



The importance of Remote Learning for a community special school – at Tweendykes in Hull – using Microsoft Teams

The Background

Tweendykes is a community special school that caters for 160 pupils with severe learning difficulties and physical disabilities between the ages of 2 to 19. A member of the Humber Education Trust (HET), the school is based towards the north of the city of Hull in the North of England.

Tweendykes School have had their technology needs met by RM for a number of years, providing complete IT support across the whole school via a Flexible Managed Service Primary Flex contract.

The Challenge

The school had started to take tiny steps towards the Cloud at the time that the Prime Minister announced that most schools were closing from 20th March 2020 – they were adopting SharePoint and had started to use the cloud for the storage of some electronic files. However, they were not using Microsoft Teams to its full potential, and take-up was not consistent across the School.

That said, when the announcement came, they quickly mobilised into action, and after a week's hard work of planning and preparation, felt as ready as they could be for reduced opening and/or even closing, should they have to. As it happened, the school has remained open, supporting up to 90 pupils each week.

"Having the online platforms in place at the outset, really helped us."

Hannah Craven, Class Teacher



The Response

Once it became clear that the school would need to adapt to new ways of schooling, everyone in the school responded collectively and geared up for what that would entail, and in particular the role that technology needed to play in making that easier.

MS Teams was the platform of choice, and with the help of their local RM engineer, they were able to resolve most technology problems, ensuring that everyone was up and running within the school. This included the standard password changes, but also the more complicated actions to implement locks and restrictions to certain areas.

"Using Microsoft Teams for meetings with staff and pupils has worked really well. Teams has enabled us to work together in creating home learning in an easy and accessible way."

Hannah Craven, Class Teacher

Prior to the outbreak, [RM undertook research with a number of schools](#) that indicated that many teachers were dismissive of the role that technology could play within education settings. Tweendykes shares the view of many post-Virus – that their teachers have embraced technology, and many have started the discussion as to how they can use MS Teams when they all return to school – recognising the value it can bring in sharing information, collaborating on documents (such as homework marking), and hosting class and teacher meetings.

"The technology we have used during lockdown has been very useful and I think what we have learned will be implemented when we are back up and running."

Hannah Craven, Class Teacher



The Lessons Learnt

1. **Focus** – creating a dedicated “home learning team” to put everything together proved essential, with one group of people focused on all the components the school needed for what was about to hit them.
2. **Plan** – whilst Tweendykes only had a week to prepare, the efforts that went in then, ensured that they were well prepared for what followed.
3. **Partner** – the reality is that few people can do it all themselves. Whether that is talking to other schools, sharing ideas with teachers and parents, or turning to specialist providers such as RM – they all bring their own experiences, and all want to help when their assistance is needed the most.

The Legacy

Like most schools, there is a genuine desire that the past 10 weeks or so are not forgotten, nor solely remembered for the sadness that the pandemic brought. This is an opportunity to learn and to build – to take the lessons, to build on the investments, to leverage the new found knowledge that has been gained – and to use them to make the post-Covid world a better place for everyone – especially the pupils who look to us to provide them with a decent education, no matter their background.

"There will still be pupil number restrictions once schools re-open, and therefore home learning will still be a priority. Even after then I really hope that we continue to use Teams and online platforms when we are all back to school and Covid starts to become a distant memory"

Hannah Craven, Class Teacher

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