

NETGEAR® Case Study

Connect with Innovation™

Hamilton Primary School gets the full benefits of the Internet and networking with NETGEAR®

NETGEAR® switches are at the heart of a network which is delivering much higher levels of performance and reliability across two sites

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Profile

Hamilton Primary is a large primary school based on two sites about a quarter of a mile apart in High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire. It has around 650 students, ranging from ages five to eleven attending 23 classes on the two locations, one of which is Victorian school house in town centre, the other a more modern purpose-built structure.

Background

IT has played an increasingly important role in the school, particularly in the last four to five years, explains Mr. Nick Stewart-Long, Business Manager at Hamilton Primary. “The school has moved from having the odd computer around to having an extensive network of machines with whiteboards in every classroom. It’s been quite a dramatic change.” There are around 80 computers at the school and all children, even the very youngest, use these systems on a regular basis.



Problem/Objective

The number of IT systems at Hamilton Primary had grown over the years but there was no structure or plan says Mr. Stewart-Long. "We were having continued failures and the network would suddenly disappear from time to time." This stopped children using the Internet and email and prevented the school from using the SIMS database, which holds all the data relating to classes and pupils. This meant that the administrators could not perform key tasks such as filling in attendance registers and created a pile-up of work that had to be dealt with later.

Solution

In September 2005, the local county education authority provided Hamilton School with funding for a high speed connection to the Internet and between the two locations. The school subsequently decided to upgrade its network. It wanted to go with a well-known branded name and chose NETGEAR®.

NETGEAR® switches were successfully installed by PowerShift Partner Cable Team (UK) during the summer holidays of 2006. These support fibre-optic backbone connections, enabling the school to locate switches over a wider distance and in the older Victorian building where some cable runs are quite awkward and long.

A total of four NETGEAR® ProSafe™ FS752TS Stackable Smart Switches and three NETGEAR® ProSafe™ FS728TS Stackable Smart Switches have been deployed to provide distributed access throughout the two locations. These devices provide 48-port and 24-port 10/100 Gbps Ethernet connectivity respectively and also come with four additional gigabit ports. In addition, seven NETGEAR® AGM731F adapters have been deployed to provide fibre optic connectivity.

Business Impact/Result

The new network has brought tremendous benefits, says Mr. Stewart-Long. "We have been using interactive whiteboards and that's meant the Internet has become more important. We also the Espresso application for video streaming and multimedia – that now runs without slowing down if more than a few classes are using it."

Files can be shared across the two sites, reliability is exceptional and helpdesk calls have reduced significantly. "We have gone from having a very volatile network to one that is very stable and the NETGEAR® switches are a significant part of that", says Mr Stewart-Long. "The fact that our supplier can manage them and do all that remotely and the support for fibre-optic capability at a price we could afford have been major benefits."

The school is looking at implementing video conferencing and voice over IP in the future – it already has the bandwidth and the NETGEAR® switches to support this functionality.

It's certainly reduced the time taken up with support and therefore the cost. It's meant that the ICT Coordinator can concentrate on the IT curriculum – not the network.

The ProSafe™ FS752TS Smart Stackable Switch



The ProSafe™ FS728TS Smart Stackable Switch



AGM731F adapter

