

Schools Achieving Success Leasing with laptops

King Edward VII School

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Paul Hynes,
Leader of ICT Development,
King Edward VII School



True professionals

You would be forgiven for presuming that the King Edward VII School is just another ordinary LEA secondary, trying its best to satisfy the educational needs of over 1950 students in the middle-England market town of Melton Mowbray. Beyond the school gates, however, lies an extraordinary place where the forward-thinking, enterprising attitude of staff has created an interactive and dynamic learning environment, with the aim of preparing pupils for working in the real world.

Walk into any classroom and you'll wonder whether you've dropped in on a business meeting. A slick PowerPoint presentation is well underway, delivered via a Toshiba notebook and a multimedia projector. The only reminder that you're in a school is that the presenter is a Year 11 student performing to his/her peers, whilst the teacher looks proudly on.

From passive to active

Since the school was awarded technology status in September 1997, over 430 Toshiba laptop notebooks have been introduced. A state-of-the-art wireless LAN (local area network) provides the technology backbone, enabling users to access information anywhere on site without the need for a cable connection, phone line or plug socket. This hearty approach towards ICT (information and communications technology) – and in particular wireless computing – has given rise to a renewed rapture in learning for both

pupils and teachers alike. This pleases Paul Hynes, Leader of ICT Development at the public government funded state school: "We're experiencing an exciting shift in the learning process, from passive to active. Every teacher now has a notebook computer and is keen to discover new ways of creating and delivering lively, interactive lessons. By accessing and downloading information from the abundant range of on-line educational resources makes for a more stimulating, multi-dimensional and involving lesson."

Access for all

Ultimately striving for 1:1 access, the school pioneered 'The E-Learning Foundation' – a charitable concept that has now been adopted across many schools, enabling lower income families to enjoy laptop ownership. The scheme is funded through corporate sponsorship and parents' contributions, according to their level of income. Len Daniels, Business Development Manager at Toshiba, adds his support: "This initiative fits hand-in-glove with Toshiba's very own ResearchEd strategy. Our aim is to reduce exclusion so that every student, no matter what their circumstances are, can benefit from today's technology." Raising levels of achievement within schools and removing the bureaucratic load from the teacher also remain core to Toshiba's philosophy, referred to as the '3 Rs for ICT'. These directives reflect government policy and specifically the white paper 'Schools Achieving Success'.

Case Study

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TOSHIBA

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"It's a bumpy ride in a backpack!"

When King Edward VII decided to invest in mobile computing, the ICT department embarked upon a pilot study that involved teachers, technicians and pupils putting different wireless technologies to the test. According to Paul Hynes, Toshiba's Satellite range of notebook computers was selected because, "they had a high specification coupled with a good, solid build that could withstand the hazards of school life!" He adds, "Most other models were obviously made with business use solely in mind. However, Toshiba's products survived being bundled into backpacks, as well as being affordable through a sustainable leasing scheme."

Installing a wireless network throughout a campus that contains a myriad of building designs from different eras did not phase Eurotechnix, Toshiba's authorised reseller who managed the project.

Making the link

On top of providing enhanced learning experiences, teachers have streamlined their daily admin. tasks. Class registration is taken on-line, and transmitted across the wireless LAN. Absenteeism is observed electronically, and when necessary, the system will trigger an email or letter home if no explanation has been forthcoming. Parents can also visit the school's Intranet site and gather curriculum details, homework projects and much more, all the while improving home/school links. Next term, parents will be able to access their child's overall progress on line, as well as the results of an exam their child took earlier that day.

Technology as a tool

Another example of improved efficiency is the development of a self-marking, multiple choice questionnaire that is web-based and designed by one of the of the school's teachers. "This eases the load on the teacher, and the students love the interactive element," declares Paul Hynes.

It is this kind of innovation that has led to the school collaborating with many other schools across the globe. "We're sharing and exchanging our learning resources so that others can benefit too. Already, we've run a number of videoconferences where teachers discuss optimum learning methods with schools in the USA and Australia."

Closer to home, King Edward VII's zest for technology is extending to many of the surrounding 31 primary schools, as these younger pupils borrow the laptops for specific projects, easing their transition into Key Stage 3 and their arrival at the comprehensive school in September.

Get Real

Even with this growing network of alliances, King Edward VII's tenet of providing its own pupils with 'life long learning' remains central. Real business projects such as designing web pages for local businesses enables the students to develop their design skills to industry standard, whilst nurturing their commercial flair needed to get on.

For further information on this success story and Toshiba's range of technology products and services, please contact Toshiba on 01932 822814 or e-mail her at educationPCs@toshiba.co.uk

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