

Empowering Harrodian's digital learning programme with iPad



The Context

Harrodian is an independent school in Southwest London, with approximately 1,000 students. The school prides itself on strong academic performance and also understands the need to prepare students for the modern world with a forward-thinking approach to digital learning.

As part of this commitment, Harrodian introduced a 1:1 iPad programme in their Senior School, initially through a pilot deployment for students in years 7-9, as well as school staff.

The Challenge

Apple devices weren't new to Harrodian – the school already had an extensive and well-established Mac estate. Despite the strong technology presence, students didn't have access to standardised devices across all classes, preventing the school from fully realising the potential of digital learning, with traditional pen-and-paper classwork persisting.

To meet this need, Harrodian anticipated the pilot programme being underpinned by 305 iPad devices for students, as well as 80 iPad devices for school staff. However, they faced a number of challenges to successfully achieve this vision. Firstly, the school's existing Wi-Fi network required modernisation to support the scale of the enlarged incoming device estate. Secondly, Apple Classroom and Apple TV's needed to be deployed to help teachers and students take full advantage of their devices for digital learning.

Harrodian proposed a parent-funded scheme for the roll-out of student devices, which helped to keep the project affordable, but required clear and careful communication to secure parent support. This was made more challenging by the school's need to manage devices during term time to prevent distractions in class – meaning students couldn't simply bring in their own personal devices.

Academia's rich history in delivering successful 1:1 iPad programmes, along with their status as an Apple Authorised Education Specialist, made Harrodian's choice of partner simple. Academia's team were brought in to support Harrodian with the deployment, including rolling out supporting infrastructure and training.

The Solution

Academia created a webstore to allow parents to purchase an iPad bundle containing a protective case, keyboard, stylus, screen protection and warranty. This ensured students had a consistent digital experience and weren't missing any peripherals that may be needed in classes.

To ensure smooth adoption for students and teachers, Academia delivered a bespoke deployment, spanning device supply and setup, alongside dedicated training for staff so they could learn how to work with their new technology and adapt their teaching style to maximise its potential. As David Sanders, Head of Curriculum and Assessment (Upper School) at Harrodian put it:



Academia's ability to recommend tailored options was invaluable. They provided a solution that not only met the specific requirements of our project but also integrated with our existing infrastructure.

Apple Professional Learning took place for staff in the summer, ahead of the new school year, giving plenty of time for teachers to familiarise themselves with their new iPad. As part of the training session iPad champions were nominated from each of the school's departments, taking on the responsibility of helping their peers get the full value of their iPad.

A key concern from parents was that they were paying for the iPad but they were to be managed by the school. A resolution was found whereby the iPad was to be managed during term time by Harrodian, but during holiday periods, students could switch to their own personal Apple ID's.



The Results

The iPad programme has been instrumental in reshaping digital learning at Harroddian.

The devices have been very well received by students. Accustomed to using similar devices at home, they now benefit from a digital learning programme that enables them to **“learn the way they live”** as Taryn Oldacre, Head of Teaching and Learning, puts it.

Around 40% of the student body also have special education requirements and many of these learners have benefited extensively from Apple’s range of accessibility features – allowing them to work with devices that cater to their specific needs.

Meanwhile, teachers have transformed their classes, giving students immediate access to resources digitally, rather than worrying about printouts and textbooks. Apple Classroom has also been instrumental in cultivating a more interactive learning experience, allowing educators to showcase student work and move away from a traditional “front-of-classroom” model. Students are also less likely to miss homework deadlines, or fail to bring the proper materials to classes, as everything is stored on their device.



Looking Ahead

The iPad programme currently covers Years 7–9 at Harrodian – as this student cohort progresses, new students will also be enrolled into the programme, creating a staggered adoption that will ensure all students at the Senior School will have an iPad within 3 years. Internal discussions are also underway about expanding the programme into the school's Sixth Form.

Harrodian has felt the benefit of extensive iPad training from Apple Professional Learning Specialists and is planning to hold regular iPad training sessions for staff going forward. The success of nominating iPad champions amongst the school faculty has also inspired plans to develop a similar programme amongst the student body, encouraging classmates to support each other and make the most of their devices.

The project's success and the commitment Academia has shown has left a lasting impact on the school.



Without hesitation, I would recommend Academia to anyone seeking a professional, flexible and highly knowledgeable partner for their digital strategy. The support throughout our journey – from initial discussions to implementation – has been first-class.

David Sanders

Head of Curriculum and Assessment
(Upper School)
Harrodian





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Academia Ltd
01992 703 900
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The Progression Centre,
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