

Case Study

Leading Academy Trust adds capacity to school's tutoring programme through online, instant-access support.



Key takeaways and results

"askOLA delivers youngsters an immediate, evidence-based blend of academic and mental health support on youngsters' terms. There has been a great response and our students are feeling empowered."

Sir Mark Grundy

CEO Shireland Collegiate Academy Trust

Across the country, our schools have been faced with a workload issue compounded by a national teaching shortage. To combat this, Shireland Collegiate Academy Trust worked with the experienced team at askOLA to develop a high dosage tutoring system, powered by qualified teachers and tutors to respond to the academic, pastoral and wellbeing needs of students during out-of-school hours.

The average effect of tutoring programmes on academic achievement is larger than roughly 85% of other academic interventions.

askOLA was initially introduced to a small cohort of students within a large multi academy trust;

- **The pilot saw 353 students using askOLA in the first 4 weeks of use resulting in an extra 1500 hours of learning**
- **Average time spent per student: 2.1 hours**
- **91% return rate for students**
- **92% overall satisfaction rating**

askOLA found an immediate need for online tutoring services. Support needs to be available to students on-demand and outside of school hours.

- **Beyond expected engagement immediately after school and in homework clubs, 7.30pm is the most popular time for students to use the platform and chat to our tutors**
- **Student driven engagement is higher on a Saturday than on a Monday, Tuesday, or Friday.**

The problem

The problem is ultimately a simple one.

Traditional tutoring is not meeting the needs of 85% of pupils.

Department for Education figures reveal that only 302,000 pupils started a tutoring course during the last autumn term – just 15 per cent of the expected target for the year.

There are concerns existing tutoring systems have not been working where they are needed most – in the areas where schools suffered the greatest disruption due to the pandemic.

The leaders of Shireland Collegiate Academy Trust set out to find an alternative academic and wellbeing support system that would serve all members of their highly diverse student community.

The trust in numbers



4,664

Learners



901

Staff



5

Primary
academies



4

Secondary
academies



2

Nurseries

The solution

**A simple problem doesn't need a complex response, it needs a modern one.
A modern alternative fit for the students that need it most.**



Our study has found that the more freedom and flexibility you give to young people to access tutoring, the greater the success. askOLA is a responsive, online tutoring and support network that provides homework help, writing feedback, and study support on-demand, beyond school hours.

Our Online Learning Assistants (OLAs) are available from 9am – 9pm, 7 days a week.

OLAs provide real-time, expert-level coaching and support to students in and outside of school;

- **OLAs add capacity to schools, reducing teacher workload and supporting the 'whole child' (from both a learning and wellbeing perspective).**
- **Where needed, students can connect with mental health therapists for specialised support.**
- **The platform leverages a High-Dosage Support model to optimise learning outcomes for students, at an accelerated student-driven pace whilst at the same time balancing pupil mental wellbeing.**
- **Student query data is made available to teachers and school leaders so that in-class learning can build further upon out-of-school engagements.**

The impact

"Following conversations with our students, it's the integrity of the answers that remains key to the service's success. They felt it was really unfair to ask families to know about difficult concepts, so one of the elements they liked about the online learning system was that the OLAs were subject specialists"

**Louise O'Gorman
KS3 Teacher**

askOLA : Today's students want instant support from subject specialists.

Sir Mark Grundy, CEO of Shireland Collegiate Academy Trust, is passionate about ensuring that all pupils are given access to an exceptional education. Sir Mark was knighted in 2006 for his services to education and technology in the UK; his emphasis on excellence is something that he drives through all schools within the Trust to create exceptional outcomes for all.

Here, he explains the need for the askOLA online student support service and shares initial student reaction from within his trust.

Post-pandemic, we are faced with a workload issue compounded by a national teaching shortage. One of the problems there is with a number of the national programs is that whilst they may have added some capacity, they add a lot of complexity. Whereas the askOLA structure is delivered to the students and chosen by the students. They drive their own learning; you take that workload issue away.

Undoubtedly, much of the success is down to the ease at which schools become part of the askOLA community.

Students within SCAT were onboarded within moments through simple, single sign-on.

Key to school engagement with the service;

- **Ease of implementation**
- **Rapid school onboarding: 10-minute process**
- **Instant use for students**
- **Recommended and supported through teacher enthusiasm**

"With askOLA we experienced maximum capacity with minimum complexity"



Wellbeing support

"This partnership has unlocked a set of resources that we've never been able to get to."

Sir Mark Grundy

CEO Shireland Collegiate Academy Trust

askOLA have partnered with mental health and wellbeing experts, Kooth

One of the fundamental components of askOLA, is the well thought out balance between academic support and mental health work. Kooth is an organization that supports our young people in secondary schools. They have been established and working with students across the country for a number of years, but previously schools may not have had direct access to the resources that the Kooth advisors used with the students. Now, through the askOLA partnership, we've managed to unlock sets of resources we've never been able to get to.

"This isn't just about an online solution that brings online assistance to youngsters. There is an evidence-based approach to mental health support and resilience in the background of this that has thousands of really, really well thought through and clinically tested resources." - Sir Mark Grundy



askOLA have partnered with mental health and wellbeing experts



Results



The impact of askOLA in schools has exceeded expectations. It quickly became apparent that school-led and student-driven tutoring was the only way forward to accelerate progress across the trust. Students simply log on to askOLA's interactive platform and connect instantly with a tutor via a live chat function that allows them to seek school and homework help, verbal feedback, and study support in their chosen subject area. Sessions can last for a few minutes or several hours, depending on the needs of the student.

- **The initial small pilot of 353 students rapidly expanded to a Trust-wide provision**
- **From September 2022 over 3,000 students in the trust will have access to askOLA**
- **Existing students reported an increased sense of wellness**
- **Students rated support from askOLA highly: 4.8/5 would recommend**

Opportunities for learning

2,500+
learning moments

1,000+
Conversations

School-led, student
initiated learning
extended by
750+ hours

askola™

askOLA is available to parents and schools in the U.K. We support children ages 11-18+ by providing instant access to specialist Online Learning Assistants (OLAs) who tutor, coach and support with learning and wellbeing 9am to 9pm, 7-days a week.

We deliver instant help on-demand without the need to wait for an appointment. Our OLAs provide help with English, maths, science and wellbeing at a fixed monthly cost. Students are supported by vetted subject specialists and protected by a safe and monitored online environment.

www.askola.io
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Book a Demo