consider themselves supported by the head teacher and the school management team, felt this recognition. This support encourages them to go on with their plans to organise school teams and develop eTwinning projects. In fact, it becomes a most important enabler at school, not only in the context of eTwinning, but also regarding other projects.

A second enabler is the technology facilities at school. As mentioned before, the school received special equipment from the administration when it was appointed as a “Technological innovation school”. However, the influence between technology and eTwinning seems to go both ways: on the one hand, having computers and an Internet connection easily available encouraged them to get engaged in an eTwinning project. On the other, participating in eTwinning helped them understand the possibilities of integration of technology in the curriculum and improved their teaching skills in this aspect. As the lead teacher said about her first eTwinning project, it was a difficult year with all the new equipment recently installed, but working in eTwinning eventually meant some help and guidance rather than an extra load of work.

Impact of the eTwinning school team

Apart from the impact in their teaching skills mentioned above, the participation in the project also reinforced their willingness to work as a team. The teachers commented that having more opportunities to exchange ideas in more varied contexts has helped them to broaden their scope and brought them benefits as professionals. Other teachers became interested in eTwinning as well and another seven teachers registered on the platform after the project, though they haven't participated yet.

Pupils were highly motivated during the project and still ask their teachers when they will be working again in what they called the "Facebook of the English". Using this term seems to point at eTwinning as an efficient source of motivation for pupils, as well as a place not only for schoolwork, but also for socialising. At the end of the last school year, the school organised an open doors day where the eTwinning project was included in the language stand. According to the teachers and the head teacher, it was one of the most successful ones, and parents and other pupils showed a great interest of knowing more about the action.

Plans for the future and a conclusion

The most concrete impact is reflected in their immediate plans for the future. Their third project, "Challenges and Possibilities", will be the development in the eTwinning platform of the second year of a Comenius Partnership with a school in Norway. In this project, the team will expand with teachers from other subjects who have already been participating in the Comenius Partnership. The idea seems interesting and challenging for them, though they predict that the main problem – the lack of opportunities to hold meetings - will probably be more present. Unfortunately, they are convinced that there won't be an easy solution for that. Apart from all the help that the school management team offers, teachers rely mostly on their willingness to use their free time to organise face-to-face or online meetings, or to communicate using other means.

The main conclusion drawn from this series of interviews is the significance of the emotional factors as enablers for school teams. The enthusiasm of the coordinator was key for the rest of the teachers to join the team, even if they were inexperienced in eTwinning. Secondly, knowing that they are supported and the management team appreciates their work makes the fact that little help can be provided to meet their most important needs easier to deal with. A supportive atmosphere with teacher teams was obvious at the school. The availability of technical equipment plays a double role: as an enabler to carry out the eTwinning project, as well as an opportunity to explore and develop teaching skills.



15 Southwater Infant Academy UK (Primary Education)

School website: <http://learning.southwater-inf.w-sussex.sch.uk>

Twinning school profile: http://www.etwinning.net/en/pub/connect/browse_people_schools_and_pro/profile.cfm?f=1&l=de&n=29773#

School context

Southwater Infant Academy, rated 'Outstanding' by Ofsted, is a vibrant and innovative example of primary education situated in a rural environment near Horsham, West Sussex, in the South East region of England. The school has 270 pupils and 27 staff, including 15 teaching staff. The ratio of pupils per computer is 6:1. Computers are located in the classrooms and library, and all classrooms have an interactive whiteboard.

School innovation history

Southwater joined eTwinning in 2007. Since then, the school has initiated 16 projects and joined a further 10. The school has received 3 national eTwinning awards (2009, 2010 and 2011) and 4 national and four European Quality Labels for their work.

eTwinning was the first British Council programme that Southwater became engaged in. The introduction of eTwinning encouraged the school to join other international programmes, such as Connecting Classrooms.

Prior to eTwinning, Southwater was involved in the West Sussex Creativity Project, which included a range of subject areas such as Global Citizenship, Physical and Social Health Education (PSHE) and Modern Foreign Languages (MFL). Head teacher Sue Winn wanted to make the curriculum more manageable under the umbrella of 'Exploring the World'. eTwinning was introduced as a tool to incorporate all of these areas and to fulfil curriculum requirements in an innovative and creative way.

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The head teacher had previously tried, unsuccessfully, to link with other areas of the UK, which would have provided the pupils with experience of a wider ethnic mix. But there was a general reluctance on the part of other schools. eTwinning provided the answer. 'Exploring the World', together with eTwinning as the driver for a significant part of the curriculum, has been an innovative approach that has interested other primary schools in West Sussex.



The eTwinning team

Southwater's approach to eTwinning is inclusive and involves every teacher in the school. There is no discrete team as such but a whole-school approach to project work, which is integrated into the curriculum. All members of teaching staff are registered on the eTwinning Portal and are able to use it effectively.

The lead teacher for eTwinning in the school is Christie Cavallo, who is responsible for Modern Foreign Languages and is the school's Coordinator for International Links. She is also an eTwinning Ambassador. The lead teacher is the driver for eTwinning in the school, leading by example and demonstrating the value and purpose of her award-winning projects to the whole staff.

Team activities

As mentioned, every teacher at Southwater Infant Academy is registered on eTwinning. Teachers often pair up to work on the same eTwinning project, so they can share the workload and maximise skills and ideas.

The lead teacher is instrumental in ensuring that other teachers are confident about their eTwinning project work and is regularly available to give advice and encouragement, answer questions and evaluate progress. In the early days of Southwater's eTwinning partnerships, the lead teacher would hold weekly training sessions to teach skills, such as how to upload information to the eTwinning Portal. Staff found posting messages on the forum to be an effective means of finding partners and asking to join existing projects. Southwater has been able to share this whole-school approach to eTwinning as a form of best practice, as it did when working with a school in Italy new to international collaboration.

An example of a project from 2011 will give some insight into the approach of eTwinning at Southwater. The project, entitled "Playground Games", was run by Sally Friend, physical education (PE) subject leader, and Hannah Smith, literacy subject leader, who both teach classes of pupils aged four to five. The aim of their project was to "extend playground games", taking a PE theme and integrating the skills that each teacher could offer. The pupils first worked together in teams, deciding which skills they wanted to teach their partners. They then wrote the rules and invented the games. Knowledge and skills were not only shared between partnership schools, but also with peers in other classes, informally in the playground, making this a true learning experience. Part of the impact has been to record the differences in what the pupils see as games and play. For some pupils it has been to discover that games could be played in the playground without specific equipment. There was also the added bonus of more general cultural exchanges, learnt through looking at images and video from schools in the eTwinning project.

ICT played an important role as the tool by which these ideas were exchanged. The pupils used videos, digital images, and presentation software. They learnt how to take a good photograph by thinking beforehand about composition and looking critically at those sent to them. Finding a way to present their work to other people became second nature, as well as making group and individual decisions on how to proceed with a task through problem solving. The overall evaluation of the project was executed through letters to their partner school.

Enablers and obstacles in the school

It is clear that the whole-school approach has led to the success of eTwinning at Southwater. At the start of every year there is a staff meeting to embed the school's international links into the school

development plan. Every teacher has at least one performance management target linked to the international dimension. When this whole-school approach was first introduced, the target for every teacher was 'to engage in an eTwinning project'. This meant that when evaluating this target every line manager was involved, ensuring a team effort with everyone learning from each other.

The academy is fortunate to have a team of committed, enthusiastic teachers who are willing to try new things and learn new skills. And the lead teacher has steered the way and helped to realise the vision, by using exemplary practice, expertise and patience. As the head teacher points out, Southwater was fortunate in having someone as enthusiastic as the lead teacher on the staff from the beginning, as she had the commitment and skills to provide the necessary level of support to colleagues.

Impact of the eTwinning school team

When asked to describe her vision for Southwater, the head teacher says, "we want all pupils to understand the importance of being active global citizens within modern 21st Century Britain." eTwinning supports this and has demonstrated a direct impact on teaching and learning. As the PE subject leader and literacy subject leader say, "eTwinning has given us a different tool to use to bring learning to life for our pupils." On their most recent project, pupils aged four to five demonstrated skills usually acquired by pupils aged five to six.

The commitment of the head teacher to integrate eTwinning into her vision for the school and to see the creative potential that eTwinning offers is an important starting point. Building eTwinning into performance management encourages every member of teaching staff to integrate eTwinning activities into their lesson plans. This ambitious approach has paid off and enabled the school to provide equal opportunities for all staff and pupils.

The introduction of eTwinning projects has meant that all ICT equipment is now being well used and there is now a strong argument that can be put to the school governors about increasing the amount of equipment to meet demand and the importance of replacing worn out stock.

All interviewees are in agreement that eTwinning has given teachers confidence and promoted a culture of sharing. Teaching staff has learnt about eTwinning together and they are now more likely to share their everyday concerns and celebrate their successes. When asked how she would regard an interviewee that has eTwinning experience, the head teacher thought that eTwinning experience immediately implied a specific skill set that could give an advantage when applying for a teaching post.

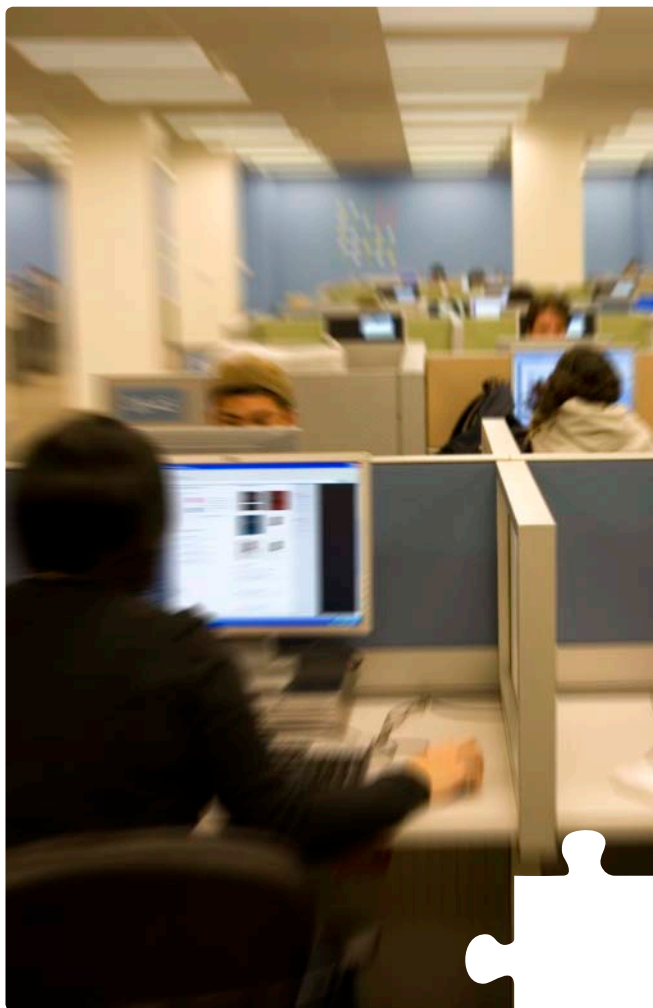
The lead teacher is currently spreading good practice by linking a network of schools in the locality, showing them how to embed eTwinning in the curriculum. The school has also worked closely with

The University of Chichester, as pupil teachers are regularly placed at Southwater. The lead teacher is interested in finding a way for pupil teachers to register on the eTwinning Portal, as this would be an easier way for them to keep up their involvement as they inevitably move from one school to another.

The work being carried out at Southwater is disseminated to the community through the Southwater News. The head teacher has also presented her experience using the local network of head teachers.

Plans for the future

September 2012 saw the launch of a new curriculum; its key drivers being communication, the environment, global citizenship and enterprise. There will be a long-term development plan and group planning per term, which will tie eTwinning to the work happening around The UNICEF Rights Respecting School and Eco-Schools. Pupils will receive teaching in the foundation subjects, with literacy and numeracy kept as discrete subject areas. Having academy status enables the school to put together a unique teaching experience for pupils. By 2014, 50% of the curriculum will be at the school's discretion, lending itself to the creative approach to learning gained through Southwater's previous experience of an integrated curriculum in which eTwinning will play a key role.



The head teacher says eTwinning can help everyone, from the youngest pupil to the most senior teacher. She would now like to expand her school's international experience into more broad-based and far-reaching projects. Southwater Infant Academy is about to embark on a project to become a 'Forest School', which incorporates an innovative educational approach to play and learning. The head teacher would like to establish a network of similarly identified schools across Europe in order to learn

from each other. Collaborative learning in the form of an all encompassing eTwinning project would fit the clear expectations and aims of this new initiative, with schools in Scandinavia being a good place to start. The support of the NSS European networks in the role of identifying 'Forest Schools' could be crucial to the success of this idea, given the time constraints on head teachers. Perhaps specific funding for a project on this scale might be appropriate in order to bring head teachers together for an eTwinning Professional Development Workshop in planning and preparation. eTwinning could become the instrument that not only connects pupils, but also the larger organisations, such as local Wildlife Trusts, who are going to provide an additional partnership for this project.





The role of the NSS was praised by the lead teacher, but she hoped that now there would be a period of stability where staffing was concerned, which would enable teachers to build up a more long-term working relationship with their regional representatives.

Whichever way eTwinning develops and moves forward one thing is clear – Southwater Infant Academy will be leading the way. Not every school will have a lead teacher with such a level of expertise, but by utilising the British Council's advice and practical support through their network of eTwinning Ambassadors, a whole school approach to eTwinning is an achievable goal.

4. Annex

Table 2. Case study schools

The number allocated to each school is used as a reference in Chapter 2 instead of mentioning the name of the school each time.

1	Country	
	School	Zweisprachiges Bundesgymnasium Oberwart, AT
	School type	Secondary (with a Primary feeder school)
	Age of the team	About 2 years (lead teacher since 2005)
	Interviewer	David Kern, Claudia Tasch http://www.etwinning.net/en/pub/profile.cfm?f=1&l=en&n=139325
2	Country	
	School	Immaculata Instituut Oostmalle, BE
	School type	Secondary
	Age of the team	About 5 years (in eTwinning since 2007)
	Interviewer	Sara Gilissen http://www.etwinning.net/en/pub/profile.cfm?f=1&l=en&n=15894
3	Country	
	School	SOU Ekzarh Antim I, BG
	School type	Primary and secondary
	Age of the team	About 2-3 years (started in 2006)
	Interviewer	Yassen Spasov, Milena Karaangova http://www.etwinning.net/en/pub/profile.cfm?f=1&l=en&n=31124
4	Country	
	School	Schule für Körper- und Mehrfachbehinderte SKB, CH
	School type	Special education school
	Age of the team	About 1 year (started in 2011)
	Interviewer	Nina Hobi http://www.etwinning.net/en/pub/profile.cfm?f=1&l=en&n=126560

ANNEX

5

Country



School

Dunant Grundschule, DE

School type

Primary

Age of the team

More than 10 years as a team (since 2001), but eT since 2009.

Interviewer

Priya Bathe. Contact: Ellen Kammertoens

<http://www.etwinning.net/en/pub/profile.cfm?f=1&l=en&n=1128>

6

Country



School

Lycée Blériot, FR

School type

Vocational

Age of the team

About 2 years (lead teacher since 2006)

Interviewer

Jean-Jacques Thibault, Odile Papin

<http://www.etwinning.net/en/pub/profile.cfm?f=1&l=en&n=38857>

7

Country



School

1st high school of Ilioupolis, GR

School type

Secondary (lower)

Age of the team

About 1 year

Interviewer

Athanasios Pantazis, Irene Pateraki

<http://www.etwinning.net/en/pub/profile.cfm?f=1&l=en&n=117089>

8

Country



School

Convent Primary School Listowel, IE

School type

Primary

Age of the team

About 1 year

Interviewer

Kay O'Regan

<http://www.etwinning.net/en/pub/profile.cfm?f=1&l=en&n=106526>

9

Country



School

“Ada Negri” part of the I.C. “Don Rinaldo Beretta”, IT

School type

Primary (part of a large institute of schools)





Age of the team

Team started in 2005 by the school head, second iteration in 2010.

Interviewer

Giulia Felice, Massimiliano D'Innocenzo

<http://www.etwinning.net/en/pub/profile.cfm?f=1&l=it&n=3225>

- 10** Country 
School **JP Thijssse College, NL**
 School type Secondary
 Age of the team About 1 year
 Interviewer Floor Nusink
 Link on the portal <http://www.etwinning.net/en/pub/profile.cfm?f=1&l=en&n=37040>
- 11** Country 
School **Szkoła Podstawowa nr 1, Bogatynia, PL**
 School type Primary
 Age of the team About 5 years. Lead teach in since 2005, ambassador 2008.
 Interviewer Barbara Milewska
<http://www.etwinning.net/en/pub/profile.cfm?f=1&l=en&n=5972>
- 12** Country 
School **Ekhagaskolan, SE**
 School type Secondary (lower)
 Age of the team About 2 years.
 Interviewer Anders Brännstedt
<http://www.etwinning.net/en/pub/profile.cfm?f=1&l=en&n=84257>
- 13** Country 
School **ZŠ Štefana Šmálik, Tvrdosín, SK**
 School type Primary
 Age of the team About 1 year as a team, but many in eTwinning since 2005.
 Interviewer Beáta Marasová. Contact: Gabriela Podolanova
<http://www.etwinning.net/en/pub/profile.cfm?f=1&l=en&n=9116>
<http://zssmalika.edupage.org/>
- 14** Country 
School **Príncipe Felipe, ES**
 School type Secondary and Vocational
 Age of the team About 2 years. in eT since 2009
 Interviewer Diego Rojas
<http://www.etwinning.net/en/pub/profile.cfm?f=1&l=es&n=62500>

ANNEX

- 15** Country 
School **Southwater, UK**
School type Primary
Age of the team About 5 years, in eT since 2007
Interviewer Anne Jakins
<http://www.etwinning.net/en/pub/profile.cfm?f=1&l=en&n=29773>
- 16** Country 
School **Grubergasse, AT**
School type Primary
Age of the team About 1 year (started in 2011)
Interviewer Martin Gradl, David Kern
<http://www.etwinning.net/en/pub/profile.cfm?f=1&l=en&n=111428>
- 17** Country 
School **Gesamtschule Hardt, DE**
School type Secondary
Age of the team About 1 year (started in 2011)
Interviewer Priya Bathe. Contact: Ellen Kammertoens
<http://www.etwinning.net/en/pub/profile.cfm?f=1&l=en&n=74943>
- 18** Country 
School **Verias, GR**
School type Secondary (upper)
Age of the team About 2 years (school started in 2005)
Interviewer Athanasios Pantazis, Irene Pateraki
<http://www.etwinning.net/en/pub/profile.cfm?f=1&l=en&n=2506>
- 19** Country 
School **Scuola Statale dell'Infanzia "F.lli Cervi" di Noverasco di Opera (MI), IT**
School type Pre primary
Age of the team More than 5 years (lead in 2005)
Interviewer Giulia Felice, Massimiliano D'Innocenzo
<http://www.etwinning.net/en/pub/profile.cfm?f=1&l=it&n=1607>

20

Country

**School****IIS Machiavelli in Rome, IT**

School type

Secondary (upper)

Age of the team

About 2 years (school active in 2009)

Interviewer

Alessandra Ceccherelli

<http://www.etwinning.net/en/pub/profile.cfm?f=1&l=en&n=49070>

21

Country

**School****Scuola media Leonardo da Vinci in Figline Valdarno (FI), IT**

School type

Secondary (lower)

Age of the team

 About 2 years
 (school since 2009, teacher active in 2010 for eT-Comenius)

Interviewer

Lorenzo Mentuccia

<http://www.etwinning.net/en/pub/profile.cfm?f=1&l=en&n=83874>

22

Country

**School****Gimnazjum nr 3 w Lublinie, PL**

School type

Secondary (lower)

Age of the team

About 3 years.

Interviewer

Barbara Milewska

http://www.etwinning.net/en/pub/connect/browse_people_schools_and_pro/profile.cfm?f=1&l=en&n=38902

23

Country

**School****CEIP San Sebastián, ES**

School type

Primary

Age of the team

About 1 year

Interviewer

Angel Pavón

<http://www.etwinning.net/en/pub/profile.cfm?f=1&l=en&n=32571>

24

Country

**School****Shawlands, UK**

School type

Secondary

Age of the team

About 5 years, in eT since 2007

Interviewer

Susie Arnott

<http://www.etwinning.net/en/pub/profile.cfm?f=1&l=en&n=23105>

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eTwinning School Teams

Case studies on teacher collaboration through eTwinning

