



With over 1,200 students aged 11-16, Priestnall School is located in Stockport, Greater Manchester. Priestnall has a truly comprehensive intake which serves the community in which it is situated. As an inclusive school we have a range of students with differing needs and are therefore constantly looking to improve provision, especially with regard to the use of technology. As we strive to move with the times and ensure students are exposed to as much modern technology as possible, we share a firm belief that investment in technology and equipment will best prepare our students for their future careers.

We have approximately 300 student computers based in nine ICT rooms around school, with a further 130 staff computers. In the last few years Priestnall School has also invested in 150 iPads for student use, divided equally between the five school colleges. Teachers can reserve the iPads for lessons and use them with students to research topics, film documentaries or for controlled assessments, to mention just a few of their uses. We have also invested in some external keyboards that are compatible with the iPads – these seem



to be a particularly big hit with some of our SEND students, who find that they can type much quicker than they can write; in addition to being a popular and cost-effective solution.

Sure solutions

An invaluable piece of software that we use at Priestnall School is the Read&Write programme which is installed on every single machine. Developed by Texthelp, this software is an assistive learning solution for people with learning difficulties, dyslexia or visual impairments, as well as being extremely helpful for people learning English as an additional language. This software is used by millions of people every day in schools and in the workplace. Many

of our SEND students use this software in a classroom or exam environment to help with their comprehension of text on screen. The student can choose the pitch, speed and volume of the voice as well as selecting a suitable accent from the many options built into the software. They can even customise the toolbar to suit them. The student then prompts the software to read the text to them or to read their written work back to them to ensure it makes sense. Without a doubt, this has been an invaluable software tool for our school.

We've also invested in a voice software programme called Dragon, which types as you speak, and over the coming months we will be introducing this to more of our SEND students, who can often struggle to transfer their ideas to paper easily. Prior to the recent GCSE exams we also purchased some Exam Reader Pens – a long-term investment which will reduce the cost of live readers in exams. The Reader Pens are approved by JCQ and other exam boards and no special access arrangement is required for their use in exams. We have found them invaluable in exams, especially for those students who do not qualify for a reader. The student can use the pen independently to scan the printed word(s) and the text is then read back to them via