We-Learn

Nicholas Chamberlaine Technology College, Bedworth
Focus on: e-registration

Challenges of registration


Paul Williams, Deputy Head

When Nicholas Chamberlaine Technology College in Bedworth was in special measures in 2000, its record of 'lates' and attendance was poor, so deputy head Paul Williams was asked to research a way to carry out registration electronically. The Leadership Team also scrutinised other issues concerned with registration. The afternoon registration seemed to be a time-consuming process which involved 1600 pupils and 80 teachers moving to form rooms after lunch for a five minute registration process and then immediately changing classroom again to start their lessons. The registration itself was carried out manually by teachers using optical mark registration forms (OMR) printed off by the central registration function and then the runners carried the forms to the central administration resource so that they could be entered into the registration system by the two-man registration team. These forms were read electronically and then sent back to Year Team leader to be used again the next day. Another area to be considered was that of internal truanting whereby pupils are present for morning or afternoon registration but are absent for the lessons in between. The DfES had said that internal truanting was a problem, which needed to be addressed in schools across England as it can lead to poor academic achievement, poor social networks and disruption to classes. Nicholas Chamberlaine researched ways of electronically registering pupils on a lesson-by-lesson basis. They considered methods such as swipe cards and mini personal digital assistants for registration connected to radio terminals.

The new registration process

The Leadership Team took the decision to abandon the afternoon registration which was traditionally done in the 67 form rooms. Registration for the afternoon is now carried out in period four, the first lesson of the afternoon, which still meets the legal requirement of registration being taken within one hour of the first lesson of the afternoon starting. Nicholas Chamberlaine Technology College uses the SIMS management system and when SIMS was taken over by Capita, the company began offering a lesson-by-lesson e-registration monitor. The school decided to stay with SIMS and to take up the lesson-by-lesson monitor to allow them to monitor internal truanting.

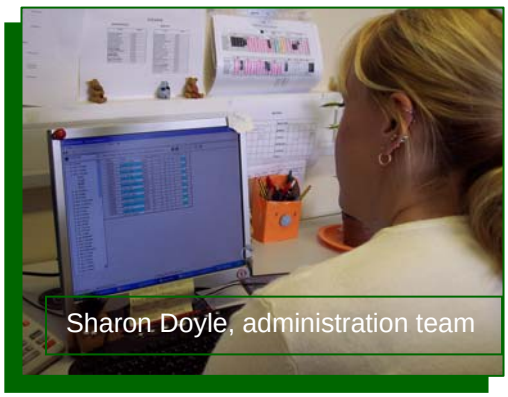

Janet Hall, Head of MFL

When supply teachers are brought in, subject leaders load up lesson monitor for them so that they can take the register, as they do not have the appropriate passwords. They have also implemented TruancyCall, a system which automatically dials parents when their children are absent and leaves them an automated message. This is used in conjunction with e-registration so that staff can make doubly sure the child is away before using TruancyCall. This has reduced absenteeism.

Implementing e-registration

All teachers are using e-registration for am and pm registration. Three departments are currently piloting e-registration on a lesson-by-lesson basis. Teachers find that if they have the

lesson objective projected onto the screen, then registration acts as a time to settle the class down while the teacher takes the roll call and the class writes down the learning objectives. From the June 2006 half term, e-registration will be carried out by all teachers (except PE and drama which do not have classroom PCs) for every morning and afternoon registration; and from September 2006 those departments will also carry out registration on a lesson-by-lesson basis. So in the space of just two terms the school will have moved completely to e-registration for every lesson.


Sharon Doyle, administration team

Computer systems

The school cascades its old PCs from refurbished ICT suites to other classrooms throughout the school and now 51 classrooms have a PC and 49 have a We-Learn PC in place. 30 of the non We-Learn classrooms recently gained high specification PCs as the school decided to purchase laptops for its managers and to give their PCs to the classrooms. The We-Learn PCs and some of the newer non We-Learn PCs run on Windows XP and the CSE Network Toolkit. Having this software means that the computers can be controlled from the central server so that if a teacher forgets to close down their system, for example, the ICT manager can do that without visiting the classroom in person. The school is developing a virtual network and when this is in place, staff will be able to access all its systems (We-Learn, the school's ADSL broadband, SIMS, Curriculum Network and Maths Password) using one Headstart. They are planning to radio link their Tablets or laptops so that all staff have a communication system with them. This will make it easier to alert individual or all staff if they are needed at a meeting or if a pupil has been reported absent.

Benefits

- Truants and patterns of attendance are easy to identify from the e-registration reports.
- Teachers who have not completed registration can be quickly identified.
- e-registration saves time and money – optical mark registers are costly to print out and time-consuming to print out and scan. At Nicholas Chamberlaine they used to have to print out 600 registers to cover the afternoon lessons.
- Pupils see registration as more significant now that it is electronic.
- Internal truanting has been reduced to almost zero.
- The system provides excellent and irrefutable data

About the school

We-Learn is used in around half the school, in 49 classrooms. Kaleidos is available across the curriculum on 50 laptops and 49 Tablet PCs.

Nicholas Chamberlaine is a comprehensive school for 1637 students aged 11 to 18. It became a Technology College in February 2003.

Tips

- *When introducing e-registration, pilot it with three departments that volunteer for one month for morning and afternoon registration. Then report back. Then introduce e-registration for am and pm registration with no OMR or manual registration option. But do have a contingency plan to use in the unlikely event of the electronic system failing. Then feedback before introducing Lesson Monitoring for everyone*
- *Set up a dynamic link with the school server so that it automatically copies files from laptops/Tablets onto the school server, to reduce loss of files and to save teachers' time copying files*
- *If teachers are issued with laptops/Tablets, ensure that they are brought into school every day to be used for teaching*
- *Have as many classroom PCs running on Windows XP as you can so that technicians can manage them remotely to save time on visiting classrooms individually*