



CASE STUDY: SERVICE: KEY FACTS:

Pear Tree Special School

Electronic Document Management

85 students, with over 7,000 pupil documents scanned

Pear Tree Special School lies in the heart of Lancashire, teaching 85 children from 2-19 years with severe, profound, and multiple learning difficulties. Many pupils have additional disabilities including autism, sensory impairment, and complex medical needs. In addition the school also has a Compass Centre for 12 children with higher dependence - children who need extra support to help them to reintegrate into the main body of the school. The school also operates a holiday club which is unique as it provides fully inclusive childcare in the school holidays for both children with severe learning difficulties or complex medical needs as well as mainstream children who live in the local community.

Growing Storage

There are a number of requirements to store pupil and school records for a length of time; a single piece of paper can be retained for a couple of years to over 50 years, depending on the type of record. Realistically this means schools must store a vast number of documents and files for compliance and audit, and if these files are stored in paper form, this equals a huge amount of space needed to house those records.

As Administration Officer Alison Riley reiterates, growing storage can be a significant problem: "The fact that our storage would grow just through the requirements to keep the records you'd recognise you had to either expand storage space to cope with the growing volume of information, or do something different. The school therefore made the decision to go down the route of **mstore**."

Paper Archiving Eradicated

mstore is Arena Group's electronic document management software – a system capable of handling a range of aspects in digitising files and workload, from simple archiving to indexing and retrieval. For Alison, the system provides a much-needed solution to storing and indexing the School's files such as student records, financial information, and other documents.

As a special school, Pear Tree sees different types of activity, creating added paperwork compared to a mainstream educational institute. Pupils will often have physiotherapists, medical reviews, and other types of external activity which all need to be documented and recorded on paper, which then needs to be stored.



The best thing about **mstore** is that our archived storage is no longer growing. Not having to file or store our paper is a huge deal for us.

Alison Riley, Administration Officer

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"We are a small school in the fact that we have 85 pupils, but we also have 85 members of staff. The support service for the children does generate a huge amount of paperwork. Now, the pay-off of having **mstore** and not having to file or store our paper is a huge deal for us."

Easy, Instantaneous Document Retrieval

Once files are scanned and indexed into **mstore** users can then search at the click of a button, as Alison states, "it's the speed of retrieval which is good – it's easy."

For any new system, it can be daunting switching from paper-based processes to working digitally, particularly when it comes to filing.

"I think [the staff] were a little bit wary of it at first but once they found what they were looking for and saw how easy it is, their confidence has grown. Everybody has been very positive."

As **mstore** removes the need to manage paper-led processes within the office, the extra space gained

from digitising documents can be realised as the school has been able to add another desk into the office and make more space in a busy area.

"We've been able to make that adaptation for a new desk because the need to store paper files has been dramatically reduced. The best thing about **mstore** is our archived storage is no longer growing. As you move forward with each passing year you can appreciate that more and more. It's so much quicker and easier."

Why Arena Group

As part of the School's contract with Arena, they are provided with on-site support and help from our software team to ensure they are getting the best out of the system.

"There has always been help at the end of the phone if we've needed it. Josh [**mstore** Education & Bureau Manager] is very knowledgeable of the product and how to use it. We're very impressed with him and we are genuinely looking forward to him coming back to give us additional support."

Interviewed and written by Arena Group.
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