

Satchel One & Google Classroom

in action at Ashton on Mersey School



Ashton on Mersey School

Ashton on Mersey School is a state secondary school in Trafford, Manchester with around 1500 pupils aged 11-18. They have been with Satchel since 2018, and Google Classroom users since around 2013.

Mersey over the years and most recently they've shared their approach to distance learning with us through our case study and when Assistant Headteacher, David Kavanagh, held a talk on our Catch-up Learning webinar. The school also made headlines in October when it achieved an average pupil engagement rate of around 90% during distance learning - far above the average uptake figure for the UK.

The article in The Teaching Times recalled a figure published in the Guardian; that "40% of pupils in the UK had little contact from teachers after closures". The piece goes on to explain how the school used both Google Classroom and Satchel One to defy this troubling statistic and build a robust distance learning system that gets results. Here's an overview of just how Ashton on

Mersey has harnessed the power of these two edtech tools to produce results during a notoriously difficult time for teaching:

Initial Response

When lockdown hit, Ashton on Mersey initially relied on Google Classroom to deliver their distance learning material. They had been using Satchel One, but mainly for homework. Google Classroom was working well but, Assistant Head, David Kavanagh thought that the school could do more to engage students, so he put in place a three phase approach for student engagement:

Phase 1

Using Google Classroom and Satchel One to deliver lessons remotely and involve parents

Phase 2

Introducing podcasts and screencastify for increased engagement

Phase 3

Livestreams and interactive online lessons via Google's Enterprise for Education upgrade



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The great thing about the [Satchel One] platform is that it interfaces really well with Google Classroom, so it's really easy to use the two together.

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Phase One:

Delivering structured online lessons

- Teachers would create a task on Satchel One's Show My Homework (accessible via single sign in, through Office365)
- This task would then be shared to the Google Classroom workspace via the handy 'Share to' link in Satchel One where students could then complete the task in either their personal or collaborative workspaces
- Parents and students would receive a notification informing them that there was work to complete
- Students could then submit the work created in Google Drive to Show My Homework for review
- Tasks were assigned in line with the school's existing timetabled lessons creating a structured home learning schedule with a clear goal, and soon the school was putting 1200 tasks live every week!
- Teachers utilised Satchel One's Messenger feature to easily contact students about tasks or to check in with their wellbeing
- SLT used Show My Homework's Task Insights and Reports for a daily view of how students were engaging with tasks assigned to them

Phase Two:

Building on a solid foundation

By now the school had built a solid foundation of daily lessons on Google Classroom to keep students engaged, and Satchel One was managing home-school communications

- Teachers created their own podcasts around key subjects so students had video micro-lessons to diversify their day and keep learning interesting.
- These videos could be added to Show My Homework tasks and, again, shared on Google Classroom through the 'Share to' function.

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Show My Homework's analytics tools were really really useful for creating daily reports to see who was engaging with tasks and who wasn't

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Phase Three:

Consolidating and perfecting

Ashton on Mersey were now consistently achieving high student engagement at around 90%.

- Form tutors used Show My Homework's Reports to identify students that weren't logging on two days in a row and make contact with them
- They invested in Google's Enterprise for Education package, with enhanced live streaming and engagement tools to use alongside the tracking capabilities of Satchel One



Schools reopening:

School reopenings posed yet more challenges for schools. Creating safe spaces for students to learn and coping with self-isolation absences were high on the priority list.

Ashton on Mersey was able to continue engaging students, even when practicing a blended learning approach thanks to both Satchel One and Google Classroom's flexible features.

- They also used Satchel's Seating app, a smart seating plan builder, to create socially distanced classroom layouts
- They also used these plans for contact tracing if any pupils fell ill
- For students that have to self isolate, the school also made use of Satchel's Content app.
- It was used to set reading and online textbook work for students working at home once again
- This was done alongside the aforementioned Google Meet lessons that present and isolating students shared

Overall, Ashton on Mersey school's approach to teaching and learning during the pandemic was pragmatic and thoughtful. Each problem they encountered was assessed and a new solution brought in to solve it. These solutions were monitored regularly to make sure they were having the desired effects and regular reports meant that, even with daily changes to the education sector, the school was always in a good position to adapt and evolve.

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Because Satchel One is such a flexible platform, we were able to offer a blended approach. We were still teaching physical lessons, but we also had students joining in via Google Meet. This was all pushed out via Show My Homework

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