

Knowledge and expertise making the grade for Bilton Grange

CLIENT:	Bilton Grange
SECTOR:	Education
COST CATEGORIES:	Managed Print, Classroom Supplies, Catering, Business Rates.

After a successful two-year partnership, Expense Reduction Analysts (ERA) brought savings and service improvements across the board which will continue to benefit the school, its teachers and students for years to come.

Bilton Grange prides itself on providing the very best environment and education for its students. When ERA Client Relationship Manager, Simon Webb reached out to the Bursar, he found that his valuable time was being taken up managing procurement and operational projects. Despite the school's best efforts, they had neither the in-house expertise nor the resource to properly manage them. After a successful two-year partnership, ERA brought savings and service improvements across the board which will continue to benefit the school, its teachers and students for years to come.

THE CLIENT

Established in 1873, Bilton Grange is an outstanding boarding and day school in Warwickshire. With specialist teachers, amazing facilities and some of the smallest class sizes in the area, Bilton Grange is where children truly fulfil their potential, grow their confidence and unlock their talents. With a strong track record of scholarships to top senior schools, including the top academic scholarship to Rugby in 2015/16, space to play and room to learn, children enjoy the best education and an idyllic childhood at Bilton Grange.

THE CHALLENGE

Simon brought in ERA's Andrew Kinnear who has over 20 years' experience in the sector. After a detailed review with the school's stakeholders, Andrew ascertained that Bilton Grange were happy with their incumbent supplier - one already known to ERA. Whilst costs were competitive, Andrew identified a familiar pattern of upgrading part of the print fleet and retaining others. This has resulted in some of the machines being over eight years old, which was affecting reliability. He also identified that there were too many devices within the fleet and that a consolidation could be achieved.

SUMMARY OF SAVINGS



"The projects were a great success for us and achieved both cost savings and improved service levels. The best thing about working with ERA is their knowledge and expertise across such a broad range of spending – it's not something you can replicate in-house."

ANDREW PARKER,
DEPUTY BURSAR, BILTON GRANGE

Knowledge and expertise making the grade for Bilton Grange

Andrew took a newly devised tender out to five best-fit suppliers, including the incumbent. Using his extensive market knowledge and experience, he negotiated not only more improved commercial terms from all parties, but also improved Service Level Agreements.

In what was a hugely positive outcome, Bilton Grange retained their incumbent supplier with whom they had a good relationship, installed all new devices, reduced the term of their agreement and secured significant savings. In addition, new technology was introduced to Bilton Grange which is already having a positive effect in reducing service costs and, going forwards, will increase the overall savings further still.

Andrew Parker, Deputy Bursar, comments, "The reports that the specialists produce are very in depth; it's not just you saved 'X' or improved 'Y' - it's the reasons why and how with strategic analysis. It gives you more visibility and offers you more control going forwards by putting you in a stronger position."

CLASSROOM SUPPLIES

Simon enlisted ERA UK specialist, Michael Williams, to manage Classroom Supplies. During his review, Michael discovered the school had a rather disjointed purchasing system; often buying from numerous suppliers and paying varying prices, for the same product. Working closely with Bilton Grange stakeholders, Michael created a new, fit-for-purpose tender which he took out to the market. His aim was to place the business with just one supplier, which he achieved whilst at the same time, maintaining 96% level of compliance with the initial contract list.

CATERING

Specialist Chris Wardle was brought in to review the Catering spend and discovered that Bilton Grange had been purchasing through a third-party procurement partner. It emerged that this was a valued relationship that the school was keen to preserve. Chris built a bespoke spend profile on food-related items and tendered to a number of suppliers, including both the third-party procurement team and the main food supplier whose produce they were supplying. Leveraging his market knowledge, Chris was able to secure greater savings from the third-party provider than the main supplier, for the supply of their own items! In addition, Chris involved two local suppliers with whom the school had longstanding relationships, obtaining better value for money whilst maintaining service and quality.

Chris Wardle, ERA specialist, states, "As with all ERA projects, I continued to monitor and audit the suppliers for a period of two years after my initial review. During this time, I raised concerns with the supplier over significant price increases that were tabled in year two and consequently, these were drastically reduced; a great result for the client and reminder that the work doesn't end when the new contracts are in place - our constant vigilance is something clients really value."

"It was hands-off for us; they did all the hard work and just reported every quarter. The reports that the specialists produce are very in depth; it's not just you saved 'X' or improved 'Y' - it's the reasons why and how with strategic analysis. It gives you more visibility and offers you more control going forwards by putting you in a stronger position."

ANDREW PARKER,
DEPUTY BURSAR, BILTON GRANGE

BUSINESS

Rates for independent schools are notoriously complex, often based on a specialist valuation structure known as the 'Contractors Test Linked to Rebuild Costs'. With over 20 years' experience in business rates reduction, Simon selected ERA expert, Paul Giness, to undertake the review. Crucially, Paul understood that due to the piecemeal nature of an independent school like Bilton Grange, which has been built up over many years, there can be scope for savings. Paul has embarked on central discussions with the Valuation Office with a view to tackling the overall basis of valuation. Once these discussions are concluded he will be looking to implement a fast-track 'Check, Challenge, Appeal' to determine scope for savings for the revaluation period 2017-2022.

MORE THAN JUST COST SAVINGS

ERA's client relationships don't end with identifying the best-fit supplier and securing savings. Ongoing quarterly audits validate that the promised service levels are being met and keep an open channel of communication between all parties.

ADDED VALUE

- Improved service and support from suppliers.
- Future-proof systems and updated solutions.
- Independent and objective market reviews.
- Better-fit suppliers to Bilton Granges' needs.