



## Facility - Turning a vision into reality Bisham Primary School

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Nic Clark, Systems Manager,  
Bisham Primary School

Staff at Bisham Primary School had a vision for their pupils but could not make it reality with their existing data management system – so they knew they had to change.

“Our vision was that any person anywhere in the school could reach the records from any machine and get information that’s relevant. That’s what networks are about,” said System Manager Nic Clark. The school looked at what was available and chose Facility.

Since the implementation the village primary school near Marlow has made huge strides in its administration and has new dreams for its educational standards. Most of the information has been transferred to the central database and the majority of school administration is carried out through it, in less than half a year.

“Everyone got the hang of it quickly because it’s very easy to get going once you learn the basics. It’s quite simple and works in Windows, which is a clear advantage over some other products. Everything is in one place and there are simple, general rules that you can follow whatever you are trying to do. It’s good to have something that feels like it’s designed to work together.”

SATS results went smoothly with returns completed in around an hour, rather than the whole day it used to take with the school’s old system. Class registration is carried out using ePortal, Facility’s web-based interface, and children pick out their own names on classroom whiteboards.

Staff now happily create lists whenever they need them, covering any information that they require to make the school day run smoothly. “Facility has the built-in reporting tool that’s easy to use. Work flows from start to end. Everything flows nicely so people don’t mind using it,” Nic said.

The change has completely removed the burden of providing information from office staff – giving them more time to complete their work. “Everything used to come through the office and it was a lot of work for them. This saves them a huge amount of time.”

Nic feels that installing Facility has also reduced his own workload. “From the maintenance point of view it is hugely better than what we had in the past. With our old system there were pages and pages of instructions for upgrades but with Serco you do things once on the server. There is no installation to do on client machines.”

But much more than administration has benefited from Facility at the 130-pupil school. “Anything is possible. Whatever you think you want to do is possible with Facility. It will really enable us to go places. The future of education is very data driven. Being able to know everything about a pupil is important,” Nic said.

One clear advantage is that pupils who attend the school’s breakfast club and after-school meetings are registered as well. So staff running the sessions have full access to information on each child, through the central database, in case of emergencies. Any medical risks such as allergies or contact numbers for parents are immediately available if necessary.

Head Jim Cooke agrees that Facility will help take the school forward. He believes that the way the system manipulates data will help him to make better decisions because he is better informed. “The importance of data-rich evidence is coming to the fore. Future inspections will require reliable data and sensible analysis. It will be important to be able to collate the information and turn it out in a variety of formats.”

The difficulty schools face is that systems have to be easy to understand so that everyone can put in information but complex enough to produce sophisticated reports for local and national authorities. “On a day to day basis we can put in a child’s name and the whole picture comes up. We can inform parents but we can also inform Ofsted of the complete picture,” he said.

Easy access to correct information is key to the school’s future. “I believe that IT is something schools need to embrace more fully. It opens things up and takes away the time constraints of a paper system. Already people here are conscious about inputting data and they are becoming more aware of the possibilities of having information and analysing it.”

