

Nomis telephony solution proves a different class



Whitegrove Primary School, in Warfield, Bracknell, is a modern, purpose-built school, designed to meet local expansion needs. Opening in January 1997, with space for 210 pupils, it has quickly expanded, to around 500 pupils. The successful expansion has resulted in increased pressure on the existing communications infrastructure. A new telephone system that helped improve internal communications and provide greater flexibility and efficiency was required.

The Whitegrove management team, needed a key supplier who could deliver on their requirements and project manage the installation, whilst providing high levels of after-sales service and support. After assessing various propositions and potential suppliers, they chose to work with Nomis Connections, from Guildford, who have a track record of supplying schools throughout Southern England.

In conjunction with the Whitegrove management team, Nomis identified several key requirements that needed to be met:

- Centralised switchboard operation – with capability of handling a variety of functions simultaneously, including call handling, e.g. taking inbound queries, forwarding calls and messages etc, and broadcasting important information.
- Improved capacity – it was essential that lost calls were kept to a minimum or eradicated altogether.
- School database integration with telephony to provide efficiency and saving time – it was important that office staff could manage calls and identify callers efficiently.
- Voicemail and Auto Attendant for out of hours and operator overflow – so that staff and personnel could be accessed, report in sick or have messages left for them, at any time of day and that office staff could

Facts & Figures

The Customer

- Whitegrove Primary School, Warfield, Berkshire

The Solution

- Aastra IntelliGate Phone System – 30 Extensions
- Auto Attendant for peak times
- Voicemail for key staff
- Integration with Schools' SIMS database
- Door phone integration

The Benefits

- All calls handled quickly and efficiently through Auto Attendant management
- Each classroom is easily and quickly contactable
- Voicemail provides efficient messaging
- School database integrated with Microsoft Outlook for accuracy and efficiency
- Improved on-site system management control

be free from telephone calls at peak times.

- Visitor response and site security – it was imperative to improve upon the current system, whereby the entry phone could be answered easily from any office handset.
- Future-proof flexibility – ensuring that systems have the capability to service any conceivable future requirement giving the system long-term cost-efficiency.

Nomis recommended the IntelliGate PBX phone system, manufactured by Aastra Telecom and configured with the following features:

- 25 digital Office phone extensions, including one in each classroom
- Voicemail and Auto Attendant
- Microsoft Outlook integration with SIMS (school database)
- AIMS system management and remote system support software

Auto Attendant provides call management at peak times

The provision of Auto Attendant allows the office staff the time and flexibility to deal with face-to-face queries at peak times, (8.30 to 9.30 am). A series of voicemail prompts and options have recently gone live and now handle all calls, at these times. These offer the caller the option to leave messages, as well as receive information from pre-recorded messages.

Improved coverage through increased number of extensions

Previously the school had a small number of basic telephones, situated mainly in the administration areas. Installing extensions for key management staff, together with a wall-mounted phone in each classroom, ensures increased coverage, improved communications and rapid response to any issues that arise. Classroom extensions have pre-set call barring, which is simply over-ridden by use of a pass code. Co-ordination of meetings is now much easier, as is communication with staff on breaks or between classes, as well as external contacts.

Improved security and access efficiency

Previously the entry-phone could only be answered and the door released, from one telephone. By providing the facility to answer the entry-phone from a number of extensions, and be able to activate the door release from several locations, ensures that callers can be vetted and allowed access much more effectively.

SIMS integration with telephony and Microsoft Outlook

The school has a rapidly expanding database of information (SIMS), which it was felt important to integrate into the new system. Now, a fully integrated telephony and database system, using Microsoft Outlook, enables efficient handling of calls, as well as providing valuable management information and improved database updating.

Excellent Support Services using AIMS software

A feature of the Aastra system is the use of AIMS software, which enables the provider to give technical support, as well as fault finding and repair capability remotely. This allows for less intrusive and much quicker fault diagnosis and repair by Nomis Connections.

Chris Dyson, IT Manager, Whitegrove School, says of the new system:

"Two months ago, Whitegrove had a telephone system with phones in the admin office and a few other places and the door entry system was on a single phone. Now we have 25 phones, voice mail to handle calls automatically during our very busy periods, door entry that can be answered and released from more than one phone and software that allows staff to dial out not only from the phone system directory but also from Outlook Contacts! The next phase is to provide the same facility through SIMS. We now have a communications system we are confident can take us forward for many years."

Simon Lincoln, Managing Director, Nomis Connections Ltd, says of the new system:

"I am very happy that Nomis Connections have been able to work with Whitegrove School. From the very first meeting we have been able to guide the school through a potential technology versus benefits minefield and finalised this with a solution that has vastly improved communications internally and externally. The Aastra system provides them with a modern but simple solution to their current needs, but with the potential to grow with future requirements"

A summary of the benefits:

- Key staff and all classrooms within the school have their own extensions
- Entry security has been improved and can now easily be controlled from several locations
- Voicemail provides a fully functional messaging service, providing a number of dynamic options for callers at peak times
- The telephony system is integrated with the SIMS Database, using Microsoft Outlook to improve data management
- The open architecture ensures that the system is expansion and future proof, providing peace of mind to the school management that whatever their future requirements the system is designed to manage them
- AIMS system management software enables Nomis Connections to administer the system remotely, providing off site system support

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