

Central Hosting

simpler management,
better management

Over the last year, over 50 schools, primary, secondary, nursery and special have been involved in piloting central hosting of their school's management and administration systems. This means their management information systems (SIMS, FMS, Dinner Money, etc.), shared office files and in some cases email, are moved onto a central server. In return, the ICT Service manages day-to-day technical operations (backups, upgrades, etc.). All the school's staff need in order to get onto the system is a web browser and an internet connection. The principal benefits for schools are:

What are the benefits?

- Time saved not having to "look after the system"
- Less stress for staff who no longer have technical responsibility for the system
- The school's MIS can be used anywhere in the school on any computer
- Older equipment can be used because all you need is a web browser – effectively equipment lasts longer
- You can be more ambitious with your use of MIS (some schools have used this as an easy way of putting management information in the hands of more staff)
- You can get access to information and files from home (subject to the use of a security token and broadband internet connection)

For primary, nursery and special schools the cost of using this service has been set at £490 plus £1.30 per pupil, so for a 200-pupil primary school this would be £750. In addition there will be a one-off migration fee of £250 to put your school's data onto the system.

The system is not going to stand still. For example during the year we hope to significantly improve the email system and put in calendar sharing using Outlook.

The principal drawback is the reliance on the school's internet connection. However, because of the location of the central hosting servers, the central hosting is often still accessible even if the internet is not.



Cambridgeshire
County Council

More information
about this system,
including names of
schools participating
in the pilot, can be
found at
<http://chpilot.cambsed.net>



