

Sidney Stringer Academy

Inspiring staff with Apple Professional Development

Keen to get their iPad scheme off to a flying start, Sidney Stringer Academy decided to launch the devices with a day of top quality, subject-specific training that would ensure all their 130 staff were comfortable using the device and confident that they could apply it in their subject areas. Here's how they engaged staff over the course of a day.

"We were looking into a mobile device scheme for about twelve months, and during this time we were graded outstanding by Ofsted in all four categories," explained Assistant Principal Sharan Matharu. "It felt right to do this now, there was already a lot of good practice and we wanted to use new technology to help us improve even more. Our ICT vision is to be at the forefront of learning technology, and using iPad in the classroom will help us towards this."

After taking part in our e7 1:1 iPad trial, the academy decided to roll out a 1:1 iPad scheme for teaching staff, keeping a bank of devices on site for support staff and keeping 150 iPad devices and 30 iPods on hand for students to use, as well as encouraging them to buy their own devices through a subsidised parental contribution scheme. Although small groups of staff had been involved in learning to manage and use iPad devices, and Sharan had been running 'App of the week' workshops for the senior management team, she was sure the best way to launch the scheme was with a single, high quality training day that would show nervous staff the true potential of the devices and help them feel confident using it in their subject area.

“All the previous work we'd done with Jigsaw24 had been really good, so we were filled with confidence. Whenever we're dealing with people from the company it's like they know you. They want to help you, they provide really excellent communication and they really understand your school, and as a company they're very friendly and approachable”

Sharan Matharu, Assistant Principal, Sidney Stringer Academy



Working with...


Sidney Stringer
Academy

In a nutshell...

Who are Sidney Stringer Academy?

Coventry's Sidney Stinger Academy is a leading edge school and is in the top 2% of schools in the country for student progress. It was recently rated as Outstanding by Ofsted. They cater to 1300 11-19-year-olds.

What did they need?

Prior to rolling out a 1:1 iPad scheme for staff, the academy wanted to stage a full day of training to launch the scheme to staff and make sure they would be confident using the devices when the new term started.

How did Jigsaw24 help?

We arranged a full day of training, including six Apple Professional Development courses on five topics, all taught by a different Apple Distinguished Educator.

What were the benefits?

Staff are now more confident with iPad, invigorated about the scheme and ready to explore apps and uses for the devices in their classroom. They have hands-on experience of using the devices in their own subject areas.



Setting clear goals for the iPad scheme

“What we’re looking for [from the iPad scheme] is that students become even more engaged,” Sharan explained. “Ideally we’d like to see their participation and engagement going up, and that consequently it contributes to our exam results going up. It’s using technology to make an even better learning experience for the students, and making sure they get the most out of the teaching.”

However, the few staff who’d been given iPad devices to trial had struggled to make the most of them, using them largely for email or remote access to the school via Citrix virtualisation software, rather than using apps to add a new dimension to lessons. “This year we thought, ‘well, we want more iPad devices, we want staff to use them, but we want them to be used appropriately. We don’t want them to be used just as teaching devices, we want them to be used in a teaching and learning context.’ But the question was, how do we get everybody on board?”

“I think the training sessions are essential if you don’t have staff who are already skilled in using iPad and are au fait with iOS devices and apps [...] iPad has so much potential in the classroom for teaching and learning that we didn’t want to waste those chances, which you do if your staff don’t know how to use the devices or what’s available.” There was also the feeling that there would be an ongoing benefit to having well-trained staff: “Next year when we have new staff in, they’ll be able to help each other, so by having one training day we’re almost creating people who can help each other within each team.”

“A week after the training, people are still coming up to me saying, ‘Thank you. I was really apprehensive about the training initially, I used my iPad for email and that was it, but now I feel much more confident.’”

Sharan Matharu, **Assistant Principal, Sidney Stringer Academy**

Ensuring maximum engagement from staff

Initially, Sharan and her team thought about carrying out the training or sourcing it themselves, but after working with us on the e7 project and speaking to one of our resident Apple Distinguished Educators, they decided to arrange the day through Jigsaw24.

“When I spoke to Jigsaw24, they were really good at explaining what the courses were, how they would help, how we could do it, and they were able to guarantee us top-end APD Authorised Trainers. We didn’t want people to come in and do something off the cuff, it needed to be structured and professional. All the previous work we’d done with Jigsaw24 had been really good, so we were filled with confidence. Whenever we’re dealing with people from the company it’s like they know you. They want to help you, they provide really excellent communication and they really understand your school, and as a company they’re very friendly and approachable.”

While the academy does an ICT training day every year, the plan this time round was to run a series of Apple Professional Development workshops that would engage staff in key subjects by demonstrating how iPad could be applied to their lessons. “If we did the generic iOS device session for everybody, it wouldn’t have engaged everyone,” said Sharan. Instead, they chose to run two introduction to iOS courses for staff who needed to be given an overview of the device, but run subject-specific sessions for four of their biggest faculties: maths, social sciences, languages and science.



"It was brilliant because [the teaching staff] were getting trained on different aspects of using iPad in the classroom depending on their subject, so they could share ideas. It's good to make sure that the experience all staff had was the same, but tailored to their individual experiences. What we found was that at lunchtime there was a huge buzz around the whole staff restaurant. People were talking about what they'd done in their sessions, how they could use iPad and I think it creates a bigger impact if you do it all on one day. And that way, if there are any queries or anyone's unsure about what's happening, they've always got someone else with them to help them out, so there's solidarity within the [faculty] teams because they're helping each other learn."

And was the project a success? Well, as Sharan explained: "A week after the training, people are still coming up to me saying, 'Thank you. I was really apprehensive about the training initially, I used my iPad for email and that was it, but now I feel much more confident.' Staff are more willing to use the devices, they want to experiment, they want to know when we can get Apple TVs in the classrooms. That was exactly what I wanted from the day – I wanted staff to be asking how we move forward, what can we do next, saying 'I want to do this.' If I'd just have said, 'we're going down the iPad route, here's your iPad' and not done the training, I don't think we'd have had the same success."



Sharan
Assistant Principal,
Sidney Stringer
Academy



For more information about iPad for your classroom, get in touch with us on the details below.

Want to find out more?

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