



“ For the first time in 12 years, I have the confidence to increase my part-time teaching hours to (almost) full time. This is directly due to Sparx and the enormous time-saving nature of this fantastic classroom and homework product. ”

Philippa Stevens,
Second in Department, St James School

The power
of Sparx in
partnership with

Philippa Stevens

sparx



**“How would we learn
without Sparx?”**

Student,
St James School

Philippa Stevens has recently become the Second in Department for maths at St James School - a mixed secondary school based in Exeter. St James has adopted Sparx Maths into their curriculum and has been working closely with Sparx as a partner school since 2011.



How did you find integrating Sparx into your lessons?

That's easy to answer. I started three and a half years ago and it's quite overwhelming when you come in and you've got this new technology, but Sparx was so user-friendly and intuitive that it was a really smooth transition. Support from Sparx was readily available, but I barely needed it.



How did you find the balance of using Sparx and traditional teaching methods?

I feel very passionately about this actually; Sparx completely supports my teaching and helps with time management, administration, planning, marking and much more. I don't think it will replace teaching at all because it takes a teacher to be able to teach a topic well, despite using technology to support them.



Do you feel that Sparx is supporting you and your students?

Yes. Sparx gives me time, and for a teacher, there is nothing more valuable than time. For students, every single lesson and homework assignment is bespoke. They are able to easily identify where they are struggling and use the video tutorials to understand the topic or seek support when they return to school. Knowing that any questions they find challenging in the classroom will be popped into their homework for them to consolidate is really powerful.



What's the best insight Sparx gives you as a teacher?

The data available in the Teacher Portal is invaluable. I used insights to compare all classes in a year group and monitor their progress against one another. I am a bit of a perfectionist and didn't like the fact that one of my classes wasn't showing as much progress as other students. I monitored the data over a few months and realised the class was cruising; I needed to push them harder so put them onto a more difficult stream of work. Straight away, I saw their progress increase.

Without these insights, they would have continued on a work stream that was too easy, and it is likely that they would have finished year 11 with a grade lower than they were capable of.

Another really important insight is the ability to identify which questions students are finding challenging, and this is often different from what I expect. Where the challenge is consistent for many students, I will revisit the topic in class and adapt how I teach it in future.



How have your students found using the technology?

It's forward-thinking, isn't it? The students love working on devices. People have asked if I think my students will get bored of the technology. My answer is always "no"; we have had decades of using textbooks, so why would students suddenly get bored of working on an iPad?

Also, students love getting to the end of a lesson or set of homework. Seeing all tasks showing as green (complete) really motivates them to work hard.



What is the main impact Sparx has had on you personally?

I have been working part-time for a long time and have never increased my hours because I have a family and didn't want my work to take over my home life. However, Sparx has enabled me to work nearly full time, and has given me the confidence to apply to become second in department. Without Sparx, I would not have been brave enough to take on this new adventure, there is no doubt about it.



What advice would you give to schools considering joining the Sparx community?

Don't hesitate. We have a very happy department. Our wellbeing in maths is really high, and this is down to using Sparx. The time-saving nature of Sparx takes away the stress of planning, marking, analysing your own lessons and much more. It allows time to focus on other aspects of your teaching; I am now more than happy to see and support students in my free period as I am no longer using them for planning. That is unbelievable.

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