nci

TECHNOLOGIES

Gatehouse ACE Academy

Our Success Story

'Maths Makes Sense' with new LED interactive touchscreens

▶ Profile

Gatehouse ACE Academy benefits from extensive grounds in the beautiful setting of Dawlish, Devon. The primary school caters for over 350 children from reception class through to year 6, key stage 2. The 88 staff support and deliver a rich and varied curriculum with many opportunities to extend learning, sharing the vision to 'Aim high, Zoom higher'.

▶ Summary

Gatehouse wanted a reliable IT provider that could offer innovative solutions and with whom they could work closely to transform school ICT. NCI successfully supported the teachers with an engineer on-site each week to deal with any IT concerns, and upgraded systems to receive automatic security updates. The school can be rest assured that data is protected and secure in accordance with regulatory specifications and with additional 24/7 system monitoring. Staff could also benefit from working more flexibly with secure access to the data they needed whether at home or off-site. Significantly, each class received new LED touchscreen interactive displays which revolutionised teaching and learning and the wider uptake of a new maths scheme to raise standards.
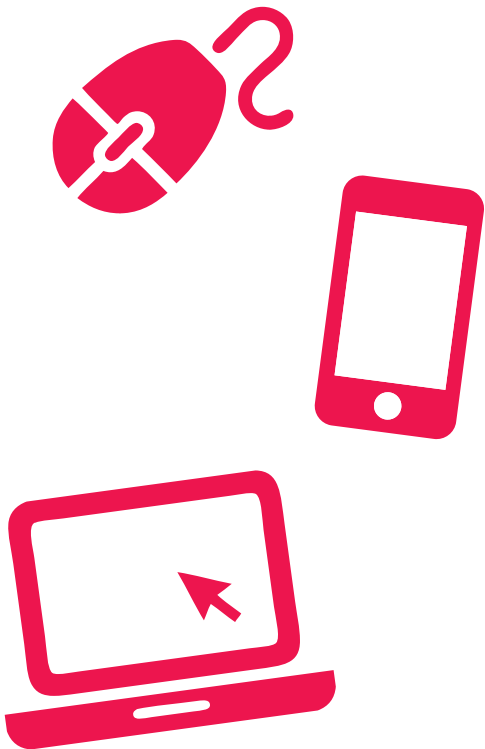
The Situation

The school were proactively reviewing their ICT provider. They needed a company who could work closely with them to further develop their strategy in line with the vision of the ACE Academy and ambitious school development plan. Innovation, reliability and technical expertise were highly sought after and NCI matched the requirements perfectly.

Following an initial assessment of Gatehouse Primary's ICT, NCI engineers worked closely with the school and academy management team to identify the areas of support and hardware provision that needed improvement. The following issues were identified:

- Updates were limited across some of the desktop PC's and servers and this was leading to reduced performance speed and a potential for system vulnerabilities

- The school were experiencing challenges with the backup process

- The Wireless was working well, however, the school needed to extend coverage across the whole site to effectively support the growing use of ICT

- Staff found that they were limited in gaining access to data and files they needed when working from home

The school were also keen to embrace the addition of new and innovative technologies as soon as possible as part of their school ICT plan.

The Solution

Bespoke IT Support Package

NCI provided Gatehouse with a bespoke IT support package offering a technical engineer on-site, for one day, every week. This tailored, frequent service meant that immediate support was given to not only assist promptly with the backlog of ICT issues that were hampering efficiency throughout the school, but also to provide on-hand support to staff, when needed, to minimise disruption and reduce the pressure. This in turn can lead to a direct improvement in the use of ICT for teaching and learning.

SMART ®

Extraordinary made simple

As part of NCI's service agreement, Gatehouse are reassured of a dedicated team of engineers, with both Microsoft and Apple competencies, providing on-site and remote services.

Visits by an engineer to the site can fit around the school schedule, assisting with ICT issues if they arise plus, reviewing and evaluating the networks and systems to update and improve overall efficiency.

Systems reconfigured to improve performance

The main PCs and Windows Servers were reconfigured and set up for optimum performance with group policies on the server changed to improve network performance for both pupils and staff. This has helped to ensure that the applications are functioning at an optimal level; efficient, protected and compatible with relevant software.

Backup and data protection with 24/7 monitoring

Securing and protecting data via regular backups is a fundamental part of the requirements for OFSTED and the Data Protection Act as well as a critical process to assist in the retrieval of data as quickly as possible in the event of a loss.

A new backup process was implemented with new drives that capture data for backup on a daily basis and is supported by round-the-clock monitoring as a protection and security measure. A universal power supply (UPS) was provided as a fail safe to deliver a power backup; protecting the server in the event of a possible power failure.

Access to the network from home

To support staff in their requirement to work remotely, including from home, the NCI team set up a VPN; Virtual Private Network that can be accessed securely from off-campus and enable remote printing and access to data and files on the school network.

58" Screen

E70 SMART Screen

Wireless upgrade to boost coverage

With the increase of wireless devices and the latest mobile technologies the school required an upgrade to the wireless network to not only optimise the performance of new hardware but increase the coverage and performance in all parts of the school. State of the art, fully managed Ruckus hardware was installed along with upgraded gigabit network switches.

LED Touchscreen Displays throughout the school

The latest, innovative touchscreens are enabling fantastic pupil collaboration and learning benefits in the classroom and helping to aid lesson recall by creating a new and dynamic tool for teaching. Gatehouse needed to upgrade their whiteboards and opted for touchscreen displays throughout the school. NCI engineers installed three different sizes of screens plus, revolutionary new InGlass technology for a smoother, more precise writing experience. The smaller 58" screen was for the early years classes and the 65" screens for key stage one. A large 70" Smart Screen, with HD contrast to reduce eye strain, was chosen for the key stage two classes.

Outcome

Gatehouse ACE Academy benefitted from a wholly transformative IT project that resulted in better use of ICT throughout the school and a real advantage to learning, helping to raise standards.