



Microsoft Customer Solution Customer Solution Case Study



Customer: Long Eaton School

Web Site:

www.longeaton.derbyshire.sch.uk

Country or Region: United Kingdom

Industry: Education

Number of Students: 1,340

Number of Staff: 187

Customer Profile

Long Eaton School is located in Nottinghamshire, England. It teaches more than 1,300 students and gained "Specialist Science College" status in 2003. It is rated by OFSTED as "outstanding."

Software and Services

- Microsoft IT Academy Program
- Microsoft Office Professional Plus 2007
- Windows Server 2003
- Windows Vista Business

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School Equips Students with Industry Qualifications to Bridge Local IT Skills Gap

"We wanted to offer our students and the community a course with emphasis on the support aspects of IT, particularly networking and operating systems. The Microsoft IT Academy Program met our requirements perfectly."

Alan Richards, Network Manager, Long Eaton School

As part of its commitment as a specialist college, Long Eaton School sought to resolve an IT skills gap identified by local businesses. The school joined the Microsoft IT Academy Program to offer industry-standard qualifications to the community. Local people can attend evening classes, students can study after school, and sixth-form students can take a short course between their first and second year.

Education Needs

Long Eaton School, located near Nottingham, England, is rated by OFSTED as "outstanding." Over the last three years, it has been in the top 5 per cent for national "contextual value-added" school performance scores. This rating takes into account student improvement based on social and economic factors—a high percentage of Long Eaton students come from deprived backgrounds.

In February 2006, the school moved into a new purpose-built site, which was officially opened

by Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown in November of the same year. Long Eaton became a "Specialist Science College" in 2003 and is now committed to increasing its community involvement—particularly with families and businesses—as part of its new standing. The school quickly learned that employers were facing a shortage of people with adequate training and qualifications in IT.

Alan Richards, Network Manager, Long Eaton School, says: "I am a member of the British Computer Society and regularly speak with

industry colleagues at local meetings. They told me that school leavers aren't equipped with the right skills because schools don't give students a technical grounding in computers any more. Young people can use word processors and spreadsheets, but don't know the technical aspects that are vital in IT support jobs."

Solution

The school wanted to offer industry-standard IT training that met employer requirements and benefitted its students and the wider community. Alan Richards had previously worked at a school that was a member of the Microsoft® IT Academy Program and felt the IT Professional training and certification pathway would give students the practical developer skills and server product experience they needed.

Member schools have access to high-quality training materials—such as Microsoft Official Academic Curriculum and Microsoft Online Training Kits, which prepare students for the Microsoft Certified Professional examinations. Alan Richards says: "We wanted to offer our students and the community a course with emphasis on the support aspects of IT, particularly networking and operating systems. The Microsoft IT Academy Program met our requirements perfectly."

Long Eaton offers "twilight sessions," where students can work for two-hour sessions using operating systems such as Windows® XP and Windows Server® after lessons have finished for the day. Sixth-form students are offered a week-long, intensive short course.

"Year 12 students take their AS level exams at Easter, but don't start taught courses again until the following September," Alan Richards says. "We fill that gap with Microsoft IT Academy Program courses, which give them the extra ability and insight into computer software we

believe they need, and they can gain another Microsoft qualification."

The school also delivers evening classes to the local community. "The evening sessions have been very successful, particularly with local businesses and network managers from other schools," Alan Richards says. "In the last six months, we have had 30 students take our courses from the community and small businesses."

Benefits

The school has been able to meet the needs of local employers and students across the entire community. Alan Richards says: "We wanted something to supplement the school curriculum and offer the wider community skills to improve their job prospects. The Microsoft IT Program fulfils both these needs."

Students Gain Qualifications as They Study

Because the school is changing its syllabus from September 2007, students can gain industry-level qualifications as they study for their academic certificates. "Students will take a Microsoft course, and the qualification will count toward their GCSE qualification," Alan Richards says. "We will also offer the BTEC National certificate in IT, which is equivalent to an A level and recognised by universities. Nearly all the modules on the course are based on professional qualifications, so students can come out with industry-recognised certificates, as well as a BTEC."

Students Improve Career Prospects

"The new qualifications give students the right background for IT careers," Alan Richards says. "We can start them off in the right way, so they can get into industry and improve their long-term prospects from the start."

This approach also helps members of the local community. Alan Richards says: "One of our

evening-class students works for a local newspaper that is part of a national group. He has gained two qualifications from the academy, and, because of these, he has moved up in his company to the national IT support office.

"We cater to people from the wider community who need qualifications to advance within their company or develop their career prospects. And our school students are keen to gain a professional qualification because they believe it will greatly improve their future employability prospects."