



Case Study:

DfE Funded Cloud Platform

Client:

Appledore Primary School

Technology Partners:

Google for Education
Department for Education

Project Date:

March 2020



Appledore
School



Google Cloud
Partner



Department
for Education

Appledore Primary School is located in the heart of an ancient fishing village in North Devon. It lies in a very creative and artistic community, which is reflected in the curriculum which has creative arts embedded throughout. The creative hub of the school is a dedicated art studio and the main corridor, which is used as an art gallery.

In April 2020, the Department for Education, in consultation with accredited partners, launched a nationwide initiative to fund and support schools and trusts to start using a free-to-use digital education platform. Through discussions and demonstrations from their incumbent ICT Support company, the school chose to move forward with Google's G Suite for Education as their preferred digital platform.

The Challenge

How can you support different learning methods with technology?

Like most schools, Appledore had invested well in ICT, with interactive panels, but student resources were limited to laptops and a few tablets, which had led to a fragmented mixture of technologies that had been installed over a number of years, and this had led to pockets of ICT being taught and embedded in the curriculum.

They needed a truly educational solution that would enhance, not only ICT, but all curricular areas through different teaching and learning methodologies. They wanted to start again on a long term strategy that was current, resilient, managed, accessible from home and could make use of some of their existing resources.

The Solution

Use G Suite for Education and Neverware's Cloudready solution to standardise all student resources.

Computeam's educational consultants knew that a cloud solution was the answer as it also included a Google partner certified product to convert existing hardware to work in the cloud.

The G Suite setup and configuration was completed over the summer, including a Wonde MIS synchronisation implementation, which automates the provisioning of staff and students and their relevant classrooms and groups. This was concluded with a handover session, where the school contact is shown some basic admin, classroom and meeting capabilities.

The school enhanced this training provision by organising 2 further twilight sessions, with

one of the sessions being completed before the school started so that the teaching staff felt confident using the platform with the children from day one of the new term.

Alongside the cloud platform, the school added new hardware across the site, in the form of 32 Acer Chromebooks and converted 30 of their old laptops into Chromebooks, using Neverware's Cloudready product. This allowed the school to not only utilise old hardware, that was still fit for purpose, but add an experience uniformity across the school, so that any pupil could pick up any device and access all their resources in the same way. The new devices have the added capability of a flip chassis and a touchscreen so that apps like Scratch Jnr can be pushed to these devices and flipped over to form a touchscreen tablet.

The Result

An easy to use but feature rich digital cloud platform.

Phil Lewis, ICT Lead said, *“We knew we had to make a significant change in our IT provision at school and the G Suite platform is so engaging and simple, it doesn’t take long for any user to begin to use all the apps effectively. We wanted to ensure that we had joined up thinking with respect to a workflow system for staff and an educational tool for children and the G-Suite platform ticked all the boxes for us”.*

“The children are not so restricted to the same way of doing things as before, there are many ways the learning objective can be met, some children are even hitting those objectives by creating and updating their own websites; it’s so creative.”

“It is important to us that children are able to make good choices with regards to technology and to become creators rather than just consumers. Technology is all about making choices and we are striving to empower children to become positive and responsible digital citizens”.

The school understood the importance of training and staff support, *“The staff were encouraged to watch videos on the capabilities of G Suite, then we had a hands-on twilight session for all staff to help build confidence so that we could hit the ground running from the first day of term.”*

Since then, additional training sessions have been included through weekly staff meetings

to enable all teaching staff to understand the capabilities of the Google platform and how it can be used as a base to enhance the curriculum in a creative way.

“Teachers are encouraged to use Classroom from the beginning to improve pupil workflow and set homework. We’d like to be in a position to be totally inclusive and support remote learning if our children find themselves at home.” Phil continued.

The long term strategy is to reduce costs but provide a more sustainable resourcing plan, *“We have an aging server at school and the plan is not to replace it. We were shown how to create shared drives for the staff so we have been moving our resources there and managing these drives ourselves; it’s so easy”*

The Head Teacher, Jeremy Cooper, was more than pleased with resourcing their digital platform, *“We knew we had to support this change with new hardware, so we chose Acer Chromebooks that flipped over so the smaller children could use them like tablets. We also had 2 small trollies of laptops that the were getting to the end of their shelf life, so converting them to Chromebooks means that they have a new lease of life, in fact we over ordered Cloudready licences so that we could convert some very old laptops that could be sent home to be used. The money we save with reducing on-site services and moving to the cloud will help sustain our resourcing plan as we move towards a device for every child in the school.”*

Key Lessons

This project showed us that:

- *Ensuring that training services accompany any new technology dramatically improves the impact and educational return on investment.*
- *Product and Vendor choice is important and shouldn’t be rushed or only look at price.*
- *Detailed project planning and identification of solution champions within the school was critical to a successful deployment and adoption by all users.*

Our Statement

“We were happy to help the school make such a transformation in the use of technology in classrooms. It is so exciting to see the difference it makes to the staff and pupils. The work we did and the ongoing relationship relates closely to Computeam’s passion for improving educational outcomes using technology and our cloud-first approach were perfect for this project.”

Chris Chaffey, Education Director

