



**SIMS**



**BRINGING ALL  
THE SCHOOL'S  
DATA INTO  
ONE PLACE**

**St Mary's Church of  
England Primary  
Academy**

- Tracking pupil progress
- Saving time and money
- Driving efficiency

## **SIMS CASE STUDY**

### **Establishment Type:**

Primary School

### **Aim:**

To bring the school's pupil, staff and financial data into one place, and use it to make more informed decisions.

### **Solution:**

SIMS Core

### **Impact:**

Returning to SIMS has helped St Mary's save time and money, as the data only needs to be entered once and can be used to monitor attendance, track pupil progress and manage the budget.

St Mary's Church of England Primary Academy is a thriving community of 265 pupils and 12 teaching staff, in the town of Kettering. With a higher than average intake of disadvantaged pupils coming to the school

from the surrounding areas, and significant numbers of children with EAL, St Mary's needed a firm grasp on its pupil data to boost attendance and achievement.

### **Background**

"Pupil attendance was a key focus for our school," explains Simon Lindley, School Business Manager. "But our old system didn't have the analytical tools to help us identify where the real issues were." In addition, St Mary's was carrying out all its pupil tracking manually, which was time-consuming and inefficient. "We were using separate spreadsheets to record pupils' attainment in different years," says Simon. "This made it difficult to get a full picture of how pupils were performing over time."

There were some inefficiencies in the school's administration too, as St Mary's was using SIMS Financial Management System (FMS), alongside a different system, with no link between the two. "Our staff data was held in one place, and our financial reporting information was held in another," explains Simon.

"We were inputting data twice, duplicating tasks and costs, and spending money on two systems

rather than one. It was not an efficient way of working".

To streamline the school's information, and make it easier to enter and access data, Simon decided to replace the system he inherited when he joined the school, and return to SIMS.

### **Tackling low attendance**

The first priority for St Mary's was to tackle pupil attendance. "We needed to engage parents in the drive to get children into school on time and ready to learn, and data was key to this," says Simon. "Now we record all our attendance information in SIMS, we are able to run a report on

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Simon Lindley, School Business Manager, St Mary's C of E Primary Academy

targeted pupil groups and set the parameters for attendance.

“The thing I love about SIMS is that it helps us to predict, early in the year, which children might be in danger of scoring low attendance rates, so we can work with their families to prevent this.

“When I’m talking to parents about a child who has missed a lot of school, I can say that based on their previous attendance, the best they can get to by the end of the year is 94%, and this will have an impact on their overall progress. It’s a very powerful message to give.”

## **A better view of progress**

St Mary’s has also chosen SIMS to support pupil tracking, and although the full transition is still taking place, Simon can see huge potential for boosting achievement.

“We were already monitoring pupil progress, but until now, we had been running three or four different databases for information on achievement. For example, we had one data tracking system for Key Stage 1, and another for Key Stage 2.

“SIMS enables us to enter the data once, and in one central place, so we can track our pupils right through the school. “Although it’s still early days for us, we are already able to look in detail

at the attainment of key pupil groups, such as children with SEN and Pupil Premium children, and put interventions in place for them. This means we can track the effectiveness of these interventions to give the children the best possible chance to reach their potential.”

## **Managing finances**

The move to SIMS has saved St Mary’s time and money on administration tasks too. “It makes such a difference having all the staff data linked to our financial management system as information only needs to be input once,” says Simon.

“When you amend staff salaries and contracts, or run the payroll each month, the system automatically updates our financial commitments. This allows us to plan what our current and future expenditure will be, and carry out different scenarios to help us make informed budgeting decisions.”

## **Everyone on board**

Changing a school’s management information system is no small undertaking, and Simon agrees that it is essential to engage staff in the process so that everyone embraces the change.

“When staff have spent years creating, filling and updating their spreadsheets to track progress in a way that they understand,

changing to a new way of working is not a quick fix,” says Simon. “But teachers are now seeing that they can do away with their spreadsheets, and manage data quickly and easily in SIMS.

“With a system as powerful as SIMS, it is worth investing in some training to help you discover the full scope of what it can do for your school, and pick up some tips on getting the most from its everyday efficiency, speed and ease of use.”

## **Looking ahead**

Simon has plans to extend St Mary’s use of SIMS across the school. “I anticipate using SIMS for more advanced trend analysis to help with performance tracking over time, and we are looking at how the system could help us with parental engagement and staff performance too.”

With a good Ofsted judgement and an outstanding rating from SIAMS (the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools), St Mary’s is ambitious for the future, and returning to SIMS is a pivotal step in helping the school realise its vision.

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Simon Lindley, School Business Manager, St Mary’s C of E Primary Academy

## **TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT SIMS**

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