



## ST PAUL'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL

### Building confidence in exams with GCSEPod

A pupil premium student at St Paul's Catholic School in Leicester is looking to her summer GCSE examinations with optimism thanks to GCSEPod.

The school, a Catholic comprehensive school for students age 11-18, located in the suburbs of Leicester city centre, subscribed to GCSEPod late on in 2017. They rolled out the resource immediately to their Year 11 students to provide additional support for their pending mock examinations.

Within days of launch most of the Year 11 students had logged on and started to download and stream podcasts to their mobile devices. However, having been purchased as a Pupil Premium resource first and foremost, the school worked more closely with all of its Pupil Premium students. They ensured that not only had they logged on but they fully understood the benefits it could offer to them and were confident in using it.

### "GCSEPod really is the best money we've ever spent."

While usage across the board at St Pauls has been amongst some of the highest in the country, it is the usage of one of the school's Year 11 PPG students that has particularly grabbed the attention of the school's GCSEPod lead and Assistant Head Nora Ward.

Nora tells us: "In my role I work closely with all our Pupil Premium students. One young girl



was particularly high on my radar as we just knew she wasn't fulfilling her full potential. With a difficult home life, her poor attendance was falling well below an acceptable level. She completed her Year 10 mocks and despite being capable of grades 5 and 6s, she achieved only 1's and 2's. We knew we needed to provide additional support to get her grades back on track, both for her benefit and the overall school P8 measure. Whilst we recognised the barriers to fulfilling her potential we needed to find a different way to engage with her.

"I was confident that GCSEPod might just be the answer for her. She could use it outside of school quickly and easily on her phone as the resource is very intuitive and very much like some of the popular content sharing sites she was already familiar with. After installing it on her phone, I set her a few personal challenges to see if this would encourage her to familiarise herself with it and perhaps whet her appetite for more.

"To our amazement she quite quickly became one of the top users in school, winning the GCSEPod pin, which she wore with pride, and earning privileges such as a fast track in the lunchtime queue. Within just a few weeks after she started to use GCSEPod, she sat her Year 11 mock exams. As I sat and marked her English mock paper, I could not believe what I was reading, it was quite literally the best thing I had ever seen

her write. From a hugely disappointing grade 1 less than 6 months earlier, she scored a comfortable grade 6."

Not only has her English Language improved, this young student is now on track with all her subjects and strongly believes her usage of GCSEPod has made the difference. She said she just listened to the podcasts on her phone as often as she could and went in to exams and wrote down everything that she remembered.

Nora added: "GCSEPod has provided her with a structure for learning outside of the school environment which she has never had before. This has helped to instil a confidence and belief in her that she can do it. In her mock exams she was able to recall the information that she had learnt through the podcasts and apply her knowledge to answer the questions thoroughly.

"In terms of supporting our pupil premium students across the board, we are easily able to evidence impact, and I can honestly say GCSEPod really is the best money we've ever spent."

This case study feature's in a recent Schools Improvement article:  
[www.schoolsImprovement.net/gcsepod-a-case-study/](http://www.schoolsImprovement.net/gcsepod-a-case-study/)

