

## Little Aston Primary School Safe and secure with the help of a CCTV system from Dedicated Micros

- Vertical Market: Education
- Country: UK
- End User: Little Aston Primary School

A Birmingham primary school is keeping the UK's first ever interactive playground safe and secure with the help of a CCTV system from Dedicated Micros, part of AD Group

Little Aston Primary School in Sutton Coldfield is nothing if not innovative. The school is the very first in the country to have its own outdoor interactive playground that enables children to log onto a computerised system, collecting points from nine different pieces of apparatus around the playground as they play. "It's fun and keeps the children active," explains head teacher Liz Pearce. "They love the fact that there is great equipment to run around on, and with their own unique swipe cards they can compete against one another and better their own times."

The school's new Finnish-designed play equipment, with its Smartus computer nerve centre that links directly to the school's ICT suite, is a significant investment for Little Aston and one that needs round-the-clock safeguarding. Liz and her team opted for CCTV equipment from security and surveillance pioneers Dedicated Micros, on the advice of Wolverhampton-based Spectre, a Dedicated Micros Fusion programme installer.

"The playground has to be secure and although it is vandal-proof, it's very attractive to unwelcome visitors because it's such a unique item," says Liz. "We already had CCTV for the school but we felt something more state-of-the-art was required to match our new playground."

### The Challenge

To guard against vandalism and theft of the school's new equipment, Spectre specified a Dedicated Micros NetVu Connected SD Digital Video Recorder (DVR) and a Dennard pole-mounted 2060 dome camera, both of which can integrate with the existing network of five CCTV cameras."

With a strong background in the education sector, Spectre is well versed in the issues schools, colleges and universities face and the equipment best suited to their environment. "Traditionally CCTV was used for security purposes but it makes an excellent site management tool for schools too," says Spectre's Operations Manager Judy Clarke. "Bullying, truancy, missing deliveries as well as all sorts of health and safety issues can be addressed with CCTV."

With an onus on educational establishments to make sure children are properly supervised, the new installation has already proven itself to be a valuable investment. Liz continues, "If we were deemed to be not supervising the children appropriately then our insurance could be invalid and that is simply not acceptable for a school. This is particularly relevant now that we have a piece of equipment as tempting to children as the electronic playground.

"At the end of the school day when parents are waiting for their children, younger siblings are naturally keen to try the playground for themselves and until our insurance provision allows for that, we simply can't let it happen.

"It's sad, but in this day and age the Health and Safety implications of a piece of equipment like this are a nightmare so the new CCTV system has been very helpful in monitoring activity and ensuring the school and the children stay protected.

To ensure the school gained the most benefit from the system, the DVR was installed in the school's main office and linked to a permanent large display screen. The flexibility the Dedicated Micros SD unit offers means office staff can keep an eye on the electronic playground covered by the new dome camera and view the rest of the school premises covered by the existing camera network simultaneously.

In addition, Liz also has access to the images using the Dedicated Micros NetVu ObserVer software which transfers the images over the schools existing IP network. The network enabled viewing capability of the SD unit also extends to remote viewing over a standard internet connection if any out of hours problems occur.

### Industry Experience

As time served experts in CCTV installations for the education sector, there are key differences between this and other sectors says Spectre managing director Steve Bonnell: "In a school environment there are no security guards, so specifying equipment that is easy to operate is essential for the end user.

"In the case of Little Aston the SD unit is very simple to use and the NetVu ObserVer software offers familiarity with Windows based drag and drop functionality – perfect for non specialist staff.

"The simplicity of the products is part of our reason for specifying Dedicated Micros equipment. After 15 years in the education sector we know we can recommend the company's products, service and back-up support."

He adds: "We advise customers that there's no point going for a lesser option if two years down the line the manufacturer has ceased trading or no longer supports the product. As an installer you just can't offer a quality service without the backup of your manufacturer."

Spectre have recently become Dedicated Micros Fusion installers – a programme which offers additional benefits to the installer, not least support and back up. "As a Fusion account manager I'm there at the beck and call of the members I represent," explains Terry Eaglen of Dedicated Micros.

It's an arrangement that works well and Judy Clarke says she is constantly impressed by the level of service Eaglen and his team can provide. "Terry has helped us with training for sales and technical staff, product awareness and project assistance. Out technicians also have access to a dedicated technical support line which far surpasses the basic 'Are you sure it's plugged in?' type of question!"

### An Excellent Report

At Little Aston primary, the special relationship between installer and manufacturer has resulted in confident school staff, and a safe play environment for the children that is protected from misuse and vandalism. Liz Pearce says the CCTV equipment has proved easy to use and adaptable. "It's fantastic because of the way it zooms in and out and rotates around. We have the equipment linked back to the school's main office and have several views of the school site on screen at any one time.

"We can get very close up pictures of anywhere in the school site, even into the neighbouring car park, which is great from a security point of view. It's very easy to use, and the NetVu ObserVer software and the images are extremely clear, so we can identify very easily who is out on the equipment. That's not always the case with CCTV images."

With the whole project completed in just six weeks, comprehensive staff training on how to use the equipment and even help with grant subsidies all provided by Spectre, children at Little Aston can now play safe in a ground-breaking new interactive playground that brought the school to the attention of national newspapers and television.

