



Harris Church of England Academy

Harris Church of England Academy is a coeducational secondary school with academy status in Rugby, Warwickshire. The school has used 4 AV1s over the past year and a half to support pupils, for reasons ranging from Cancer to Periodic Paralysis. Their first two AV1s were loaned through Warwickshire County Council and Great Ormond Street Hospital. The school has since gone on to rent and purchase AV1s from No Isolation directly.

In this interview Lizette Hummell, SENCO, talks more about the school's experience.

Q How did you come to start using an AV1?

A We first started using an AV1 with a year 9 pupil (now year 10) who had to self isolate right across the lockdowns. In his annual review, at the start of 2021, our integrated disability service, from the local authority, recommended that we consider using one of their available AV1s.

Q Were there any concerns coming from staff?

A The head teacher was a little bit concerned about the privacy aspect of the device, but after a little bit of deliberation and review of the information provided by No Isolation it was agreed that we would give it a go.

We set up a training session for the staff to show them how AV1 works. Some

of the staff were amazed that the child could actually be in the classroom this way. We shared all the agreements for the student and family to sign and staff were informed that the student could not record or screenshot via the app.

We had one situation where a student accidentally took a screenshot and they





were immediately blocked. This acted as on the spot training for teachers and I can now use this example to alleviate any staff fears that things will be recorded.

Q How have your AV1s been used at school?

A How the AV1s were used depended on the student and their level of engagement. The first student to use the AV1 felt integrated into the classroom as if he was never out of it. When they did practicals in science he contributed to his group, by reading the method out. We recommended that his friends took him out to break and lunchtime and it was brilliant to see his friends take him down to the year group's communal space in the morning. It was amazing to see the peers engage with this pupil through the AV1 and vice versa.

Q How did the AV1 support in the reintegration process for this student?

A The young man did struggle whilst he was away especially since, initially, he had to be isolated even from his family. He used the AV1 for six months and one of the biggest benefits to him was the interaction with his peer group during social times so he didn't feel left out. It was an easy transition back into school because he was not behind on his work and was able to engage in lessons and speak with friends.

Q How have the AV1s supported the pupils socially?

A We used an AV1 to support a year 7 student that had significant health issues causing them to be completely immunocompromised. The student is now at the point where she can come into school but still needs to be in a



separate room. The AV1 goes to class in her place and she is able to log on and take part fully in class. Her friends have really wanted to come and see her because they've been engaging with her through the AV1. For the student, it's helped build those social relationships which she didn't have when she started in September.

Another year 8 student using an AV1 found it a bit more difficult as there was a breakdown in the friendship group. This made it harder for her to engage with her peers outside of the classroom.

Q How have the AV1s supported the pupils academically?

A The year 10 pupil made great progress. His Maths assessment jumped 20 points from the previous year. The student had other interventions in place

but if it wasn't for the AV1 I'm not sure we would have seen that big a jump.

Our year 11 headboy has been the most recent pupil to start using an AV1. He has been able to attend revision sessions, leading up to his final exams, through the AV1. For him the value is being in the classroom and being part of the discussions as he's hoping to get some good grades. We have also had emails from the parents saying how amazing it is to see him smile when he is interacting through the AV1 with his friends at lunchtime.

Q How have the AV1s been managed day to day?

A I think it is all about choosing the right students to look after the AV1; someone responsible but also someone that might engage with the student as if

they were chatting with a friend walking down the corridor. For one student, his friends would pick up the AV1 in the morning, take it to his tutor group, to his lessons and back to the office in the afternoon.

For another student using the AV1, the form tutor was really helpful in selecting somebody who is mainly in her classes to take the AV1 from lesson to lesson. I think it was important to give the tutors time to chat with the student using the AV1 about how they hoped to interact, as well as selecting people who they might want to build friendships with.

It's better to rely on the students to look after the AV1 because the teachers and TAs are so busy in between lessons. It's also far better for social interaction within the peer group.

We took the time to train staff on exactly where to put the AV1 in the classroom, what the different features mean as well as training the students using the AV1s on how they can manipulate their view to see worksheets or what's on the board. It was interesting to see how well AV1 was used in a group setting whether it was in an English classroom or in a Science classroom.

Q What sets AV1 apart from other video conferencing software?

A Logging on with the AV1 is almost like being in the classroom and the child is not relying on the teacher to open up a teams or zoom meeting.

I think teachers become more aware of the fact that the AV1 is there vs. an online meeting set up on a laptop. They know what they should look out for; the flashing head, the blue head, the expressions on the face. The children will also make the teacher aware of what's happening with the AV1.

“ If we hadn't brought AV1 in over a year ago I don't think we would be where we are today. We're so confident with them now that we've had other schools come in to see how they work. ”