



SIMS

helping
schools
inspire



Streamlining finances

Saving time and money

Efficient financial reporting across the trust

Woodland Academy Trust

Woodland Academy Trust was formed in September 2011 with three primary academies situated in the London Borough of Bexley. In January 2017, a fourth Kent primary school joined the Trust.

All three Bexley schools had already been using SIMS Financial Management System (FMS) before the trust was formed, as it was the main financial system used by the local authority. On converting to an academy trust, they decided to carry on using SIMS FMS to see if they could make it work as an academy finance system.

More recently, the trust also implemented FMS MultiView, which enables multi-academy trusts to monitor and support the financial management of all of the academies within their group. Sue Ashton, Woodland Academy Trust's Finance Director, regularly uses the system.

Why SIMS FMS?

"What we like about FMS is that it's an education-based system," explains Sue. "It's user friendly, the screens are clear and it's not a complicated business accounting package."

"For the users, whether that be the heads or the office staff, it is very easy to go in, run a report, read the report and understand what you're doing. The simplicity of it is the key reason why I favour FMS. I would rather work with FMS to do that than think about another alternative finance system."

Access to SIMS anytime, anywhere

Woodland Academy Trust also enjoys the benefits of a Hosted SIMS solution, which means that Sue and other academy staff can access SIMS anytime, anywhere. "The ability to access SIMS FMS online through the hosted solution is an added bonus because now you can pick up FMS from wherever you are," Sue continues. "The finance office can now work from home and that's proving a real bonus too."

"Through the hosted solution I can access all three schools' FMS systems," says Sue. "It's very easy for me to extract reports for my own financial reporting. It's really straightforward to interrogate suppliers, invoices and the spend of ledgers. SIMS FMS allows you to really get down to the detail and that's where FMS for me is the best solution for schools and academies."

A group level view of finance

Woodland Academy Trust has also been using FMS MultiView over the last year.

Academy group SIMS case study

Aim:

To have an efficient system in place for financial reporting across all of its schools.

Solution:

SIMS Financial Management System (FMS), FMS MultiView, Hosted SIMS

Impact:

SIMS Financial Management System (FMS) and FMS MultiView have made it easier to run and produce reports and give the trust a consolidated view of all their schools' finances. With Hosted SIMS, staff also benefit from being able to access the system from any location.

"Because we do all our finance at trust level, FMS MultiView is the tool that I can use," explains Sue. "I can get it up on screen, look at all three schools, look at the consolidated accounts and show the figures on the screen. We are still developing how we use this, but it will be a really useful tool as well."

For Sue and Woodland Academy Trust, the aim is to embed FMS MultiView within the trust, and ensure the trust's directors are regularly using the system. Sue concludes: "FMS meets all our expectations. We've looked at other systems, but there's just no way we would want to move away from FMS as a system."

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