

# Manor House School

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Val Allcott  
Administration Manager at  
Manor House School

**Manor House School is an independent school that offers a traditional and caring environment for its 400 pupils, from the beginning of their education at nursery through to the completion of their GCSEs. Based in Leatherhead, Surrey, this girls only school is relatively small, but has fully embraced the benefits that ICT can deliver, not only in the classroom, but also throughout the running of the entire school.**

The school has a full-time ICT Technician who is dedicated to improving the ICT facilities, but with more and more equipment entering the classroom such as PCs and interactive whiteboards, as well as the infrastructure needed to support these tools, it was becoming a real challenge for one person alone.

Val Allcott, Manor House School's Administration Manager describes the dichotomy the school faced, *"A technology failure, such as a curriculum server malfunction, can immediately impact on the usually smooth day-to-day running of our school. However, we are not able to afford a dedicated IT department to meet our needs and even if we could, there wouldn't be the office space available to house them."*

To maintain the school's existing investment, as well as to assist in keeping abreast of advances in ICT, the school needed additional support and at the beginning of 2007 contacted specialist IT solutions consultancy ramzac. Mrs Allcott explains why, *"I was already well aware of ramzac and recognised that we too could benefit from their expertise."*

The first job undertaken by ramzac was to work with the school's ICT Technician to complete a thorough audit of the technology infrastructure, including a review of existing and future requirements. ramzac provided a report detailing the condition of all the ICT hardware in the school - including its 120 PCs - implementing a colour coded system whereby each item was labelled red, amber

or green to indicate when it would require upgrading or replacing. The completion of this audit report brought with it an immediate sense of relief for the school,

*"Relying so heavily on our ICT, but not knowing the condition it was in had been a constant source of worry for the school for some time," adds Mrs Allcott. "Now for the first time we would be able to understand our situation, make plans for the future and budget appropriately."*

To assist in the creation and execution of these plans ramsac appointed one of its Network Consultants as Manor House School's dedicated ICT consultant, who visits the school on a regular basis.

*"Knowing when ramsac will be on-site means we can have a rolling schedule of issues, questions and developments that we can work through,"*

continues Mrs Allcott.

*"We also have telephone and email support throughout the week, so if anything urgent arises, we know it will be dealt with efficiently."*

During the audit process it was revealed that the school did not have an adequate procedure

in place for the back-up of important documents.

A tape-based back-up system was implemented along with a tape rotation schedule.

This ensures that all the latest versions of documents can be stored and taken off-site at the end of each school day for extra safety and security, with the system thoroughly tested monthly.

Next, ramsac replaced one of the schools ageing network servers, as well as installing a Microsoft Exchange 2007 server to overcome the fundamental issues the school was experiencing when using email, as Mrs Allcott states, *"We were using a web-based email service which didn't allow us to use basic but important functions such as shared calendars and contacts. Now we benefit from access to shared calendars and we know that our emails are more secure and are being properly backed up."*

By working together ramsac and the school have been able to implement a realistic timeline for all such projects taking into account urgency and budget.

Future plans include a new curriculum server that will include all of the teaching applications and tools that are needed by teaching staff in the classroom. This project is scheduled for roll out in April 2008.

The relationship between ramsac, the school and in particular the ICT Technician has made a huge difference, as Mrs Allcott explains, *"Not only does the school benefit from working with ramsac, but our ICT Technician now knows he is a highly valued member of a larger ICT team. He is able to discuss his own ideas for improving ICT with us and his ramsac colleagues, as well as getting involved in training programmes to further improve his own skills."*

*"The professionalism, expertise and commitment we have enjoyed from ramsac since day one cannot be faulted,"* concludes Mrs Allcott.

*"They help us to make the right decisions for the school and our pupils. Today our ICT is planned, efficient and an integral part of Manor House School's operations."*