School Profile

This profile is taken from a questionnaire which was sent to all 21 schools taking part in the Tablets for Schools research in July 2013. Unless otherwise stated, all figures in this case study represent the school cohort at that time.

Harrogate Grammar School is a state school with 1,840 pupils. 3% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, 262 pupils have SEN. 84% of pupils achieved five A*–C at GCSE (2013), including English and Maths. This school has been rated Grade 1 in its last three Ofsted inspections. The school has a Sixth Form. Harrogate Grammar School is a designated Teaching School.

Tablet introduction

The school provided pupils in Year 7 with iPads in spring term 2012, followed by pupils in Years 8–11 in autumn term 2012. Sixth form pupils received Tablets in autumn term 2013. 1,285 pupils are currently using Tablets in the lower school year groups, and 120 pupils are using Tablets in the Sixth Form, making a total of 1,405 pupils using Tablets. Teachers were provided with Tablets free of charge. Assistant Head Teacher at the school Ms Katie Nicholson estimated that the process of introducing Tablets took approximately one year and seven months.

The reasons for adopting one-to-one Tablets were:

- to ensure equality of access to the internet
- to prepare pupils for working living in a digital age
- to support self-led research and problem solving
- to improve the quality of feedback, home learning and collaboration

The Tablets were first trialled in four groups of pupils, before they were introduced to the rest of the school. The groups included an SEN group, a Year 8 Performing Arts class, a Year 11 English class and a Year 13 Biology class. The leadership team at Harrogate Grammar School described at this point already feeling confident of the educational benefits of the devices, and the trial was more to explore what could go wrong.

The Tablets are personal to each pupil, and pupils are allowed to use them both at school and at home. The Tablets are partly funded by parental contributions, via a three-year lease, with an initial £40 deposit followed by a £10 monthly contribution. At the end of the three-year lease parents are provided with the option of not collecting their deposit and keeping the Tablet.
leadership believe that many parents saw this as a way of buying an iPad for their child, which they were already considering.

The school decided to self-insure the Tablets and spare devices have been purchased. All Tablets were issued with a TeckNet case and pupils were free to choose their own case, which was thought to make it easier to identify the Tablet. Breakage rates have been higher than the school had expected, and a stronger protective case has now been developed.

The wifi network in place in the school before the introduction of Tablets was described as sporadic and it was felt that if parents were being asked to contribute towards the devices the infrastructure needed to be consistent and good. Significant improvements to the school’s broadband capacity were therefore made before the Tablets were introduced. Aerohive boxes were installed in every room at a total cost of £125,000. The school benefited from a knowledgeable Network Manager, who led the procurement process and ensured the school got the best deal. The school has since also invested in a VLE as well as MDM (Mobile Device Management) software. The school still has a number of computer suites.

The Assistant Head Teacher at Harrogate Grammar School acknowledged that the Tablet did initially present distractions to pupils, specifically from iMessage. It was felt, however, that classroom management skills, along with MDM solutions, could prevent this. It was argued that:

*Initially the accessibility to iMessage can be a distraction but normal classroom management techniques limit this. With improved MDM solutions available this gets easier to manage all the time. Teachers have not once complained about the distraction factor. If they feel there are any issues they would just ask students to put the iPads away.*

**Professional development**

Teaching staff were offered professional development before the Tablets were introduced and during the period of transition, as well as ongoing training since that time. This has been from both internal and external sources, and covered both technical advice and support for staff in how to use Tablets in lessons. Apple Distinguished Educators visited the school on an inset day before the introduction to help train the teachers. But it was argued that:

*Much of the best CPD has occurred in an informal way between teachers or between teachers and students.*

**External guidance**

The school sought external guidance with regard to finance, wifi and research into pedagogical uses of the devices. The school approached the e-Learning Foundation for help with financing the Tablets. The e-Learning Foundation as well as IT services provider XMA were approached for help with insurance. XMA was also approached for help providing protective cases, as was TeckNet. The school received help from Aerohive in updating their wifi capabilities.

Harrogate Grammar carried out extensive research from a range of sources before communicating their vision to teachers, pupils and parents. The school followed other Tablet schools that had been featured in the press, via their websites, and it received visits from Abdul Chohan from Essa Academy and Fraser Spiers from Cedars School of Excellence; it also visited Longfield Academy,
Kent. Other sources included the internet, Apple conferences and Apple Distinguished Educators. The school was also helped by being attached to a group of local schools, as part of the Red Kite Alliance, several of which had experiences with smaller trials of mobile technology. These schools have been able to collaborate and pool their learning.

**Perceived benefits of using one-to-one Tablets in education**

The school listed the following as the main benefits:

> Faster, more effective and personalised feedback can be given. Noticeable student engagement and creativity, with greater opportunities for independent learning and challenge.

**Perceived disadvantages/pitfalls of using one-to-one Tablets in education**

> None ... It just takes a lot of work to get the scheme off the ground and requires constant evaluation and modification to make sure it is a success.

**The biggest surprise about the use of one-to-one Tablets after they were introduced**

> The shift in culture to one of a greater level of trust and respect.

**What did you wish you had known before introducing the Tablets?**

> That it would be tricky to manage iMessage.

**Case Study**

*This case study is taken from a visit to the school on Friday 10 May, during which discussion with the leadership team and observation of classroom use of the Tablet devices took place.*

**Introducing Tablets**

Assistant Head Teacher Ms Katie Nicholson was given the responsibility of replacing outdated computers in the school. Ms Nicholson did not have a specific interest in technology, but was fascinated by what it could do for teaching and learning. A budget was in place to replace the computers and a recently departed deputy head had left a report behind discussing the possibilities of one-to-one schemes. A group of staff had previously visited other schools to look at options. The decisions had until then been led by network managers who controlled the budgets, but Ms Nicholson was able to add the perspective of teaching and learning to the discussion.

Although the achievements at the school were already high, Ms Nicholson felt that there was a lack of independence in learners, especially among the 6th form pupils. One-to-one Tablets were seen as a great opportunity to encourage more independence as well as ownership of the technology and of learning. Teachers consciously communicate and encourage a sense of freedom and trust to the pupils.

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1 All these schools are part of the Tablets for Schools research and feature in the Tablets for Schools’ Case Studies.
The Tablets were also thought to provide teachers with the opportunity to offer a range of stimuli in the classroom. They were expected to free up the teacher as well as pupils from previous barriers to learning, such as booking a computer room or depending on a teacher’s own technical knowledge. The school felt, however, that the Tablets do not have an impact by themselves but can facilitate the type of learning the teachers want to encourage. According to Ms Nicholson, the introduction of the iPad was used ‘as a backdoor way to re-engage my staff with what good pedagogy is’.

Presentations were not given to pupils, as the school did not want to create pester power. Pupils were simply told that Tablets were being considered and parents were being consulted. However, some pupils felt that it was unfair to be excluded from this process. The school has since engaged with pupils by identifying 40 ‘iChamps’ among pupils, and an Executive iChamp in Year 12. These pupils take the role of ‘digital leaders’ and are in the library every break time and lunch time to help other pupils. Apart from this, pupils are not allowed to use their iPads during breaks unless it is raining.

The school experienced parental resistance to the Tablets initially. In order to engage with parents, a number of meetings and presentations to parents were arranged. Some parents argued that teachers and pupils could not be trusted, and that the teachers did not have sufficient technical knowledge to work with Tablets. Parents have been the school’s largest obstacle, expressing concerns about inappropriate use, such as playing games, texting and using social networks in school. The school was dependent on convincing parents, as they would be asked to contribute towards the Tablets, and continued to engage with parents and explain the motivation for wanting to introduce Tablets. The school used a PR company to advise it on communication.

The uptake among parents varied. While 96% of parents of Year 7 pupils opted in, only 75% of parents of Year 11 pupils said they were prepared to contribute. The scheme was therefore introduced to Years 7-11 only, as the original Year 11 had become Year 12 at this time, and in the current year it is only Year 13 (the former Year 12) that is not now part of the scheme. Since the introduction of the Tablets, the school has hosted conferences on one-to-one Tablet deployment for other interested schools, and offers a variety of information to schools on their website.²

Choosing the Tablet
The school decided against introducing netbooks, because the Assistant Head Teacher did not want to simply provide a web browser and word-processing tools, but rather to promote more creative learning. Previously the school had unsuccessfully trialled laptops with the Sixth Form pupils.

The school considered several options, and there was originally some disagreement over what device would suit the school’s needs best. A number of resellers were invited into the school to talk about different devices, and the school finally decided on the iPad. Apple was thought to be a generally well-regarded brand, which would potentially make it easier to convince parents. It was also acknowledged to be a highly successful company, with a commitment to education, and it therefore felt like a safe option.

The school envisages eventually moving to a BYOD scheme once there are enough good devices on the market. This also necessitates the same applications being available across platforms, as the

² [http://www.harrogatemgrammar.co.uk/default.aspx?id=948](http://www.harrogatemgrammar.co.uk/default.aspx?id=948)
leadership at the school currently finds the applications available for the iOS operating system superior. The introduction of a camera with the iPad 2 was felt to be an important development and pupils being able to document and share work in different ways has been a very positive experience.

**Content**
The Tablets were supplied with £60-worth of pre-loaded apps. The pre-loaded apps included Keynote and Pages, Socrative, Explain Everything and Showbie. The school believes that pre-loading the devices is essential as every student is expected to have the required Apps for their lessons. However, the school prioritised creating their own content rather than purchasing new apps. Pupils and staff are also encouraged to create content using iTunes U, iBooks Author and Creative Book Builder.

**Safety and breakages**
The school has an active focus on the impact of technology on pupils’ seating position and posture. It is currently working with a local Registered Ergonomist and Osteopath to carry out a survey into posture-related problems and to create a poster and video campaign about best use.

The school sees e-safety as a continual challenge and continues to engage with individual parents who express concern over their child’s use of the device. All pupils have been asked to sign an e-Safety and Acceptable Use Policy. Parents and pupils were provided with extensive guidelines for appropriate use of the Tablet both at school and at home when the Tablets were first introduced.

The schools also offers an annual online eSafety training programme to all parents and staff; regular assemblies are held for students as well as annual parents’ forums on eSafety.

The £40 deposit parents pay at the start of the lease covers the first incidence of loss or damage. Beyond this parents are invoiced £40 as a ‘contribution to any further loss or damage incidents’.

**Teaching**
Teachers were briefed about the plans before the parents were, and were supplied with Tablets six months before the introduction to pupils. There was a range of attitudes to technology among the staff, and some were more reluctant than others. The school is tracking usage among teachers and found that frequency of use has increased from about 30% at the start to about 70% now, but all teachers now use the device and are unanimous in recognising the benefits for certain specific tasks.

It was argued that the introduction of Tablets has encouraged far more interaction between pupils and staff, which was seen as a strong positive. Parental engagement in learning had also been observed to improve. Pupils have been observed going further in tasks than has been asked of them. Among Year 11 pupils revision has been improved by the ability to keep all their material on the Tablet. The school is currently collecting data on the impact of Tablets, including statistics of pupils’ work and emails sent from disengaged pupils who have become re-engaged. The school has observed an increase in independence and motivation, especially among children with SEN.