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## ‘School of the Future’ Bexhill High Enjoys Communications of the Future

Bexhill High School is an International Community Technology College, situated in Bexhill on Sea, East Sussex. The school is home to 250 teachers and staff, responsible for 1,500 students, aged 11 to 18.

In November 2010, a brand new Bexhill High School was built, following funding of £37m from the Government’s Building Schools for the Future programme. A new Skills Centre was also constructed on a second site, offering the community a wide range of vocational courses, from engineering to woodwork, to hair and beauty.

### The Situation

Bexhill High is a showcase of technology innovation in education. A new **state-of-the-art telephone system** was essential, to match the technologically advanced facility.

It was the task of Jon Martin, ICT Project Manager at East Sussex County Council, to manage the IT implementation at Bexhill High. He explained: “Bexhill High is a state-of-the-art facility offering new ways of learning, with 60in screens in every classroom and personal laptops or tablet PCs, for every student.



East Sussex County Council Project Manager, Jon Martin (in Lewes)

We needed a technologically advanced telephony system to match the fantastic ICT facilities in the school.”

### The Tender Process

With a history of Cisco corporate communications in East Sussex, the County Council invited 3 local providers to tender for a Cisco solution and any suitable alternatives.

### As preferred supplier to the East Sussex County Council,

Cavendish had won the initial £300,000 deal for the structured cabling for the project and was in regular discussions with the local council, about ICT requirements to support the Next Generation Networks programme for schools in East Sussex.



As a result of the relationship, the Head of ICT at the East Sussex County Council had attended one in a **series of Cavendish educational seminars** in 2010, explaining some of the options for Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity. On the strength of this event, Cavendish was invited to tender for the communications at the new school.

## The Solution

The Mitel Applications Suite was deployed alongside a Mitel Communications Director 3300 platform, providing Bexhill High with a range of advanced features to better connect staff, parents and students.

Bexhill High employs 250 members of staff, who work across the main school and the Skills Centre. Using the Mitel system, teachers and support staff are no longer tied to a single location and can easily communicate from any of the 100 desks and workstations available.

## The Benefits

Teachers have a single number, so staff, colleagues and parents can contact them wherever they are, maximising their availability. **Staff can simply log into any IP handset** and their extension number controls the call flow and any enabled features, such as pre-programmed speed dials, regardless of where they are and which phone they are using.

Mitel's voicemail to email function is also proving critical to ensuring **teachers can receive and respond to messages quickly**. Due to the nature of their role, teachers are not always available to take calls, but the new phone system converts all voicemails to .wav files and sends them to the individual's email address. Teachers can easily pick up the voicemail from their laptops, in the school, at home or at other locations, for maximum convenience.

The school also now has the advanced Mitel call reporting functionality, Jon Martin explains: "Call reporting provides Bexhill High with complete visibility over who is calling into and out of the school, so we can keep track of

billing and focus on driving down costs in specific areas. Having granularity of calls to and from the Skills Centre is particularly useful, given the commercial nature of some of the activities, such as the hair and beauty set-up."

The ability to record calls at the touch of a button is enabling teachers to **easily capture parent feedback** so issues or concerns can be shared with colleagues and handled appropriately. Phone users simply push a button to instantly start an ad-hoc recording.



*"Nothing seemed too much trouble for Cavendish"*

## Why Cavendish

Asked why Cavendish had been selected, Jon Martin explained, "Cavendish had submitted a Cisco quotation but also suggested we looked at an alternative solution from Mitel. The Mitel quote was competitive as far as the up front costs were concerned and offered **significant annual savings** for the on-going maintenance and support costs. It also offered many additional system features as standard, rather than optional extras."

Jon went on to say, "Cavendish were able to demonstrate the proposed Mitel solution to the key decision makers at the school in their **customer demonstration suite** in their offices.

## Why Mitel

Ask why the school had decided upon the Mitel solution, Jon Martin said, "It was clear that Mitel could offer a **cost-effective IP phone system** that didn't compromise on features and capability."

We previously had only 30 extensions for 250 staff and the Mitel system provided the opportunity for us to put in place a highly advanced, feature-rich IP system to support all teachers and staff across both sites."

Jon Martin explains: "With our advanced network and 60in screens located throughout the school, we're ideally set up to take full advantage of the **video conferencing capabilities** offered by Mitel. We have lots of relationships with international schools and pitch our capability as a 'virtual learning environment' so this fits brilliantly with our ethos and collaborative approach to learning."

## Working with Cavendish

Commenting about the experience of working with Cavendish, Jon Martin said, "**Cavendish did a great job of getting the school operational in just two and a half weeks**. Timescales for the school communications were very tight and Cavendish not only responded quickly, but offered a solution that saved us over £2000 per year in support costs over the competition." Jon went on to say, "**Nothing seemed too much trouble for Cavendish, they were really responsive and dealt with any issues quickly without ever panicking.**"