

POSTCARDS WITH A DIFFERENCE

The groundbreaking schools' new portal, Making the News, went international when a Suffolk middle school used it to report live on their school trip to France.

Pupils from St Louis Catholic Middle School in Bury St Edmunds spent a week in the Ardeche region of Southern France and filed reports on their trip each evening, enabling parents and friends in the UK to read descriptions of what they had been doing within minutes of the activities ending. The Year Seven pupils enjoyed caving, climbing and river trekking, as well as a two-day canoe trip through the Ardeche Gorge.

Each evening the trip leader, Melissa Mak, worked with ex-St Louis teacher and Regional Broadband Consortia (RBC) consultant Brendan Routledge, to help pupils write and upload their reports. Melissa explained:

"We're aware that school trips can be a worrying time for parents, especially if their child is away from home for the first time. MTN is a very effective educational tool. We realised that it could help the children reflect on what they were learning from their trip, at the same time as keeping parents up-to-date with their experiences."

Brendan confirmed:

"MTN is an excellent use of the RBC network and perfectly illustrates the way that broadband can be integrated into school life to offer new opportunities for pupils, teachers and parents. Since we have returned from France, the parents have been full of praise for the project. They really enjoyed feeling that they were part of the trip and could join in from home – and they also felt more secure and generally happier about their children's experience."

Making the News is a national, DfES-supported, broadband project that enables pupils to publish for a real audience. It provides online live templates that support the instant publication of stories and illustrations as text, digital photographs and instant video recordings. The application is available to all schools at all times. It supports all areas of the curriculum and is relevant at any Key Stage as it is so flexible. MTN assists teachers in publishing and managing news items, with links to safe news sources and image galleries. It is easy to use and provides an exciting challenge and motivational exercise for pupils of all ages and abilities.



**For further information access:
http://kmi4schools.e2bn.net/mtn_stlois/index.htm**