

Stephenson Memorial Primary School

Engaging parents and improving results

Stephenson Memorial Primary School is a thriving school in North Tyneside serving over 425 pupils in what is, historically, an area of high deprivation. Despite incredibly hardworking, dedicated staff and a fantastic learning environment, their SATs results were barely meeting national floor targets. The school decided to turn to iPad purchase scheme in an attempt to engage whole families in their children's learning. The result? A massive jump in Points Progress and APS and SATs results above floor levels, exceeding expectations.

"The school has a history of low attainment and has always struggled to hit national targets. We knew we needed more involvement and support from parents," explained headteacher Emma Overton. "The staff were working incredibly hard, but we weren't getting the right kind of engagement from pupils' families. We focused on reviewing the curriculum and taking a more creative and engaging approach; that's where technology came in."

With this goal in mind, Emma reached out to other schools who were already on a similar technological journey. "I think it's crucial that schools help provide equal access to new technology," Emma told us. "You hope that children are being given these opportunities at home, but unfortunately that isn't always the case for a lot of children who attend our school. By introducing them to iPad, we're also introducing it to their whole family, so we see this as a family and community project here at Stephenson rather than something that just helps our pupils."



Want to know more about the Apple ecosystem and how it could help your students?

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Working with...



Stephenson Memorial Primary School

In a nutshell...

Who are they?

Stephenson Memorial Primary School in Wallsend serves 425 pupils from nursery age to Year 6. They aim to provide an education promoting the academic, physical, spiritual and social development of each child.

What did they need?

A way to engage pupils and their families to improve learning in the classroom and at home.

How did we help?

We helped the school set up their iPad@MyPad student purchase scheme, which allows students in Key Stage 2 to take part in an iPad 1:1 scheme. They also have iPad class sets in Key Stage 1 and EYFS, and teachers work with iPad, MacBook Air and Apple TV to deliver modern, engaging and varied lesson plans.

What were the benefits?

- The original Year 5 cohort made 4.6 Points Progress in writing, compared to 1.8 points in the previous year.
- Year 4 students with iPad are a term ahead of the previous year in terms of attainment.
- Parents are able to support their children's learning at home.
- Teachers are able to flip learning by sending lesson plans and content in advance.
- Teachers are able to provide access to technology and resources the children would not have experienced otherwise.
- Students are able to collaborate beyond the school day.

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Trialling iPad with students and staff

After choosing iPad over iPod touch because “we wanted our children to be able to treat tablets like the pages of a book, and see them very clearly”, Emma and eLearning Leader Lynsey Carr set up a trial with the school’s Year 5 students.

“Each Year 5 teacher had an iPad, a MacBook Air and an Apple TV for a term before we shared the learning the rest of the staff,” Lynsey told us. “Then we held an open lunch session to give the teachers an opportunity to share the type of things they’d been doing with pupils in the classroom and discussed how it had enhanced their teaching. Using iPad wasn’t forced upon any of the staff – we just said we would give them an iPad if they’d commit to using it for teaching and learning, not just as a tool for email or as a diary. I was expecting maybe half of our teachers to say they’d give it a go, but actually every single one said yes.”

After providing iPad to every member of staff, it quickly became apparent to Emma that “staff became quite attached to [their iPad]. It wasn’t like a computer you left on your desk when you went home. We couldn’t have handled sharing each other’s iPad, and we couldn’t expect children to share either. It was very apparent that we needed a 1:1 scheme so that children could take their work home and their families could engage with their specific learning journey.”



Getting parents on board with a 1:1 scheme

“We wanted to send iPad home with pupils because some of our parents aren’t always confident in supporting their children with learning at home, or there can be misconceptions in relation to different teaching strategies,” Lynsey explained. “Giving them iPad created an element of teamwork and enabled them to share their learning.”

However, the main barrier to rolling out iPad across the school was the fact that parents saw iPad as being too expensive. Lynsey explained that at the first parent meeting, “we put the weekly cost of the leasing scheme against the cost of a pint of lager, children’s toys and other things our parents could relate to, and then we benchmarked it against what it would cost to buy a non-branded tablet, because we wanted to put it in context for parents. And once they realised it would only cost £3 a week, it became instantly affordable for every parent, so even though 58% of our children are in receipt of free school meals, they all signed up.”

And the school continues to keep parents engaged throughout their rollout, publicly publishing the results that they’ve seen since using iPad, recommending apps for pupils to use at home, and inviting parents of older children back to the school to explain the benefits of the scheme to parents of new starters.

“Apple TV has got to be the best invention ever. We use it everywhere in school, and it really empowers children to share their learning and encourages others to critique their work, and that’s had an amazing impact on attainment..”

Lynsey Carr, eLearning Leader and class teacher, Stephenson Memorial Primary School.



Improving learning outcomes with iPad

The school originally rolled out iPad 1:1 across Year 5, and after seeing improvements across the board they decided to open up the scheme to the whole of Key Stage 2, while keeping a class set for Key Stage 1 classes and a small number for Early Years Foundation Stage learners. All staff have a MacBook Air or MacBook Pro and iPad, and all classrooms have Apple TV, Apple’s content streaming device (and excellent projector replacement). But how have learning outcomes changed?

“The children are really confident,” Lynsey told us. “And they’ve become responsible as well, because they know it’s not a toy. It’s really developing their social skills, too – you would automatically assume that students would work on their iPad alone, but actually there’s a lot of collaboration and apps where they work together and send one another things. Collaboration is an essential focus for teaching staff.”

Being able to use apps and avatars when presenting to the class has really helped less confident pupils too. “The pupils can use Apple TV to mirror their iPad to a screen, so they don’t have to stand up in front of everyone, but they are presenting their own work and they’re getting immediate feedback from their friends as well, so it’s really encouraging for the children.”

Along with these, the school has seen huge improvements across reading, writing and maths. Over the first three terms alone, the original Year 5 cohort made 4.6 points’ progress in writing, compared to 1.8 points in the previous year, and the first Year 4 group to have access to iPad ended the year almost a term ahead of the previous cohort. You can see the full report on the first year’s progress here: <http://bit.ly/1FLxyUU>

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Supporting the computing curriculum with Apple notebooks

As well as iPad, the school has a set of MacBook Air notebooks, and staff all carry both devices. "The pupil MacBook set is used primarily to teach the computing curriculum," Lynsey explained. "We use Scratch a lot, and we have some Lego WeDo that we like to use, but generally it's been easy to adapt. The computer literacy-based side of this curriculum is something we do within our project-based learning curriculum."

"The computer science side of things is something that is sometimes taught discretely, or as an extra curricular activity, so using the MacBook set as something that's already there and that everyone's familiar with enabled us to make that transition quite easily."

“ Jigsaw24 are a fun, friendly company. They're very approachable and very efficient, and you get a personal service, which we really like. I'm the director of the North Tyneside Learning Trust, and I've been recommending Jigsaw24 at every opportunity. ”

**Emma Overton, Headteacher,
Stephenson Memorial Primary School.**



Continuing development and becoming an RTC

Keen to ensure they continue making progress, staff hold regular informal training sessions. "Every Monday I hold an assembly with the whole school whilst the staff all meet in our new Teaching & Learning Lab and have a lightbulb moments session," Emma told us. "So they'll share 'I used this app, this is what I use it for and this is the impact,' and then the rest of the teachers then have that information and can go away and use it."

"You can't plan out your CPD for technology a year in advance because so much changes," Lynsey added. "So this session is just 10 or 15 minutes of training that's very current and impactful."

In order to share their learning and help other schools achieve the same results, Stephenson Memorial have now become an RTC. "We've been criticised for being in an Apple cul-de-sac," Emma admitted, "but I don't think anybody's being short changed by not having a PC on their desk – I don't mind what equipment we have or what brand it is, it just needs to work efficiently for the staff and students."

Key to making that tech work are the Jigsaw24 team. "Jigsaw24 are a fun, friendly company. They're very approachable and very efficient, and you get a personal service, which we really like. I'm the primary director of the North Tyneside Learning Trust, and I've been recommending them at every opportunity."



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