

# Kent Catholic Schools Partnership

Parago helps rapidly growing multi academy trust get to grips with asset management saving them time and money.

For many schools, academies and trusts, it's not often the case that their current asset management solution isn't working well – but more that asset management isn't happening at all. The same could have been said for the Kent Catholic Schools Partnership.

The Partnership was incorporated in 2012, established under the authority of Archbishop as a conversion vehicle for all previously voluntary-aided Catholic schools in the Kent County Council geographic area (of which there are 32). Since then, it has converted 20 schools – 16 primaries and four secondaries – with a hope to convert another four in 2016.

## An asset management challenge

Between all of those schools, that's a lot of assets that weren't being managed. Mark Harris, finance director at the Kent Catholic Schools Partnership, remembers the difficulties well.

"As almost every school was converted, we found that there were inadequacies in our audits," he says. "Robust asset registers were non-existent. So in the case of an insurance claim, theft, or a fire, they couldn't get their hands on evidence quickly."

## Seeking a solution

Keeping detailed registers of all your assets without a quality solution is hard. Staff time is limited – particularly in primary schools – and although they could have put processes in place to record new purchases accurately, Mark felt that the schools simply weren't equipped to go back and catalogue every purchase and item in the school. Instead, the Partnership sought a bespoke software solution.

## Parago is the answer

"We wanted to work with a company that was a market leader in asset management," says Mark.

## Key outcomes

- 1 Central oversight of assets of across a large MAT
- 2 Reduction in unnecessary purchases
- 3 100% positive staff feedback

Learn more:

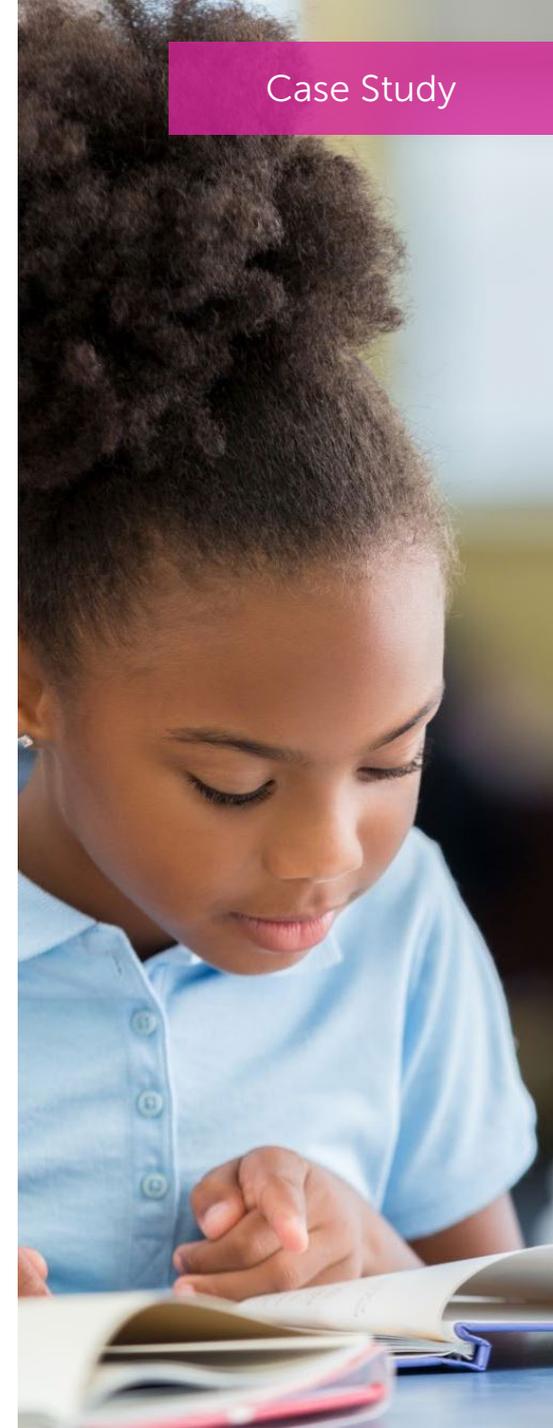
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"We wanted to work with a company that was a market leader in asset management. We are wholly positive about Parago. I can't think of a single negative"

**Mark Harris**, Finance Director, Kent Catholic Schools Partnership



"We had a school that was ready to convert which already used Parago's solutions. They'd processed this themselves, and so we had a very good model to look at. We then trialled Academy Asset Manager in another of our schools and both found the software incredibly useful."

"When we signed up for Parago, I don't mind saying that I thought going around all of the schools and trying to list all the items was going to be a bit of a nightmare – but it absolutely wasn't. It went very, very smoothly. We had no complaints whatsoever."

**Mark Harris**, Finance Director, Kent Catholic Schools Partnership

## A proven approach

The Parago team then went out to all 20 schools in the Kent Catholic Schools Partnership, working alongside members of staff at the schools throughout the back-cataloguing process.

It was a process that Mark thought would be difficult, but this wasn't the case. "That hands-on approach was really the best level of training. I can't speak highly enough of the Parago staff who helped implement the program."

## Positive feedback

Once all assets were logged and photos of the entire estate were saved, Parago's Academy Asset Manager was good to go across the 20 schools. The next thing Mark needed was to know just what the schools thought of the software.

"Sometimes when you put a program in place, you get schools feeding back to you various issues – 'it's not doing what we wanted' for example – but I've not had a single issue in Parago's case. All feedback has been extremely positive."

"All of the schools' employees like it very much because they see Parago as a tool that helps them. Sometimes these things can be looked at as a hindrance and an unnecessary bureaucracy, if you like. But in the case of Parago, they've all taken it on board as a very helpful tool. I think everybody now realises they need it to control their assets."

## Reaping the benefits

The knock-on effect in the Kent Catholic Schools Partnership is a more efficient, robust and cost-effective practice.

It now has much more accurate data on what it is they actually have. Meaning if a school has demand for something – iPads or laptops, for example – which can be satisfied by what another school has, they can identify it easily and don't go out and buy unnecessary items.

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## Easier than expected

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