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Parkstone Grammar School

Parkstone Grammar School was founded in 1905 as a co-educational school at Ashley Cross in Parkstone, Dorset. Originally opened by William Earnest, the school has been a recognised Science Specialist College since 2003 and became a language specialist college in 2008. Approximately 1,089 students from school years 7 to 13 attend the school of whom 350 are in the sixth form. On 1st January 2012 Parkstone Grammar was officially awarded Academy status. The school's popularity can be attributed to a positive school ethos, high standards, excellent examination results, high quality teaching plus a caring and friendly approach.

Parkstone Grammar School places high value on courtesy and consideration for others. The school ethos is to help the girls to develop self-discipline, a sense of self-worth, independence of thought and confidence in expressing themselves, encouraging their participation in a wide range of activities including art, music, sport and drama. This gives the girls tremendous opportunities to explore and extend their talents, often with national recognition.

Craig Judd is the IT Network Manager, responsible for server applications and systems management in the school and has been working for the Parkstone Grammar School for the past 11 years. Here, Craig tells us why and how Groupcall Emerge was chosen and implemented within the school.

"We discovered Groupcall while searching in desperation for a simpler mobile system to replace our existing solution that was failing. Following an 8-week trial, we purchased 12 licences for use on iPhones, iPods and iPads. I was really impressed with the response and attitude that I received from the pre-sales/technical team at Groupcall. I didn't feel any pressure and the whole team was extremely helpful.

Groupcall Emerge is a powerful, yet intuitive App available for both Apple iOS and Android devices enabling schools to have an up-to-the-minute copy of their MIS (Management Information System) data instantly and securely available in the palm of their hand for access anytime, anywhere. Registration can be taken simply with Emerge and written directly back to the school's MIS along with behaviour and achievement information write-back for SIMS.

Emerge fell in line with our changing device management and the simple interface appealed from the start. The implementation process was seamless and it sits on one of our Hyper-V virtual server hosts along with the main SIMS database. The Emerge server/Xporter service appears relatively lightweight and my early concerns of processor load were unfounded. We have not noticed any impact in performance from the database, which is a credit to the product. I'd like to thank the whole Groupcall support team for the implementation which (fingers crossed) remains bullet proof!"

Craig continues: "Product training was provided, but to be honest, Emerge is so simple, I don't see any person with a modicum of technical skill having any issues with the entire platform. Due to the product being so intuitive, very little training is required. The after-sales service has been excellent and Emerge has improved the workload of my staff. It takes away the pressure of logging in, time constraints, class focus and brings the power back to the staff! The system actually frees mobile staff members to be just that – mobile.

The feedback from staff so far has been good and having the ability to access data in the offline mode is great. The latest version has behaviour and achievement write-back for SIMS included, along with video and photographic functionality. We've yet to try this but it looks good!"

Craig concludes: "I would certainly recommend Emerge to other schools and I'm excited about the future of Emerge and what plans they have for the development of the product in the long term. I personally think it's a great interface, in a way I wish there was a desktop application for it as well, as it's a lot simpler than SIMS.

For further information on Groupcall's range of products, please call: 020 8502 7344, email: sales@groupcall.com or visit: www.groupcall.com