



Case studies

22. Grevegårdsskolan, Gothenburg, Sweden

Reporter: Anna Klerfelt – June 2009



CONTENTS

1. Context of the school	3
2. Example of practice	3
3. Impact, barriers and enablers	4
3.1 School.....	5
ICT development plan, implementation strategy, organisational changes and attitudes	5
Resourcing.....	5
The curriculum and ICT	6
Assessment of ICT and ICT for assessment	6
Organisation of support.....	6
3.2 Teachers	7
ICT as a tool for communication and collaboration	7
ICT as a tool to improve the quality and efficiency of planning and administration	7
The pedagogical role of ICT to improve learning and teaching.....	7
ICT skills	8
Participation, motivation, confidence and performance.....	8
3.3 Learners.....	9
ICT skills	9
Motivation, participation and confidence	9
4. References	9

This is one of 25 case studies produced for STEPS, the Study of the impact of technology in primary schools, to illustrate the impact of ICT, on schools, teachers and learners, and to highlight barriers and enablers to its effective use in the school. Further information can be found at <http://steps.eun.org>.



The views expressed in this work are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Commission.

This study has been commissioned by the European Commission, Directorate General Education and Culture.

© European Commission

1. CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL

I step into a large, light room. The children in the preschool class in Grevegårdsskolan come up to me and say “Welcome, welcome.” Then they go back to their activities. Together in small groups they are deeply involved in playing with cars, animal dolls, blocks, are employed in “the office”, are cleaning the “flat”, visiting the “hospital” or busy with the computer.

Grevegårdsskolan is a F-9 school which means that children from six years old in the pre-school class are in the same school building as pupils aged 7-16 years, from grade 1 to grade 9, the final grade in the Swedish Compulsory School. The school starts at 8.00 and ends at 13.20. The school day includes both indoor and outdoor activities and is not divided into lessons. After the activities in the classroom, the junior school children go to the after-school centre in the same building. About 500 pupils attend the school and 75 teachers work there. The school was built in the seventies and somewhat worn by years of intense activities, but buildings are to be restored in the coming year. Walking through the long corridors one notices the change from the older pupils’ corridors to the younger ones’. As one nears the pre-school class and the after-school centre the amount of pictures, photos, posters increases and the rooms gets cosier and more decorated. There is plenty of material to choose from in the pre-school classroom and it is well organised. The playground outside the school consists of a big asphalted open space, a lawn and a football field.

The school is located in a suburb of Gothenburg, the second biggest town in Sweden. It is situated in a green area with trees, flowers, bare hillocks and fields among the newly renovated blocks of flats and the houses. Gothenburg is a highly segregated town, but this quarter of the town is one of the very few that are mixed. In this district rich and poor live side by side, Swedes and immigrants from different parts of the world live in the same area, and you find both immigrants and Swedes in the houses and blocks of flats. This implies that children with very different backgrounds go to the same school and is noticeable when entering the classroom. Twenty-five children, boys, girls, black, white and two children with special needs play and interact in a harmonious atmosphere, supervised by three teachers. When the children get older, some of the parents make special choices for their children and often the children living in the flats remain in this school.

2. EXAMPLE OF PRACTICE

This educational setting is characterised by a well thought-out structure and conscious choices. The educational goals are high and in line with the Swedish curriculum. The teachers try to take the children’s perspective and their vision is to create an attractive and playful environment for the children. Although some of the children need very clear rules, teachers talk with them in a cheerful tone and in a respectful way. The range of activities is wide and children choose themselves what to do and indicate their choice by putting their name plate beneath a sign with their choice written on. The children also get involved in short or long projects. The projects are mostly individual choices, but the teachers consciously give

attention to projects that arouse other children's curiosity. Such projects have a tendency to spread spontaneously among the other children and the original individual initiative often ends up as a common activity; because it turns out to be so absorbing and interesting everybody likes to join in.

One of these ongoing themes at the moment is a 'Swedish Eurovision Song Contest'. By typing 'YouYube' (a difficult for Swedish children to spell) the children enter the world of the internet and watch, read about, and listen to their idols. They grab microphones, sing and dance in a big crowd in interaction with each other and the artists in the movies on the screen. Every child works with books about these idols, they print out pictures and write spontaneously about the singers and their performances. Spelling or grammar is not important in this stage, only joy and self-confidence. The urge to write spreads through the group and even the most timid child is dragged into the activities due to the other children's enthusiasm and the teachers' supportive attention.

When describing their educational attitude the teachers emphasise the concern of bringing children's everyday experiences into the pre-school and to find opportunities in their play which invite the children to take part in learning processes.



Participants in the "Eurovision Song Contest"

3. IMPACT, BARRIERS AND ENABLERS

The teachers mention the Swedish curriculum as the most important instrument for steering the educational process. The curriculum is very short, 15 pages, and gives guidance instead of detailed directions. The pre-school teachers and the pedagogues in the after-school centre are well educated, with four years' university based studies and they have the freedom to direct their own work within the framework of the curriculum. Their educational standpoint, to try to take part in the children's engagement in media, is a basis for the fruitful use of ICT.

3.1 SCHOOL

ICT DEVELOPMENT PLAN, IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY, ORGANISATIONAL CHANGES AND ATTITUDES

- **Impacts**

- The pedagogy in Grevegårdsskolan is well matched to the Swedish curriculum. In the curriculum ICT is highlighted as important, but not really emphasised. All the teachers participate in national professional development and it is encouraged by the head teacher.

- **Barriers**

- Not having an explicitly expressed plan could both be considered as promoting and hindering development.

- **Enablers**

- The use of ICT is more or less taken for granted, but use differs between different classrooms and teams of teachers.

RESOURCING

- **Impacts**

- All schools in Gothenburg are connected through a common learning platform, where teachers can share educational ideas and pupils can show and share projects etc. On a national level the Swedish National Agency for Education have a well developed site with courses, interesting articles and reports, and plenty of tools for multimedia. This site is often used by both teachers and pupils.

- **Barriers**

- Although the school has both a lab with computers and computers in every classroom, the need for more equipment is often mentioned. This includes both hardware and software. Despite having a common base of ICT skills, several teachers want to deepen and expand their own ICT-competence.

- **Enablers**

- The school is constantly improving both hardware and software, although the staff wish for faster access.

THE CURRICULUM AND ICT

- **Impacts**
 - ICT is not a specific subject, but integrated in everyday activities and especially in the ongoing themes.
- **Barriers**
 - Not having a specific curriculum steering ICT activities is the Swedish way of regarding the curriculum. It is hard to say if it is limiting or promoting ICT activities.
- **Enablers**
 - Not having a specific curriculum steering the activity could be seen as a freedom to develop ICT use based on the teachers' own choice and in collaboration with their colleagues.

ASSESSMENT OF ICT AND ICT FOR ASSESSMENT

- **Impacts**
 - In Sweden, formal assessment of younger children is not considered to promote learning although a change in this standpoint is being discussed by politicians. The thought of assessing children is far from the pedagogues' educational attitude. Assessment of ICT and ICT for assessment is unfamiliar to teachers. When talking about this issue in the interview teachers could not even conceive the relevance of the question.

ORGANISATION OF SUPPORT

- **Impacts**
 - All schools in Gothenburg are connected to a common learning platform and the service includes support – described as fast and efficient, and having resources for learning. When mending something, the technicians 'take over' the computer remotely from their central office and the teacher sits at the computer screen in their school and watch the technicians' actions. In addition to the support provided from the platform, support is also provided by a colleague. This person has two hours a week included in their duty for supporting teacher teams. This access to personalised support is appreciated.
- **Barriers**
 - Some teachers mention as a barrier that they themselves are prevented from installing applications on the computers. If they want to install Skype for instance, they are directed to the support service and have to await their assistance. If they bring old computers to the school with the purpose of increasing the number of

computers to enhance the children's access to digital tools, these computers are not connected to the support system.

- **Enablers**

- All the teachers describe the support service as an appreciated resource.

3.2 TEACHERS

ICT AS A TOOL FOR COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION

- **Impacts**

- All teachers use e-mail and the local intranet. They receive information from the head teacher via the learning platform. Exchange of information between teachers and parents is mostly face to face or by written notes, as parents fetch their children from school almost every day.

- **Enablers**

- The existing platform with possibilities for exchange and collaboration between pupils and teachers from different schools will soon be replaced by a new and hopefully more attractive one.

ICT AS A TOOL TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY AND EFFICIENCY OF PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION

- **Impacts**

- All administration concerning work, for example notification of illness, holidays, and so on, is placed on the learning platform and easily accessed by the head teacher and administrative staff.

THE PEDAGOGICAL ROLE OF ICT TO IMPROVE LEARNING AND TEACHING

- **Impacts**

- Most of the teachers want to increase the use of ICT, but not all. Interest varies between colleagues.

- **Barriers**

- The lack of interest and engagement from colleagues could be a negative factor for those wanting to learn more.

- **Enablers**

- And inversely, interest and engagement promote and stimulate constructive discussions about how to develop the pedagogical role of ICT to improve learning and teaching. All the teachers take part in the extensive teacher training

program Practical IT and Media skills provided by the Swedish National Agency for Education.

ICT SKILLS

- **Impacts**
 - All teachers have basic ICT skills, obtained both in informal settings and in formal training.
- **Barriers**
 - Some of the teachers consider lack of certain specialised equipment as a disheartening factor that reduces their interest their own aspiration for development, and they also mention lack of time as a barrier.
- **Enablers**
 - Obtaining the desired equipment, but above all, inspiration from the children and colleagues.

PARTICIPATION, MOTIVATION, CONFIDENCE AND PERFORMANCE

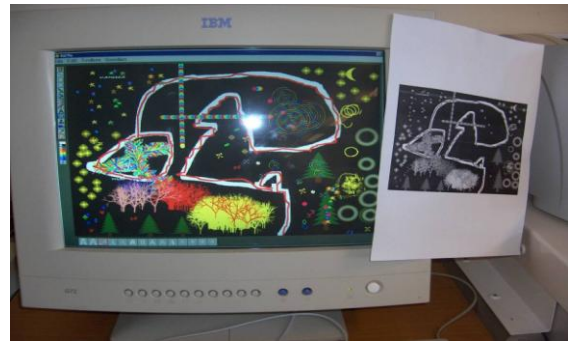
- **Impacts**
 - The teachers in the classroom described have the necessary qualifications for the activities they offer the children in the classroom. Not all teachers are motivated, but the teachers in the pre-school class are highly motivated. The reason for their motivation is that they want to take part in children´s everyday life and make their learning pleasurable. Confidence is of less importance, engagement and teaching skills are of high importance and these teachers are constantly reflecting about their activities.
- **Barriers**
 - Some of the teachers mention time as a limiting factor for increasing their participation in different courses.
- **Enablers**
 - The teachers' close collaboration is mentioned as an important motive for striving to develop as pedagogue.

3.3 LEARNERS

ICT SKILLS

o Impacts

- o Even though just six years old the children show observable skills. The children constantly ask each other for help and they seem to be well aware of who knows what. They help each other to remember and spell web addresses, they help each other to find technical tools, they write and draw on the computer, they create stories, create games, send e-mails, take photos with the digital camera or download photos from the internet, organise text and pictures together, and make small movies and many other activities. They are especially fond of making maps.



- o The teachers constantly encourage the children to work together and share knowledge.

MOTIVATION, PARTICIPATION AND CONFIDENCE

o Impacts

- o As the children can always choose between different activities, they seem to work eagerly with the chosen activity. Playing with technological tools seems to be as motivating and popular as other activities. The children are deeply involved in the choice made and show confidence in both themselves and in the knowledge of their peers and teachers.

4. REFERENCES

o Sources:

- o Interviews with teachers, observation of lessons, interviews with the children, interview with the headmaster.

o Further information:

- o School website: www.goteborg.se/wps/portal/grevegardsskolan