

Case Study for Flex-Telecom

Customer Success Story: Castleford Academy Trust

Castleford Academy Trust is a Multi-Academy Trust based in West Yorkshire.

Jayne Clarke is the Primary Director of Education for Castleford Academy Trust. Over the last 10 years, she has worked with Flex-Telecom at schools across West Yorkshire.

Flex-Telecom has solved old technical problems and delivered new cost-effective equipment. The impact has been to transform the outcomes for each school.

The Challenges of IT in Education

During her career, Jayne Clarke has worked with many schools in difficulty.

Often there are problems with the school's infrastructure as well as the teaching. Their IT systems have grown over time without a strategic plan.

"Each time I arrive at a new school, it's usually because things are not where they should be. So often it's back to the beginning, unwrapping old systems and getting them working," said Jayne Clarke.

When technology does not work it impacts children through lost learning time. It also distracts staff from supporting learners.

The other key challenge is financial. As Jayne Clarke explained, "with school budgets, you can't do everything at once."

**"Matthew Cranney
and his team are
excellent at
unpicking
problems that
don't make sense
to other people."**

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How Flex-Telecom Helped

At each school, Flex-Telecom fixed the most immediate issues and helped to develop a strategy for the future.

“In Castleford, Matthew's worked really well with our in-house IT team because we have a high school with its own IT. We've also zoned one of the schools in our trust who needed the Paxton system put in place,” said Jayne Clarke.

“He understands the school-based problem and translates it into a technical answer.”

As school budgets are limited, it's been important to work on each school's IT priorities in a cost-effective way.

Flex-Telecom made changes in layers to fit with the school's plans. As a result, there's a way to expand systems in the future when the extra budget is available.

Jayne Clarke said, “Matthew and his team understand where I need to lead the school and the management strategies that underpin that. He can look at it step-by-step to support that leadership vision.”

“If you walk around the school and outline where you are, where you want to be, he'll find on the spot solutions to solve problems. Then he'll help to form a strategy for the future.”

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The Results

Flex-Telecom's work has made major improvements for the schools.

“The children, parents and staff can see and feel the changes,” said Jayne Clarke.

“It’s radically changed outcomes for the school because everything that we do technically has a benefit to children. If you make the wifi work, it means there's no lost learning time. If you get the CCTV to work you're not losing things through theft or burglary.”

Schools have also received critical help with safeguarding, through the Paxton access system. This keeps children safe within the building and helps them feel safe too. A key area for Ofsted.

In addition, the leadership team have been able to rely on effective technology. This has cut down on lost learning time. A major benefit for the learners and the staff delivering the learning.

“You can invest in Chromebooks, iPads or interactive boards but if the IT behind it doesn't work, it becomes worthless. Regardless of how much new technology you buy,” added Jayne

**“[Matthew]’ll
always go for the
most economic
advice and he
always comes in
below everybody
else. That's why
I've worked with
him for 10 years.
You can trust him.”**
