

# DigiSmart<sup>®</sup>

Targeted booster workshops with all session materials provided



## Helping struggling 10 year-olds to triumph

DigiSmart works in partnership with primary schools to boost the literacy skills of under-achieving 10 year-old children from disadvantaged backgrounds, enabling them to catch up and succeed.

Intervening by the age of 10 is critical - the chances of making a decisive impact diminish as children get older.

The youngsters selected to take part in DigiSmart are at risk of not achieving the national standard by the time they leave primary school. Their struggle with literacy is a key obstacle to their success.

Put starkly, at the age of 10 the majority of children selected for DigiSmart are reading at the level of 6 year-olds.

DigiSmart provides a carefully constructed course of booster workshops taking place as extra provision across a year. The project uses technology as a motivational hook to engage children's attention and interest.

The DigiSmart workshops teach children a wide range of literacy skills, including reading, as well as building their appetite for learning.

Key ingredients are structure, motivation and plenty of challenge. Children's progress is measured from start to finish and they work to weekly targets, which they love.

Project results to date overwhelmingly show that children make strong learning gains.

Over 5100 children have benefited to date.

Attendance levels have been consistently over 90% year on year since 2002.

**"There is no other intervention offering like DigiSmart. It is the way that the vulnerable children who fall 'below the radar' of other interventions are scooped up and helped by DigiSmart that is unique."**

John Jackson, Headteacher

**1 in 5 children fail to reach the national standard by the age of 11 and children from poor homes are more than twice as likely to be in this position.**

Source: Department for Education



**"DigiSmart gives children a reason to read. Much of its success is due to it being a real motivator for children who find it a challenge to concentrate or deal with quantities of text."**

Anne Stewart, Headteacher

## How DigiSmart Works

Once weekly workshops across a year are held with a group of 12 children from disadvantaged backgrounds who have been identified as most in need of a very targeted boost.

In each school a teacher is trained to act as Lead Tutor and takes overall responsibility for workshop delivery, together with 1 or 2 Support Tutors.

Each child receives their own DigiSmart Workbook which they use each week.

At the end of every workshop session, children assess themselves against their weekly targets in negotiation with one of the DigiSmart Tutors.

## Training the Tutors

DigiSmart provides one full day's training attended by all Lead Tutors new to the project. This prepares them to deliver the DigiSmart activities and equips them to maximise the benefits of the course for the children.

All tutors receive a comprehensive Tutor Handbook, together with support and guidance across the year.

**"I look forward to DigiSmart because it makes me feel good and strong inside. I don't feel scared anymore."**

DigiSmart child



**"Every week it's been like going to the funfair – always exciting and different. Better than the funfair really."**

DigiSmart child

**"My son always had trouble with reading and had really fallen behind his classmates. He saw anything that involved reading as a problem. But DigiSmart has changed all that and now he is reading. Experiencing success at DigiSmart has given him the confidence to have a go at things he was afraid of trying."**

Parent of DigiSmart child

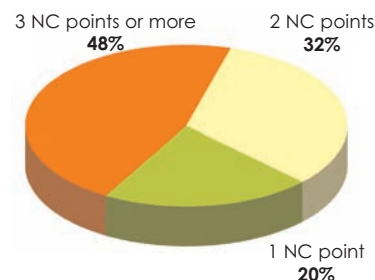
## Project Results

In every year of the project children's progress is measured. Action research data over the last 8 years evidences consistently strong learning gains made by children, as shown below.

### Literacy gains:

Most children began DigiSmart well below the expected national level for reading.

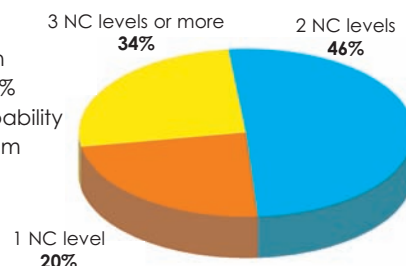
After 1 year every child made gains and 48% improved their reading by a full National Curriculum level or more\*.



### ICT gains: (Information and Communications Technology)

All children were performing below the national average in the use of computers at the start of DigiSmart.

After 1 year all children made progress and 80% improved their ICT capability by 2 National Curriculum levels or more\*.



\*NOTE: It is expected that children will improve by 1 National Curriculum level over a period of 18 months.

**"DigiSmart has been fantastic for these children. They have gained grades we didn't think they would get and DigiSmart played a really big part in that."**

Anita Bayley, Headteacher