



# Coventry Council's Woodway Park School Chooses The IT Index for IT Procurement

## Save Time, Save Money, Improve IT Procurement Efficiency

Delivering the very best IT into the classroom in the shortest possible time and for the best price, every time has shot to the top of the agenda in education establishments. No longer does the debate focus solely on the importance of getting the highest specification 'computers for schools', it now rests on getting them there in the first place. That means consistently best price and quickest delivery.

Much of this movement has been stimulated by government and independent bodies pressing for fiscal savings through transformation of business processes. The 'Efficiency Review' is an example of one report that has sparked the debate and targets laid down by the government.

However, schools' approach to processes are largely based on the ethos of their Head Teacher and Bursar in much the same manner as a small business follows the direction of its MD and FD. Often their specific requirements for purchasing of IT are very different to the public sector at large – a balancing act of providing quality education vs maximising budgets.

But more efficient procurement can deliver product faster and for a better price, which means budgets can be used to purchase more or even better equipment.

Woodway Park School is one pro-active organisation that is seeing the benefits of a best practice procurement tool – theitindex.co.uk/gov – delivering best value IT purchase after purchase. This has helped the school smash the DFES PC:pupil ratio of 2:1.

## The Client

Woodway Park School has been established for 30 years and is part of the education offering from Coventry City Council. Currently there are 750 pupils between the ages of 11 and 18.

The resources team has to support a diverse network of 530 machines and 40 printers.

With a focus on providing greater access to studying aids through technology, the school recognised its IT infrastructure required development to enhance its pupil to PC ratio and secure ICT Qualifications.

## The Challenge

The school classically used its outsourced IT service and support manager to procure IT. This meant the school had little control over securing the best deal or delivery.

The school's Head decided that on this occasion, Resources Manager, Deborah Brown, should be given the opportunity to secure the best deal given her outstanding record of achieving best value purchases in other areas.

Deborah would commonly use a combination of phone and web research to investigate product spec and price before contacting multiple preferred suppliers to manually compare and negotiate the best deal. Whilst this process consistently returns exceptional price and service, it is recognised that it can be very time consuming.

Woodway Park acknowledged that as part of its development of the IT infrastructure and given that the IT marketplace is highly dynamic – daily price, availability and spec changes - a new process of procuring IT had to be found.

A trial implementation of Probrand's The IT Index/gov was agreed with Coventry City Council and Woodway Park school.

## The Solution

theitindex.co.uk/gov is a web based procurement solution which daily updates a list of more than 100,000 products from more than 1200 different suppliers by best price and availability. Operating in a secure on-line environment, the solution saves time, saves money and adds value to the bottom line, so organisations can stretch the reach of their IT budget.

Core functionality:

- Free to register
- Product search by brand, code, spec. Europe's largest listing from the biggest brands
- Central management functionality - budget tracking, analysis, planning & forecasting
- Improved spend visibility and reduced rogue purchasing
- Automated comparison engine – eliminates time consuming supplier ring rounds and manual comparisons
- Accredited by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales
- Catalyst framework approved
- The solution maintains total price transparency, displaying mainline distribution cost and cost plus agreed margin.
- The solution enables users to get to the best priced product in the shortest possible time - from a server to a printer toner cartridge.

## The Benefits

As part of a 'one stop shop' approach, Woodway park has enjoyed a unique combination of cutting edge e-procurement technology and personalised customer relationship management - theitindex.co.uk/gov and Probrand's reliable service, support and account management function.

Resources Manager Deborah Brown explains: "theitindex.co.uk/gov is a buyers dream tool, it removes the 'noise' of suppliers and cuts straight to a great deal. It is saving us in excess of an hour per order, which would otherwise be spent liaising with suppliers. This equates to four working days a month that are better spent on other key tasks.

"theitindex.co.uk/gov is also saving us on average around 10% on our IT budget, which can be used to buy higher specification equipment and the very latest technology. This means our pupils are able to advance their use and understanding of newer technology earlier in their education. So, our pupils are actually benefiting from the implementation of a more efficient procurement process.

"An example. Much of our system is Dell based, but the solution demonstrated to us that HP provided a better cost, availability and specification match. We were then able to discuss the finer details of this high configuration, high volume five figure order with our account manager at Probrand. We saved over 35% on this order alone. Result!"

"The fact that we have achieved a best value deal has enabled us to increase the number of PC's per head to more than 2:1, outstripping DFES recommendations.

"We have been so impressed with the overall solution to our IT procurement headaches that we have started to convert all our printers to HP as well.

"Our purchasing is driven by a combination of best price and service. It is no good securing a great price if the delivery doesn't support it.

"With theitindex.co.uk/gov, I have the reassurance that the price is the best in the UK, the delivery will happen and we will only be charged per order bundle and not on an item by item basis. Furthermore, if I have a query I know I will not be put on hold or call back. The Probrand account team is impressively prompt and we have valued the powerful 'one stop shop' approach they offer.

"Beyond the brief, this solution has enabled us to develop and broaden our purchasing function. I no longer need to worry about IT procurement. theitindex.co.uk/gov has given us a best practice process to secure best value every time."

Kristian Smith, Strategic Procurement Officer at Coventry Council, added: "The solution matches the needs of the challenging education environment. It has improved the financial, labour and management efficiency of the school's ICT expenditure."

Headmaster, Steve Allen, adds: "This truly is a best practice purchasing tool that has demonstrated that great deals do exist outside of Dell.

“Based on the benefits we have enjoyed in such a short space of time, the solution has the potential to save the education sector around £70m on its annual IT spend and as a result we are keen to share our experiences with other leading schools in the region.

“Put simply, it is helping us provide our pupils with a better education.”

## Contact Details

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