

Warwickshire County Council ICT Development Service

Gigajam hits the high notes in Kineton High School



Gigajam interactive software provides educational resources to help improve pupils' ability to play music and enhance their enjoyment. Gigajam provides pupils with immediate, real-time analysis and feedback on playing techniques when plugged-in instruments are used. Pupil's own instruments can also be used in conjunction with instructional videos and audio files to play along with. The software is best used in a structured music lesson to enrich the teaching and learning experience. Gigajam can also be used as an extra curriculum activity to promote collaboration and help foster a music community and culture within the school.

Objectives

Kineton High School wanted to use Gigajam to:

- Encourage participation and learning of music through the performance of a musical instrument.
- Encourage pupils to work together by performing in a band.
- Harness ICT to facilitate personalised learning in a classroom environment.
- Enrich the teaching and learning experience by making the lessons interactive and more enjoyable.
- Promote a community culture within the school.

Background

Kineton High School has over 1000 pupils and is a rural, Sports College. In April 2007, the ICT Development Service worked with Kineton High to install the Gigajam software

and set up a dedicated classroom where it could be used with different musical instruments. This involved setting up displays and working closely with the music teacher Dr James Haughton to understand how best to use the software with the pupils.

Implementation

Initially, six pupils of mixed musical abilities and ages from Key Stage 3 and 4 regularly used the Gigajam software as an extra curricular activity. The pupils used a mix of their own instruments and midi instruments which ranged from bass, guitar, drums and keyboard. Working together, the pupils regularly participated to play rock music with the supervision of their music teacher. Plug-in instruments could also be used with Gigajam to further enrich the learning experience for real-time analysis.

Using a projector and a sound enabled whiteboard, the music teacher engaged the pupils with a starter activity. The pupils then logged onto the school curriculum network and opened up the lesson. Pupils followed the instructions and played the individual elements of the lesson, bringing it all together towards the end of the lesson. The lesson was analysed to highlight the elements of good playing and where changes were needed to be made such as notes, cords and tempo. Pupils used this information to improve their performance and could ask for help where necessary from their teacher or from other pupils.

Impact and Outcomes

Since using Gigajam, the pupils have:

- Personalised their own learning when playing a musical instrument.
- Worked collaboratively together to play music.
- Used the real time analysis and feedback to help improve their ability to play their instruments.
- Thoroughly enjoyed the sessions and encouraged them to participate more actively in music.
- The school is planning to purchase further midi instruments and extend the experience to Key Stage 2 pupils in the local vicinity.
- The school is working with the ICT Development Service to allow remote access for pupils to use the software at home as an online resource.

Benefits

- Gigajam does not rely totally on being delivered by a qualified music teacher. Anyone with a musical interest or background that has the confidence to use ICT equipment may support the use of Gigajam.
- It can be used flexibly in a structured music lesson or as an extra curriculum activity to promote collaboration and build communities.

Pupil Voices

Pupils from year 7 and 9 were asked about their experiences with Gigajam, here are just

a few comments:

"I like the ability to choose my own pace and revisit elements where I feel I need more practice"

"Great to be able to try out and learn a second instrument, which normally I could not afford to do"

"..approach is very good as it explains the aims and objectives and introduces new notes and techniques step by step, backed up by video clips"

Teacher Voice

Dr James Houghton has been very impressed with Gigajam and said;

"I am looking forward to observing the impact of Gigajam on music lessons within school and will link observations with Open University research I am currently undertaking."

"Pupils have been keen to remain after school to enable them to work on Gigajam and are very enthusiastic about the approach taken."

"Gigajam pupils are to make a video demonstrating their new skills . This will be shown to other pupils in the school to promote interest."

Useful website addresses

www.gigajam.com
www.warwickshire.gov.uk/ictds
www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/personalisedlearning
<https://www.we-learn.org/gigajam> (access through Warwickshire broadband to 5 free lessons)



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