

Case Study – St Mary's School



Overview

St Mary's is a non-maintained special school for children aged 7 to 19. The young people who attend the school have needs that are placed within the moderate learning difficulties range and include speech and language disorders; social communication difficulties (autism); physical disabilities and complex medical conditions. St Mary's is dedicated to providing a first class education and appropriate resources to all its students. Ofsted said of St Mary's in June 2005; "St Mary's gives an outstanding education and provides outstanding value for money".

The school's lead occupational therapist recommended that David Cassar, Principal of St Mary's, visit our stand at the London Special Needs Show in September 2004. He was "enormously impressed" with what he saw, saying "Quite often, when one looks at equipment for the disabled, the price is 2 to 3 times what it would be otherwise, whereas their solution was reasonably priced".

David Cassar liked the fact that the school could be very involved in the design of the IT suite and that our desks were not only reassuringly robust but could be colourful too. Height adjustability at the touch of a button is another key benefit of our solution; the motorised legs allow rapid and quiet height-adjustment to accommodate wheelchair users and allow proper clearance, as well as catering for the variation in height of the pupils.

The brief

Our brief was to maximise use of the available space whilst maintaining access for wheelchair users. In January 2005 after close consultation with the school, we installed 13 jigsaw-patterned powerlifting stations – 2 x 3-seater units, 3 x 2-seaters and a teacher's workstation. The teacher's desk came with a master control button for controlling the height of all the workstations.

We also created a bespoke network/software package to meet the needs of the St Mary's students. David Cassar says "They showed foresight with regards to software... they were looking forwards". Since our products are fully and easily upgradeable it makes them an economical investment that can always meet current technical requirements.

A classroom transformed

St Mary's did not have a proper IT suite before our suite was installed. David Cassar explains that, "(The new suite) has allowed us to teach, in discrete ways, ICT skills. This was very difficult to attempt before because of having banks of different types of computers."

He continues "[The desk] takes into account all the needs of all our children. The desks go low enough to meet the needs of a key-stage two child and rise to meet the needs of a college student at the touch of a button...and can be used for staff training too"

David Cassar believes the new suite has "led to a change in attitude towards learning".

