



Case study

Fitzjohn's Primary School



The customer

Established in 1953, Fitzjohn's Primary School is a Community primary school in Hampstead, London.

The school took over the school buildings and some of the grounds that were previously part of the estate belonging to the Royal Soldiers' Daughters' Home.

There is also a nursery school which opened in 2006 and the school is authorised to have a maximum of 230 pupils, including the nursery intake.

“The whole experience of moving to hosted telephony with Horizon has been an extremely positive one. Working closely with Acorro, an initial audit identified the phone lines we didn't actually need, which meant we were able to start saving money immediately. With no complicated equipment to maintain and no upfront capital expenditure, Horizon has really helped us to reduce our long-term telecoms spend. Staff find the system very easy to use and it provides a much more professional image to parents wishing to contact us. We are delighted with the results.”

Frank Swan, Business Manager Fitzjohn's Primary School

The pains

Fitzjohn's had been struggling for many years with an outdated BT Nortel Meridian product and issues such as the basic transfer of incoming calls and being able to contact classrooms in an emergency were difficult.

Messages were being left on a normal answering machine and parents were having difficulty in calling in at busy periods, mainly due to the old system's lack of features and functionality and a lack of incoming telephone lines. For those lines that did exist, legacy line rental and call charges from BT were not easily understood and were expensive.

This led to the office team finding itself under extreme pressure because messages had to be delivered manually around the school campus, with no facility to contact staff in classrooms in an emergency.

The solution

Aside from resolving Fitzjohn's immediate communications issues, one of the objectives was to trial a hosted telephony solution, which, if successful, would be offered as an option to other schools and educational institutions, throughout the borough. Acorro proposed Gamma's Horizon hosted telephone service.

An initial audit of the school located and documented all existing telephone lines and numbers, revealing legacy lines that were being paid for but not required, hence making a real saving by ceasing them.

Once agreed, the existing telephone lines and numbers were then transferred to the Acorro billing wholesale platform which is provided in conjunction with Rainbow Group. Being on the Acorro billing platform meant that once the Horizon telephone service was ready to go live, it would be instantaneous to transfer the numbers. This number transfer was carried out with no disruption to the school.





Case study

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A telephone was installed in each classroom, so that teachers could be reached at any time. An authorisation code is required for external calls, which ensures no children can tamper with the phones and additionally, premium numbers are barred.

When calling in to the school, parents are given specific options which enable them to leave messages to report their child's absence or lateness. In addition, a simple auto attendant mechanism to contact the particular year group teaching staff is also available for parents. This ability for parents to contact the specific year groups and teaching staff directly has removed enormous pressure from the school office and enabled much more efficient communications with parents. Announcements are easily recorded by the staff and can be played in the event of any cancellations or school closure.

The telephone system no longer relies on two outdated BT analogue phone lines, instead uses the school's existing Virgin 10Mb fibre internet connection. Using this internet connection means there is no real limit to the number of incoming telephone calls ensuring the school will never miss a call. Of course, the telephone line rental is also not required, which makes another important cost saving.

Once the school was live on the new telephone system, training was given to the admin and teaching staff. It is both testament to the school staff for embracing the new technology and the simple, user-friendliness of the Horizon hosted telephone service that after its third month following installation, there was not a single problem reported.

The outcome

Frank Swan, Fitzjohn's School Business Manager said, "The whole experience of moving to hosted telephony with Horizon has been an extremely positive one. Working closely with Acorro, an initial audit identified the phone lines we didn't actually need, which meant we were able to start saving money immediately.

With no complicated equipment to maintain and no upfront capital expenditure, Horizon has really helped us to reduce our long-term telecoms spend. Staff find the system very easy to use and it provides a much more professional image to parents wishing to contact us. We are delighted with the results."

Acorro Sales Director Ele Nicolaou said, "Acorro has worked for many years to attain the status of authorised supplier to London Borough of Camden. We are proud to be working with Camden IT for schools and helping our educational institutions reduce costs and get a better service"

Why is hosted telephony a great choice for schools?

- There's no complicated telephone equipment to worry about so no maintenance costs
- As simple as only a telephone handset on any desk - and that's it!
- No upfront capital expenditure costs a for new system
- New features that make life easier for the school
- Provides a professional image to the parents
- Allows parents to contact the relevant departments directly
- Enables easy communications throughout the entire school
- Reduction in costs of telephone calls and line rental

