

Tring School



Our community stimulates and encourages a love of learning



Susanna Collings, Headteacher with successful, confident and responsible students

When I started as Headteacher at Tring School in 2011 it appeared to be doing well: fully staffed, all year groups full, pleasing post-16 results and Good Ofsted in 2010. Underneath the bonnet, however, a very different picture emerged: science results were very poor, teaching was variable and too many staff were simply not good enough. In addition, it was difficult to know if Tring School was a Church of England school, the role of Chair of Governors changed regularly and the school buildings were in a poor condition.

In response I developed three goals:

- » 'Revolutionise' the quality of teaching and learning
- » Address staffing and organisational culture
- » Create a school fit for the 21st century.

Revolutionising the quality of teaching and learning

To bring about change, the leadership team established a learning and teaching group to innovate and inspire. Every teacher was observed during a three-day 'mocksted'. Paired observations revealed 49% of lessons were judged as Requiring Improvement or Inadequate and 51% were Good or Outstanding. This meant on average half of the teaching for each student was simply not good enough.

Science had a bad reputation. Far more serious were the science GCSE results which were poor and there was an exodus of A-level students who left to study elsewhere.

REPORT CARD

- » Headteacher: Susanna Collings
- » Tring School, Hertfordshire
- » 11-18 Converter Academy
- » 1,530 students including 330 in Sixth Form
- » 180 staff

“We are now defined as the ‘30th Google Reference School’ in the country”

The situation was likely to get worse before we could make it better, as initiating the processes of dismissing staff and replacing them was neither quick nor straightforward – yet absolutely essential. Changing half of the department has made a huge difference.

With a bolstered leadership team I knew we could move forward more quickly. Senior staff had clear accountabilities for raising academic standards and the quality of delivery improved. As a result 93% of lessons are now Good or better and over 50% are Outstanding. Progress has been positive for the past three years and science is now one of our top performing departments. In January 2014 Ofsted saw the improvements first-hand; they awarded Good with many Outstanding features in their report.

By 2015 we revised our IT strategy and began an extensive research and training programme into Google Education. In May 2016 we launched our 1-2-1 Chromebook scheme for all students and we are now defined as the ‘30th Google Reference School’ in the country. Our staff and students use ‘Google Applications For Education’ to explore new ways of learning and teaching. Many administrative functions have become hugely more efficient, leading to significant savings. More importantly, we have seen a dramatic improvement in academic progress, for example our middle ability boys’ results improved by 11% within a year.

With large student numbers it’s essential to have clear systems in place. We insist upon excellent attendance and punctuality, timely completion of homework, clearly understood rewards and sanctions along with politeness and mutual respect. Tring School has great students and we are incredibly proud of them. We are delighted to be in the top 10% of all schools post-16.

Uniform has always been good; however, skirts had become too short! We spelt out our requirements to families before September 2015 and the vast majority of students arrived looking smart, but some were incorrectly dressed. This wasn’t a new policy, yet some parents were upset and the local press descended. However, within three days the students were all wearing the correct uniform – and when Sir Michael Wilshaw made reference on national TV to his support of the Head in Hertfordshire, I knew to whom he was referring!

Key to revolutionising learning for students is the formation of a strong 3-19 education in Tring and the surrounding areas. We are the only secondary school in Tring, with very close relationships with local primaries. This has allowed us to explore the formation of a Multi Academy Trust. Whilst the economies of scale from shared services will be useful, we can clearly see the educational and pastoral benefits.

The House system forms a strong community within our school



Staffing and organisational culture

Changing organisation culture is always challenging and rarely swift. It is essential to set, and then drive unwaveringly towards, the ethos and vision. Clear articulation of Christian values and beliefs, actions taken from a strong moral position, uncompromising commitment to high standards – they all form part of changing the culture. Over time people who don't feel that they 'fit' will move on. When filling the vacancies it is again essential to be uncompromising, only recruiting and then training the best possible staff.

Having excellent staff remains the best strategy for raising achievement and we're a leading school in the Dacorum Teaching School Alliance. Our comprehensive training and wellbeing programmes explain why 98% of staff are 'proud to work at Tring School', 95% 'know what the school is trying to achieve' and 95% 'have the skills and training to do a good job'.

Schools have to become entrepreneurial and we have established a trading company to sell the school uniform and related items. We can think differently about our finances and help plug the falling revenue from the Education Funding Agency. It's early days but in time we can see that the new company will provide



Exploring new ways of learning through Google

sufficient funds to maintain our present staffing levels.

Creating a school for the 21st century

In 2011 the school boilers were at the end of their life. Over £200k was needed and no funding was available but eventually the local authority were persuaded to fund the work. Through prudent financial management and access to capital improvement funds, we replaced several roofs and improved existing structures. However, this was only a temporary fix; we needed a more strategic solution. We engaged a local architect to create a masterplan for a state-of-the-art learning environment. This proved to be a valuable part of our application for new-build funding in 2014. Our thorough application built a compelling case and over 70% of the estate will now be rebuilt or substantially refurbished. Our application was 100% successful, making the project one of the largest in the country.

“We're a leading school in the Dacorum Teaching School Alliance”

Looking forward

Our three goals are coming to fruition. Our collective desire and passion for improvement has transformed our culture and hugely improved classroom practice and outcomes, and we're on the brink of a huge rebuilding project.



Tring School



Tring School in Hertfordshire, England is a shining example of additional gains that even a school with a (deserved) reputation for good results, progressive thinking and innovation can make with a rollout of Chromebooks and G Suite for Education. Starting with key administrators and teachers, then cascading to the rest of the staff and students, the introduction of G Suite for Education and Chromebooks at Tring took a school that was already strong in student engagement and satisfaction and furthered their open culture of differentiated learning.

School facts

Total enrollment

1,550 **90**
Students Teachers

Years served

7 > **13**

Google tools

500–600 Chromebooks (growing each day)
2 Years using Chromebooks
2 Years using G Suite for Education
100% Students using G Suite for Education

G Suite for Education tools used



Why Chromebooks

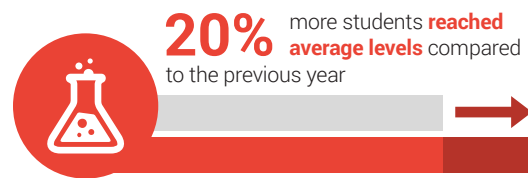
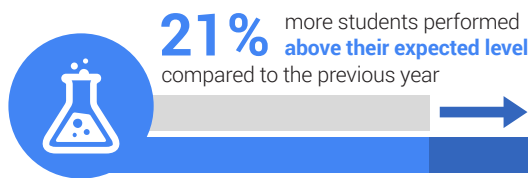
- Boys in the school embraced Chromebooks wholeheartedly, and are more accountable to teachers and more engaged.
- Real-time comments and advice in private exchanges from teachers offer students more privacy and less self-consciousness.
- Using Chromebooks helps nurture creative, independent and curious learners who can facilitate their own education at the school.

Results

Since putting Chromebooks in the hands of students, results at Tring continue to rise. Teachers receive a higher volume of completed assignments. In Science classes, an additional 21% of students performed above their expected level compared to the previous year, and 20% more of student results reached average levels versus the previous year. Students are more engaged with each other, too. For example,

when conducting quality primary research, some students have received 300 data points from online responses, versus a handful before the rollout of Google Forms. Finally, boys in the school who may have been reluctant to embrace schoolwork beforehand have embraced the technology wholeheartedly, making them more accountable to their teachers and more engaged in their learning.

Student performance increased in science classes vs. previous year



Introduction

In the summer of 2015, the leadership team at Tring School launched a future-proof plan, designed to cement in place the open and collaborative mindset of the school's 1,550 students and 90 teachers by supplying them with new technology. The team began by training for L1 G Suite for Education certification, embracing G Suite for Education on a daily basis. This led to the creation of a core group of Google Champion teachers, who led the way in their academic departments and across the school.

After early wins in teacher productivity with Docs, Slides, Gmail and Calendar, the school kicked off a trial with the whole suite of apps and a few hundred Chromebooks, available to students via a booking system. Teaching staff undertook

the same G Suite for Education training as the leadership team, but the real clincher in achieving a culture of sharing came with the arrival of student-led Chromebook use.

As the school approached the end of their first year trial in 2016, Tring began a 1:1 rollout of Chromebooks. Today, Chromebooks are purchased by parents and last each student through their secondary school level learning; the school provides Chromebooks during the day to any students who opt not to purchase a Chromebook. All 240 Year 10s will get their personal Chromebook, and although a Year 7 rollout doesn't start until January 2017, 73 percent of the parents have already bought Chromebooks for their children to use in school.

“The increased feedback and interaction with teachers improved my marks. Before G Suite for Education, we never had this level of detail or ability to ask specific questions back within the work.”

Year 11 student

Increased feedback

With the introduction of G Suite for Education and Chromebooks, teachers can see which students are struggling and provide them with additional support, using overall pace of work to gauge progress and engagement. Real-time comments and advice in private exchanges offer students more privacy and less self-consciousness. "The increased feedback and interaction with teachers improved my marks. Before G Suite for Education,

we never had this level of detail or ability to ask specific questions back within the work," says one Year 11 student.

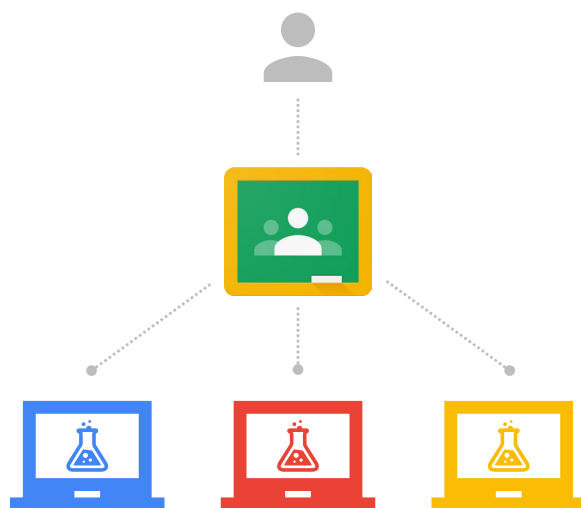
"We're able to better monitor and differentiate students, then direct them to specific resources that they need," says Chris Lickfold, Tring School's Director of Learning. "It's putting better tools in the hands of already skilled practitioners."

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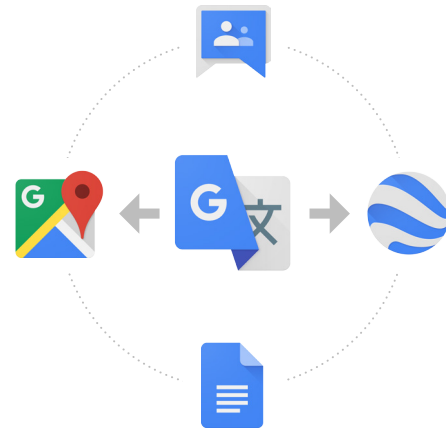
Richer learning environments

The Science department at Tring School experienced a transformation thanks to the new resources of Chromebooks and G Suite for Education. Each class now has its own Google Classroom, providing specific sets of materials, resources, in-class tasks and homework assignments. "The teacher is there to facilitate and support the students, but a lot of what they do is independent. We're creating creative, independent and curious learners who can facilitate their own education," says Lickfold. The department as a whole embraced the model of flipped learning, enabled by the introduction of G Suite for Education, and each student is more in control of their own learning and development.



Learning in context

The Modern Foreign Languages department uses Google Maps and Google Earth as key tools in lessons. Teachers immerse students in the sights and sounds of far-flung locations. "They try to integrate G Suite for Education into their lessons wherever they possibly can. They love it. They use VideoNote and EdPuzzle, and it wouldn't happen if we didn't have the whole G Suite and Chromebook plan in place," says Lickfold. The mix of easy access to Chromebooks, G Suite for Education and the world beyond precipitated a wave of student collaboration, made manageable in a foreign language course with Google Groups and Docs.

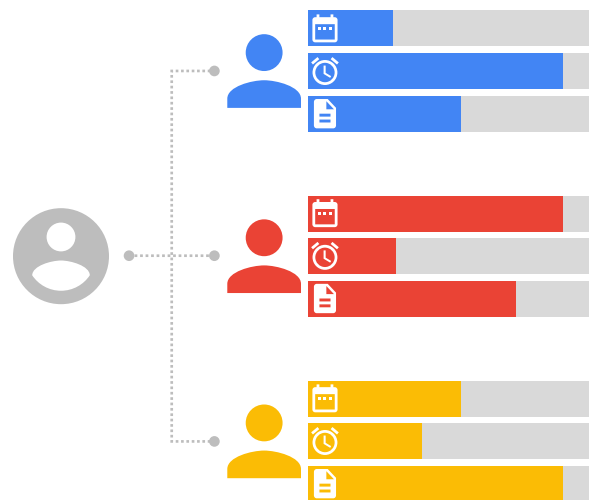


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Streamlining the process

Teachers at Tring School set the majority of their work through Google Classroom. Now, neither staff nor students face the issue of lost or damaged work, while teachers can provide differentiated material for each student and track measures like attendance, student timetables and workloads. The school believes that these tools are more student-friendly and more manageable and effective in the classroom, taking an already excellent school and making it an even better one.



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