CHRIS LEWIS
FIRE & SECURITY

St Edward's School

Building a secure network at St Edward's

St Edward's School, Oxford was founded in 1863. Currently it has approximately 660 pupils, between the ages of 12 and 18, 76% of which are boarders. The academic standard is very high and the school offers a huge extra-curricular programme of sport, music and drama.

Project background

Like all schools, St Edward's takes the security of its staff, pupils, their possessions, and its premises and equipment very seriously.

The majority of the school's students are boarders, which the school accommodates in eleven accommodation blocks. Chris Lewis Fire & Security was initially asked to install access control to the boarding houses in 2001. Four years later, it was commissioned to upgrade and network the access control system to provide more flexible access to staff and students.

The school wanted to grant authorised users access to the accommodation blocks during designated daytime hours, but restrict access to certain staff at night time – also serving to prevent students from leaving their accommodation after curfew. It also wanted to be able to centrally manage the access control system and be able to expand it to include doors in other buildings in the future.

Richard Hayes commented, "The extendibility of the access control system was critical. Our priority was to install it in the boarding houses initially and then gradually to roll the system out to incorporate departments that house high value equipment. Our goal is to incorporate the entire school onto the system with the next five years."

More recently St Edward's has needed to upgrade the fire protection system in one of the boys' boarding houses, Apsley House, and to incorporate disabled access in some of their accommodation blocks. It required two of the girl's boarding houses and two of the boy's boarding houses to be installed with automated doors and access control pads at heights which complied with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).

Richard Hayes added, "We made the decision that it is not currently feasible to provide disabled access across all the accommodation blocks, but by installing it at two of the girl's and two of the boy's houses we can give disabled pupils an option as to which house they join."

Project scope

Access control

Automated doors for disabled access

Fire system upgrade

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> "We have a long standing relationship with Chris Lewis Fire & Security and we greatly value their product and technical knowledge, and their professionalism. They provide a very efficient call-out service if we experience a problem and their engineers are always very friendly and efficient."
>
> Richard Hayes, Estates Bursar
> St Edward's School

The solution

Chris Lewis Fire & Security installed a Paxton Net 2 access control system on the school's existing IT network. Students gain access in and out of buildings controlled by the system by entering a code into the keypads located at the doors.

The system is centrally managed through a Windows-based user interface. This enables authorised staff to change the code when necessary and control times when doors can be opened using the keypad. At those times when movement of students needs to be restricted, the system is programmed to allow entry only to those with an authorised proximity fob. In this way, the school can secure the students in their accommodation blocks at night, whilst enabling authorized staff to enter and exit the buildings as necessary.

Chris Lewis Fire & Security also integrated the access control system with the school's fire alarm system so that if a fire alarm goes off, the doors in that building are released automatically. We also installed break glass sounders on each door that are incorporated into the access control system. In the event of an emergency an individual can break the glass to release the door. The system's interface identifies which door has been released enabling staff to respond immediately to any potential problem.

The fire system upgrade to Apsley House had to be completed in four days to meet the school's own time constraints, so a team of experienced engineers was deployed to work round the clock to complete the job on time. Richard Hayes commented, "Chris Lewis Fire & Security's engineers did an excellent job in very difficult circumstances."

Disabled access at four of the accommodation blocks was provided by installing automated doors and lowering the the key pads and proximity readers to the height recommended in the DDA.

The results

The Net 2 access control system was installed with minimum disruption by using the school's existing IT network and cables. The benefits of the system are extensive and enable the school to monitor and control movement across its buildings. The system is controlled by centrally managed software application with a user friendly Windows-based interface that can be accessed from any workstation on the network. Any number of authorised personnel can remotely access the software simultaneously.

The software permits authorised personnel to control every door on the system individually, as well as to amend access rights each proximity fob as required. This makes the system particularly useful as fobs can be issued to contractors and cleaners who only need access to specific areas at certain times on certain days. Other features include the ability to cancel a fob if it is lost or stolen, to issue a new or temporary fob, and to run reports on users' and building's access history.

Richard Hayes added, "The system offers the ideal solution for keeping our students secure and keeping unwanted intruders out. The versatility of the system is ideal for a school environment because it enables us to restrict access at certain times. So, for example, we can let cleaners in only at those times when they're working, and we can ensure that the pupils are safe and secure after school hours."

The Net2 system is extremely versatile and highly extendable. As St Edward's decides to install access control in other buildings, the system can simply be programmed to incorporate the additional doors.