

Case study

Leighton Park School benefits from collaborative teaching and learning



Independent school chooses HP Chromebooks before winning an HP STEM & Creative Learning Studio

Industry
Education

Objective

Improve teaching and learning with a Virtual Learning Environment

Approach

Researched the market and trialled various devices using a points system

IT matters

- HP Chromebooks provide a robust and reliable solution with swift boot-up, long battery life and simplicity
- The web-based solution reduces IT management workload and eliminates security concerns
- HP STEM & Creative Learning Studio uses emerging technology that enables users to manipulate the physical and digital worlds in innovative ways

Business matters

- HP Chromebooks deliver a solution that is one third of the cost of other devices
- They support a feature-rich environment that produces independent, autonomous learners
- The HP STEM & Creative Learning Studio win gives the school equipment worth £20,000



“Using HP Chromebooks has given us real confidence in the transportability of technology for staff and students and the parents are clearly excited by the prospect. It really is a tool that can support both staff and students.”

– Karen Gracie-Langrick, Deputy Head, Academic, Leighton Park School



Hardware purchase leads to exciting win

Leighton Park School had a vision of a Virtual Learning Environment that would assist both teaching and learning in the classroom. That vision has now become a reality with HP Chromebooks being used to access Google™ online learning solutions. The purchase qualified the school for a competition run in conjunction with HP, The Ripple Effect campaign and, as a result, it won a £20,000 HP STEM & Creative Learning Studio.



Challenge

Realising an educational vision

Modern education has moved past the mass production of 'chalk and talk' knowledge into the realms of more individual learning, where collaboration is the watchword and technology is the catalyst. One establishment to have wholeheartedly embraced this shift is Leighton Park School, a co-educational, independent school for 11 to 18-year-olds.

Located in 60 acres of parkland south of Reading, UK, Leighton Park School was established by the Religious Society of Friends in 1890 and is still run today on Quaker principles. Originally a boys-only school, it first admitted girls in 1993 and now has 483 students of which 154 are boarders. The school has 265 members of staff, including some peripatetic teachers.

Three years ago, Leighton Park School formulated a vision of creating a Virtual Learning Environment (VLA) that would assist both teaching and learning in the classroom. It wanted a system where staff could upload a whole host of feature-rich resources; where students could collaborate with each other and where there was full transparency and visibility to monitor progress and offer assistance.

The school decided that Google™ G Suite for Education was the answer. This collection of free, web-based productivity and collaboration tools is aimed at making it easier for people to work together. It includes shared calendars, mail and features such as Google Docs, Google Sheets and Google Slide. There is also Google Classroom, a learning management system, designed to simplify the creation, distribution and grading of assignments in a paperless way.

Having decided on the cloud-based software, the school needed the hardware to access it. It had moved towards a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) environment but as Director of IT, David Pacey, explains: "We wanted to have more differentiated learning with easier access to resources, but BYOD meant that we were managing multiple different devices and that became more complicated. Our core vision was standardisation - a dynamic solution with identical technology in every classroom and centralised management."

The same vision is echoed by Deputy Head, Academic, Karen Gracie-Langrick: "I wanted to empower the staff with any place, anywhere, anytime technology that they could move around the classrooms, take home and use to upload work and mark online from both home and school."

Solution

Access to online resources

Having decided that more expensive options may include many features it would not use, the school researched Chromebooks, the low-cost, Linux®-based laptops that use the Chrome operating system to access and store cloud-based data through the Google Chrome browser. After trialling various machines and using a points system, it opted for the HP Chromebook with assistance from HP Platinum Partner, XMA. It initially provided staff with HP Chromebooks running Google Classroom to set homework and has now rolled out its first 290 devices to pupils in years seven and eight. Following positive early feedback, it's anticipated that a further 150 machines will be rolled out to year nine students and GCSE pupils in year ten.



Leighton Park School was already using HPE servers and networking and there were many reasons why HP was again its first choice. Not only did the school want to standardise on a robust, reliable and cost-effective solution, it also required solid support, as Pacey explains: “I like to work with a vendor that I feel is strong, that has reliable equipment but also provides good after-market support. I like HP because it’s not just about shifting equipment. The HP team are concerned about what the school is using it for and how they can make it better, which is a level of interest that you do not get with other vendors. Our success comes from the fact that the wider team works well together. From our account managers at XMA right up to HP, the team pulls together, goes the extra mile and it works.”

And this connection with HP has paid other dividends for Leighton Park School. Through XMA, it was introduced to The Ripple Effect, a joint campaign by HP, Intel® and channel partners Misco, Softcat, XMA and Academia to improve science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) learning via technology. The campaign invited schools that had recently purchased HP hardware to submit their reasons for needing a top-of-the-range HP STEM & Creative Learning Studio worth £20,000. Central to the studio is the Sprout Pro by HP G2 which incorporates a PC, projector, hi-res camera, touch mat and 2D and 3D capture capabilities. The studio also includes a Dremel 3D printer, ten HP ProBook laptops, two instances of HP Classroom Manager software and a charging cart.

Leighton Park School submitted a video produced by pupils and a written submission. It won the prize and HP has since added three further Sprout Pro by HP G1.

“I think we won because of the passion that came through on the video which showed the way that technology is embedded into life at the school,” says Pacey. “We showed that it wasn’t just a ‘nice to have’ but something we really want to use.”

Benefits

Feature-rich learning environment

“The HP Chromebook provides us with low-cost and simplicity,” adds Pacey. “While there are some benefits from having on-premise solutions, using HP Chromebooks to access web services is more cost-effective, easier to manage and supports our ‘whole-school’ initiative. We get everything that we need from Google and it takes management and security issues away, giving us more visibility. HP Chromebooks also come at a cost that is up to three times lower than certain alternatives.”

“We find that lightweight HP Chromebooks are more robust than other devices. We previously used Chromebooks from another vendor and did not have a single one that made the two-year lifecycle they were designed for. With HP, you are almost getting a fully-fledged laptop and the keyboard is a good size. They’re quick to boot up and the battery will remain charged throughout a full academic day. There’s no messing about. They all work and they’re all reliable.”

Pupils are also motivated to use the attractive HP Chromebooks and that leads to organic growth with many logging on at home during school holidays and older pupils providing collaborative help for younger ones.

So, what’s the teacher perspective?

Customer at a glance

Applications

Google online education resources

Hardware

- HP Chromebook
- Sprout Pro by HP G2
- HP ProBook x360EE Notebook
- Dremel 3D40 for Education
- HP 20 Managed Charging Cart V2

Software

- HP Classroom Manager

“This platform enables our pupils to become autonomous, independent learners with a piece of equipment that is standardised but still provides versatility, skills and all the tools,” says Gracie-Langrick. “Teachers can upload all sorts of differentiated teaching and learning resources for each subject, class or year group and for students of different abilities. They can outline the lesson’s aims and objectives and additional resources that may be used. They can record and upload homework and parents can also have visibility of what homework is set. Likewise, students can also upload their homework for teachers to mark online.”

This solution is also transparent for teachers, heads of department and middle managers, giving them the opportunity to dip in and out of a student or group workbook, offer feedback and suggestions to aid learning. The school is also looking to introduce online books so students do not have to carry around six sets of text and exercise books every day.

“HP technology is helping to make Leighton Park School a more feature-rich environment and a more exciting place to learn.”

– David Pacey, Director of IT, Leighton Park School

It’s hoped that using the HP technology will help improve examination grades and early indications are hopeful, as Pacey explains: “It gives a better flavour and a more feature-rich environment for pupils to learn. Some pupils who may have struggled in a particular subject will have more visual stimulation or more in-depth differentiated learning available to them because of the platform and because of the devices they have in their hands.”

The use of the HP STEM & Creative Learning Studio at Leighton Park School is spreading further than the predictable design and technology department. The Sprout Pro by HP are already used for art and design and may also spread to other subjects such as English and geography. They have even been used by the maintenance department to mock up components.

The school is also creating an HP Innovation STEM Room with various technologies that departments can trial to produce a strategy for their use.

“HP is supporting this idea by providing demo kits and we just don’t get that level of input from other vendors,” concludes Pacey.

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