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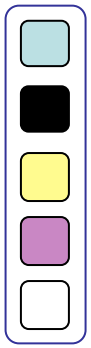
Thornbeck College

"From everyday effective practice to virtualisation: Creating an inclusive and responsive virtual learning environment. "

Technology to Support Autistic Learners

Rose Bowl, Leeds Metropolitan University, April 2013



Association of Colleges

LSIS BEACON

Ofsted Outstanding 2009|2010

Chris Surtees | Quality Manager | North East Autism Society | Thornbeck College

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Introductions

- **Name**
- **Role**
- **Provider / Type of Provider**
- **Do you currently use a VLE?**
- **If so, what platform do you use? If not, are you thinking about introducing a VLE.**
- **Have you taken any steps to make your VLE more accessible to learners with autism?**

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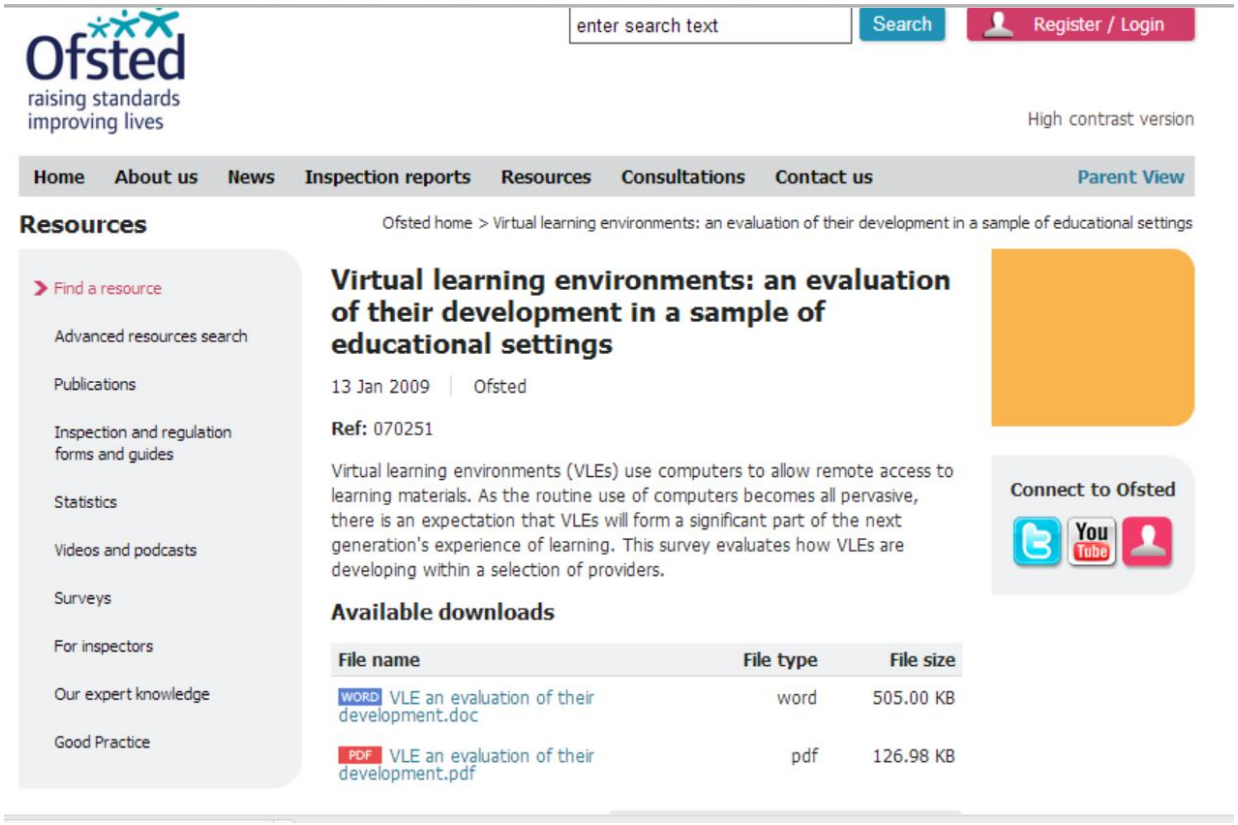
Ofsted VLE Evaluation



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Our Challenge

- **To create a virtual learning environment which allows for blended learning opportunities across a range of sites and environments.**
- **To create an environment which is accessible to all learners regardless of their literacy and ICT skills.**

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Learner Entitlement

- **Essential that learners are able to access vocational specialist teaching regardless of their location.**
- **Are able to access resources 24/7**
- **Are able to access a wide range of materials in an accessible format.**
- **Promotes independent learning through a supportive medium**

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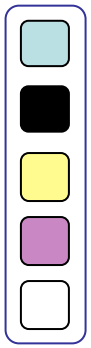
Access to all

- **It is essential that all learners are able to access course materials regardless of their literacy or ICT skills.**
- **Structure the environment to minimise distractions.**



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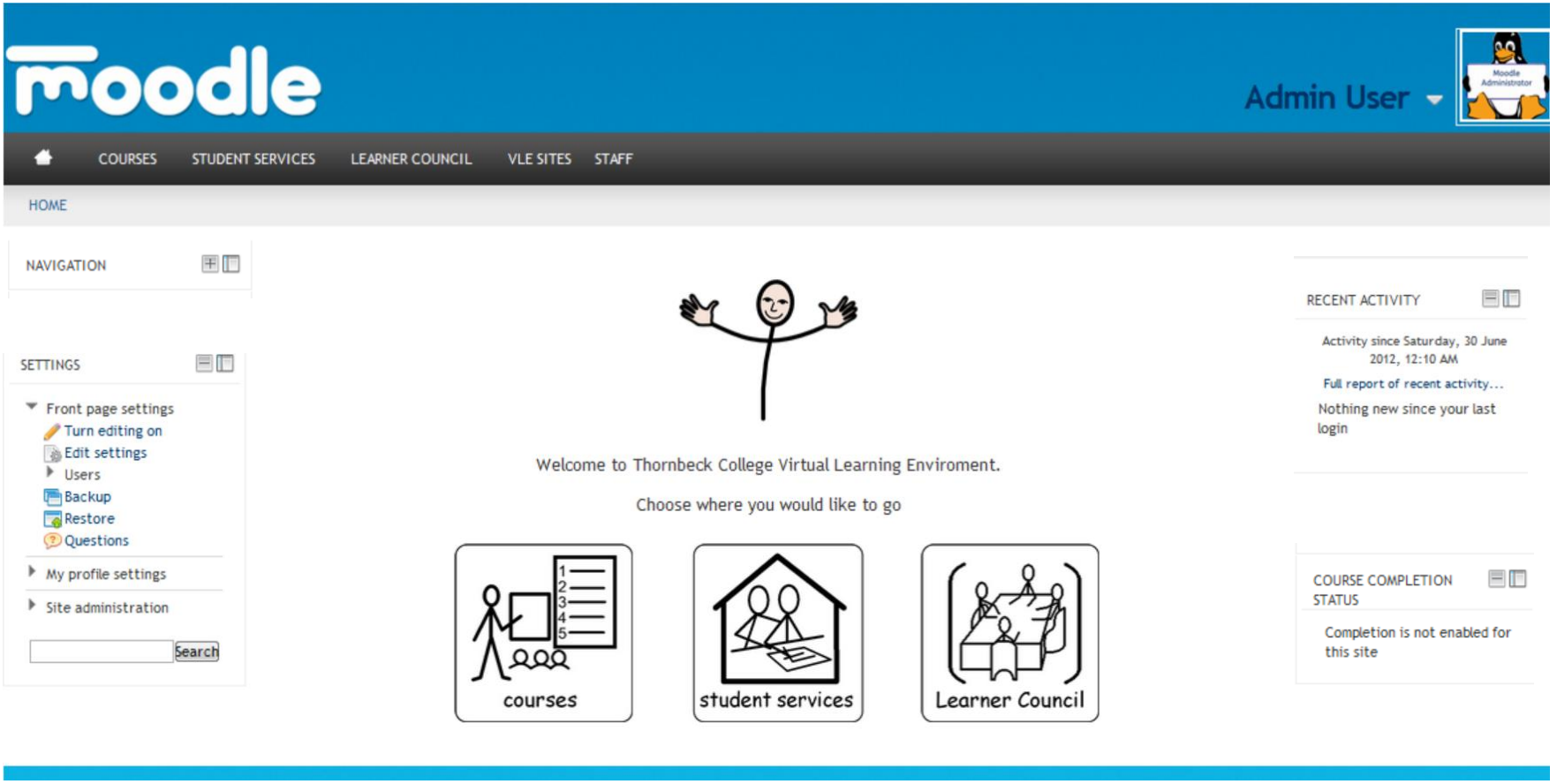
Clean Pages



- **The docking bar introduced in Moodle 2 allows learners to access specific 'blocks' without them constantly been a distraction.**

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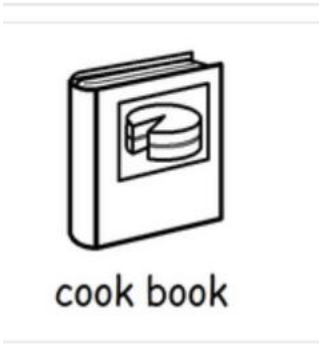
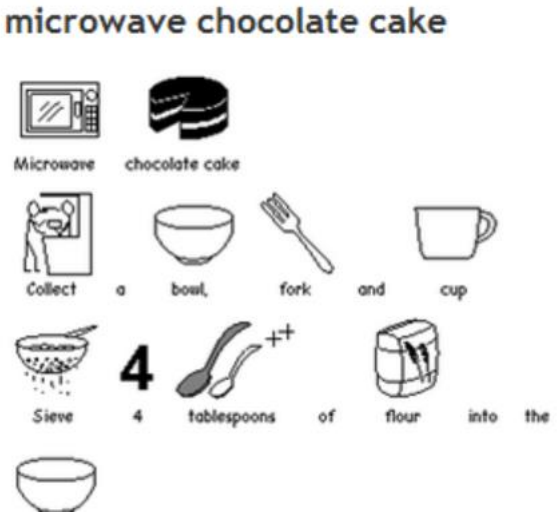
Access through assistive tech





- **The use of hyperlinked images enables learners to easily access resources through a range of assistive technologies and devices**
  - **Touchscreen Monitors**
  - **Interactive Whiteboards**
  - **Tablets/Mobiles**
  - **Switch Technology**

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The use of symbols/consistancy

- **All symbols used are consistent throughout the college and the wider society.**
- **Support literacy**
- **Clear and concise single concept**
- **Over 20,000 images available**

Widgit Symbols (c) Widgit Software 2002-2012

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Overview of students

Separate groups: All participants | Role: Student

	First name / Surname	Last online	Progress Bar	Progress
	Bobby Bunce	Monday, 12 November 2012, 8:19 AM	✓ ✗ ✗ ✓ ✓	60%
	John Jones	Monday, 12 November 2012, 8:15 AM	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✗	80%
	Michelle Murray	Monday, 12 November 2012, 8:17 AM	✓ ✗ ✓ ✓ ✓	80%
	Suzan Smith	Monday, 12 November 2012, 8:13 AM	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	100%
	Steven Summers	Wednesday, 25 July 2012, 12:01 PM	✗ ✗ ✗ ✗ ✗	0%

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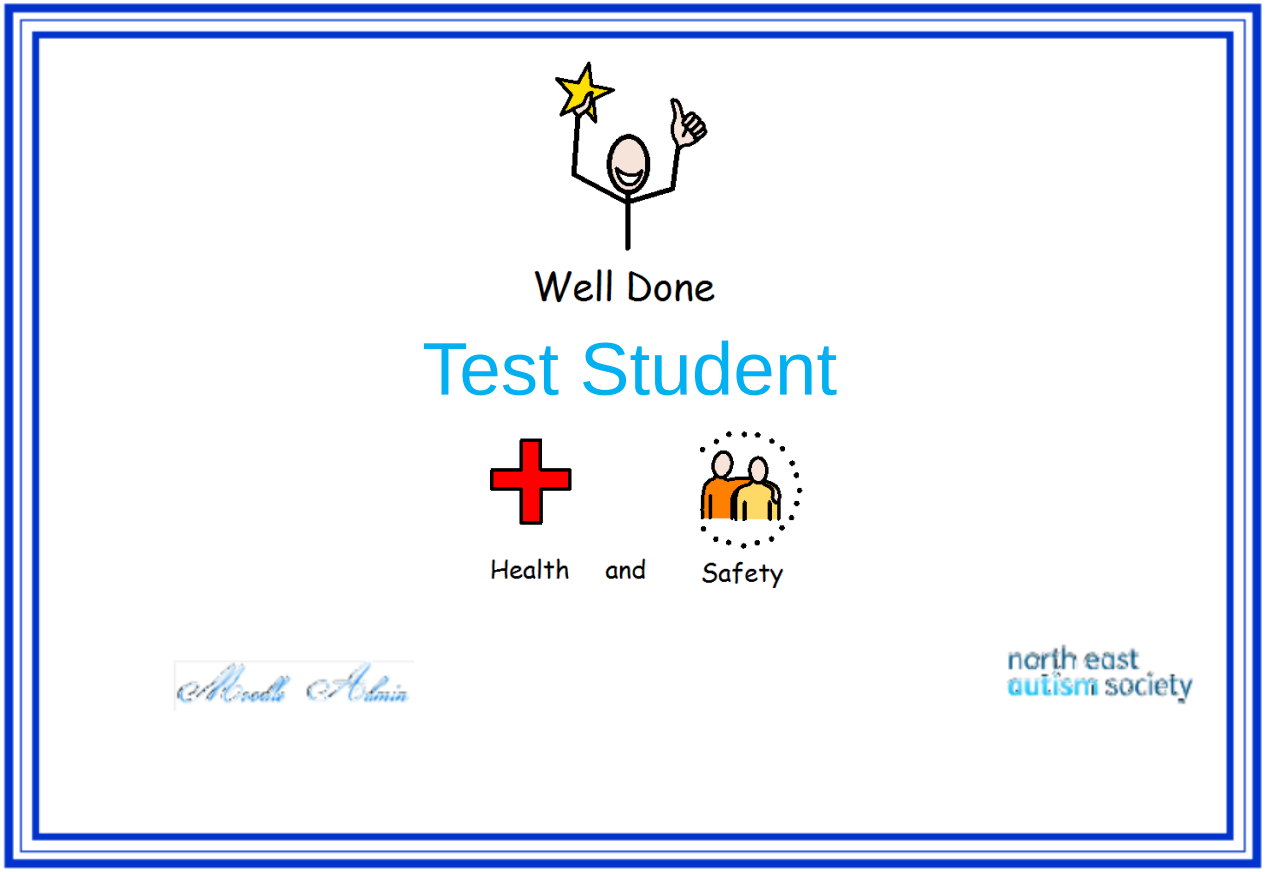
Recognising Achievement

- **Certificate module is embedded in all course.**
- **Fully customised for learners and staff**
- **Learners benefit from instant feedback.**
- **Certificate module allows for the recognition of achievement.**
- **Is based on the successful achievement and completion of quizzes throughout the course.**


Well Done
Test Student
Health
and
Safety
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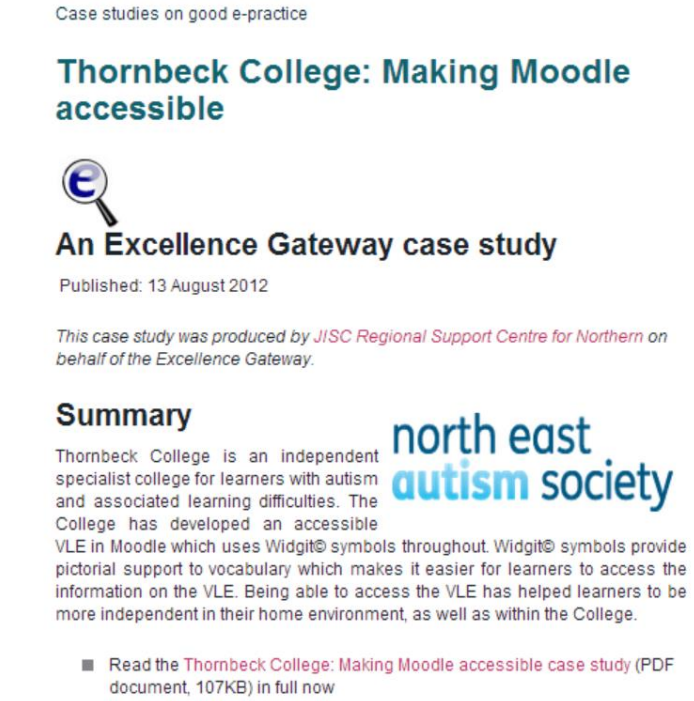
Excellence Gateway Case Study



Case studies on good e-practice

Thornbeck College: Making Moodle accessible

An Excellence Gateway case study

Published: 13 August 2012

This case study was produced by JISC Regional Support Centre for Northern on behalf of the Excellence Gateway.

Summary

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Thornbeck College is an independent specialist college for learners with autism and associated learning difficulties. The College has developed an accessible VLE in Moodle which uses Widgit© symbols throughout. Widgit© symbols provide pictorial support to vocabulary which makes it easier for learners to access the information on the VLE. Being able to access the VLE has helped learners to be more independent in their home environment, as well as within the College.

- Read the Thornbeck College: Making Moodle accessible case study (PDF document, 107KB) in full now

http://bit.ly/SXuPlw

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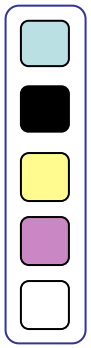
Activity

- **Using your own VLE how does it currently meet the needs of learners with autism and LLDD.**
- **How could it be more learner friendly?**
- **What barriers might you face?**



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