

Partnership Case Study

Barnardiston Hall & Eastern Business Systems Ltd



Barnardiston Hall
Preparatory School

Interactive Education

The Barnardiston Group of Schools consists of Barnardiston Hall and Riddlesworth Hall, both mainstream preparatory schools for pupils aged 2-13 years and Broadlands Hall, a specialist school for students aged 11-18 years with autism and associated learning difficulties. The group has always believed in combining traditional methods of teaching with the latest technology.

Barnardiston and Riddlesworth were founded 50 and 60 years ago, respectively, with Broadlands Hall set up in 2005. Small class sizes, enthusiastic staff and the latest interactive, digital whiteboard technology brings learning to life for pupils.

Angela Gregory has been the Schools' Bursar for the last 13 years. "We have a built a reputation for being progressive. The Headmaster's goal is to achieve very high educational standards while making learning fun. This is helped by having the latest whiteboards installed in classrooms which the children have started to use, making the latest technology part of their everyday school life. Most of the teachers have adapted to the OliBoard dual-pen system very happily as they can involve the children more. We were also delighted that, during our recent round of ISI / Ofsted inspections, the inspectors specifically commented on the boards and were pleased with the way we were using them in class."

There are currently 9 interactive boards installed at Barnardiston Hall, connected to the School's Linux server, and 4 on the Broadlands Hall site, which are connected to Windows. The boards, which include the Olivetti OliBoard dual-pen range, were installed by local business equipment provider, Eastern Business Systems (EBS), with offices in Norwich, Peterborough, Cambridge and Colchester, who have been supplying the schools' copying and printing systems for the last 10 years.

Angela said "EBS has been so helpful in supplying and installing the new OliBoards. They have always offered an excellent personal service to us and so, naturally, we were more than happy to take a look at the new boards they suggested. We have been delighted with the results."

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While there is a variety of capacitive pen operated boards installed in the classrooms, Nick Robinson, Head of IT and Trevor Knee, his IT Technician who joined the School on the very first day of EBS' OliBoard training for the staff, explained that they had a real need for uniformity. As Nick explained, "One of the challenges we faced with some of the previous boards was that they were quite slow to respond when written on and we had a problem with not being able to write clearly as lines appeared too thick on the screen, even if you chose the thinnest option. The OliBoards we have now react instantly and, with their high resolution, we can write more clearly with more text able to be written on the board."

Paul Biggs of EBS has been working very closely with Angela Gregory for 10 years. He said; "It was vital that any system we installed was going to be right for the Schools. We have been aware that the Schools' IT systems are predominantly Linux-based and this needed some careful consideration. Fortunately, Nick Robinson comes from a Linux background, so we were able to work very closely with him, and with Trevor on the Windows application, to ensure everything could connect properly. With both Nick's and Trevor's backgrounds, the Schools are working towards having the best of both worlds, which is rather unusual."

The OliBoards have offered Barnardiston Hall and Riddlesworth Hall improved flexibility and quality. They are proving to be reliable, robust and fast. Images and information can be downloaded instantly from the internet or from the Schools' servers and they offer a much more streamlined look to the classroom. Teachers like the different backgrounds available on the OliBoards. The colours are vibrant and the pens can be used simultaneously on any part of the board. The feedback from teachers and children has been very positive about the speed and ease of moving images and texts around on the screen and also about the functionality.

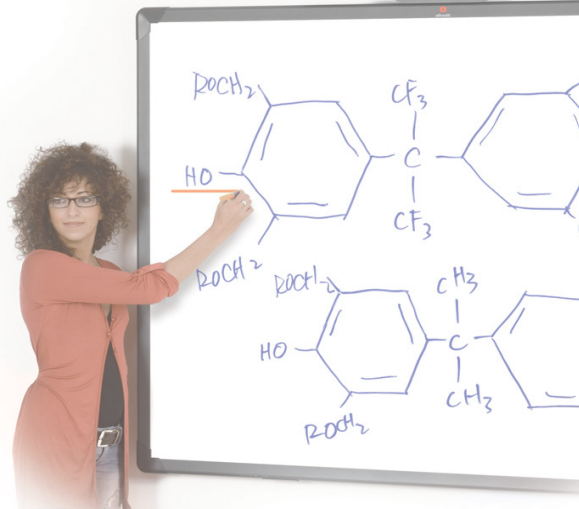
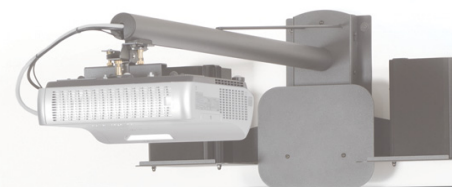
The OliBoard's function menu is located on the screen via a screen-based circular image - one for each pen. Each round image has a feather icon in the centre to signify a traditional "quill".

When this is touched with a pen, an extensive list of functions is displayed on the screen and chosen by the user. These "feather" icons can be minimised, allowing writing and images to take priority.

The screen can also be used to play videos, thanks to its high resolution screen and good quality speakers. Teachers are also able to print their work directly from the OliBoards to the Schools' network colour multi-functional machines, via the server, making homework and classwork quick and easy to produce.

What is more, the cost of ownership is also being addressed. "We noticed that we were starting to spend more on the maintenance of our older boards" explained Nick. "With our copying and printing equipment through our suppliers, EBS, we know what the cost of ownership is going to be".

Angela Gregory concluded that, "for schools like ours, it is really important that the way we operate has been sympathetically taken into account by EBS. Paul and the rest of the team recognised that we had a need for the OliBoards - they are compact and offer the children a hands-on opportunity to embrace the latest technology. Throughout the process we needed to keep in contact with EBS and found everyone there so approachable. Whenever I call EBS, I have instant access to everyone when I need them, including the Managing Director, Kevin Francis. He is always incredibly helpful and Kevin, the EBS engineers and Paul always go that extra mile for us. I think we have an excellent partnership".



setting new standards