



CFO oversees six academy conversions in a year with HCSS Education tools

Company

Inspire Partnership
Multi-Academy Trust

Establishment

MAT

Location

Gawthorpe, West Yorkshire

Size

5-15 Academies

Products

 HCSS Accounting

“ The finance teams at our academies have got on well with HCSS Accounting as it's so intuitive; many of them hadn't handled accounts before converting. ”

Hayley Hill,
Chief Financial Officer,
Inspire Partnership
Multi-Academy Trust

Based in West Yorkshire, the Inspire Partnership Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) is a new but fast growing MAT under the careful financial management of Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Hayley Hill.

Starting out with a single primary academy, Inspire Partnership plans to have a total of six primary academies by May 2017.

Overseeing simultaneous academy conversions has made life very hectic for CFO Hayley, who previously held the role of School Business Manager at Gawthorpe Community Academy, the MAT's founding member.

Working long hours in various different locations, Hayley needed an accounting software solution that could keep up with her busy schedule.

She chose cloud-based HCSS Accounting for its flexibility, usability and capacity for integration with HCSS Education's budgeting software.

Challenge

Hayley Hill's role means that she is always out and about. Juggling several simultaneous academy conversions, on top of her overarching commitments at the trust, Hayley rarely stays at one desk for very long.

As the MAT grew rapidly, Hayley was in danger of being swept off her feet by work commitments.

“Only one academy had converted in August last year, now we're approaching six academy primaries under our MAT umbrella,” Hayley said.

She continued: “I don't have a typical day just because I'm working in between the different academies so much.”

This irregular work schedule created a problem for Hayley because her accounts, managed through a combination of Excel spreadsheets and FMS, weren't easy to access while she was on the road.

She said: “The software we used was quite limiting. It was difficult to use between all of the academies and it wasn't very intuitive.”

Hayley decided to purchase web-based HCSS Accounting after learning about its integration with HCSS Budgeting, which she had used for many years at Gawthorpe Academy.

“Having accounting software that integrated easily with our budgeting software, and at a good price, was something that I was very keen to try,” she said.

“ HCSS Accounting has made my life a lot easier – I’ve only got good things to say about it. ”

Hayley Hill,
Chief Financial Officer,
Inspire Partnership
Multi-Academy Trust

Solution

When HCSS Accounting launched in September 2016, Inspire Partnership was one of many MATs that purchased the software at the early adopter price.

Hayley said: “With so many changes happening, I really needed something that I could understand quickly. And because I had enjoyed using HCSS Budgeting for so long, HCSS Accounting seemed like the logical choice.”

Because she is on the road so much, Hayley really values the flexibility that comes with using cloud-based software like HCSS Accounting and HCSS Budgeting.

She said: “Having software that I can access from different locations is essential. I wouldn’t be able to work without it.”

It is also important that Hayley can view information from the trust’s individual academies quickly and easily.

“If someone in the finance team at one academy needs to show me something urgently, I can just log into the software and have a look. There’s no need to organise a meeting about it,” Hayley said.

She continued: “The finance teams have got on well with the software so far, which is good because many of them hadn’t handled accounts before the conversion.”

“On the whole, HCSS Accounting has made my life a lot easier – I’ve only got good things to say about it.”

Result

Now that the long line of academy conversions is nearing completion, the most pressing work is beginning to die down for Hayley. But in many ways, the real challenges are just beginning.

“With our situation over the last few months, I have obviously been working really long hours. But there’s light at the end of the tunnel now and I’m proud of what we’ve achieved. I’m looking forward to doing more in the future,” Hayley said.

The academy trust has seen its funding drop by 1.3% in 2017/18.

Hayley is realistic about the budgetary challenges faced by the MAT, but she is also confident that using HCSS software will help to address upcoming challenges.

“Like most schools and academies, our budgets are feeling the squeeze at the moment. But HCSS Budgeting and HCSS Accounting and the integration between the two makes effective financial management as easy as it can be.”



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