



## Background

Aireville School, based in Skipton, North Yorkshire, is a dynamic and progressive school with Specialist Sports College status. It is a non-selective 11-16 school in a selective area, which strives for excellence and aims to help all students achieve their full potential, in all areas.

## The Challenge

The school has faced many challenges over recent years. As a result of an Ofsted inspection in September 2006 the school was placed in 'special measures' but, due to the hard work and commitment of the school's leadership team, teachers and students, this status was quickly removed in January 2008, moving straight to satisfactory.

Among the many contributing factors attributed by Ofsted for the 'quicker-than-expected' turnaround in the school's fortunes was the introduction of Classroom Management software which has enabled more effective use and teaching of ICT, an area originally identified as an area for improvement.

## Situation

As Al Metcalfe, Aireville's ICT specialist explained, "When I first started at Aireville I inherited some groups with an ethos of ICT lessons being of poor behaviour and limited productivity and learning. As a new teacher in the school, this is something the school leadership team, Ofsted and myself wanted to turnaround. So we installed and tested 5 different Classroom Management software products and decided on NetSupport School.

## NetSupport Solution

After testing 5 different Classroom Management systems, we selected NetSupport School with the objective of providing teachers and network managers with a tool that would allow monitoring of PC usage and focus students on the task in hand, rather than the ICT labs being seen as a place where students could go to surf the Internet or use inappropriate software. NetSupport replaced the image of ICT lesson as somewhere of learning and focus with improved climate for learning.

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NetSupport School made an immediate impact on productivity - From day one the software started to prove its worth. It was firstly an eye opener to see just what the students were getting away with! NetSupport School enabled me to centrally monitor all the PCs in a class by displaying a thumbnail of each desktop on my screen. This instantly pinpointed where students were not sticking to the task in hand, whether it be because they were accessing random websites or using incorrect applications. Having seen this, software was then restricted so that only the programs required for that lesson could be run. Internet Access was blocked, monitored or only approved sites required for that lesson were allowed. This ensured the students stayed on task. We weren't using the software in a 'big brother' type scenario but once the students became aware that I was connected to their machine and they could only do what was required for the lesson, they soon started to toe the line and learning increased dramatically. By 'quietly' highlighting to me where a student might be having problems with a topic I was able to provide help using the product's messaging capabilities and target specific students that required support. Since learners were then on task, it gave more time to offer motivational support to those who were identified with difficulties. Teaching and learning has vastly improved removing issues the students had previously got away with for the last 2 years."

"The development of the toolbar, at first, was seen as a "big brother watching" by the students. However, the usefulness and quick access to software, web site and methods of communication meant it quickly became the norm and students began to ask for the toolbar if it was not present. Now NetSupport School is being seen as a useful friend to the students, rather than restrictive software. Students now see the point of the software."

"The range of teacher presentation tools is also very impressive. There's nothing worse than trying to present information to the class only to see that half of them are tapping away on their keyboards or worse, chatting to their mates on MSN! I can show the content of my screen to all student screens in real-time and, in order to retain attention, lock down all workstation peripherals - ie keyboard and mouse - for the duration. One feature that my students particularly like is the fact that I can put my screen on their screen in a window. This means I can put work, sets of instructions or help on their screen whilst still allowing them to do their work. It saves a lot of paper, rather than printing worksheets out, you can modify the instructions for differentiation."

As well as the obvious help NetSupport School has provided in terms of more effective teaching, it has also helped the school save costs as it offers a number of unique features designed to prevent the need to purchase additional hardware. I am a great believer that if we have bought a product to do a job why go out and buy more equipment? Whiteboards seem to be all the rage but cost can be an issue. NetSupport School comes with an integrated Whiteboard feature which cuts out the need to focus on a piece of equipment at the front of the class. I can call up the whiteboard on each student's PC and use a range of annotation tools to highlight information.

"A Print Management utility is also provided as standard. It's criminal how much wastage a school like ours can produce but with NetSupport School I can easily manage print jobs at the press of a button. In addition to preventing students from printing, I can set page limits on a student by student basis, prevent duplicate prints or even choose to approve each individual print request.

"The ability to restrict and control the use of USB memory sticks or CD's is also an advantage as I can allow students to take work home and load homework up but at the same time ensure that

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only relevant work is copied. I can also prevent the students from running software from home by blocking executable files from USB and CD's.

You can give responsibility to students by creating group leaders. This means they can share work and the group leader can monitor the work being undertaken by their group and give support using a cut down version of the NetSupport system. The group leader can also collect and share out the group work so that if a member of the group is absent one lesson, their work is still accessible by the group and so that work can continue. It makes group work more fun giving an extra dimension. It is also a great way of rewarding students, putting them in charge of their own learning.

"NetSupport School has certainly been instrumental in getting ICT back on track at Aireville. In a recent survey of student voice conducted on 3 June 2008 by the local educational authority, the students said they liked NetSupport, they found the features useful. They loved the toolbar especially since it puts their name on the top of it. Other students said, It's just there, I don't think about it any more, if it was not there, I would think something was wrong.

The manager of the LRC (Learning Resource Centre), said, "The installation of NetSupport in the LRC has made a considerable impact on learning, by enabling students to remain focused on their projects. The LRC spans three rooms and is mainly used by students that are working independently, i.e. completing homework, doing research or coursework. Simply knowing that NetSupport is installed, is often enough to keep students on task, however, on the occasions when students are tempted to use web sites unrelated to their work, the supervision aspect of NetSupport along with the added Safe Search option is invaluable."

NetSupport School allows us to share our learning objectives between teachers as well as with other schools who use NetSupport School. We can collect work for marking and hand work back that has been marked, we can also send files to each student during the lesson or load a software application on every machine instantly. We can even take a class register and put the details into Sims.

The list of uses for NetSupport School is vast. You can send students messages in a variety of ways, you can show videos, co-browse, even speak to them when they are using headsets via a microphone. If students are watching something and you need to speak to them you can switch the sound off instantly. A whole new dimension is given to lessons.

At the end of the day, we save so much time and money while caring for the environment by powering down all the computers in the room.

## ↳ Testimony

"I would recommend this product to all schools. If you want to see this product in action, you are more than welcome to come and see it in use in our school. Yes the restrictions are still in place, but we use the software for the fun element. It helps to make lessons more interesting, dynamic, exciting, delivering that all important WOW factor for the students, with tangible improvements in their engagement, participation and ultimately their learning. We have recently set up an ICT cluster group that meets about 4 times a year. During this meeting we discuss the ICT curriculum, share ideas and good practice as well as resources. We also discuss NetSupport and during some sessions NetSupport visit us to take feedback and ideas for the latest version as well as offering support."

- Al Metcalfe, Aireville School ICT Specialist

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