

BITC Member Company Education Case Study



Royal Mail

Company Details

Royal Mail Group Ltd is the national postal service of the United Kingdom, wholly owned by the government. Historically, the General Post Office including the mail delivery and telecommunications services was a government department which, in 1969 became a state-owned corporation known as The Post Office. In 2002 it became Royal Mail Group.

Royal Mail Group is split into four businesses: Royal Mail; Post Office Ltd, managing Post Office retail outlets; Parcelforce Worldwide, an express parcel service; and General Logistics Systems, the European parcels business. Royal Mail Group employs over 190,000 people in the UK, almost one per cent of the entire working population.

Royal Mail covers the delivery of mail within the whole of the UK. Each day it collects 85 million items of mail from 113,000 post boxes, 14,300 Post Office branches and around 87,000 businesses.

Post Office Ltd runs the group's Post Office branches throughout the UK and is the largest retail and financial-services chain in the UK offering over 170 products and services.

Parcelforce Worldwide is the group's express parcels business, delivering around 150,000 parcels daily, or 337 million a year.

General Logistics Systems, the group's European parcels business, has its head office in the Netherlands. It has 14,500 employees and its core operation is business-to-business parcels deliveries. It has 220,000 customers in 34 European countries.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is at the heart of Royal Mail Group Ltd which stresses that CSR in Royal Mail Group Ltd is “*doing the right thing*” for three groups: its employees, its business, and the communities in which it operates. The Group's CSR activities focus primarily on four areas: health, safety, environment and social policy. Royal Mail Group Ltd's continuing commitment to CSR is reflected by the 13 CSR awards the group received in 2006, including the European Best CSR Programme of the Year award, World Mail Award for the Corporate Social Responsibility category and a Gold Award for Payroll Giving Quality Mark. Awards gained in 2007 include the Silver Jubilee Big Tick for education, a further Big Tick Award, five Payroll Giving Awards and an Environmental Award from 'CILT'.

Educational Activities

Education has featured in the CSR activities of the business for over 25 years. The group's educational activities focus primarily on helping teachers and students in the classroom through the provision of resources that support the

basic areas of the National Curriculum. Historically, the resources that Royal Mail has produced have had an emphasis on literacy and numeracy; with the introduction of the National Curriculum and recent policy initiatives, the resources have taken on a more focused approach to include a major pack on enterprise education and another on climate. All resources, with the exception of *Seeds of Care* described below, are provided free of charge, and teachers can order on-line or by post, fax or telephone.

It is common practice for Royal Mail employees to introduce the resources by visiting schools and working with children and teachers. Hundreds of staff volunteer to visit schools and support literacy and other work of students. These visits are enhanced by the use of resources that are then presented to the class teacher. Volunteers are supported by *Getting Involved with Education – How You can Help* packs explaining how individual resources work, and how best they can be introduced into schools during employee visits.

Royal Mail acknowledges that it is crucial to ensure that resources have a clear educational value and are well tailored to the needs of teachers, children and young people. Resources are developed in consultation with teachers and professional educationalists to ensure that each supports current educational thinking and can be used to complement the relevant curriculum. If specific areas are addressed in a new resource, Royal Mail liaises closely with external experts and appropriate agencies. It is common practice for Royal Mail to commission one or more external organisations to help develop resources. Once an information pack is designed, Royal Mail prints and offers it to schools.

Resources are also constantly reviewed and updated to reflect the changing educational demands in schools. Royal Mail maintains regular contact with 37,000 primary and secondary schools through *Teacher's Post*, a newsletter sent out every term, updating teachers across the UK on the catalogue of resources available to them and their classes. The interactivity of the contact has been upgraded with the launch in autumn 2007 of the *Teacher's Post* dedicated website, through which resources can be ordered online and feedback encouraged via online questionnaires and evaluation forms included in the packs. Royal Mail acknowledges that increasing demand for its resources is a good indicator of their popularity among teachers and reinforces their value.

The budget for all educational activities and resources was £250,000 in 2006/7, encompassing 35 per cent of the group's total social policy budget for the development of new resources, revising existing materials and reprints. The Education department of Royal Mail Group is carbon neutral in all its activities. Publications are all on recycled paper and all CO₂ emissions are offset.

Some of the most innovative resources are described in detail below.

Climate Change Challenge Pack

Royal Mail Group is one of many companies that are seeking to manage their carbon footprint. Each has their own role to play in addressing the causes and mitigating the impacts of its own carbon footprint.

It is hoped that *Climate Change Challenge Pack*, designed for Key Stage 3 level, will not only help raise pupil awareness of what has already been done, but also stimulate thinking as to what pupils themselves might do now and in the future to reduce their own carbon footprint. They must also appreciate the power they can have as individuals to influence business and governments to act responsibly on climate change and other important environmental issues. Copies of this new resource were well received when recently presented to the Prime Minister and the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Climate Change at a meeting in Downing Street.

Sorting It

Sorting It is a career-related activity that addresses the National Literacy Strategy by supporting primary school teachers to encourage letter and creative-story writing by setting up and running a postal service in their schools. Teachers are provided with a project package including a *Sorting It Guide* that details the project and related templates to be used by schools during the project. The project is made up of six easy-to-follow stages.

Domestic Blitz

Domestic Blitz is designed for Key Stage 2 and above and aims to provide an insight into civilian life during the Blitz. It encourages and supports teachers and students to engage in two levels of historical enquiry – life in the Blitz and film as a medium. The *Domestic Blitz* pack was prepared in partnership with the Warwick Arts Centre. It includes five classic films taken by the Royal Mail GPO Film Unit pioneers and designed for classroom use, and a Teachers' Book including sections on the Background to the Blitz, Total War, National Priorities, the GPO Film Unit, and Film and Photography. The films included are: Do It Now; Britain Can Take It; Heart of Britain; Blitz and Pieces and how to use it; and Dig for Victory, Food Flashes and Health.

Enterprise Skills Pack

Enterprise Skills Pack is one of the most recent resources commissioned by Royal Mail to address Enterprise Education, introduced to the secondary curriculum in 2005. The pack aims to enhance teachers' understanding of how to set up and run a Main Enterprise Day with the intention of preparing students to run a school mail system as a mini-enterprise scheme. The pack aims to help

teachers equip students with employability skills through the provision of a structured framework.

The pack contains lead lessons on team-working, problem-solving, grand designs, change management, and comparison and evaluation of different options. These materials can be used with Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 students and aim to increase student awareness of the importance of enterprise education and help them improve their skills. Royal Mail indicated that this resource had received great interest from teachers.

Seeds of Care

Designed for children aged 5-11, *Seeds of Care* aims to help them learn about the diversity of seeds and the life cycle of seeds, and develop a range of skills while working with seeds. The *Seeds of Care* pack includes seed mats impregnated with poppy and cornflower seeds, an activity pack and a sheet explaining how the pack can support the curriculum from the Foundation Stage of the National Curriculum.

The *Seeds of Care* pack is the only pack that Royal Mail Group does not provide free of charge because it was created to raise funds for the firm's charity partner, *Help the Hospices*. Founded in 1984, *Help the Hospices* has two critical aims: supporting hospices through training, information, grant-aid, advice and national fundraising events; and raising the voice of local charities that provide the majority of hospice care through the publication of reports and briefings. The pack costs £25, and all the profits made are donated to local hospices across the UK.

It Takes All Kinds of Mind

Designed for teachers, *It Takes All Kinds of Mind* explains common conditions associated with learning difficulties and provides guidance on how children with learning difficulties may be best dealt with. Royal Mail has sponsored *Mindroom*, a charity that aims to help children and adults with learning difficulties, to write the six-leaflet *It Takes All Kinds of Mind* pack. The pack includes leaflets on Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism, Asperger's Syndrome, Deficits in Attention, Motor Control, and Perception (DAMP), Dyslexia, and Tourette's syndrome. Royal Mail has printed 30,000 copies for distribution to schools.

Lenny the Letter

Lenny the Letter was launched in 1989 as a result of the perceived need to support primary and infant school children, at a time when business support concentrated mainly on secondary schools. Meetings were held between the Post Office Film Unit and primary and infant school teachers to determine

whether there was scope for business involvement and, if so, what form it should take. The meetings confirmed that resources to support writing and letter-writing would be highly valued by teachers. *Lenny the Letter* was developed to address this need.

Lenny the Letter presents young children with the journey a letter takes through the postal system: letter writing, postage, collection and sorting, transport through the trunk network to the delivery office and final delivery to the addressee. Young children were also presented with paper-based worksheets and sequencing cards, outline drawings and a wall frieze to write to 'Lenny', for which they received acknowledgements from 'Lenny' when their work was forwarded to Royal Mail by their teachers. The first adventure of 'Lenny' was a huge success among infant and primary school children, with more than 15,000 copies of the video distributed in three years and a demand for a larger range of items to support the video. Bookmarks, puzzle books, a story book, colouring templates and a series of reply letters to young children were subsequently produced to meet this new demand.

Today, there are five 'Lenny' resources available for infant and primary schools: *Lenny's First Journey*, *Lenny's DVD Adventures*, *Lenny Goes to the Country*, *Lenny's World* CD-ROM, and *Interactive Fun with Lenny the Letter*.

Royal Mail acknowledges the importance of providing accurate and up-to-date information, and it therefore reviews and updates this resource periodically by re-commissioning new sequences to reflect new procedures. As its mailroom automation procedures have changed, Royal Mail has twice re-commissioned/revised the format of *Lenny the Letter*. Since its first issue in 1989, over 100,000 requests have been received for 'Lenny' cassettes, DVDs and CD-ROMs.

Impact

The resources mentioned above have intended benefits for both Royal Mail and schools. However, research-based analysis of their impact is not available and the following section is mainly based on anecdotal evidence, and third-party testimonials.

Company Benefits

Royal Mail observes that being engaged in responsible business improves brand awareness, enhances reputation, builds customer awareness and focus, and raises the company's profile. It provides employees with the opportunity to get involved in the communities where they both live and work. Additionally, most have a stakeholder interest in the schools via children, siblings or extended family. It also acknowledges that employee involvement leads to increased staff retention and increases staff motivation, loyalty and pride.

Educational Benefits

Royal Mail stresses the popularity of its resources in schools, and measures success by positive feedback from schools and a high number of repeat requests from the same teacher for additional copies. It is recorded that in 2006 classroom packs dispatched were up by 474 per cent on 2004 and 300 per cent on 2005; pupil resources dispatched were up by 239 per cent on 2004 and 195 per cent on 2005. In total, 87,543 resources were dispatched in 2006 compared with 33,063 in 2004.