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Education Specialist

Case study

Bertha Park High School: Building Technology into Educational Foundations

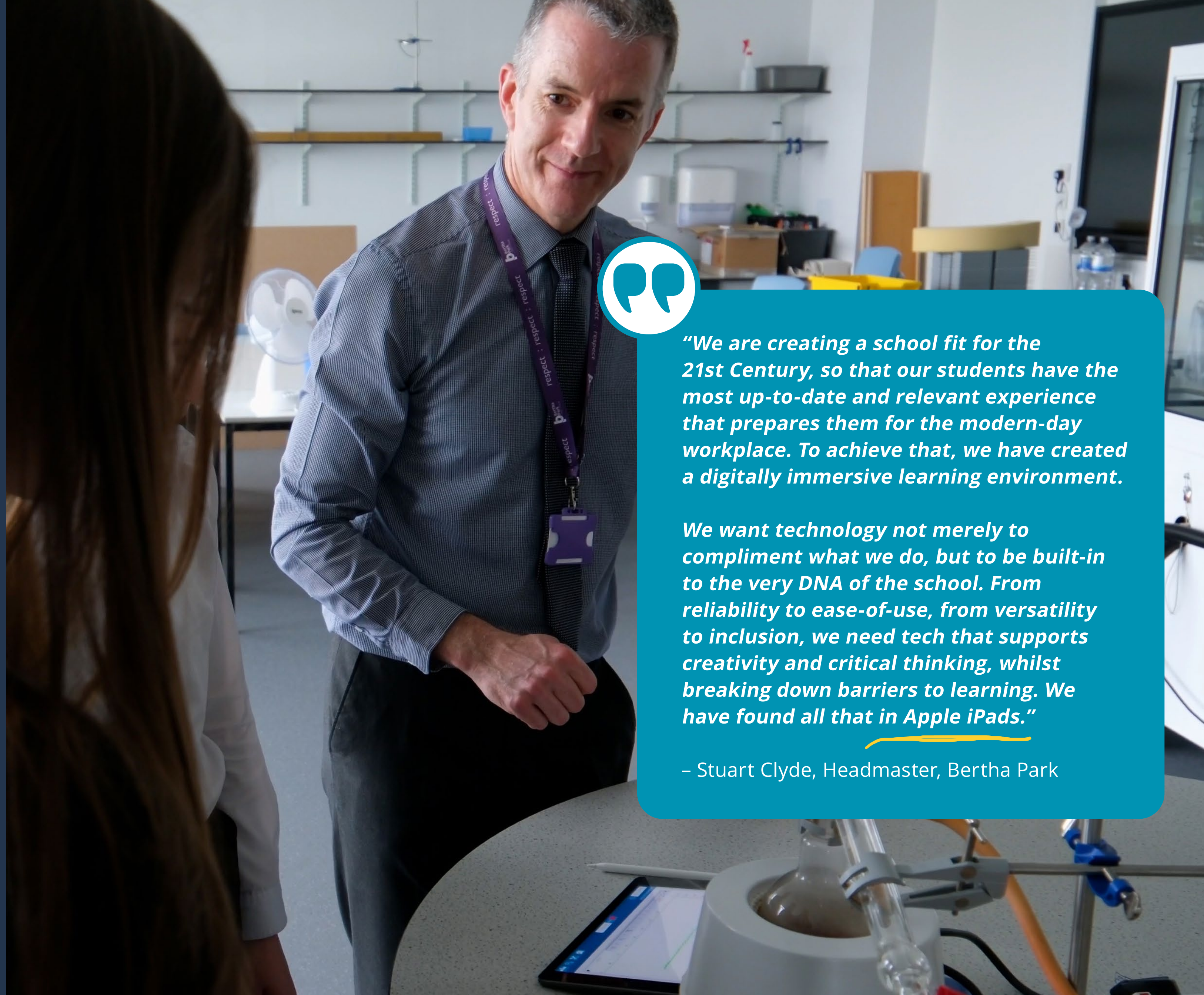


A School with a Mission

In 2019, as a new school serving a new community, Bertha Park High School in Perth, Scotland, wasn't content with simply opening its doors – it aimed to rethink the place of technology in education. Driven by the belief in its capacity to unlock the potential of its students, the school embarked on a mission to find the perfect tools to empower students and teachers alike.

A Vision Without Concessions

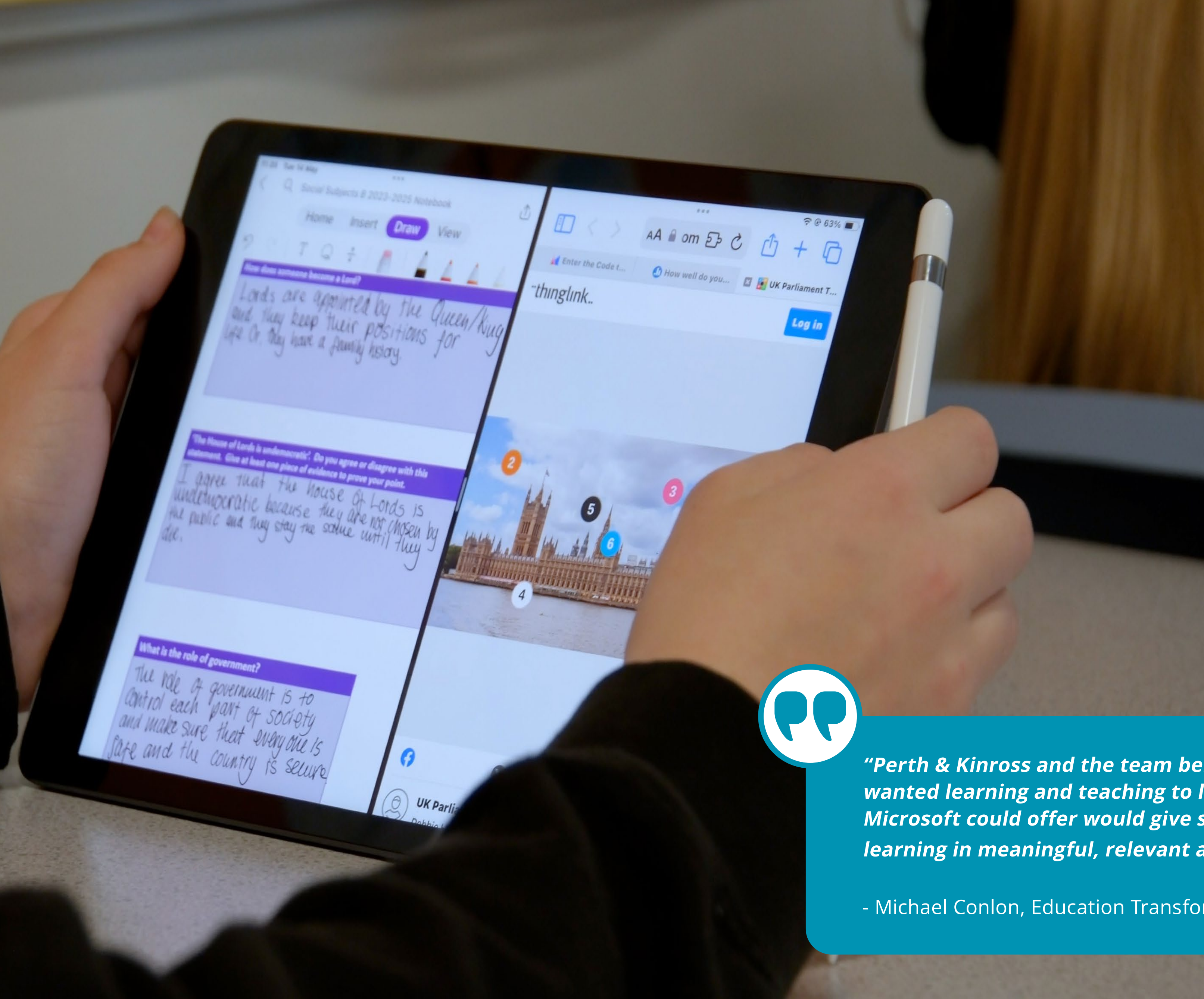
Bertha Park's Headteacher, Stuart Clyde, didn't settle for compromises. He looked for technology that was more than just functional; it needed to spark creativity, invite collaboration, and bridge the gap between the classroom and the ever-evolving workplaces of tomorrow. User-friendliness and accessibility weren't just buzzwords – they were fundamental to driving learning every day.



***“We are creating a school fit for the 21st Century, so that our students have the most up-to-date and relevant experience that prepares them for the modern-day workplace. To achieve that, we have created a digitally immersive learning environment.*”**

We want technology not merely to compliment what we do, but to be built-in to the very DNA of the school. From reliability to ease-of-use, from versatility to inclusion, we need tech that supports creativity and critical thinking, whilst breaking down barriers to learning. We have found all that in Apple iPads.”

– Stuart Clyde, Headmaster, Bertha Park



XMA and Bertha Park, fuelled by iPad and Microsoft 365

Building on a strong, well-established relationship with XMA, Bertha Park took the first steps on their edtech journey. XMA's mission was clear – provide stella procurement, training, and consultancy services. XMA's guidance gave them the space to explore the art of the possible, ultimately landing on the winning combination of Apple iPads and Microsoft 365. Microsoft 365 offered the familiarity students would need in the workforce, while the iPad burst with creative power, endless versatility, and inclusive tools designed to level the playing field and bridge the digital divide.

An excellent example of this is Microsoft OneNote. Already a versatile piece of note-taking software, when paired with the Apple Pencil and the iPad camera, it becomes a truly digital jotter – a canvas to capture learning across a whole school day.



“Perth & Kinross and the team behind Bertha Park took great care in defining what they wanted learning and teaching to look like. They understood that utilising the best iPad and Microsoft could offer would give students and teachers the broadest opportunities to shape learning in meaningful, relevant and engaging ways.”

- Michael Conlon, Education Transformation Consultant, XMA

Apple?



How Microsoft Office 365 is optimised for iPad:



Touchscreen-Friendly Interface:

The entire Office suite (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, etc.) is redesigned to work effortlessly with the iPad touchscreen. Menus, toolbars, and navigation are intuitive for finger-based input.

redesigned?



Accessibility:

The visionary set of accessibility features built into the iPad is boosted by Microsoft tools for inclusion, like Immersive Reader, that work across its suite of applications.



Apple Pencil Support:

Take handwritten notes, annotate documents, and draw with precision in Word, OneNote, and PowerPoint, leveraging the pressure sensitivity of the Apple Pencil.



Training began in May 2019, with XMA Education Transformation Consultant, Michael Conlon providing guidance on how to maximise both the use of iPad and Microsoft 365 Apps. Teachers weren't simply asked to rewrite previous lesson plans and reuse old templates; they were inspired to reimagine lessons, weaving iPad capabilities and Microsoft's software into the very foundation of their teaching styles. As the countdown to the end of school holidays was ticking down, the initial iPad rollout was a key milestone, putting 250 devices - each paired with an Apple Pencil - into the hands of students ready to learn.



“Planning for learning using iPads is completely different, but so much better. My lessons naturally include research opportunities and alternative work options for pupils, allowing me to better meet their needs. Having iPads available helps me to build in both support for those who need it to achieve highly, and for those who require further challenge. It is common for me to ask pupils to work collaboratively on tasks using shared documents, live response apps on the whiteboard or even in the collaboration space on Microsoft OneNote. Retrieval practice and AiFL are so easy to build into every lesson. Put simply - I can't imagine teaching without iPads in the hands of every pupil - it is truly transformational and worth every minute of extra effort to learn these new skills.”

– Educator, Bertha Park





Bertha Park was Prepared for the Unexpected

The true test of Bertha Park's bold vision came with the unprecedented challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic. Yet, they didn't just weather the storm; they thrived. Because technology was already ingrained in their learning model, the transition to remote instruction was seamless.

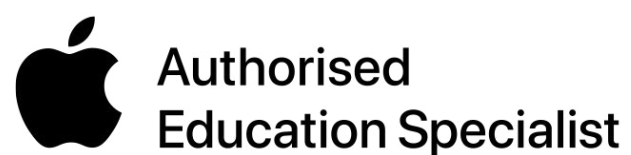


“Having the school’s learning organised around the Microsoft Office 365 suite was crucial in establishing our remote learning model. The students were able to transfer almost seamlessly into this way of working as it was already the way we did things. It has allowed us to have a legacy of facilitating working out of school that we still utilise today.”

– Educator, Bertha Park

This resilience has fuelled Bertha Park’s rise to the pinnacle of educational innovation. Their commitment has earned them the rare dual distinction of being both a Microsoft Flagship School and an Apple Distinguished School – the first in the UK to hold both titles.





A Long-Lasting Partnership

XMA is more than just a technology provider for Bertha Park High School; we are partners in progress. Together, we continue to push the boundaries of what modern education can be. Bertha Park's story is proof that when schools embrace technology, students and teachers gain the skills and confidence to shape it.



"Using my iPad has allowed me to present my work in unique and different ways. I feel I have developed my skills in using film and media to demonstrate what I have learned. I have discovered that working this way is one of my greatest passions, so I now know that this is what I want to do as a career."

– Robert Jack, S4 Pupil, Bertha Park



Discover more watch the video



If your institution is ready to ignite a passion for learning fuelled by transformative technology, **contact XMA today.**

Explore XMA and Apple in education