

Wow for Life TV

November 2008

A FURNESS primary school is pioneering a satellite television network that promotes health and well-being and celebrates life.

Greengate Junior School, in Barrow, is the first school in South Cumbria to introduce The Life Channel Schools.

The educational TV system - which aims to inform, engage and inspire - was launched at Greengate Junior School in July as part of its 135th birthday celebrations.

Pupils have been tuning into positive messages and awareness campaigns about topics such as healthy eating, fitness, hygiene, reading, and community.



Some programmes use cartoons to get the messages across, another uses famous actors and actresses explaining why they enjoy reading. Pupils also have the chance to be stars of the small screen through footage of their plays, concerts and classroom projects being displayed alongside the programmes.

Headteacher Colin Smith said: "We feel privileged to blaze a trail for new technology. "The most common things the children have said are 'wow' and 'cool'. "They love it."

The programmes are shown on plasma screens in the school's new reception and breakfast room, which were all part of Greengate's revamp. The Life Channel network was first successfully run in doctors' surgeries, clinics and hospitals.

The Life Channel Schools was created to complement the Every Child Matters agenda. It was launched in County Durham last year at an event hosted by former Prime Minister Tony Blair.

Mr Smith said: "It's having quite an impact after just a few weeks. "One or two of the children have said 'I did not know that before'." The headteacher said that having the children appearing on screen will be very useful for their speaking and listening.

Mr Smith said: "We have written it into the curriculum for next year. "The children will make their own cartoons, plays and messages for other pupils and share their work. It's going to be a wonderful tool for learning, as well as sharing information with parents and the community. Teachers from other schools have come to see it, to see if it's right for their schools. They have been quite impressed with what they have seen."

Paul Vitali, director of The Life Channel, said: "Informing and educating children and young people to take control of their own health and wellbeing is crucial to preventing many commonplace physical and social problems.

"Many of these can be easily avoided if the person is clear on the impact and effects certain lifestyle choices have on them, their family and the community. Early intervention and support mechanisms for our children are crucial to their long term wellbeing."

"We are delighted that The Life Channel has been received so well by schools and colleges across the UK. We hope that through the The Life Channel Schools initiative together we can raise aspiration, improve health, help keep children safe and have them better prepared for their lives ahead."