

# OBS Success Story Westminster School



## Introduction

Westminster School is a coeducational Early Learning to Year 12, day and boarding school with 1,230 students, located in Marion, Adelaide.

One of Westminster School's central aims is to provide its students with 21st century learning spaces, as well as to transform the learning experience using Information Communication Technology.

The School recognises that Information Technology is now an integral part of many aspects of modern schooling, particularly teaching, learning and school administration.

## Challenge

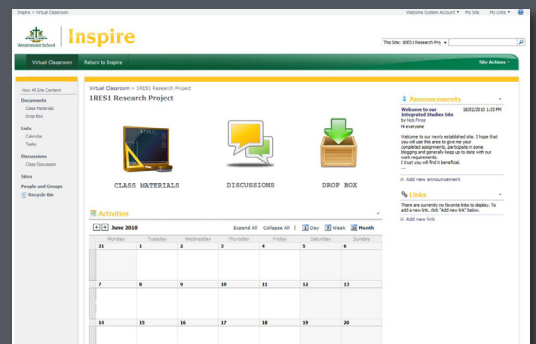
Westminster School has long aspired to be a leader in using Information Technology for educational delivery and student learning.

Simon Smith, Director of Information Systems, Westminster School, explains that "the most important set of technologies are those that foster collaboration between staff, students, parents and the wider School community, as well as those that provide analytical capabilities for the ever increasing levels of information that make up the learning process."

Initially, Westminster School had numerous systems that did not integrate with each other, meaning that without any communication between systems, process automation and information sharing was non-existent.

"We were unable to easily extend our existing systems to deliver new functionality in an integrated manner.

"Our systems also required an ever increasing support and maintenance effort, meaning we were unable to meet the demands around new communication and collaboration capabilities to pursue our IT goals," said Smith.



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### Solution

Westminster School required a centralised Intranet platform that would assist in achieving the School's goals to:

- Enable effective communication;
- Ensure timely access to important and up-to-date documents;
- Streamline business processes; and
- Develop a platform for eLearning.

They sought a platform that would be the foundation for delivering key future initiatives involving staff, student, family and community collaboration.

The platform also needed to be able to support the School's general business needs, which included workflow processes, management of information, and application development.

"One of our key requirements was to minimise the number of technologies we were dealing with.

"The fact that we have a heavy investment in Microsoft technologies, along with the fact that Microsoft Office SharePoint Server (MOSS) 2007 ticked all of the boxes in terms of the functionality we were after, made it a 'no-brainer,'" said Smith.

Westminster School engaged OBS to develop their MOSS 2007 Intranet, Inspire.

"OBS's approach, particularly their stressing of the need to get an appropriate governance structure in place, as well as their strong local presence, made them the obvious choice," said Smith.

*Inspire* was designed to foster collaboration between teachers and students, an example being the use of the Portal's home page to communicate School news and calendar events.

*Inspire* also automates key business processes, using electronic forms and workflows as well as being the single repository for policies and procedures. Paper-based form processes, particularly enrolment, absentees recording and bookings can now be managed through online workflows.

*Inspire* also fosters eLearning capabilities by creating 'Virtual Classrooms'. This allows teachers to upload learning materials to classroom sites. It also means that this content is available for students to access any time.

"We are establishing a 'Knowledge Central' site where teachers can collect and organise curriculum activities that will be delivered through 'Virtual Classrooms,'" said Smith.

Westminster School's MOSS 2007 Intranet platform is focused heavily on connecting people and enabling collaboration. The next step is to extend this idea to collaboration between staff, students and parents with a 'Parent Portal'.

"The Parent Portal will ultimately provide real time engagement of parents in their children's education," said Smith.

OBS continues to work with Westminster School in training their IT employees so that they have the skills required to continue to develop *Inspire*.

"The OBS team has become part of our extended team. They have been flexible and provided good knowledge transfer so that we can build our own self-sufficiency in the MOSS 2007 platform," said Smith.

### Benefits

*Inspire* is currently being rolled out to staff and students School-wide.

"The reaction from all has been very positive. The main feedback has been about the bright, fresh new look and feel, and the reaction from small groups who have so far trialled the collaboration facilities in the Virtual Classrooms has also been very positive," said Smith.

Westminster School expects to experience considerable Return on Investment (ROI) once the platform is fully deployed to all staff, students and parents.

"The ROI will be in two broad areas: direct savings through improvements in business process management (including the IT process of solutions delivery), as well as the benefits of providing one of the key technology enablers for 21st century teaching and learning," said Smith.