



# Implementing Remote Learning using Google Classroom at a popular Primary School in Biggin Hill, in the London Borough of Bromley

## The Background

Biggin Hill Primary School is part of the Charles Darwin Academy Trust – a two-form entry Primary School in a beautiful rural setting on the outskirts of the London Borough of Bromley. With below average levels of Pupil Premium, the majority of this close community of 420 pupils live within 1 mile of the school.

The school moved to a cloud-based Google tenancy – provided by RM Education – in January 2020. RM project managed the implementation of the new system from start to finish (and beyond) including a complete Wi-Fi upgrade, conversion of old hardware, new end user device installation and Google training.

## The Challenge

At the time the Prime Minister announced that most schools were closing from 20th March 2020, Biggin Hill Primary School had already migrated all of their on premise storage to the Google cloud, and all staff in the school were using G Suite. The school had developed their use of shared drives, Gmail, calendar and using documents, sheets and slides collaboratively.

When the lockdown was announced, it came as something of a shock, but the school were better prepared than many. Whilst the school remained open throughout – with on average 16 key worker/vulnerable children attending daily – the vast majority of their pupils were now at home, and needed to continue their education.

**“Whilst we had a system prepared and ready the week before closure was announced, it still came as a challenge for us, and we had to react pretty nimbly.”**

**James Ellis**, Headteacher



## The Response

The school created a shared drive that contained a folder for each year group. In each folder there were separate folders for each week that contained work for that week. They created maths and reading multiple choice tests using Google Forms.

Children were trained how to use this and were quickly moving into a routine of emailing their teacher copies of their work for feedback. The system worked well as a starting point, but the school encountered issues with overwriting documents and experienced some difficulty in sharing work with teachers.

The school also started to look at YouTube and started posting daily story-time videos for their pupils.

Two weeks into lockdown, they conducted their own online training – supported by RM – using Google Meet to set up Google Classrooms. From Easter all work was set daily on Google Classroom and teachers were feeding back daily on submitted work.

**"Google Classroom enabled us to overcome some of our earlier problems with pupils overwriting work. Importantly for me, parental feedback has been excellent."**

**James Ellis**, Headteacher



The school have developed their use of YouTube still further, with playlists for each year group and each subject. Staff post videos regularly on the channel, and signpost them on the stream within Google Classroom. They still do daily story-time and have introduced a weekly family quiz, and started a cookery playlist with staff and children both posting videos of different recipes to follow.

They have made full use of the technology, with shared drives that contain a Google Slide Doc that acts as a series of galleries – with an art gallery, joke gallery, maths puzzles, tongue twisters and daily physical challenges.

The school use Google Hangout and Google Meet for small and large weekly meetings to share good practice, and help plan for the next stages of their provision in the lockdown situation. They have also introduced short meetings with all of the families of children who will be starting school next year, to familiarise them with the school and what to expect.

After the Summer Half Term, they will be starting weekly live short teacher demonstrations with children to support home learning.

**"G Suite has been amazing and the timing could not have been better. Staff have had to teach themselves and each other but have embraced the entire system and love the ease with which some tasks can be done."**

**James Ellis**, Headteacher

## **The Transformation**

The school were already on their journey to the cloud, embracing G Suite, at the time the lockdown was announced, having had a very poor IT system prior to this. As such, there was already buy in from teachers – in some respects contrary to [the research from RM prior to the Coronavirus outbreak](#) that suggested that many teachers in other schools were somewhat reluctant for faster edTech adoption.

**"We were fortunate that our teachers were already becoming accustomed to using G Suite, but the lockdown has definitely speeded up the process and ensured all staff have embraced the move to digital learning"**

**James Ellis**, Headteacher

As an RM customer, they also had access to RM Unify, which they found helpful to collate a range of online resources for children to access quickly.

## The Lessons Learnt

- 1. Investing in modern, reliable technology infrastructure.** Ensuring the system was manageable for all stakeholders – staff, children and particularly parents – was key to being able to continue to teach during the lockdown. The system is such that children are able to access nearly everything independently, thus removing the stress and anxiety of the parents.

**“Put simply, all of my staff now have access to IT that works reliably and quickly!”**

**James Ellis**, Headteacher



- 2. Accepting that technology is for all.** Biggin Hill Primary School intend to invest further in more Chromebooks to maintain the children's access to devices, allowing them to balance written and online work together.
- 3. Having a reliable and accomplished technology partner available when you need them.** As the school adapted to this new way of learning, they were reliant upon RM to support them – with regular Google Meets with their Account Manager, using screen share to see how different aspects work – supporting them with set up, ongoing training and remote support.
- 4. Maintaining a regular dialogue with pupils and their parents.** Probably the biggest challenge Biggin Hill Primary School has encountered has been the gap in regular contact between staff and children – which they have addressed successfully via G Suite coupled with regular phone calls home.

## The Legacy

The School have already begun discussions about how they will continue to use all the elements of the online learning provisions once schools reopen. There have been some amazing benefits from G Suite supporting learning at home, and they are keen to ensure they bring some of this into the school but also use it for continued remote learning.

There will be a lot of time before schools will operate fully in a “normal” way. Many children will have anxieties about school and the number of children refusing to school may grow. Biggin Hill Primary believe that their system will be able to support this – using Google Classroom when pupils are not able to attend class, for whatever reason.

There is also a genuine hope that the respect that parents and their families have for school staff has increased and can be maintained as children return to school.

**“On a personal level this process has brought our school community closer. Staff have supported each other throughout. Parents have seen how much hard work has gone into our provision at a time when many schools have been criticised for not doing enough – we have demonstrated that we have gone above the norm. All my staff have maintained a full time working schedule... just in a very different way!”**

**James Ellis**, Headteacher

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