

Case Study



Churchmead Secondary School Overview

Churchmead Secondary is a Church of England School for mixed 11-16 year olds in Datchet Berkshire. Their telephone system was out-dated, limited functionally and gradually dying, but like many schools with tight budgets the money was just not there to upgrade, at least whilst the system kept working!

iCS had contacted the school in September 2019 and was invited to provide a costing for an upgrade. We understood the budget was not yet available, but also appreciate the benefits of building strong relationships with our clients. We kept in touch, and 12 months later received a call to say the system was failing and needed replacing in the coming weeks. After providing a refreshed cost iCS successfully won the bid for the work.

Mandeep Lalli, I.T. Manager at the school explains "Out of everyone, iCS had a product that really suited the education sector. Having seen several pitches, it was obvious that every other supplier was trying to push us 'kit' that we just didn't need. John, on the other hand, was more concerned about improving our processes. He didn't try 'the

hard sell'. In fact, at one point, he told us not to waste our money on something that we would have happily bought. And he was right, we didn't need it. John's pitch was brilliant. He really understood the school system and what we needed to make our processes better. It was hands down the best proposal."

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**Mandeep Lalli, I.T. Manager
at Churchmead Secondary School**

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The Solution

Due to the previous supplier contract the project was delivered in two parts: the initial system replacement and then the migration of ISDN lines a few months later. We connected the existing ISDN lines and new IP lines, routing their outbound call over IP. This provided immediate call cost savings until the lines and calls contract ended with the incumbent supplier.

iCS recommended a Splicecom SV1000 system with Yealink IP handsets. Whilst this system can be cloud or on site, after careful cost analysis the on premise system was recommended.

The system comes with a flexible auto-attendant voicemail, call logging and call recording as well as school specific features such as staff lockdown features, paging to all IP handsets and virtual extensions.

Because of the previous system failure, the new system required rapid installation in term time, with the 'go live' scheduled for 5.30 p.m. after the school had shut. iCS normally work in schools during the holidays to ensure any fault finding and corrective actions can be undertaken without disruption. However, on this occasion we ensured the new system was live with an engineer on site to assist when staff arrived the following morning. This was followed with a training day for staff a few days after the installation was complete.

Mandeep was delighted with the iCS approach and commented "The iCS installers were fantastic. I think they were on site for about three days. While they were busy doing their jobs, they were constantly interrupted by staff members asking for help. They were extremely helpful and patient – taking time to help and train staff. Not only did iCS install our system during the pandemic, which brought its own logistical issues, but we were still tied into our previous contract and the incumbent suppliers – whose product was expensive and no longer fit for purpose were making it very hard for us to leave."

The Result

The new system gives the school increased efficiency, extra functionality, and a lower monthly recurring cost. One feature they love is that the support desk at iCS is open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. meaning faults or tickets can be raised early and are cleared later when the school is shut.

Mandeep is pleased with the outcome too and says "Everyone loves our new system. It's made our lives so much easier and more efficient. Two of the features that have made a great difference are the emailed voicemails and the ability to broadcast to every handset. This has been designed for lockdown scenarios which, luckily, we've not needed but we have used it as a quick and easy way of communicating to everyone at once."

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