

Battle Hill Primary School



Launching a successful parental contribution scheme thanks to communication, training and passionate staff.

Battle Hill Primary School started their iPad journey eight years ago with a single class set of devices. As teachers became more confident and students developed their digital skills, the school wanted to roll out a 1:1 scheme and embed iPad across the curriculum but couldn't find the funds – until they teamed up with Jigsaw24 to launch a successful parental contribution scheme.

In a nutshell...

Who are they?

Battle Hill Primary School in Wallsend caters to pupils from ages two to eleven. The school focuses on raising aspirations, raising achievement and raising happy, sociable young learners who are proud to attend their school.

What did they need?

Battle Hill's staff wanted to replace their class set of iPad with a 1:1 deployment supported by a parental contribution scheme.

How did we help?

We set the school up with a leasing partner and helped them launch their parental contribution scheme. As well as reassuring parents and providing devices, we led training and mentoring sessions for teaching staff and school leadership to ensure the transition to 1:1 went seamlessly.

What are the benefits?

- Staff are more confident using iPad in a range of creative ways.
- Management of the devices is more efficient and puts less pressure on any individual staff member.
- The school avoids major hardware costs while also providing an affordable route to device ownership for families living in digital poverty.
- Leasing devices means the school always has access to the latest models and features.
- Children are more engaged, and able to extend their learning through additional activities or support.

"Things really changed when we invested in training for our staff and they started to see what they could do with iPad," explained class teacher and ICT lead Stephanie Brown. "iPad can bring so much to lessons, but because each teacher only had access to them for half a day a week, we couldn't do anything spontaneous or engage in work that was led by the children."

Initially, it seemed like the solution might be to ask children to bring devices from home – some older children even asked to do this – but it became apparent that "we'd only have one or two children in each class who could bring an iPad, and it wasn't really fair on the others."

That's when Battle Hill asked us about setting up a Parent Portal.



The massive benefit of working with Jigsaw24 is that we deal with one person who knows our school really well and works closely with our trainers and business manager.

**Stephanie Brown, Class Teacher,
Battle Hill Primary School**



Launching a successful parental contribution scheme

Working with their local Jigsaw24 Education Specialist, the school came up with a list of equipment students would need and opened a Parent Portal – a dedicated purchasing portal where parents could purchase an iPad for their child and pay off the cost in monthly instalments. Children would use the iPad in lessons and at home and, when the full cost was paid, their family would be able to keep the device.

Parental contribution schemes like this have become popular because they allow schools to reduce hardware costs while giving parents affordable access to the latest devices, but they're not always an easy sell.

"Given that we're in an area of high social deprivation and our school has a higher than average proportion of pupil premium children, we initially thought parents wouldn't go for it," said Stephanie. "We didn't think they'd want or be able to pay money out every month. But children who used the class set would go home talking about iPad, so it was easy for their parents to see the benefit it was having in class and once we explained that the cost was less than £5 per week, we had an amazing uptake."

Now several years into the scheme, the school has developed a blueprint for a successful launch. "The overarching thing that parents want to know is the cost, so we're very upfront about that. We also hold an evening where myself, the school business manager, our headteacher and our Jigsaw24 specialist explain the technical side of things and how iPad affects teaching and learning. Some of our pupils who are digital leaders do a demo and share some of the work they've done in class, and the parents ask them questions. I think parents buy into it a lot more when it comes from the pupils because it's easy to see how passionate they are about their work, and that they're not sitting around playing games all day."



Switching seamlessly between remote and in-person teaching

Recently, another major factor contributed to parents' willingness to join the iPad scheme: COVID-19. "Lockdown really hammered home to parents how important the iPad are, even for the children to talk to each other and discuss their work," Stephanie told us.

At the start of lockdown Key Stage 2 students, who already had 1:1 iPad, were able to transition smoothly to remote learning. "We were able to replicate their school day online so that they didn't miss anything," said Stephanie. "We shared screen recordings, children could ask us questions in Showbie and parents using the online chat function to get support – it just felt seamless."

By contrast, the parents of Key Stage 1 students were having to travel to school to pick up packs of worksheets. The school acted quickly to ensure its own iPad were available for home use and they were loaned to the families of Key Stage 1 pupils. Then the parental contribution scheme was opened to Key Stage 1 so those families could buy their own devices.

But the benefits didn't end when pupils came back to school. As Stephanie explains, "Bringing iPad into a lesson opens the door to so many possibilities. You could teach a lesson about Everest and show the children a picture, or they could use Google Maps to see what it's actually like on top of a mountain, while carrying out their own research.



It's also about the things they can create. Yesterday my Year 2 class went into the playground to find objects made of different materials. They took photographs of the things they found, made collages of the different groups and labelled them, then uploaded them to Showbie to share with everyone. Without the iPad, I'd have had to print off pictures and get the children to cut them out and stick them in a chart, but with it, they're able to find things, they're able to take their own photographs and add their own notes, they can upload their work and show it to their parents at home. It allowed the children to complete the task in a more engaging and exciting way than the traditional approach, while increasing their confidence and ownership of learning. iPad really ups your lesson from something ordinary to something special for the children, and I can't stress enough what a difference that makes.



**Stephanie Brown, Class Teacher,
Battle Hill Primary School**

Boosting staff confidence and creativity

Of course, Battle Hill's iPad deployment wouldn't be anywhere near as successful if their staff weren't fully trained and confident in their use of the iPad.

"We've been through the coaching and mentoring programme with Jigsaw24's trainers and it's been fantastic. When we first started with iPad, I was doing everything on the management side myself and staff would bring me their iPad if it wasn't working, but through the training we've been able to develop other digital mentors. It's nice not feeling like everything's on my shoulders and has meant that we can split the workload between us. Rather than having all of our staff come to one training session, we can do quick, informal sessions with groups of teachers who want help on a certain app – it's a lot more efficient than what we had before."

Having teachers with a well-rounded skillset has allowed Battle Hill to embed digital skills throughout the curriculum. "We made a plan of what we wanted our pupils to be good at when they left each key stage, and we shared that with staff and offered CPD for anything they weren't comfortable with. That way, all our pupils can develop the skills they'll need for the next level of school. iPad allow our pupils to embrace the digital age as a foundation of their education. They develop their knowledge to become intuitive, setting them up for a life where digital fluency will be core to their next stage of learning and future careers."

The importance of the right IT partner

"The massive benefit of working with Jigsaw24 is that we deal with one person who knows our school really well and works closely with our trainers and business manager," said Stephanie.

"I think in a lot of corporate places you never speak to the same person twice and end up explaining yourself over and over again, but we have a go-to person who works closely with our trainer. If we're doing a training session and I mention something's a bit glitchy, I know that by the end of the day that'll have been fed back to our local education specialist and he'll be looking into it. Plus, he's always doing background research, finding out what we'd need to implement new ideas and what the financial impact will be. Without that, we wouldn't be where we are now."



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