



How Wellington College transformed its learning environment with Microsoft Surface and Autopilot





WELLINGTON
COLLEGE

'Between the '80s, when I actually went to school, and 2009, when I started working at Wellington College, nothing had changed. You could go even further back and still see rows of desks looking at the front. Now, thanks to Microsoft Surface, we have different classroom configurations. Everyone's facing each other. Everyone's learning in a new way.' – Tony Whelton, Director of IT Services at Wellington College

Founded in 1853, [Wellington College](#) has a tradition of innovation. In recent years, Tony Whelton and his IT team have brought technology into the classroom, empowering students to learn in a completely new way.

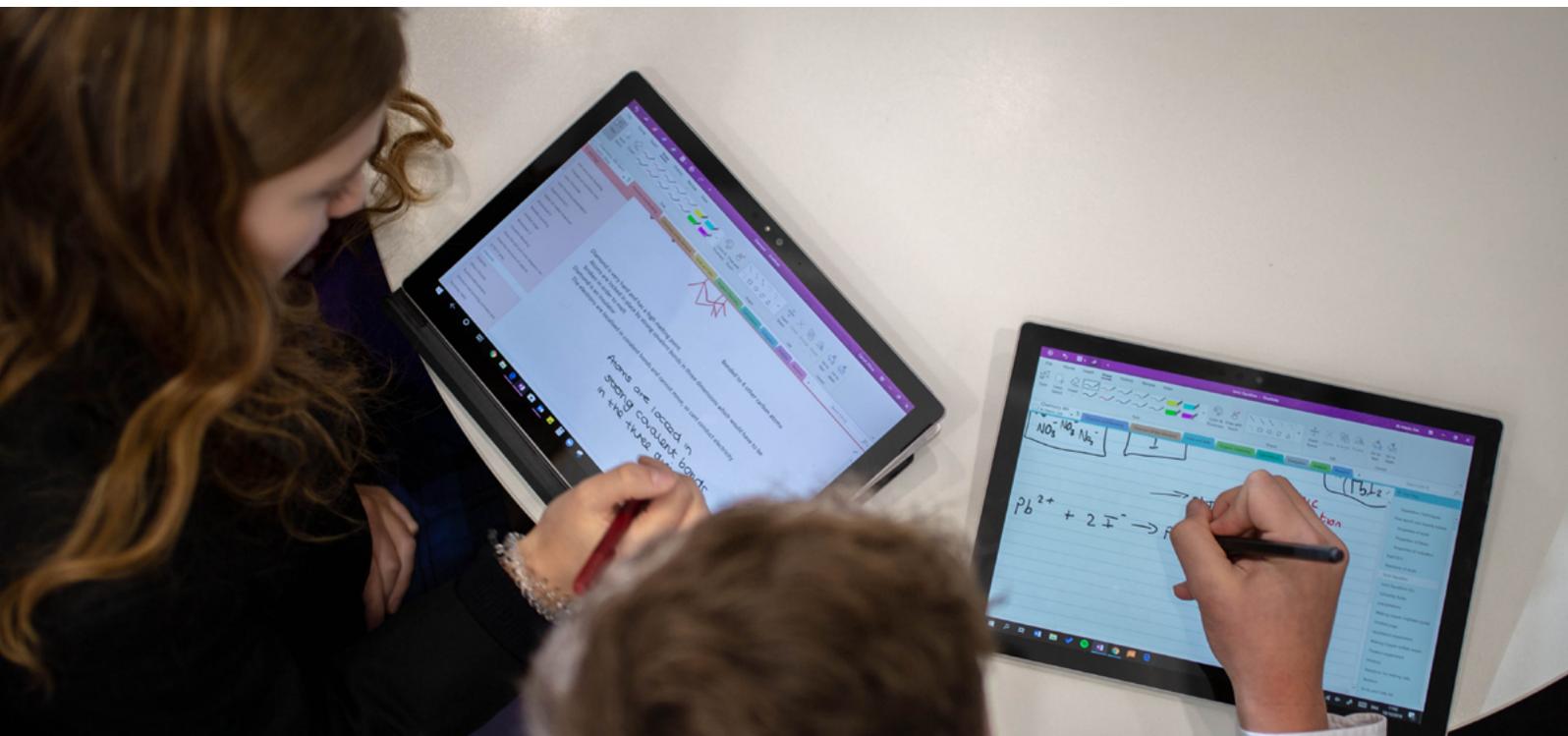
From introducing [OneNote](#) to providing every student and teacher with the latest [Microsoft Surface](#) devices, Wellington College has made education more collaborative, efficient and immersive.

As a [Microsoft Showcase School](#) for the last three years, the school regularly attends educational conferences to share what it has learned with other schools.

Microsoft-driven innovation

The IT team worked with Microsoft to update their hardware regularly, explore new cloud applications and get students set up on their devices faster. At every step, they had a dedicated account manager at Microsoft to provide guidance and to connect the team with key contacts if they had any questions.

'They were already a forward-thinking type of customer, so it was a natural thing for them to progress to our latest technology,' says Steve Beswick, Business Development Director for Education Surface in Europe at Microsoft, and account manager for Wellington College. There is a lot of support within the school for using all aspects of technology to improve learning outcomes.'



IT-led transformation

Tony Whelton heads up the eight-person IT team at Wellington College. He joined forces with members of the teaching staff to champion the benefits of Microsoft technology for every department. Currently, many of these 'digital leaders' are undergoing training to become [Microsoft Innovative Educator Experts](#) (MIE Experts).

To ensure the decision-making process was a school-wide effort, the IT team consulted student and teacher groups and ran regular feedback surveys.

Bring your own device didn't work well

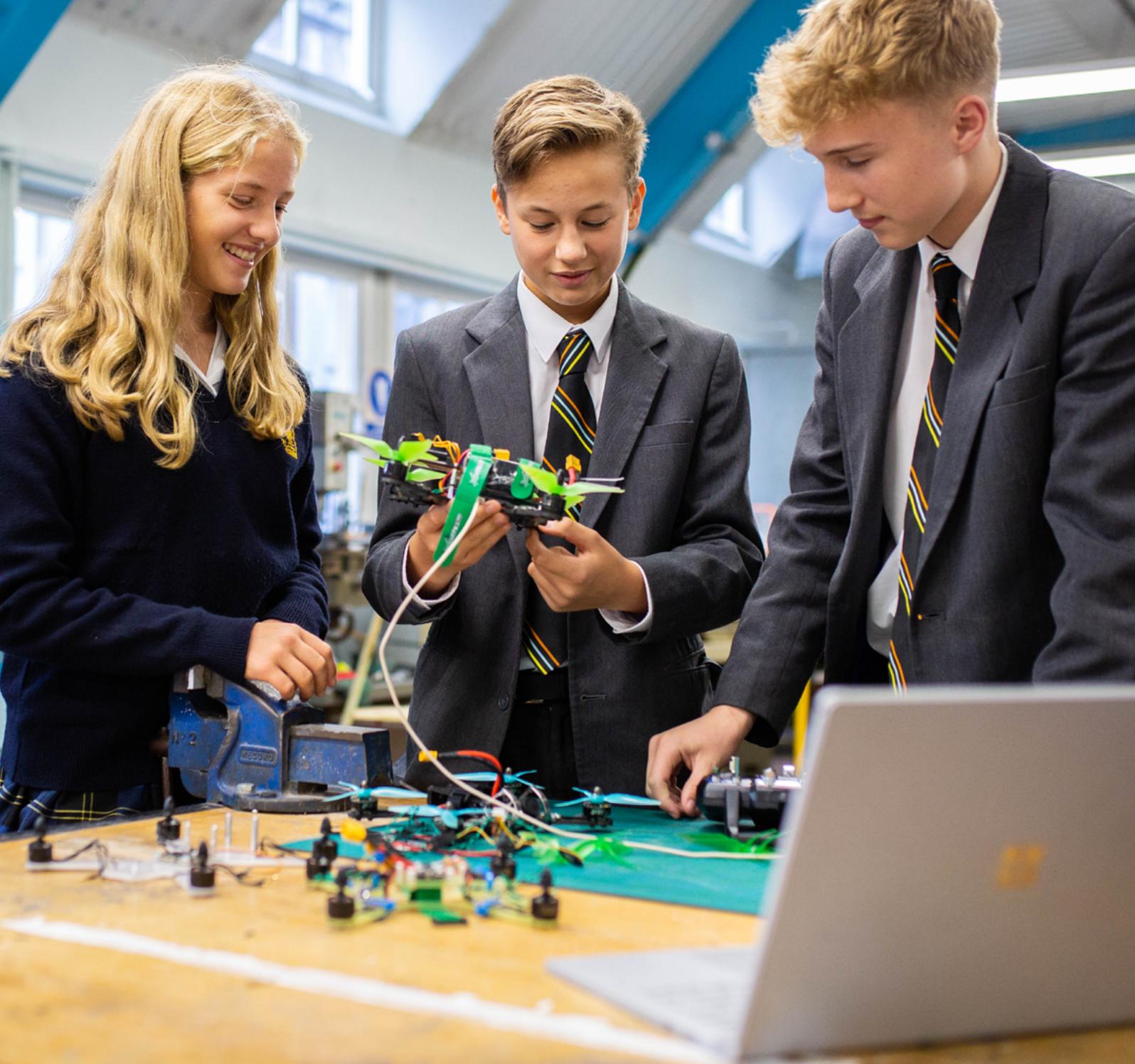
To start with, every classroom had a smart board and nearly all the computers in the college were traditional desktop PCs. Everything was plugged into the walls. This immobile solution was inflexible and made everyday classroom interactions less natural. Worse, on a 400-acre campus, it was time-consuming for IT staff to provide desk-side support.

So, starting in 2011, Tony's IT team introduced a bring-your-own-device (BYOD) approach, alongside digital inking and cloud applications like Microsoft OneNote. While this opened up the classrooms, it brought a whole host of issues. Different devices and different interfaces meant some applications wouldn't work, leaving the teacher as the first line of support, wasting time in the classroom and slowing adoption of the new technology.

Foundations for change

It became clear that standardisation was the only way forward.

By 2015, everyone was running the same operating system (today, Windows 10), and the school brought in a choose-your-own-device (CYOD) policy. Students were able to choose between Surface, Lenovo and Dell devices. With a **90 percent** adoption rate, Surface devices were the clear winner. All teachers were using a Surface Pro 3 and students loved that they could have the same device as the teachers.



The Microsoft solution

Standardising with Surface

Every student and teacher at Wellington College now has a Surface device. The school is offering the 2019-2020 intake a choice between the [Surface Pro 6](#) and the [Surface Book 2](#), which both benefit from:

- The best expression of Office 365, so students can make the most of these tools to take notes, write essays and collaborate on projects;
- A large screen and high-performance inking technology, making it a natural experience for students and teachers to interact with their devices,
- And, the two-in-one functionality of a slate and laptop, which suits different ways of working for different subjects.

Self-service device configuration

Back in 2015, new computers had to be imaged individually, meaning that the IT team had to install and configure the operating system and software on each machine, one by one. It was so laborious that the IT team had to hire extra resources during the summer holiday.

Also, because the IT department had already unboxed the computers to set them up, students didn't feel like they were getting their own new computer.

To overcome these problems, in 2016 the IT team deployed full integration with Azure Active Directory (Azure AD), with all the associated policies and profiles. This put the configuration in the hands of the student, who would receive a box-fresh experience with their new computer. However, the process still took up to an hour, and some students didn't complete the process for various reasons.

2017 was the real game-changer. The goal was to make the setup process simpler, faster and more automated. By using Microsoft [Intune](#), a mobile device management platform (MDM), the IT team were able to reduce the installation time to just 18 minutes. The IT Help Desk saw a huge drop in support queries as well, freeing up more time for the IT department.

Engage Autopilot

Still, there was an opportunity to go a step further. In 2018, Wellington College introduced Microsoft [Autopilot](#).

The Autopilot process works with the MDM platform. It offers an automated way to deploy, reset and repurpose devices without any intervention from the IT team at all. This reduced the installation time for each new Surface down to just six or seven minutes, with all apps and functions completely ready for the first day of classes.





Not only that, but devices can be remotely updated, wiped or reconfigured, protecting user data from risk and saving huge amounts of IT time.

How it works:

1. When a school buys a device through a Microsoft reseller, they receive a Microsoft Excel file with the serial numbers of the machines they have bought.
2. The reseller then uploads these IDs into Azure Active Directory.
3. When the user first connects to any Wi-Fi, in the school or elsewhere, they sign in with their school email address.
4. This identifies the required machine in the cloud and kicks off Intune's deployment and security process, setting up the machine automatically.

Everything in the cloud

As student files are stored in OneDrive and users can access virtual applications in the cloud, hosted on VDI servers, there is no need for an expensive, high-spec version of the Surface devices. This helped the school to cut hardware purchase costs without sacrificing performance, even with demanding applications like Adobe Creative Suite.

The IT team created a customised dashboard for the devices so students and teachers can access all the apps, tools and information they need in a couple of clicks.

In addition, in order to allow students to use their Surface devices to play games, browse the internet and so on, it was essential to keep the devices secure and protected against malware. Tony's IT team did this using Microsoft Advanced Threat Protection. This means students get the best of both worlds: an advanced learning platform and a great computer for personal use.

The benefits of change

IT team benefits

There is a reduced time-burden on IT, with a streamlined IT induction day at the start of term and fewer support requests more generally. When things do go wrong, students bring devices in to be repaired via Surface Complete, and receive a loan device, so there are no more on-location repairs. Updates can be managed on campus and off-site and can be rolled out in groups.

Iterative deployment of services meant that training was a natural evolution of skills. A small team of eight people manage the entire process without having to hire in support. And, the school enjoyed further cost-savings on IT management, servers and other hardware by moving to the cloud and subscription models.

Finally, the IT team can experience stress-free summer holidays!

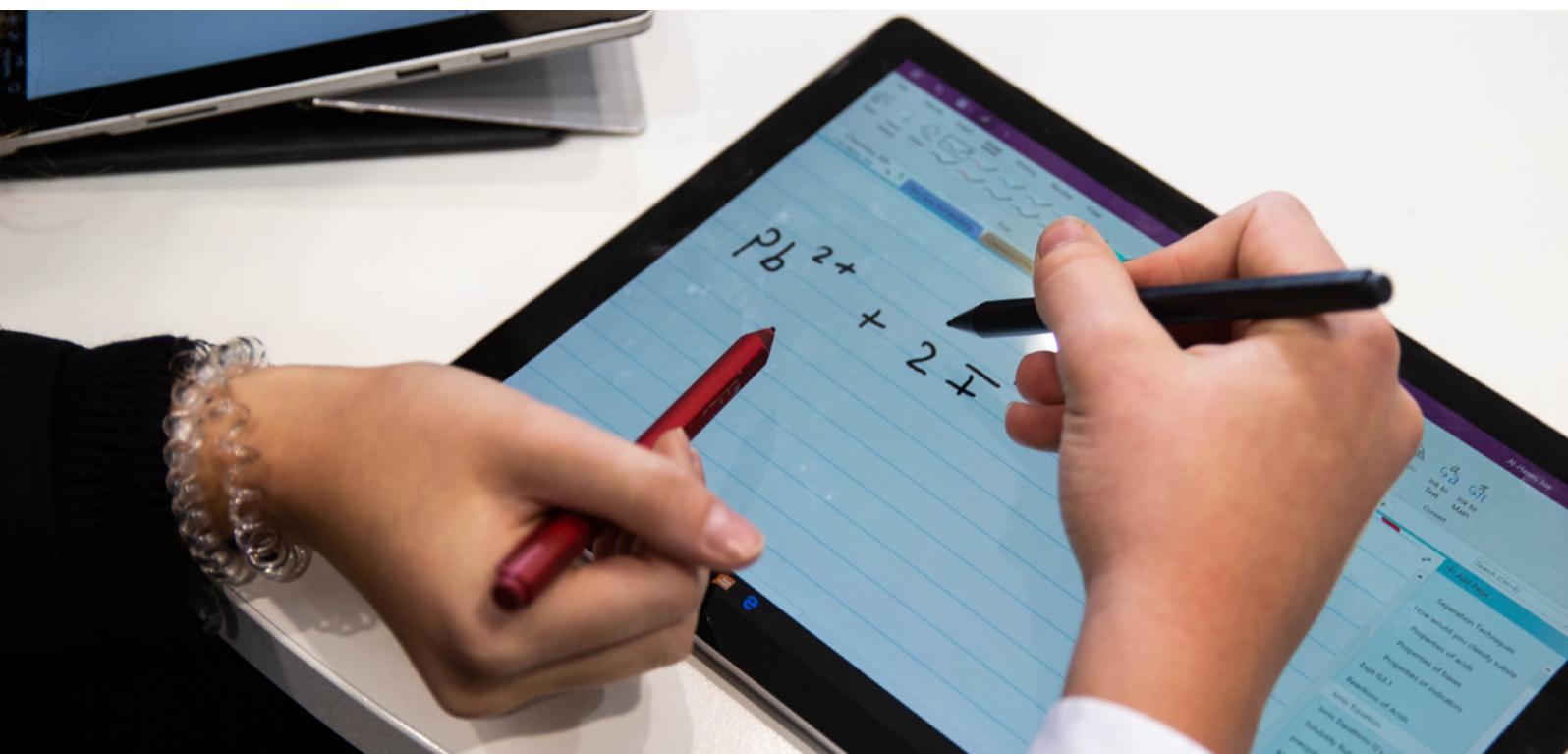
Teacher benefits

Thanks to Microsoft technology, teachers have transformed the way they teach. They can see their student's work on their own devices or project it onto a larger display, using the Microsoft wireless display functionality.

By using the same handheld devices as their students, they can create a collaborative, flexible learning experience. No more 'chalk and talk'.

Firewalls set up by the IT team mean entertainment functionality is restricted, so learning takes place in a distraction-free environment. Students are doing their work faster, and teachers can mark it more quickly as well.

'The staff have become so used to it that if they move onto different schools, they try to get their IT departments to do the same. Then I get contacted by these other schools. I'm always spreading the good news.' – Tony Whelton, Director of IT Services





Student benefits

Students get a brand-new Surface Pro 6 or Surface Book, a Type Cover and Surface Pen stylus, and the shiny cellophane-wrapped out-of-the-box experience.

Setup takes just six or seven minutes and is very easy to do. All devices are managed to comply with safeguarding requirements, and Wellington College uses biometric security with Azure AD to ensure devices are as safe as possible.

These fully mobile devices have excellent connectivity, so they can do work anywhere, inside and outside the classroom.

On a day-to-day basis, this technology just makes life easier. The inking functionality combined with a large screen means that it's intuitive to use. The devices are personal to them and can be used for work as well as entertainment and gaming.

The future

'I've picked up on new things at various Microsoft Ignite events,' says Tony Whelton, Director of IT Services. 'The Take a Test functionality is on the roadmap for next year, for example. And, one of our goals is to get the deployment phase down to under five minutes. I'm confident we can do it.'

Students learn best through collaboration. IT teams deliver transformative results in the same way.

To help your school bring technology into the classroom, it's time to take action. Contact your Microsoft partner, attend a Microsoft event or even reach out to other pioneering schools to find out more.

If you're ready to take the next step, read this guide:

[Get started with Autopilot ->](#)

