



# Hermitage Academy

Scrapping planners and making  
their school paperless



For staff, students and schools alike, planning and organisation are crucial to success. For things like managing homework, school planners have been a staple in schools for years. But these are costly and can be inefficient ways of tracking and recording homework. Matt Archer, Head of Department at the **Hermitage Academy**, recently made the move to scrap school planners and make their school paperless.

## How it all began...

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**Matt Archer**  
Head of Department

"We started using Frog about four years ago on Frog 3," says Matt, "but the person who had introduced it was being promoted through the school, so Frog had slipped down his priority list and it wasn't being used to full capacity. I came in about two years ago, picking it up and developing it further. Now we're really focussing on getting parents involved on it and boosting student engagement."

Homework setting is one of the key reasons Matt has found Frog to be so useful at his school. "Setting homework on Frog only takes about a minute, it's the easiest thing ever" says Matt. "Especially for the students to know what they've got to do. Previously a lot of people would say that they'd lost their planner, didn't know what was expected of them or their planners would simply live in the bottom of their bags and never come out, staying permanently blank. Whereas now because they're not having to write in it themselves and they



know that they've got a record of the homework set online, they've got no excuses for not getting it done. Then if there are any issues, we can query the parent directly through Frog, without having to rely on the planners to be a vehicle for that complaint."

Of course, when moving to paperless homework setting and planning, there can be teething problems, but nothing that can't be resolved: "one of the issues we had was somebody in a department deciding that they were going to give one member of staff the job of setting all the homework, rather than individual teachers doing it" Matt explains. "But that then meant that students didn't know when they were getting their homework set, and often there would just be a generic start and end date. So getting each teacher on board and learning the process so that they can set the homework themselves is definitely the way forward."

The Frog team have always been on board to help make the process for Hermitage Academy as smooth as possible: "throughout this process I've been in close contact with people from Frog," explains Matt. "There were quite a lot of meetings with Frog that I was able to attend in the past year as they were in the local area, and they're very good at giving one on one time, so they helped



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me a lot with the implementation of Frog for homework planning. For example they said how they would induct one year groups worth of parents first to see how it goes, then if there's a problem it's a much smaller number of people you're having to deal as opposed to having to fix issues with the whole school at the same time. Advice like this was really useful, so even though the issues we had were minor I think without their input the process would've been more challenging."

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Since going paperless, Hermitage Academy have also been able to save a good deal of money, such as the cost of planners, which were costing upwards of £1000 per year for their students. "We're also saving money on things like photocopying costs, the costs of issuing notices and letters etc. It can be difficult to quantify that kind of data, but it does add up to a significant amount over the course of a year."

Here at Frog, we want to ensure we're as supportive as possible of our schools, so we try to listen to the feedback we get and work with teachers to provide the best possible service. Matt continues, "I like the way that Frog are good at listening to what people are suggesting for improvements or requirements for the platform. For example, we talked about having an app for mobile devices



that both parents and students could download to keep them up to date. It's still in its development stage but they've released their first version of it so that schools can begin to make Frog even more accessible to parents. I'm glad they did that, rather than say they're not going to release it until it's perfect. For us, as we decided to go paperless this year it's really handy to be able to just go onto the app rather than have to log onto a computer. That was a bit of a game changer for us really."



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