

Juniper



Case study

Bursley Academy



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Bridging the gap between teacher-parent communications



About Bursley Academy

Bursley Academy, situated in Newcastle-under-Lyme, is a large two-form entry school dedicated to supporting the educational journey of pupils from nursery through to year 6. Bursley distinguishes itself through its commitment to setting the highest standards for all pupils, offering a diverse range of learning activities and opportunities. Recognising the significance of collaborative efforts, Bursley Academy actively engages with parents to ensure the best outcomes for each child, whilst demonstrating the schools core values of Nurture, Inspire, and Achieve in the day-to-day school experience.

The challenges that led the Academy to MarvellousMe

The Academy received criticism from parents who felt communication about their child's learning journey and academic achievements could be improved. This was mainly because all communication had to go through the busy school office, creating a high workload for office staff. The Academy's Facebook page for parents also presented challenges, with late-night enquiries often left without immediate responses, adding to concerns.

Understanding the demanding nature of teachers' jobs, the Academy sought to address this challenge with a simple, quick, and user-friendly communication tool. The school has a diverse and modern demographic (over half of pupils come from blended families) so the parent communication strategy had to cater to every family's needs. The aim was to provide a platform that allowed parents to express feedback through a straightforward 'thumbs-up' system, avoiding complex two-way communication. The solution needed to be easily monitored yet uncomplicated,

aligning with the Academy's commitment to improving communication and engagement between teachers and parents.

The Academy wanted an app that was simple and frictionless, with a comfortable user experience – something that would be easy for both teachers and parents to use.

Encouraged by favourable feedback from another school in the Trust that was already successfully using MarvellousMe, Bursley Academy decided to explore it as a solution to support their goals of improving parent communications.

On the Academy's parent engagement aspirations, Mr Wilkinson, Headteacher at Bursley Academy, said:

"As a school, we wanted something where teachers could feel like they were improving parental relations by sending out more reward badges and more information about what each child was doing in class. From the feedback from another school in the Trust, we could see that MarvellousMe was amazing value for money and ticked all of the right boxes."

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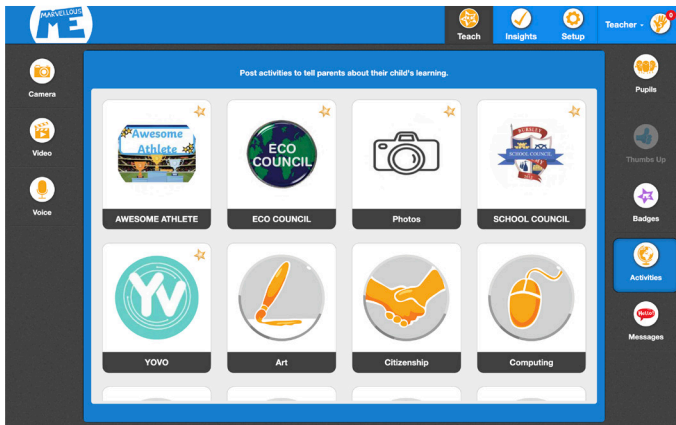
Bursley Academy

Bridging the gap between teacher-parent communications

A marvellous solution that boosts parent engagement

After providing Juniper's team with information and detailed requirements, a dedicated MarvellousMe platform was created for Bursley Academy.

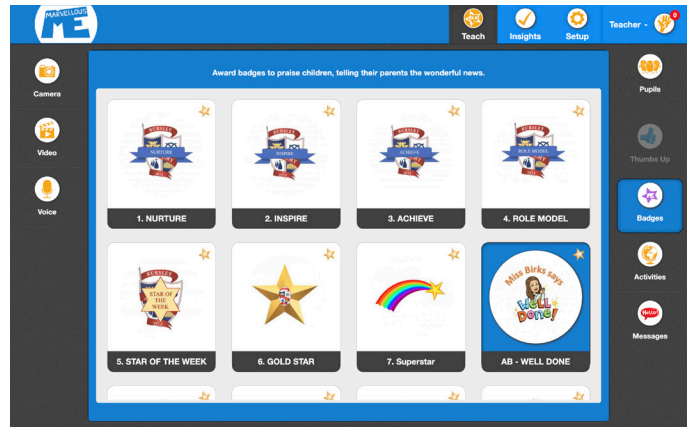
The team designed customised apps, including personalised school badges for subjects like PE, badges for school clubs such as The Eco Council and Young Voices, and individual teacher badges for rewards and recognition. MarvellousMe marked a substantial improvement over the previous system, which included a classroom chart reward system that was difficult to maintain.



Juniper also developed a suite of tools specifically tailored to meet the Academy's needs, introducing features like the 'Star of the Week' communication, which was previously communicated offline, and a new House Points feature to improve upon the old system, which was "hard work."

The Academy had concerns that installing the app might be "too much effort",

especially considering the already busy school office. They were wary of a complicated onboarding process and didn't want a high-maintenance product. Juniper offered an ideal solution, taking care of every detail.



To streamline the onboarding, Juniper ensured the system was set up and ready to use immediately, addressing all the Academy's requirements. The team also proactively prepared launch communications for the school to share with parents through emails and the school's newsletter.

Debbie Verdiani, Office Services Manager at Bursley Academy, played a significant role in the implementation of MarvellousMe and shared her thoughts on the support received:

"The setup by the team made life very easy. The onboarding was smooth and is a testament to how good the setup was that we rarely needed help with support or maintenance. On the rare occasion that we did need assistance, Juniper was quick to respond and help – resolving issues immediately.

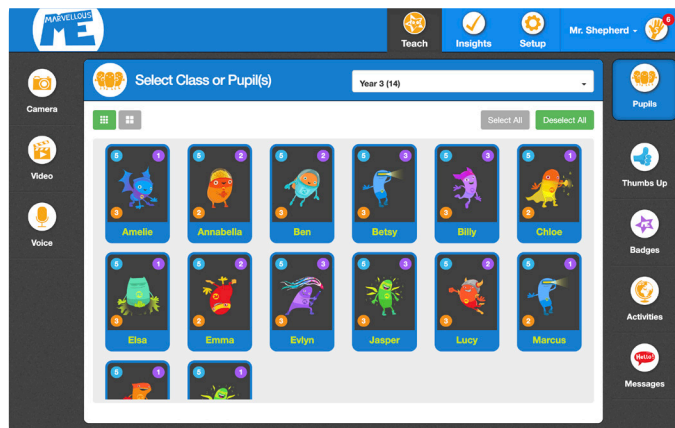
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Another significant benefit of MarvellousMe at Bursley has been its impact on encouraging children to complete their reading assignments. Despite the Academy recognising that staff can be hesitant to adopt new technology, teachers have embraced MarvellousMe with open arms. They can now effortlessly send praises for accomplishments, such as for reading homework, and communicate with parents about the school day.



Debbie comments on the transition to MarvellousMe:

“MarvellousMe brought no resistance from teachers, the implementation was seamless, and the app was so easy to use that our teachers embraced it straightaway. MarvellousMe is simple and does what it’s designed to do without interruption or friction.”

Additionally, the platform has effectively facilitated positive reinforcement for good behaviour and academic success among pupils in the classroom. It is apparent that using personalised badges and introducing house points for pupils has enhanced engagement and classroom motivation,

creating a more modern, digital, and efficient reward and recognition solution.

Senior leaders also use MarvellousMe to boost staff interactions, ensuring each child receives a reward badge at least once every two weeks.

The Academy state that it is evident that communication between teachers and parents has significantly improved, reducing calls to the office regarding P.E. days, clubs, and other matters. Moreover, there has been a noticeable increase in communication between children and parents regarding various positive aspects of school life, and parental engagement with homework and activities has significantly increased since implementing MarvellousMe.

Reflecting on MarvellousMe, Debbie asserts:

“MarvellousMe now literally runs itself. I was heavily involved during the implementation stage, but now, I can take a huge step back. To other schools thinking about using MarvellousMe, I wouldn’t hesitate. I’d say go for it!”

When discussing how she’d highly recommend MarvellousMe to other local schools, Debbie suggested:

“Schools may watch the MarvellousMe demo and think that’s great, but it’s helpful to actually know what it would look like in practice. We welcome neighbouring schools in and around the Stoke-on-Trent area to come visit and see how MarvellousMe works in action.”



**Need help?
Talk to an parent
engagement expert.**

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