

Our Patron - DAME Sheila Hancock!

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MEDIA RELEASE

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CONGRATULATIONS to our Patron — DAME Sheila Hancock!

"I strongly believe in the power of the word and the imagination. No child should leave primary school without good literacy skills. DigiSmart is addressing this in a rigorous and fun way, fusing traditional learning with children's love of computers. I've seen how engaged children are with my own eyes and am very excited to be involved." **Dame Sheila Hancock, Patron of DigiSmart**

COMMENTS ON BEHALF OF DIGISMART BY DR. MAGGIE HOLGATE, CO-FOUNDER

Richly deserved Damehood

"Massive congratulations to our Patron Sheila Hancock on her richly deserved Damehood, for services to acting and in recognition of her charitable work. We are overjoyed!"

Sheila has been Patron of the DigiSmart literacy initiative since 2013. Her contributions have been and continue to be unstinting and of real practical benefit. She is an absolutely hands-on Patron, visiting many schools in the North and South of England. There is no end to Sheila's drive and her commitment is unconditional — she really does get stuck in, helping children with their reading and literacy work, inspiring them to achieve, and engaging with teachers and Headteachers about education.

Sheila's integrity, loyalty, passion for education and for social justice give us strength. She truly cares and whole-heartedly participates. We are unbelievably fortunate to have her with us as part of the DigiSmart team."

Covid critical times

"Sheila's involvement in these challenging times is even more valuable and critical. She is striving with DigiSmart to help schools plug gaps, given the prolonged disruption of children's education due to Covid.

This year she has played a proactive role in the wider rollout of the DigiSmart Reading app in Greater Manchester, helping us forge partnerships with Rochdale and Oldham to support thousands more children.

Sheila's most recent school visit has been via Zoom, to St. Luke's CE Primary School in Rochdale. This uplifting and joyful catch-up session meant so much to the children and teaching staff."

NOTES ABOUT DIGISMART

DIGISMART is a charitable initiative harnessing the appeal of the digital medium to boost children's reading, literacy and wider learning.

DIGISMART began in 2001 as a web-based educational programme designed to improve the reading and literacy confidence of under-achieving children. The project was successfully trialled and evaluated between 2001–2016, working with 1,000 schools, 3,400 teachers and 20,964 pupils.

The proven impact of the DIGISMART method, combined with children's growing use of tablets in schools, led to the decision to create the DIGISMART READING SKILLS app in 2016. This app for iPads provides a motivating and progressional programme which teaches three fundamental reading skills — skimming, scanning and keywords — enabling children to catch up and establish a firmer footing.

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Here is just one 'testimonial' from a pupil at St. Luke's CE Primary School in Rochdale: *"I didn't like reading before DigiSmart, but now I love reading and I can't put books down."*

There are five more educational apps for iPads in the DIGISMART portfolio, including DIGISMART WRITING which includes a masterclass by Sheila Hancock helping children present their work to an audience.

LINKS

Sheila Hancock as DIGISMART PATRON <https://www.digismart.net/patron.html>

About DIGISMART <https://www.digismart.net/about.html>

Twitter <https://twitter.com/digismartplanet>

CONTACT

Dr. Maggie Holgate, Co-Founder, DIGISMART – 07770 635 880 maggie@digismart.net

Photos are available upon request.

Company Contact:

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DigiSmart

T. 07770 635880

E. maggie@digismart.net

W. <https://www.digismart.net>

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