

Independent Schools: How to stand out from the crowd

5 winning formulas independent schools have used to drive recruitment, boost attainment, and improve wellbeing.





We understand the need for independent schools to put themselves out there and really stand out from the crowd. However, launching revolutionary strategies that drive pupil recruitment, boost attainment, and improve wellbeing without breaking the bank is hard. That's why we have collated stories from five schools from across the globe, outlining the strategies they've implemented to really stand out from the crowd to get more students in, increase learning benefits that really make a difference to their students.

Covering technical innovations, strategic changes, wellbeing structures and more, now you can learn the (in some cases award-winning) strategies that are helping schools to make a real impact in both the local and global markets.

Case Study #1 - The North West Apple Wizz

Bolton School Boys' Division introduced 1:1 iPad usage which transformed the way pupils learn and improved the school's efficiency. The school's vision was about enabling innovative pedagogical approaches by combining modern learning techniques with traditional teaching methods. For Bolton Boys, the focus is not on the device itself but what it enables the students to do.

iPads have been used for several years at Bolton School Boys' Division, and have become an integral part of learning for over 2,000 pupils who are utilising the technology within their classrooms, around the school, and at home. Understanding the need for children to carry multiple books for each subject, alongside organisers, pencil cases, the iPad rollout enabled Bolton School to cut down on the needs for other resources bringing everything into the digital world.

Whilst a 1:1 iPad rollout may not seem that unusual, the introduction of iPad ambassadors across the school has been revolutionary. Students were trained on different aspects of the iPads which enabled them to become the leads for any iPad related queries other students may have. The initiative helped children to take ownership of their learning, with teachers reporting a marked success through this simple addition.

Case Study #2 - SEN specialists cooking up a storm

The Holmewood School

Cavendish Education has made a name for itself as promoting SEN systems and support throughout all its seven schools. Cavendish Education Group was set up with the simple aim to give others the chance to succeed against the odds and in the face of obstacles.

In 2019, The Holmewood School in London won two TES awards for its Special Needs Initiative with its creative and innovative cooking program, 'The Occupational Therapy Cafe'. Understanding the difficulties that students with SEN have within school, the integrated Occupational Therapy services looked at a new way of getting students heavily involved to develop key life and social skills, and decided to launch a pupil-led cafe. Students research menus, buy ingredients, make the food, serve customers and handle the money, leading to a fully student-led enterprise. Being involved in such an innovation has proven to increase mental and emotional wellbeing for the children, alongside improvements and growth in all areas of school life.

The core team consists of five students, spanning baking, and cooking meals all supported by occupational therapists. Those that take part in the cafe have made massive improvements with their motor skills through cooking but also have seen a boost in confidence through navigating social situations. The innovative look has even made some consider a career within the culinary field.

Case Study #3 - Pastoral improvement

Alice Smith School

Award-winning Alice Smith School in Kuala Lumpur have revolutionised their pastoral initiatives through transforming playtimes.

The initiative was introduced to help develop Year 6 leadership opportunities, empowering students to help transform breaks and lunchtimes. Year 6's are expected to develop leadership in a range of categories, such as referees to sports games, equipment managers to sign in and out equipment, play mentors, break and lunch monitors, buddies and helpers - all easily located through badges and sashes.

Breaking the playground into designated areas means activities can be contained, with Year 6's working to ensure break and lunchtimes are treated as the break that's needed.

Students were involved through the entire process ensuring that every step of the journey was led by the children. As a result all students now have a happy and safe break during positive playtimes.

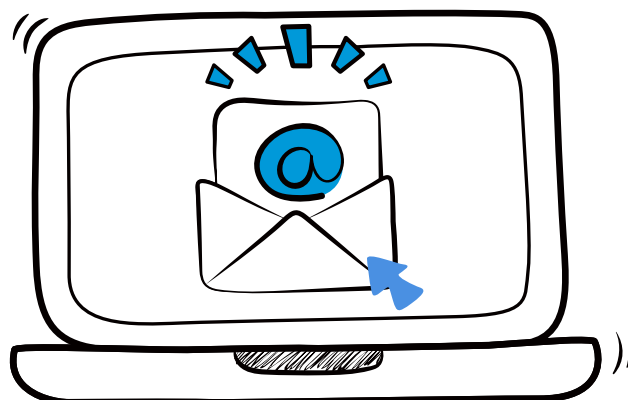
Case Study #4 - Parental engagement

Henderson Goddard School

Henderson Goddard School in Nevada, USA initiated a new daily report collaboration between teachers and parents, removing the need for letters home or notes in the organiser.

Understanding the need to move further into the digital world, Henderson Goddard School created 'Affiliation', a collaborative connection tool between teachers and parents.

Affiliation allows teachers to send daily emails which include classroom updates, pictures of work, and other documentation relevant to their child's learning experience. The initiative has meant parents now feel more involved with their children's educational journey - ensuring the link between the classroom and home is closer than ever.



Case Study #5 - Digital textbooks using Classoos

St Edmund's College

Looking at the main focus of reducing how much students were required to carry in and around the school, with research showing that students should carry no more than 10-15% of their own bodyweight on their back, but currently carry between 31-42%, alongside wanting to reduce the quantity of lost or damaged textbooks, St Edmund's made a conscious decision to introduce digital textbooks using Classoos. The ability to make notes on their own device, highlight passages without damaging the longevity of the textbooks, has saved money for the school whilst seeing an increase in the physical and mental wellbeing of the students.

Karl Fry, Director of IT at St Edmund's College says; *'I had become increasingly aware of how much the students were needing to carry around with them, the size and number of bags taken into College and the effect that this can often have on the overall condition of the books that they use... Classoos provided the necessary solution to meet our needs. Ultimately, the ability to work across publishers so that we could create a critical mass of books on the platform was vital in making this a cost-effective solution.'*

'The introduction of Classoos has been well-received by both students and teaching staff. The students really enjoy being able to have access to so many resources, across either their laptops or tablets, and also while at home. They also enthusiastically make their own revision notes from screenshots of the pages they've been studying, without having to write in the physical resources. Staff, meanwhile, can see both the cost and time benefits that this has made.'



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Implementing these easy strategies enabled each independent school to stand out from the crowd - and even win awards. Each of the schools realised a major issue that affected their learning environment and strived to fix that first. By bringing members of the local education community together throughout the process they have shown small steps can lead to significant changes in the way the school runs.