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RECOMMENDED BY TEACHERS

## GCSEPod, a long term resource in a high achieving school

A View From Paul Cairns, Assistant Head Teacher at Archbishop Temple School, Preston

**Archbishop Temple School in Preston, Lancashire was recently ranked the top performing secondary school in the North West and once again topped the national league tables for GCSE exam results amongst state secondary schools.**

The Church of England school was one of the first schools in the UK to subscribe to GCSEPod back in 2011 and this academic year sees the fourth cohort of Year 11 students to use the content for their revision and independent learning.

Paul Cairns, assistant head teacher at the school tells us why he believes GCSEPod has stood the test of time amongst the students and why it continues to play such an important role within the school.

### How do you use GCSEPod in school?

GCSEPod is very much used as an independent learning tool to support what goes on in the classroom. Whilst some teachers do use it as a teaching resource in the main this is a resource which belongs to the students themselves and as a result they have really taken ownership of it.

As this is the fourth year we have had it in school, our current Year 11s are really familiar with it as they have been using it since year 9, so they are already using it quite heavily early in the year.

It is pretty much embedded in to the culture of the school and we can see from the usage records that students often go off and download specific

podcasts independently following lessons so that they can go back over things they have learned in class.

We believe that encouraging this independent learning and encouraging this level of ownership is really important to a rounded education.

### Your exam results are impressive year on year. What role does GCSEPod play in this?

GCSEPod certainly supports what we do as a school and is well used – in fact I think we are one of the top users of the software per head.

Whilst we don't have firm evidence that it impacts on exam results, anecdotal feedback from students would suggest that it does really help during the revision period and we can see that students definitely use it to revise specific exam related topics.

We use GCSEPod within intervention groups such as pupil premium students or borderline C/D students and because of the dashboard it is easy to record and monitor usage and track progress.

### Do you encourage the use of mobile technology in school?

We have a very clear vision when it comes to mobile technology in school which is why I think it works. We have wi-fi which can be accessed during lessons by teachers and is turned on for students to use in the run up to exams. We really believe in mobile technology as something which can successfully supplement and support traditional learning but by no means do we use it to replace traditional methods.

That said, we have been very careful in what software and content we invest in. Budgets being as tight as they are, it is essential to ensure the mobile tech adds value to the students and their learning. This is why we have chosen to limit the options we offer the students and use only two resources; GCSEPod and Firefly.

I think schools can be guilty of providing too much choice to students, which can result in lower levels of adoption. Because we focus our efforts on two key providers, the students have fully adopted them and in the main are using them to maximum benefit.

