



## Thomas Alleyné's High School Shares the Secret of its GCSEPod Success

Thomas Alleyné's High School pupil Tom Hollins has become the first sixth former to become GCSEPod lead.

Thomas Alleyné's High School in Uttoxter, Staffordshire is an average size, good school with just over 1,000 students age 11-18.

The school's head teacher Julie Rudge joined the school in 2014 and one of the first things she did was to introduce GCSEPod. Having successfully used GCSEPod in her previous school, Julie recognised the huge benefits it could bring to many of the students at Thomas Alleyné's.

So sure of its impact, Julie managed the roll out of GCSEPod herself. Two years on, the educational content is now truly embedded in to the school, so much so that Julie no longer oversees its usage but has instead created a dedicated small team of sixth form students, headed up by student Tom Hollins, to manage the process.

"I knew from past experience that GCSEPod would be a great additional resource for the school and despite being rather late in the academic year, one of the first changes I made was to subscribe to the educational content provider and to demonstrate my commitment to its success, I took on the task of rolling it out to all our then Year 11 students and the staff.

"GCSEPod has universal appeal and is well used with students across the board. However what really attracted me is the valuable resource it offers our middle ground students who can so easily go under the radar. We can track usage and progress across all our student groups quickly and easily which helps us to



ensure that we are giving every student the best possible chance to succeed.

"I was a bit like a broken down record, I talked about GCSEPod in school assemblies, in tutor groups at staff meetings but it really didn't take long to get the message across. Whilst we subscribed to use it initially as a student resource for independent learning it is increasingly being used by teachers also; some teachers to set homework tasks but in the main they simply remind the students to refer back to GCSEPod to consolidate knowledge learned in the classroom or to prepare ahead of the next lesson.

"But I'm delighted that the students have really taken to it and without a doubt those who use it regularly have shown the biggest progress."

One such student is Tom Hollins, who last academic year was one of the school's highest users of GCSEPod and he passed his GCSE exams with flying colours. At the start of the 2016 autumn term Julie approached Tom, now studying for his A-Levels, to see if he would like to take on the responsibility of GCSEPod – the first student in the UK to take on this role.

Tom, together with three of his peers have now been entrusted with the responsibility of helping Year 10 and Year 11 students to better prepare for their end of year exams using GCSEPod.

Julie added: "In most schools rolling out technology initiatives is the job of a member of the senior management team but I thought why not turn this on its head and ask a student to take on the role. After all someone like Tom is able to talk about his own recent experiences and offer students something they can closely relate to.

"Whilst Tom's first priority must be his own studies he has wholeheartedly taken on the challenge and I can already see that his approach is encouraging more students and indeed teachers to make better use of the technology available to them. What's more the role is certainly helping to shape his own leadership qualities and will certainly support his aspirations of becoming a teacher.

**"I think we have found our recipe for success!"**

