

Bedford High School

Teaching, learning and understanding for the future with Adobe® Acrobat®

BEDFORD HIGH SCHOOL

- Size: over 800 pupils
- Location: Bedford, UK
- Founded: 1882
- www.bedfordhigh.co.uk

INDUSTRY

- Primary and Secondary Education

PRODUCTS USED

- Adobe® Acrobat®

Organisation Profile

Bedford High School was established in 1882 and today remains a very successful girls school for seven to eighteen year olds. The school prides itself on providing pupils with an excellent education, within a friendly and mutually respectful environment. Central to the school's ethos is the fostering of excellence and aspiration. Girls attending the school expect to achieve, be enriched, inspired and fully involved in the vibrant and challenging school community.

Like many other schools in the UK, Bedford High School strives to provide students with the best possible start in life by helping them to achieve excellent results. Education at the school during the last ten years has changed dramatically through the implementation of cutting-edge Information Communications Technology (ICT).

The overall strategy behind Bedford High's concentration on technology, is to prepare pupils for life in the digital world. Kathryn Macaulay, head of Information Technology explains, "We want to give pupils the widest possible experience of communications technology, because it is an area that changes and develops so fast. Today it plays a key part in everyday life and it will also be an inherent part of the girls' future lives."

Challenges Faced

- Increase ICT awareness
- Introduce pupils to industry standard software
- Enthuse the pupils to use ICT

Bedford High School wanted to find a way to raise awareness and enthusiasm for ICT whilst teaching the pupils to industry standards. Technology at Bedford High School is embedded firmly throughout the Key Stages. Through every level of the curriculum, pupils learn basic through to advanced skills within a portfolio of software packages including Adobe Acrobat.

Macaulay explains: "About ten years ago we started to explore the use of Acrobat 1.0 which although not as sophisticated as current editions, definitely gave us the basic principles to help us start teaching our pupils about future business experience.

"At the school we believe that enabling our pupils to achieve superb results at GCSE, A Level and AS Level is only half the story. Teaching our pupils key industry skills is equally important."

As well as Adobe Acrobat the school also uses software packages such as Adobe Photoshop® CS, Adobe Illustrator® CS, Adobe InDesign® CS, Adobe Premiere® and Adobe GoLive®.

Success Strategy

Within many schools Acrobat is now a fundamental tool for teaching pupils the communication and collaboration skills that are needed in industry. Kathryn Macaulay explains how she incorporates Acrobat into the classroom environment.

“Adobe Acrobat is fun and the pupils, their parents, my staff and I are happy in the knowledge that we are teaching something interesting but incredibly relevant to the future. Not only that, we are using the most up-to-date comprehensive, industry standard technology that is currently available to the education sector and to all sectors worldwide.”

Kathryn Macaulay,
Head of Information Technology,
Bedford High School

RESULTS

- Strengthened effectiveness of curriculum by providing students with valuable experience for careers
- Enhanced pupils' ability to deliver high quality, dynamic work
- Improved the formulation of ideas and collaboration

“Teachers at Bedford High School use Acrobat in various ways to teach very different subjects. The great thing about Acrobat is that it has many facets. The user can print to file, show full screen views, create PDFs from multiple document types and utilise the versatile bookmark feature. You can also edit text and objects, create articles, embed multimedia files, create comment notes and much, much more! I use it in the classroom in a multitude of ways.”

Macaulay introduces the ‘teaching’ focus relating to Acrobat in Year 7 and continues developing skills and knowledge across Key Stage 3 to all pupils.

The focus at Key Stage 3 is “the document”. Pupils acquire Microsoft® Office skills at Key Stages 1 and 2 and go on to develop more sophisticated skills relating to paper publishing in Year 7 using Adobe InDesign. The use of Acrobat is naturally integrated into the classroom. Throughout the year the pupils learn how to use a wide range of Acrobat tools through integration with their InDesign document productions. “We try to encourage workflow activity that is similar to industry.” Macaulay confirms.

Results

The adoption and combination of advanced software together with excellent teaching has lead Bedford High School to achieve results beyond expectations.

Throughout the school’s 112 year history teachers at Bedford High School have witnessed a multitude of changes. “The integration of advanced ICT in our school has been fundamental to our success as one of the top all girls schools in the UK” said Macaulay.

Through versatile use of Acrobat in the classroom pupils at Bedford High School truly embrace the technology and its benefits. Pupils often hand work in as a PDF document and use comments to respond to staff. Students also use email to send PDF documents around the classroom to formulate ideas and collaborate in e-discussion mode. Macaulay continues, “The pupils are able to create e-documents that satisfy a range of end user needs and offer superb opportunities for pupils to solve workflow problems using a real business product. The experience is high quality and inspirational.”

In Year 8 the study of the document moves away from paper and into digital medium. Pupils develop the skills that are core to the production of documents for the Web, CD and DVD.

Areas covered include the manipulation of graphics for the Web, animation and the production of an email flyer for distribution to a database of clients. The subject area can become as broad as the teacher deems appropriate for the class. In Food Technology, for instance, using the website www.choosefood.com, a new product “Quick to Fix” is launched and marketed by the pupils. The pupils then create email flyers to send to fictitious clients and businesses helping them to experience both the standards and customer focus required within industry.

Acrobat is used as a professional software package in nearly every industry sector. The software is adaptable to the classroom environment and as Macaulay explains, “Adobe Acrobat is fun and the pupils, their parents, my staff and I are happy in the knowledge that we are teaching something interesting but incredibly relevant to the future. Not only that, we are using the most up-to-date comprehensive, industry standard technology that is currently available to the education sector and to all sectors worldwide.”

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