

IRIS Education comes out on top for Mellor Primary School



Customer Story

A photograph of a teacher with curly hair, wearing a black and white patterned top, smiling and looking down at a young student with blonde hair. The student is also smiling and looking up at the teacher. They are in a classroom setting with a desk and an open book visible. A teal diagonal overlay covers the left side of the image, containing text and a list of highlights.

Mellor Primary School is an academy school in Stockport, currently serving over 220 pupils from nursery to Year 6. With a vision to be a growing Trust, Mellor Primary utilises a range of IRIS products, including IRIS Ed:gen, Central, Financials and, more recently, they have signed up to Payroll Services and Every to support them with their HR and payroll needs.

Highlights

- IRIS Every and Payroll Services wins on cost, functionality, security, and efficiency
- One provider with integrated products to help support an efficient back-office
- An MIS that *actually* makes life easier
- A team at IRIS that goes above and beyond



It all started with Ed:gen...

Eleanor Wyborn, School Business Manager, explains that the decision to seek alternatives to their previous MIS provider stemmed from the school's dissatisfaction with the service provided. ***"When I came on board in 2021, they had made the commitment to move the school management information system (MIS) because the provider we were using had changed the way they were operating. They were looking for longer-term contracts, and there had been a sense of disgruntlement with the functionality for quite some time."***



Eleanor Wyborn,
School Business Manager





The Trust explored other MIS systems as alternatives but found that none were a complete solution. At the time, Mellor Primary was looking to move communication, payment, MIS, finance and budgeting systems at once, and finding a single provider proved challenging. The Trust ultimately identified the MIS and finance systems as the top priorities and, after consulting with the IRIS team, decided to adopt Ed:gen and IRIS Financials. The ability to integrate other software, along with the automatic synchronisation of data between the two systems, made the decision to switch to IRIS an easy one.



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"It's all been ticking along nicely", says Eleanor, reflecting on the Trust's experience with Ed:gen and Financials. One of the best things about IRIS, she adds, is the continuous integration of new features and additional systems: "As soon as we start thinking about where we might need some support, our account manager at IRIS contacts us to let us know it's either a new feature or a new addition to the IRIS Education portfolio! The products are all continuously being enhanced and improved to make our life as efficient as possible, and that's a really important thing for us that the tech we're using remains innovative."





Ed:gen and Financials are transforming operations at Mellor Primary



Ed:gen and IRIS Financials have been big wins for Mellor Primary, providing significant improvements to the school's operations. ***"Ed:gen was a big win because it's intuitive, offers a lot of functionality, and now even more features are being added,"*** says Eleanor. ***"We're planning to use it for tasks like replacing our subscriptions, such as the Medical Tracker, since we can now track our accidents directly within Ed:gen."*** The upcoming rollout of the IRIS parent portal is another exciting development. ***"There are things that we can now bring into this one place. IRIS is rolling out the parent portal – brilliant, because again, everything will be in one place. At the moment we've got an app for payments and an app for attendance, so having that in one place will be great."***



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Regarding financial management, Eleanor highlights the advantages of IRIS Financials over their previous system: ***"IRIS Financials is a more advanced system than what we were using previously, and we like the double-entry. This means you can clearly track where funds are coming from and going to and is much more intuitive. With our previous system, you would input data into a journal, and it seemed to disappear. We're really happy with IRIS Financials."***



IRIS Every and Payroll Services win on cost, functionality, security, and efficiency

Mellor Primary's journey with IRIS progressed further with the addition of Every and Payroll Services more recently. After an issue was raised by external auditors, the local authority overseeing the school required a change in the payroll process, which gave Mellor concerns. As a result, they began exploring new solutions: ***"We looked across three providers – EPM, IRIS, and the local authority – to compare."***

After evaluating the options, the Trust realised that Every and Payroll Services stood out for their seamless integration. ***"The big win that IRIS has got yet again is the fact that it will feed directly into Central and Ed:gen. So, when I make a change in my 'single source of truth', everything else automatically updates. Previously, when I made changes in our MIS, I'd have to update the contact, communicate with the local authority, process the changes through their software, and then update my budget planner. It was time-consuming. Now, I just need to ensure my budget planner in Financials and Every are aligned, and that's it. It's a much more efficient process. Happy days!"***





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The school's approach to procurement is careful and methodical, ensuring value for money while balancing the functionality of each solution: *“It's important for us to explore all options and ensure we're making the best possible choice. Functionality is key, but since we're still spending public money, we have a responsibility to use the funds provided by the state as efficiently as possible. Our procurement process involves a lot of due diligence. I have a scoring system that evaluates value for money, functionality, security, and efficiency. Each of these factors is scored and weighted, and when compared, IRIS came out ahead.”*

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At the end of the year, if I've changed or bought anything or spent money that I didn't spend the previous year, I need to prove that I've done so in the most efficient way possible, and I have to be able to justify every decision. I don't just choose IRIS products because I like working with the team – we choose the best products for the problem we're trying to solve, and it just so happens IRIS Education comes out on top every time."





Building a partnership with IRIS



Having been in touch with several members of the IRIS team, Eleanor is very satisfied with the service provided. ***“The team at IRIS will always go above and beyond to help us.”*** For example, the school is currently facing a security issue which is preventing them from using IRIS Central. Eleanor tells us, ***“A member of the IRIS team is now talking to our provider from the local authority, who handles our internet security and emails, to make sure that we meet all their requirements, removing any barriers to using the system.”***

“Normally, with any other service provider in my experience, it would just be, ‘Oh well, computer says ‘No’ – we can’t do it,’ but the team at IRIS will always go the extra mile. Someone has stepped in and said, ‘We’ll work together and find a way forward,’ which is brilliant. It’s a service that isn’t expected but means an awful lot to us. It feels as though the team at IRIS are on our side.”

The vision to be a growing trust



Mellor Primary has a clear vision to grow as a trust, understanding that being a small, single academy trust, especially as a primary school, is not always cost-effective.

“We would love to be bigger because there’s not much life for a single academy. You need to find efficiencies, otherwise, you’ll end up shutting the doors because you can’t keep going. We have to grow or we will fall foul.”

The school will soon be joining forces with another school to form a Trust, encouraging them to join under the same IRIS Education umbrella. ***“What we have said to them is that it makes sense for them to come on board with the products we are using. It will mean less work for everybody – for consolidated reporting alone, it makes sense for us all to be using Ed:gen, Central and Financials.”***





Mellor encourages other schools to explore what's available in the market but advises that IRIS should be considered due to the significant benefits it offers, including simplified reporting and time-saving efficiencies. ***"Shop around, have a look, but may I suggest that, if you do so, you include IRIS because there are some big wins – the joined-up reporting, and the fact that you don't have to enter data into three different systems. Schools often think about the money savings, but the time savings are crucial to consider. For us, that is as important as the financials savings."***

"We are really happy with IRIS Education and the products we're using. We've built a fantastic relationship with the team and we're really excited about the future and what products and enhancements are sure to come. We feel in safe hands with IRIS Education as our provider and for us, none of the competitor products come close. We highly recommend and will continue to do so."



To find out more about IRIS Education,
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