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– Phil Gordon, Principal
Kelston Intermediate



Introduction

Kelston Intermediate is a West Auckland School, with around 265 students from Kelston, Glen Eden, Fruitvale and Glendene. Like other schools in the Kelston area it is decile 3, and has been serving the area for over 40 years.

Phil Gordon has been the Principal for the last two years. He sees the school’s small size as a strength, and expects the roll to plateau at 300 students within a couple of years.

A new direction

When Gordon first arrived the school had a mix of aging technologies. Some they owned and some they leased. The resulting infrastructure was fragmented and reflected a variety of changes in direction and requirements over preceding years. Both their hardware and systems required constant support from a steady flow of technicians.

It was clear to Gordon that it was time to modernise.

Kelston Intermediate had been a customer of Fuji Xerox for six years and had several of their multifunctional devices in the school. However, when Gordon made the decision to move to an outsourced printing and copying option, Fuji Xerox responded with a proposal for an all-inclusive IT solution that would completely change the school’s approach to technology.

Fuji Xerox OptimiseIT

OptimiseIT is Fuji Xerox’s fully managed IT Service, and provides a seamless, environment encompassing all hardware devices, infrastructure, Cloud computing and HelpDesk support.

“I liked the new direction Fuji Xerox was going in,” said Gordon, “and I really liked what they were saying about putting people at the centre of the organisation. Which in a nutshell, is also our own philosophy. Discussing their OptimiseIT solution planted a seed, and that’s where the journey actually started. We started talking about having one provider, one solution, and one contract.”

When asked by the school’s incumbent technology suppliers how this would work, Gordon responded honestly: “I don’t know. They’ve never done this for a school before, and nor have we.”

However, Gordon and his staff were excited by the prospect of what they could achieve for the school and its students, and were more than confident that Fuji Xerox could deliver on what they promised. “What we wanted was a total digital solution: devices for the kids, computers for our office, laptops for our teachers, and connectivity for us all. We didn’t want to be just sold devices. We wanted the right devices. Not the cheapest or most expensive, but the ones that allow us to do a better job for our kids. And we needed solutions for the specific types of problems that we face.”

The dream ratio

Gordon has been delighted with the final number of new devices they were able to afford for their students through OptimiseIT.

“We considered what ratio of devices to students we wanted to achieve. Previously we had 30 netbooks total for the students to use, laptops for the teachers, office PCs, and smart boards with some outdated projectors that were not being used very well at all. We decided that a ratio of one device to three students would be a great end goal.”

Kelston Intermediate now have new All-in-One desktops for staff to use in the reception area, the library and the teacher resource room. In addition, all teachers have laptops and there are also 12 interactive projectors for classroom use, a couple of shared printers and of course, Fuji Xerox multifunctional devices.

Students have access to four dedicated All-in-Ones in the library and another three per classroom, as well as 30 iPad Minis (on an impressive charging and syncing trolley which recharges all of the iPads at the same time). Fuji Xerox also topped up the list with several iMacs to add to the 18 units the school had purchased outright with funding.

This means the school has around 90 devices available to the students: Gordon’s 3:1 dream ratio.

“With our new IT capabilities and great range of devices for our students,” Gordon said proudly, “we’re on a par with any primary or intermediate school in West Auckland.”

Cloud-bound

Through OptimiseIT the school was able to abandon their server, along with the issues that had previously accompanied it. All the school’s applications and solutions are now remotely hosted, backed up automatically, and the systems fully managed by professional teams.

Being part of a shared Cloud environment means reduced costs and increased efficiency. The school automatically receives upgrades, updates and improvements to their environment and software. These changes are made remotely and uniformly, with no interruption to the school day.



Value for money

The mixed status of the school's hardware meant a combination of capital and operational expenditure and dramatically depreciating hardware.

Gordon had been justifiably wary of buying the leased hardware as it came off contract, no matter how inexpensively, due to its age and the advances in technology in the meantime. "I honestly couldn't see us wanting to buy devices as fixed assets every year as it would mean we couldn't afford to upgrade it as needed. The only time we outright purchase anything is if we get a grant, or we apply for funding for a specific item or items."

Gordon is sold on the value-for-money aspect of the OptimiseIT service. Because costs are charged at a set rate, the school's IT budget is now completely predictable. There are no overspends and no need for contingency funds for the unexpected.

"We are saving money because the contract is so inclusive," said Gordon. "It covers everything including repairs, maintenance and of course insurance, which is a large expense, and all of our computer consumables – except for paper. We used to put aside part of our IT budget every year just for repairs, and our insurance excess was so high that we were never able to replace like-for-like."

To make things even easier, if devices are stolen or damaged OptimiseIT have replacement hardware delivered the very next day.

As a further bonus, part of the Fuji Xerox OptimiseIT services mandate is ensuring the hardware is the latest available so it always performs at optimal levels, meaning that the school and its students are no longer restricted by the limitations of aging technology.

Helpful and handy

The OptimiseIT HelpDesk is supported locally. This means school staff always talk to someone in their own time zone who is familiar with their particular technology and the way they are using it.

However, when it came to dealing with the demands of their first client in the education sector, it wasn't quite 'business as usual' for the HelpDesk. Because of the acute impact an interruption in service has on a classroom of waiting students, a call from the school couldn't simply be logged and responded to within the hour. In addition, the school's non-standard operating hours meant that the window of opportunity to respond and resolve was much tighter.

To overcome this Gordon and his team worked with the HelpDesk to establish a specific support model that solved issues in a timely fashion. This includes a technician who calls in on a weekly basis to troubleshoot, and an on-call technician for urgent issues.

A real difference

As far as Gordon is concerned, Fuji Xerox has more than stepped up to the mark as a partner. "We want to make a real difference in students' lives. So when we are working with someone they can't just be an ordinary company, they need to be an organisation that cares. I challenged them right at the beginning to do that, because if you don't care about my kids then we can't have a relationship."

Being a low decile school means pressures and challenges, and not ones that Gordon wishes to pass on to the students' families if they can be avoided. "We would like to be able to one day give our whanau and our families options to have the same technologies in their homes, in an affordable way. It's tough because you don't want your kids to be left out, you don't want them to feel bad if they don't have the IT devices that they need. I would love every kid in our school to have a device. We just need to think of different ways to make that concept a reality."

Fuji Xerox is well known for its deep level of engagement in the education sector. The company commits around \$1 million a year to supporting school programmes including scholarships, the Next Generation Leaders Programme, and Project K – a programme helping kids to gain self-confidence and learn life skills.

So Gordon's challenge to show they are a company that cares is one they are proud to rise to.

As well as delivering a total managed IT service through OptimiseIT, the company has contributed some much appreciated practical support to the school. This includes co-branded Kelston Intermediate and Fuji Xerox shirts for a group of students visiting Samoa last year, branded shirts for teachers, an iPad presented by the company to an outstanding student at the end-of-year prize giving, and a 3D printer.

"Despite any issues which have come up," said Gordon, "you always have a sense that these guys are listening to you, and want to solve the problem. You don't always get that feeling with some people you talk to who provide services to schools."

Taking a stand

Gordon couldn't be happier with the outcome. "With our new IT capabilities and range of devices we're on a par with any primary or intermediate school in West Auckland."

In his position of Principal he also appreciates the value of his own hard won reputation, so is always careful when he makes a recommendation.

"For me to actively promote a company they have to be outstanding. As far as I'm concerned it's all about providing really good outcomes for our kids, so other principals know I wouldn't support Fuji Xerox if they didn't share that same passion."