Lightspeed Systems®

CASE STUDY

Cognita Schools Give Teachers Visibility and Control of Devices in the Classroom

CHALLENGE

Cognita Schools is a diverse group of schools with 60,000 students in over 90 schools across four regions. As the pandemic accelerated Cognita's 1:1 deployment across their UK sites, devices became firmly embedded in the classroom experience. Donna Shah, Cognita's Digital Learning Adviser, knew they needed to help their teachers manage the diverse devices in use. "**Technology has become fundamental to our teaching and learning and the education system across our Cognita schools**" explained Ms. Shah. "**We have over 11,000 students using a combination of Windows, Google and iOS devices, and we needed something that worked in support of everything we already had in our existing systems.**"

Cognita needed a robust solution that could be customised to their new device-oriented, online classrooms, but whose use was also intuitive enough for teachers to adapt quickly without disrupting their lessons. "**That's where Lightspeed Classroom Management™ came into play: it allows the teachers across our schools to manage and monitor their devices,**" said Ms. Shah. "**Plus, I can support teachers from my home office, while the senior leadership team can to the same regardless of where they are.**"

Ms. Shah and the team also needed a management tool they could customise for the students of different ages in Cognita's schools. "**We use Classroom Management from year 3 to year 13,**" Ms. Shah said. "**As you can imagine, the needs of an eighteen-year-old differ greatly from those of a seven-year-old!**"

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SOLUTION

To address these concerns and make the most of their 1:1 initiative, Cognita decided to roll out Lightspeed Classroom Management to 27 of their 40 schools across the UK (the remaining 13 will receive the solution later this year) with additional schools implementing the solution across Spain, Switzerland and Italy.

Cognita chose Lightspeed Classroom Management because it gives teachers the ability to monitor students browsing behaviour from their own devices—without having to be physically watching students' screens. This feature was crucial in helping teachers adapt to Cognita's new digital landscape. "**One of the key features with Lightspeed Classroom Management is the whole class view,**" said Ms. Shah. "**It's here that the teacher can either have a view of all screens at once or in a list view. There are also insights that appear when it's something you're not expecting to see: for instance, the AI will alert the teacher to students who are going off task.**"

Cognita was also drawn to Classroom Management because, when necessary, teachers can use the solution to close individual tabs to keep students on task. Further, Ms. Shah and Cognita's teachers appreciate the power to stop all students browsing at once. "**It's certainly one of the powerful tools Classroom Management offers: with this solution, teachers can lock an entire class and their devices in one go so that they can get students' attention,**" said Ms. Shah.

In addition to the power to monitor and manage the entire class at once, Cognita was drawn to Lightspeed Classroom Management because it grants teachers the ability to segment students using the recently added groups tool. "Groups was one of the most powerful features," declared Ms. Shah. "**The reason I like groups is that they're dynamic. They are easy to rearrange and amend. Yet, equally, the tools that sit within them are the same as you have for the whole class.**"

Finally, Cognita decided to deploy Classroom Management because, in addition to monitoring what's on student devices, teachers would now be able to broadcast what's on their own or on a particular student's screen. This feature makes it easy to demonstrate work and share best practices. "**If a teacher is in in the classroom and a student has done some amazing work,**" said Ms. Shah, "**instead of having to save it and send it, a teacher can use Classroom Management to easily share that student's screen with everyone.**"

THE DIFFERENCE

Lightspeed Classroom Management has helped Cognita leverage the power of their technology while simultaneously reducing the strain on the IT team. For instance, instead of contacting IT every time they need to unblock a website, teachers are now able to use the Web Rules feature to control internet access. "**I love the fact that Web Rules allow us to either block or allow specific URLs so students can only go to certain websites,**" said Ms. Shah.

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Further, Lightspeed's customisable Web Rules have helped Cognita improve its testing. "**Because we do a lot of online testing using tools like Microsoft Forms,**" Ms. Shah explained, "**you can actually drill down and allow an individual student access to one web URL and turn off web browsing for the rest of the internet. That has revolutionised how we use testing because we are now secure in the knowledge that students are only accessing approved content.**"

And when educators must intervene to keep students engaged with the right online content, Lightspeed Classroom Management gives teachers subtle ways of doing so. "**I was teaching a lesson from my home office while looking at Book Creator and I noticed a little oddity,**" recalled Ms. Shah. "**One of my students wasn't on the correct website. Instead, they were looking for cricket updates. In this instance, I didn't want to shame the student in front of everybody, so instead I just closed the tab within Classroom Management. The student obviously realised that they'd been caught out, so we didn't have any issues beyond that.**"

Teachers have also been utilising the Groups feature to discretely share links with students: if teachers want to share a specific URL during a lesson, they can easily send the link to individuals, the whole class or to specific groups they've created. "**Some of our classes may have an additional adult assigned to work with them, and so with Groups they can then push out links directly to students,**" said Ms. Shah. "**These may be support documents, these may be things that they can do to scaffold their learning, these may be additional resources: all can be given out discreetly to that group of students without the rest of the class having to know what's going on.**"

With their classroom monitoring and teacher controls in place, Cognita also had to ensure the devices were safeguarded outside of the classroom. They discovered that Lightspeed Filter™ provided the KCSIE compliant device safety required, while also integrating with Classroom Management to save deployment and management time. "**Using Lightspeed Filter alongside Classroom Management allows the schools to see any inappropriate behaviour, any content that's being accessed and searched on a single dashboard,**" said Ms. Shah. "**This access to the filtering and reporting is very useful for our DSLs. It gives great insight into learners and helps keep them safe wherever they are and whichever device they use.**"

RESULTS

As a result of these successes, Lightspeed's solutions are now integral to Cognita's 1:1 initiatives and digital learning plans. Ms. Shah is busy training more teachers across the remaining UK schools and has reached out to teachers for their feedback after using the solutions. "**I think my favourite comment that I received is this: 'Classroom management allows me to get on with doing what I do best: teach.' I don't really think you can say anything better than that,**" concluded Ms. Shah. "**The fact is these solutions empower teachers to teach, secure in the knowledge that their students are on task, engaged, and safe.**"

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