

What were the achievements from the PicoH Pilot?

I really love to see the children applying ideas of variables and ideas of, particularly in functions as well, to create a more complex algorithm. A lot of children before this project would create complex algorithms, but it'd be a singular algorithm or singular function based on one input. And here you could have simultaneously with the PicoH, several things could be happening at once, which was particularly nice. So in terms of it being able to make it also bob its head or wait around and do things while something else was going on that was really allowed us to take their skill base on the next level, which I was really excited about, and that really could see a clear progression of their skills from where they were last year, now to now.

So in terms of assessment and attainment for the children, the PicoH is really, really useful in terms of seeing what they're able to do now, and also allowing me to teach in more detail those key skills that they may have missed out on in previous scratch lessons. Definitely the experience for everybody, I think, was very worthwhile. They got a lot of fun out of it and the experience working with others and seeing what programming can do in context, I think all the children could understand how an algorithm can be created for something like Siri and Alexa. How does that happen?

And now they can clearly see some of the steps towards that by us breaking it down and seeing the lessons we've had here is a way of breaking down each of that into smaller steps. And so it's something that all together makes sense. And that's what I think what really excites me here is that there's this big algorithm, a lot of complex things and different functions going on, and a child points at it to tell me this is what this can do and this is what something else can do.

I've been really impressed by what the children have achieved within Wormholt Park School on this project. I think the project has allowed children to really push their application of computation thinking to a level that I don't see very often in other schools. And the PicoH projects has really allowed for that. It's because it requires the use of conditionals and variables in a really defined way and with a really clear outcome and some other projects you see around, they're not necessarily quite as defined as that, because for any sort of question and answer system to work, it requires those use of those tools, and there's no other way of doing it.

There's no way to sort of cheat the program where there are other ways of doing things when you're doing game creation or animation. There are ways of cheating the program to make it simpler, but there's no way of getting away from using those more advanced programming constructs and concepts.