



CASE STUDY

Adding a digital layer to enhance the traditional learning experience



Highlights

- Supports positive student well-being with location tracking and video calling
- Accelerates the adoption of digital teaching methods
- Simplifies network management with secure segmentation and clear visibility of use

1,000
network users

100+
acre site

2
campuses

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SAM YOUNGS

Head of Digital Services, Langley School

LOCATION

Norfolk, UK

INDUSTRY

Education

PRODUCTS

Meraki MS series switches,
Meraki MR wireless
access points

Overview

[Langley School](#) is a thriving coeducational day and boarding school for students aged 6 months-18 years, situated in Norfolk, UK.



Challenge

Langley School is a fee-paying educational institution in the east of England, and is home to 765 students and boarders. There are many reasons why parents choose Langley, ranging from the educational excellence; the two 100-acre sites of countryside; or the school's values of kindness, confidence, curiosity, and integrity.

Until recently, very few would have scored Langley highly in terms of network connectivity. The school, occupying two sites on the outskirts of Norwich, lacked functional Wi-Fi. Though there was a desktop in every classroom, internet access was only possible through one of the school's thirteen IT suites for students.

"Technology was not regarded as essential to a good education," said Sam Youngs, Head of Digital Services at Langley School. "Connectivity in our rural locations was often limited to 3G, and only accessible from the IT suites."

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The pandemic changed everything: many students were required to be taught remotely, Langley had to govern capacity in certain rooms, and events, including Parents Evenings, had to be held virtually. Overnight the school recognised it needed a new level of flexibility, and that a network upgrade was key to building a modern approach to learning.

“The future arrived very quickly,” said Youngs. “We needed the network to open up new possibilities for the school, for teaching, and for students.”

Solution

Langley had previously established budget priorities that resulted in underinvesting in the network, according to Youngs. The strategic importance of the upgrade required the school to think seriously about a long-term solution.

“We looked at several possibilities, but my experience with Cisco Meraki gave me the confidence that Meraki would be the best option. Given the small size of the team, I wanted a solution that would be easy to manage on the fly where I could scale up new networks as required,” he explained. “What we needed to avoid was complex configuration and multiple VLANs.”

The Meraki solution is built on MR wireless access points and MS series switches, with a 10-year license agreement. It ensures Wi-Fi connectivity throughout the two sites, both indoors and out.

“We were conscious of the significance of the investment, but also consider Meraki as best-of-breed,” says Youngs. “It gives us long-term peace of mind, no matter how the network grows.”



MS SWITCHES

Results

The impact is transformative. Langley has gone from a place where connectivity was restricted to select rooms to a flexible, campus-wide wireless experience. Staff and students can now work with tablets and laptops and classes are being held outdoors. This has all been achieved with no loss of control or oversight.

“I can now scale up a new network for a different user group very quickly,” says Youngs, “each with a distinct level of access, bandwidth, and security.”

For example, Langley can provide more open network access for sixth formers (ages 16 and up), with tighter control for younger users. Teachers and operational staff have their own networks, and Youngs can also provision a network for day visitors or guests booking out-of-term accommodations.

With clear boundaries and policies in place, the school is more confident in exploring possibilities. Teachers are encouraged to find a work style that suits them and there is no central mandate on how lessons should be taught. From April 2022, year three students and upwards will be issued devices. With a solid network in place, Youngs' role, he says, is to support staff and students and to explore what might be possible.

"This is only the start. We recognise this is a journey," he says. "It has become apparent that many teachers were craving a great wireless connection. I've been encouraged by the variety of ways the network is being used."

The ideas Langley is pursuing include location-based teaching content—where students can access material in specific areas—and ring-fencing network access. The network will also enable Langley to host teachers who broadcast lessons into classrooms from overseas, extending the school's educational excellence. Youngs is also looking at sensors to monitor the environment where equipment is located. Meraki sensors provide alerts for excessive temperature, moisture, and more. "We have a small team," he says. "Anything that helps improve management of the campus is useful."



With students boarding (and a high percentage of international students), the network can also be used to support positive student well-being. Location tracking can pinpoint students across each campus and apps can be used to help students check their mental health.

“One of the most obvious differences has been the ability for students to hold video calls with their parents,” said Youngs. “Previously, they may have had to book one of the IT suites. Today, conversations can be more spontaneous and private. That is extremely important to the well-being of students and is reassuring for parents.”

“It’s my hope that our [IT] team can use Meraki products to change our jobs from being merely a help desk to helping our faculty use all kinds of technology in the classroom,” said Youngs. “Students are using new technology everywhere else in their lives, so why not at Langley, too?” By choosing Meraki, Langley School was quickly able to adapt to the changes the pandemic brought to their campuses while prioritizing remote education for their students, additional technological support for staff and faculty, and a learning experience that extends far beyond the classroom walls.



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