

## Touch typing: one of the pillars of digital literacy

*Giles Bennett is Deputy Head and Director of Innovation at St Paul's Girls' School in West London. The school took first and second place in the 2023 KAZ Touch Typing Tournament. Here he explains why he has such a high regard for the software.*

In about 1997, my late father bought a CD-ROM from a discount bin at Makro. It was KAZ - Learn To Touch Type in 90 Minutes (PC). At that time, I was a teenager who loved everything to do with computers, so I tried it out and sure enough, within 90 minutes I could touch type. I was convinced!

When I became a teacher, I thought I would like to recreate that same enthusiasm for touch typing in my learners, using the same platform if possible. I was delighted to find a web version of KAZ with options such as audio guidance, different fonts and colour schemes to personalise it for neurodiverse students. We have students with a wide range of SEND (from dyslexia to visual impairment), all of whom are fully supported by the KAZ platform, with a wide range of adaptations embedded within the product.

It might seem odd to focus on touch typing with all the newer technologies we have today. As exciting as voice dictation and other such technologies are, they aren't always perfect. Voice recognition isn't particularly good at dealing with regional dialects and accents. It is not practicable in a traditional working environment, in an office or a school classroom because of the background noise. Touch typing will be a core skill for decades: it is one of the building blocks of digital competence.

### Rolling out KAZ

We bought a whole school licence and launched KAZ in the second half of the spring term in 2023 with a series of assemblies, looking at note taking, metacognition and the pros and cons of different learning techniques. Then we let our 800 students loose on the software, encouraging them to use tutor time to practise their skills. This coincided with the KAZ Touch Typing Tournament. Our students like a challenge and



a chance to test their skills so, even though we were only just starting with KAZ, we entered.

We were delighted to find we were placed first and second in the competition. Our prize was a year's free subscription to KAZ for the school. We had already budgeted for a second year's licence so we have been able to buy a subscription for the Hammersmith Academy, one of the other schools in the West London Partnership.

### **Not just for students**

KAZ is so effective that we decided to offer it as an additional staff benefit and have rolled it out for all staff including our operations and administrative staff. Now every single person employed by Saint Paul's Girls School, including the gardeners and cleaners has access to KAZ.

It benefits them and it benefits us. It is an incredibly cost effective way of providing longitudinal CPD. Our employees learn a new skill and develop their digital literacy, and at the institutional level, we benefit from improved efficiency and digital confidence. We live in an increasingly digital society and touch typing absolutely has its place as a great enabler. It is a tool that can make all other learning that we want to achieve just that little bit easier.

St Paul's Girls' School - <https://spgs.org/>

KAZ - <https://kaz-type.com/>