

## **Specialist Technology College selects Corporate ICT, based on efficiency, supportiveness and a proactive approach**

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**Alan Ives – Business Manager, Haggerston School**

Haggerston is a thriving and successful community girl’s school which is set in a listed building and beautiful grounds in the Borough of Hackney. The school describes itself as a ‘creative learning community’ and aims to develop confident and responsible young women who have the integrity to contribute to society in the 21st Century.

As a specialist Science, Maths and Technology College, Haggerston is also part of the government’s ‘Building Schools for the Future’ (BSF) scheme, which means that extensive refurbishment is planned for the coming years. Haggerston School will become a mixed comprehensive community school from September 2010 and at the same time will also extend its intake of students by including a sixth form. These developments, coupled with access to a proportion of the £20m government BSF budget, means that the opportunity for the school to expand in the future is immense.

This development will mean an increase in the number of school buildings, beyond the three that currently exist. More buildings means an even greater requirement for effective communications, which was a key consideration when the lease on their existing phone system came to an end in 2006. Alan Ives, the school’s Business Manager, takes up the story:

*“We swapped our old and antiquated Norstar system for a Samsung DCS in 2001, but when the lease came up for renewal in 2006 we knew it was a good opportunity to bring our communications technology into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, to tie in with our future development plans. The Samsung OfficeServ 7200 was recommended to us by Corporate ICT, who provided our previous Samsung system.”*

### **Choosing the supplier, not the system**

Corporate ICT started working with Haggerston School in 2001. Alan was looking to replace the Norstar system and approached four telecoms companies who had sent him marketing information at around that time. After seeing a presentation from each company and reviewing the systems they were recommending, Corporate ICT were placed on the tender list. They were eventually successful in winning the business after the board had agreed with Alan’s recommendation and approved the funding.

*“The information with Corporate ICT sent through initially looked interesting and we were impressed after their presentation”, explains Alan. “They were very proactive and interested in what we needed, rather than in just trying to sell us what they had. We were not as concerned about the type of phone system as we were about finding a company to work with who could provide it and then keep it up and running for us. The decision was definitely made on the supplier, not on the product. Corporate seemed interested in the school and were very supportive, something which has proved to be the case ever since.”*

### **Making the upgrade**

The new Samsung OfficeServ 7200 was installed during the Summer holidays in 2006 using the existing hard wiring between the three buildings. It has 80 extensions in total, plus two operator consoles, and provides digital display handsets for all staff.

It also has full voicemail facilities, as did the DCS, but the new system offers the added benefit of a central voicemail system in the staff room as well. This means that teaching staff who are constantly mobile around the premises can come into the staffroom during breaks, key in their own personal access code, and retrieve their voicemail messages simply and efficiently. Saving time and avoiding messages having to be left in various locations around the school, in pigeon-holes or on post-it notes. Alan continues:

*“The new OfficeServ definitely has better features, and staff really like the new digital display handsets, which we previously only had a few of. The best thing for us though was, even with all these new features and the new handsets, the cost of the lease actually went down! As well as the phone system we now also have all of our call costs managed by Corporate. They looked at our bills initially and renegotiated all of our services to get us better rates, and they now review this regularly to make sure we are always getting the best options at all times.”*

### **Planning for the future**

Haggerston School do not currently have any incoming ISDN lines, which means that DDI functionality is only possible using 13 incoming analogue lines which are rented directly from BT. However, there are plans to upgrade the lines in the future, as well as to look at maximising the VoIP functionality of the Samsung system, a logical step forward to improve communication between the school's multiple buildings.

With the BSF scheme, the school will expand extensively over the next three years, including more buildings, and more pupils when the sixth form opens in 2010. The Samsung system has the capacity to meet these challenges, as Alan concludes:

*“We know that the OfficeServ will meet our needs over the coming years as it is very scalable and also very reliable. Corporate are very good, especially if any problems do occur. Recently we had a power failure which resulted in us needing to re-set the voicemail system and they were able to talk us through it on the phone very easily. Having said that, if we do need them to come to site, they are very responsive.*

*Over the Summer holidays in 2007 we had 17 room changes as well as new staff moving into new offices. Corporate handled everything efficiently and were very proactive. Their ongoing support has been excellent.”*