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 Success Stories

*~ featuring ~*

King's Cross EAZ  
Islington

*Raising Standards Through ICT*

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teachers and pupils across ICT and the entire curriculum.*”

~Derek Smith, director of King's Cross Education Action Zone &  
Peter Barrett, project manager of King's Cross Education Action Zone

## King's Cross EAZ Raising Standards Through ICT

*By Derek Smith, former lecturer and Ofsted inspector, and currently director of the King's Cross Education Action Zone (pictured left) and Peter Barrett, the Action Zone's ICT Project Manager (pictured right). Here they give a brief insight into how the EAZ has utilised the versatility of Espresso and explain how they feel the service has helped to improve standards within the zone's seven schools.*



King's Cross Small Education Action Zone is situated in the London borough of Islington. It is made up of seven schools, which are all located between King's Cross railway station and the Angel Islington. The schools within the EAZ are;

- Angel Primary 190 pupils
- Blessed Sacrament RC Primary 220 pupils
- Copenhagen Primary 260 pupils
- Elizabeth Garrett Anderson 1100 pupils
- St. Andrew's C of E Primary 204 pupils
- Vittoria Primary 228 pupils
- Winton Primary School 223 pupils

### **Dedicated to improving opportunities**

King's Cross Education Action Zone's catchment area is one of significant social deprivation. Around 60% of children receive free school meals and 30% are on one of the statutory stages for Special Educational Needs.

### **Setting the Scene**

#### **King's Cross EAZ Borough of Islington London**

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*Number of pupils: Approximately 2,500*

*Espresso products within the EAZ:*

*Espresso for Primary Schools,*

*Espresso for Secondary Schools*

### **What is an EAZ?**

Education Action Zones were an important part of the Labour Party manifesto. They take as a starting point two principles: that, in our most deprived urban and rural areas, more needs to be done to ensure all pupils have the chance to succeed; and that it is essential that the school system has built into it the capacity for change and innovation. They are about discovering models of improvement which can be shared with the rest of the education system.

There are currently 99 EAZs throughout the country, in addition to 82 'small' EAZs, like the one in King's Cross. Small EAZs consist of up to 8 schools, always including at least 1 secondary school, and receive £250,000 in funding from the DfES. These schools work in partnership to share resources and best practise to improve standards.

The EAZ strongly supports the national agenda to transform inner city schools, based on diversity and high expectations. It is keen to build on work currently being undertaken by schools, the LEA, and the Excellence in Cities initiative. The vision of the zone is to promote the growing community of schools and develop a sustainable infrastructure that will help to accelerate the process of each school's continuing improvement.

King's Cross EAZ, like all other 'small' zones, receives a grant of £250,000 a year for a period of three to five years, depending on progress. Zones are also encouraged to work closely with local businesses, and any sponsorship they raise is matched by the DfES pound for pound up to an additional £50,000 per year.

In line with the Government's recommendations, King's Cross EAZ has invested a significant proportion of the EAZ grant on Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in a bid to raise standards and create a greater sense of community between the schools and the local neighbourhood. This has been achieved through a truly pioneering project, combining the latest laser networking technologies with high quality content from Espresso.



### **Encouraging community with Information Technology**

The King's Cross area is changing rapidly and the EAZ is contributing to that change by creating a new community formed and linked by technology. The concept of a group of seven schools linked by a laser network represents genuine innovation. Quite simply, a laser network on this scale has never been attempted before. All schools in the EAZ are in line of sight from the rooftop of Copenhagen Primary School. This enables the laser to link all seven schools and to share learning resources such as Espresso. The laser network's capacity for data exchange is enormous - for example schools can routinely work together via videoconference, and store and access video materials on demand.

"The schools in King's Cross EAZ place high value on Espresso. Teachers find it very easy to use and appealing to infants, juniors and secondary school pupils alike. After only six months of use, it is something which we could not do without."

***Derek Smith, Director, King's Cross Education Action Zone***

### **Espresso - Tailoring a service to the needs of the individual**

We first heard of Espresso from one of our primary school teachers. Although involved with the Zone's ICT in the school, this particular teacher did not have an extensive ICT background. However, what she had seen and heard of Espresso intrigued her to find out more about the service. This led us to investigate the resource at the BETT exhibition in January 2001 and we were so impressed with what we saw that by July 2001 King's Cross EAZ was a fully subscribing customer.

King's Cross EAZ was persuaded to invest in the service because of the exceptional value for money that Espresso could offer. Espresso is supplied to all seven schools via the laser network. Only one school, Elizabeth Garret, has the satellite dish and 'Espresso server' required to receive Espresso's weekly updates of video-rich and topical learning material, which are broadcast to subscribing schools throughout the country via the ASTRA satellite – the same as that used by Sky Television. Elizabeth Garret then shares this content with all schools in the zone. The technology that King's Cross EAZ has invested in enables cheap, high capacity, low maintenance educational material to arrive on all of the PCs with the minimum of effort.

## Espresso – Promoting enthusiasm and encouraging development

The EAZ has approximately 400 PCs with each school having its own ICT suite. This is complimented by several PCs that are scattered around each school. Initially, Espresso was only used to teach ICT within the suites. But gradually, as teachers have become more familiar with the resource, the fantastic range of materials within the Espresso service are being integrated into other lessons, particularly languages and maths, and teachers and pupils can now be found enjoying Espresso throughout the school.

“Espresso has played a key role in the raising of standards and enthusiasm in both teachers and pupils in ICT and across the entire curriculum”

**Derek Smith, Director,  
King’s Cross EAZ**

The Espresso service has not been simply confined to use on PCs. Teachers are increasingly turning to Espresso for additional classroom resources such as photographs and flashcards and activities such as worksheets and quizzes. This is a use that I believe will grow and grow. Teachers are really beginning to appreciate the variety of exciting content and activities contained within the Espresso service. The ‘Staffroom’ facility is also proving a big hit, where teachers can go for expert guidance on how the Espresso service meets the National Curriculum and individual modules within the QCA. Once the initial nervousness of using the resource had been

overcome, teachers found it simple to navigate and easy to find the relevant resources for their subjects and particular topics.



King’s Cross EAZ has an overall feeling of enthusiasm and this can be accredited to our innovative use of technology, well-chosen education resources and dedicated staff. Our teachers welcome new initiatives and resources that stimulate learning. Interactive whiteboards, for example, are now used extensively across the zone to present Espresso materials, among others, to larger groups of pupils. Espresso has played a key role in the raising of standards and enthusiasm in both teachers and pupils in both ICT and across the entire curriculum.

*Contact us today for a free in-school demonstration:*

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