



HCSS EDUCATION

Looking Beyond...

Case Study

Revolutionising education through technology



We met up with Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council, Services for Children and Young People, Resources Manager, John Barlow to find out how HCSS Education has assisted the Council and its Schools with the implementation of FPSadvance.Net.



Setting the Scene

The Council continues to focus on the priorities laid down by the people of Tameside; a safe, clean, prosperous and learning borough. The Council has been rated as 'improving strongly' for some time and believes their best is still to come.

Tameside have a long list of awards for their education initiatives, and forward thinking strategies. These include a national recognition for its leading work in revolutionising education through technology. The council was named joint runner-up for the Support for Schools title, at Becta's annual ICT Excellence Awards and winners of the Guardian's North West Teacher of the Year.

The borough recently scooped the coveted Best Achieving Council award at the prestigious Municipal Journal (MJ) Awards. It was the only Local Authority in the North West to receive the top rating of four stars with a judgement of 'improving strongly'.

The Authority focuses strongly on staff input and development to keep the Authority forward thinking and innovative. The Authority works hard to build strong, reciprocal relationships with their schools; there is a lot of data sharing and transparency between the LA and schools. "We believe that is why we have such a good relationship with our schools in Tameside, we have a lot of support from schools and they often take up our services" says Resources Manager, John Barlow.

Time for Change

Typical of most Authorities, Tameside had been using a series of Excel spreadsheets to manage schools' finances. "We did provide our own spreadsheet for schools to use when budget planning, this was in use for well over a decade and was becoming too large to handle the complexities of multi year budgeting and provided no way of monitoring the outputs or linking the School Development Plan".





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Partnership Approach

Tameside saw an opportunity to partner with a supplier who would be able to satisfy existing and future requirements. "We deemed our excel tool as no longer fit for purpose and that is when we saw an opportunity for a way forward with a new product that could manage the process. We have been talking to HCSS Education for well over a year now about their new Financial Planning Software that has now been written in VB.Net instead of the original Excel version. We really liked the idea of the School Development Plan being tied into the long term budgeting tool, this was a huge benefit".



Managing Change

Changing systems used by over 100 schools was not an easy task; "we did encounter a small amount of resistance which is only natural, but my feelings were 'we have to move forward to stand still'. FPSadvance.Net was the only product on the market that met our needs."

"Our only doubts were how the schools may react to this change, but the feedback has been very positive indeed. The training has been provided by the Local Authority and this has also helped with the implementation process and helped to further cement relationships between the finance team and schools."

"We advised schools very early on in the decision making process that we were looking to improve upon the previous excel spreadsheet and then we ran a successful pilot."

A number of school business managers were excited by the product once they had seen the online demonstration on the HCSS education website. John went on to say: 'They were keen to implement the software as soon as possible... this was an excellent result!'

www.hcsseducation.co.uk

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