

## City Heights E-ACT Academy provides a diverse student body with 21st century education using Google for Education tools



### At a Glance

#### About City Heights E-Act Academy

- [www.cityheightse-actacademy.org/](http://www.cityheightse-actacademy.org/)
- Lambeth, London
- 450 students

#### What they wanted to do

- Support equal opportunity learning for a diverse student body
- Provide students with a 21st century education

#### What they did

- Introduced Google Apps for Education and Classroom
- Rolled out 390 Chromebooks

#### What they accomplished

- Encouraged students to participate in class regardless of learning style
- Increased student collaboration and peer teaching outside the classroom walls
- Helped teachers provide feedback at every step in the creation process
- Encouraged teachers to easily share resources

### About City Heights E-ACT Academy

City Heights E-ACT Academy is a secondary school that serves the Tulse Hill and North Streatham communities in Lambeth in South London. Since opening in September 2013, the school has grown from 100 to 450 students and expects to have a student body of 1,000 in the next five years. City Heights specializes in teaching Spanish and other modern languages, and focuses on providing students with a 21st century education.

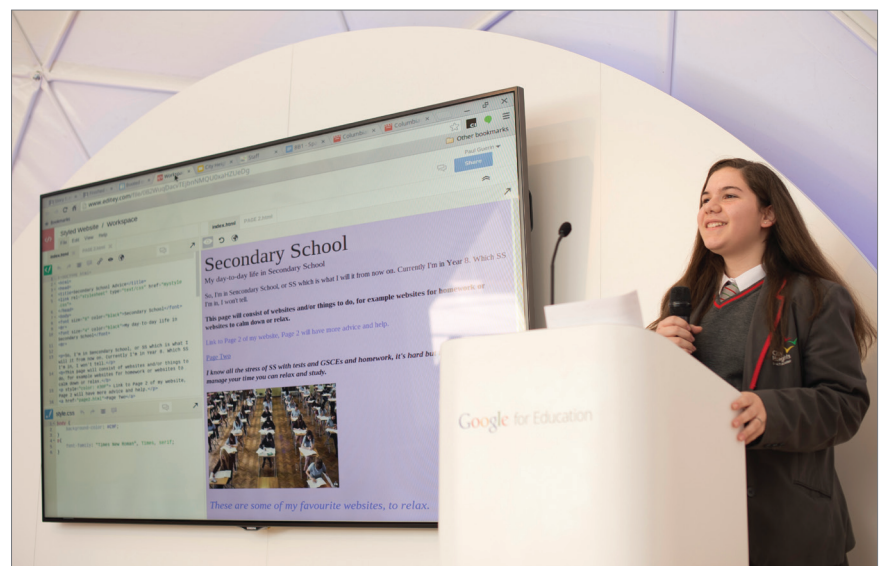
### Challenge

City Heights is known for its diversity, in terms of ethnic background and household income. More than 50 percent of City Heights students are eligible for free school meals. With a diverse student body, City Heights wanted to provide students with equal opportunities for learning, but teachers and students struggled to work together. They couldn't collaborate easily outside the classroom or share resources to help one another.

### Solution

When City Heights evaluated technology solutions when it opened in 2013, they prioritized collaboration capabilities and universal access. That year, they piloted Google Apps for Education, and within six months introduced Google Apps schoolwide. In 2014 the school rolled out Classroom and 330 Chromebooks, and at that point, they had more Chromebooks than students. One year later they added 60 Chromebooks.

"As a new school opening in 2013, my vision has been to use the latest collaborative technologies to help staff and students work more efficiently and for students to be able to work collaboratively and share their learning," says Jim Henderson, principal at City Heights. "The Google platform has enabled my staff to be very creative in making this happen."

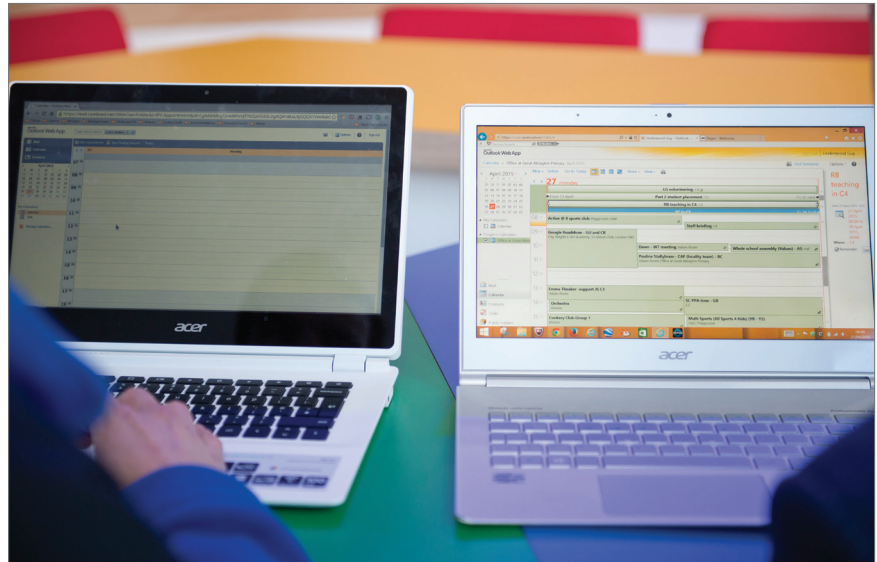


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*—Jim Henderson, Principal, City Heights E-Act Academy*

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## Benefits

### Reduced barriers to learning

Students often fear they'll receive a paper covered in red correction marks with a low grade. Using Chromebooks and Classroom, teachers track students' progress and provide personalized feedback throughout the writing process, making the grading process less intimidating. The sooner students receive feedback in the creation process, the greater the impact on their learning. “The traditional process, where students hand in a paper and wait a week or more for feedback, results in students looking at the grade and not the comments, since the subject isn't fresh in their minds,” Guerin says. “Now, the process is much more efficient and effective for teaching students.”

Students who are shy to raise their hands in class can look up information, such as a definition or verb conjugation in Spanish, using their Chromebook. Students can also participate in class in new ways using Google Apps. For example, students involved in Debate Mate practice their debating skills silently using Google Docs, encouraging students who aren't as apt to volunteer their ideas to contribute.

It's vital that students can access documents and projects when they're not at school using Google Apps and Chromebooks. When students leave school, Guerin says he often hears students say, “I'll see you on Google Docs tonight.”

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*“In my 30 years of teaching I cannot think of a piece of educational technology that has been more powerful in transforming the way that we are able to approach teaching and learning.”*

*—Jim Henderson, Principal, City Heights E-ACT Academy*

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### Deeper collaboration, beyond the classroom

Students share ideas and work on projects, regardless of their location and Internet access. English is a second language for more than half of the students, so City Heights created a language ambassadors program in which students give writing feedback to their classmates using Google Apps. Ambassadors add comments in Google Docs and provide edits in suggestion mode, to help improve their peers' English skills.

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### About Google Apps for Education

Google Apps for Education is a suite of free, secure tools that includes Gmail, Calendar, Sites & Documents. Use it for collaboration and communication no matter where you are or which device you're using. Over 40 million students, faculty, and staff in schools around the world have gone Google with Google Apps for Education.

[www.google.co.uk/edu](http://www.google.co.uk/edu)

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### About Google Chromebooks

Chromebooks are designed to help students and teachers get things done quickly and easily. Devices start at £159 and are simple to manage at scale through a web browser. With several devices to choose from, it's easy to find a Chromebook that meets your students' needs. You can learn more here:

[www.google.co.uk/edu](http://www.google.co.uk/edu)

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Google Apps also helps students collect information and communicate with their peers while working on timely projects from different locations. Last year as part of a BBC News Desk project, students acting as journalists collected field research and videographers captured the news happening in real time in the field. They shared their findings with editors back at school via Google Drive. While the journalists and videographers were in transit, the editors cut the video and pulled out the best sections using WeVideo.

"It was inspiring to see the student collaboration that happened across geographic areas," says Paul Guerin, vice principal at City Heights. "Plus the single Google identity meant students could use the same login information for Chromebooks, Google Apps and WeVideo, so they didn't have to waste time signing in again."

With 72 staff members, teachers wear multiple hats, so sharing lesson plans, videos, worksheets and best practices via Google Drive is instrumental to success. During the summer, new staff can communicate with current teachers and start planning for the first couple weeks of school.

#### Minimal maintenance

Since Google Apps and Chromebooks are intuitive, City Heights didn't need to spend a week or more train staff how to use the tools. One technician supports the students and staff two days per week, saving the school £50,000 that used to be spent on additional technical support. Now, the technician is able to spend more time supporting staff and students, rather than applying patches and updates. With Active Directory Sync, students and staff sign on to Chromebooks, Google Apps, Classroom and other third-party services without the hassle of signing in with a new username and password.

"In my 30 years of teaching I cannot think of a piece of educational technology that has been more powerful in transforming the way that we are able to approach teaching and learning," Henderson says.