

Customer Success Story

Berkhamsted Schools Group Learns from Proactive Forecasting and Reporting



B E R K H A M S T E D
S C H O O L

Berkhamsted Schools Group **Education**

Hertfordshire, U.K.

Berkhamsted Schools Group, comprising six schools, is one of Britain's leading independent education establishments, with 475 years of history and tradition. It is a day and boarding school teaching students from ages 3 to 18.



Automated control and consolidation over group-wide financial strategy helps schools to act decisively and continually plan ahead

“Schools are not like traditional businesses. Quite rightly, the executive team’s priority isn’t managing the finances, it is furthering the education of our students. My role is to support them by making sure the finances add up and can support this pursuit—a task I’ve seen great progress in thanks to the visibility afforded by Adaptive Insights. ”

— Peter Nicholls, VP of Business Operations

Berkhamsted Schools Group is one of Britain's leading independent schools group, with 475 years of history and tradition. The group comprises six schools, teaching students from ages 3 to 18 at its sites in Hertfordshire and Buckinghamshire, England. Each school must balance a large number of expenses and cash flows each term—from student fees to teaching materials to staffing. The job of forecasting and making sure the books are balanced across the group falls on the operations team, while the group’s leadership team focuses on Berkhamsted’s primary concern—the education of its students.

Using Excel spreadsheets, the team had historically run forecasts only once a term. This made it difficult for the group to plan its resources throughout the school year with the agility to make changes as needed. Indeed, the process was so time consuming that the team was reluctant to forecast any more frequently. The situation was frustrating for Peter Nicholls, VP of operations, who wanted more rapid planning and forecasting cycles to best manage cash flows and investment decisions in the schools.

Increasing financial agility through more regular forecasts

Working with Adaptive Insights’ U.K. partner Clear Plan, Nicholls identified Adaptive Planning and Adaptive Reporting as the solutions he needed for a more automated

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approach to monthly forecasting, reporting, and analysis. With Clear Plan’s support every step of the way, the new system was implemented over the six-week summer break, meaning Nicholls could start the new term in September afresh.

The group has now met Nicholls’ aim of running monthly forecasts for each school, allowing operations to be far more agile and flexible with the group’s finances during the term.

“Before we used Adaptive Insights, our forecasts meant very little because by the time we ran the numbers they were already out of date, and the opportunity to use the intelligence gathered had passed,” said Nicholls. “Adaptive Insights has allowed us to be far more agile, with a robust set of standardized reporting that helps us make decisions and continually plan ahead.”

Utilizing the benefits of a cloud-based system

According to Nicholls, one of the greatest benefits afforded by Adaptive Insights comes from automated control and consolidation over group-wide financial strategy, which removes the risk of human error, allowing operations to act decisively on trusted data.

“Any fears we had about the cloud were completely unfounded,” said Nicholls. “It’s allowed us to centralize the finances of our six sites, with versions which are automatically aligned and updated in real time, making it far easier to report and plan across the group.”

Using new insight to advise the group’s leadership

Berkhamsted’s numbers are now more transparent, making it easy to trace anomalous or particularly noteworthy costs. This is especially exemplified with staffing costs—which Nicholls is now able to comprehensively monitor and manage across all six schools.

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