



“Those who use it most see the greatest benefits”

Discover how GCSEPod has played a vital role in one school's impressive improvement story...

When James McAleese joined Mount Grace School as assistant head in 2015 his challenge was to embed digital learning across the school. Having regularly used GCSEPod at his previous school he knew that the resource could play a huge part in the digital transformation of Mount Grace.

However, faced with increasing budget constraints, James needed to think creatively; he decided to ask parents to try and meet the cost. So confident was he in the power of digital learning, he approached the then Year 11 parents to ask them to contribute towards the cost of a digital support package which included GCSEPod at the forefront together with Learners' Cloud.

“Roughly speaking it worked out about £10 per year per student, so I put it to the parents that for only £10 they could have a huge impact on their children's results and transform the way in which they learn,” said James.

Having enlisted some financial and emotional support of parents, James knew his plan must prove effective. “For it to work, it needs to be used,” he said. “So I made it my mission to ensure that everyone was exposed to it and encouraged and incentivised to use it.”

Improved progress

Fast forward a few years and GCSEPod has become a cross curriculum resource which every Mount Grace student in Years 9, 10 and 11 has access to and is proactively encouraged to use both independently and to complete assigned tasks.

Inevitably, it is used by some more than others, however, those who use it the most see the greatest benefits, and James believes it is no coincidence that the highest using departments saw the biggest progress in last summer's exams.

He said: “Our English department were quick to embed GCSEPod into their schemes of work and it has become a key component of classroom learning and homework. The English Literature teachers set weekly assignments using the podcasts and it is little wonder that this one department has



‘podded’ more than a typical school of 1,200 students. But more importantly, our results in English Literature went through the roof and GCSEPod was a major contributory factor in this success.”

Keen to learn from the success of the English department and emulate it across the school James has tracked usage against individual results and worked with assigned ‘GCSEPod Stars’ to find out how they use the content to help others use it more efficiently.

Gathered momentum

The school has adopted a RAG system in order to monitor weekly usage. James has set targets for the number of pods to be watched each week and rates usage against a traffic light system of red, amber and green. This simple technique alerts him immediately to any areas of concern, or indeed extra high usage, so he can begin to examine patterns emerging.

Interestingly, James made a conscious decision this academic year to stop extolling the benefits of GCSEPod in

order to gauge just how embedded it is amongst students and teachers.

He adds: “Without saying a word, I have watched usage increase week on week; a number of departments are now using it as their homework resource of choice and a growing number of students are using the pods daily to consolidate what they have learnt that day in school into a short, half-hour burst.”

For a resource which only two years ago was part-funded through a voluntary parental contribution, GCSEPod has quickly found a place in the heart of the school and is now the school's only online subscription.



Find out more at gcsepod.com