With 670 students, Wembrook Primary School is the largest primary school in Warwickshire. Committed to involving students in all aspects of school life, Wembrook abides by a strong set of values. With numerous awards and accreditations under its belt, including an ICT Mark Accredited by Naace, the school provides an excellent learning experience for all its students. Operating a 1:1 model, all students, from Year 4 upwards, have their own Netbook device that they can use both in and out of school to support their learning.

With 1:1 devices across the school, as well as 100 PCs across computer suites, controlling the IT environment was of the upmost importance. Previously using Smartsync, the school had experienced some problems with their classroom management software, which wasn’t reliable and often failed to connect. This would slow down the start of a class, while teachers tried to get the software to work, causing students to lose focus and become distracted. The school’s IT Manager would also spend a huge amount of time moving from one classroom to the next, trying to deal with issues and requests.

In a bid to speed things up and find a more reliable tool, the school got in touch with their Managed Services Provider, Warwickshire Education Services (WES) ICT Development Service. WES, at the time, was looking for primary schools to pilot classroom management software, Impero Education Pro, with a view to rolling this out across the local authority. Wembrook was keen to get involved and signed up to the pilot programme.

Set up was simple as it was all done remotely by WES, who added the software client to a shared storage area and provided support every step of the way. The school’s ICT Manager, and a couple of teachers, attended training sessions provided by WES. These super users are now responsible for training up staff and providing in-house support as the software is rolled out.
benefits

saves time – lessons can start promptly as the software is quicker and more reliable than the previous product. Students can all be sent to the correct website or application at the start of a class, saving time previously spent assisting each individual with this simple task. The ICT Manager also saves time doing network admin tasks remotely, and in bulk, rather than having to go round each machine (e.g. installing or updating software).

enhances learning – broadcasting examples of a student’s work on the classroom’s main screen allows them to demonstrate what they’ve done and talk through how they did it. This makes lessons more interactive and promotes critique and feedback throughout the session.

keeps students safe – WES monitors the health of PCs remotely, for a more proactive approach to IT management. The school’s ICT Manager can also remote in to PCs to perform network administration tasks, keeping equipment and software in top condition.

Q&A with Rachel Edwards, ICT Coordinator and Year 5 Teacher

describe a typical lesson with Impero Education Pro

Well firstly I can keep an eye on what everyone’s doing from my desk, which is great. I can broadcast a student’s work if there’s something worth showcasing, which the students love. If a student is struggling I can take control of their machine and demonstrate how something should be done. If I feel students are going off task or becoming distracted I can blank their screens and get things back on track. Being able to fire out web links at the start of a class is great too as it means everyone is where they should be, no excuses or faffing, and we can start the class on time.

how does this improve the learning experience?

Often when students are working on laptops or PCs it can be a very individual experience. Impero Education Pro brings it all together and promotes better communication across the group. I can also message students privately to check they’re okay, rather than having to make a big thing of it, which is great for some of the less confident students.

Q&A with Mitesh Patel, Year 4 Teacher

what do you like about Impero Education Pro?

It’s the overall control and central visibility which was previously lacking in IT-based lessons. Seeing everything in one place makes lessons much easier to manage.

what do your students think of the software?

They’re aware of the software, they know I can see and control everything – often this knowledge is enough to improve behaviour and productivity in IT-based lessons. We’ve done a few quizzes using the exam module too, which was good and the students enjoyed it.

Q&A with Jo Webb, IT Manager

from an IT perspective, how has this made your life easier?

It’s saved me a tremendous amount of time. Setting up new machines and sending out software updates can all be done remotely now, so I don’t have to go round every PC to complete these tasks.

what are the next steps?

We’re still not using the software to its full potential as I’m aware there’s still more it can do, so exploring these features with more training is a priority. There are still some staff members that need training so we’ll be rolling this out, with a view to having everyone up to speed and using the software for the start of the new September term.