

Kimberley School

Sector: Education

Key elements: VoIP, Auto Attendant, Business Continuity, Call Recording



Kimberley School, based in Nottinghamshire, has 1,322 pupils, 85 teachers and 60 support staff. It became a specialist technology college in September 2006.

THE BUSINESS CHALLENGE

The existing communications solution consisted of a traditional analogue system which limited the school's ability to route calls effectively. With only a few administrators receiving all incoming calls many were going unanswered as a result of being dropped or being put through to the wrong extensions. Callers were often forced to spend long periods on hold to get through to the reception.

With the school looking for future growth and expansion it required a solution which not only connected all school buildings but also proved easy to administer and improve the lost call count.

THE SOLUTION

Kimberley School, an existing client of Shipton Communications, analysed a range of possible solutions to its problem. However, a limited budget meant ensuring any major capital expenditure would see a return on investment very quickly.

Following consultancy from Shipton Communications, Kimberley School chose one of Inter-Tel's solutions. "With a high level of functionality 'out of the box', it met all our requirements and enabled us to further grow in size," said

Mike Jones, Bursar at Kimberley School. "Inter-Tel's technology came highly recommended from my colleagues at other schools who had implemented it, which definitely influenced our choice."

THE BENEFITS

Inter-Tel provided an auto attendant with Direct Dial Inwards (DDI) functionality as part of the technology. DDI gives callers the option to enter an extension number without requiring staff at reception to have to put them through. This function drastically streamlined calls and reduced labour for staff.



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Callers can also be presented with a button driven menu (i.e. 'Please press 1 for the operator', etc) to enable more efficient call handling. "This has vastly improved our communications," said Mr Jones. "Particularly during school holidays, when there is a skeleton staff. Many calls were missed and this added to the frustration for callers having to keep trying to get through to the school."

This led to enhanced communications both within the school itself, but also with parents and pupils. One example is when parents call the school, the auto attendant can give important messages about school closure.

The system was installed within three days without any implementation issues. With an IP-based solution, the phone system is part of the data network but not linked directly to the IT system.

"Having the two separated is important to us, as it stops the telephony system crashing if and when the IT network goes down, but means that we can still link it to our data when required," said Mr Jones. "Also, we didn't want our teachers and staff to have to undergo any disruption. Inter-Tel was able to accommodate our existing extension numbers, while upgrading some of these to a digital system."

Copper wires are no longer required to transmit messages and route calls, which means that when new buildings are built, they can be automatically connected without any rewiring. Everything can be communicated over IP, which has cut line rental costs, and there is the capability for every member of staff to have voicemail so they never miss a call. With handsets being plugged into any room with a connection, teachers can be more flexible in their working and aren't limited to one department.

Other features include the paging facility which allows teachers to alert reception for example if there is a problem or pupils are being unruly. The call-recording function is also valued by Kimberley School. "It has already been used on occasions by my staff," said Mr Jones. "Being able to record conversations of a delicate or intricate matter and having an audit trail is very useful. It is also an advantage that we can easily access the recorded conversations as and when we need them."

FUTURE ENHANCEMENTS

With the IP-based system, the school now has the potential to easily upgrade and implement new applications in future such as call reporting, multimedia solutions (including video), which was not possible before.

