

Ringling the bell at Thorndon Primary School.

How Axis network audio helped improve communication between pupils and staff.



Organization:
Thorndon Primary School

Location:
New Zealand

Industry segment:
Education

Application:
Broadcasting and announcements

Axis partner:
Pure Tech

Mission

As part of its renovations, Thorndon Primary School had the opportunity to modernise its existing communication system for a network audio system with increased functionalities and flexibility. It needed a future-proof solution that would meet the needs of the school today and for many years to come.

Solution

The school engaged Pure Tech, who suggested a network audio system from Axis Communications, consisting of internal speakers mounted flush into the ceiling, an external horn speaker that gave coverage of the whole outdoor play area, a programmable microphone system at reception and a centralised console with the easy-to-use, browser-based, Axis audio management software.

Result

The network audio system that was installed has changed the way Thorndon Primary School now communicates with its students allowing for tailored messages and sounds that have created a more positive environment for students and teachers.



Opportunity for a flexible solution to meet growing needs

At Thorndon Primary School, the fire bell was rung several times a day. Not because there was a fire, but because it was the only bell system in the school. Therefore this fire bell was used to mark the beginning and end of lessons and recess periods.

Whilst it did the job, it was a fairly basic form of communication – the bell had to be manually activated. Furthermore, it was a harsh and intrusive sound and there was no way of making any form of announcement.

So when the Ministry of Education announced that the school would be completely rebuilt, former Deputy Principal Tim Kong decided that, along with the teaching facilities, the communication system should also be modernised.

“Rebuilding the whole school from scratch gave us a unique opportunity to incorporate an audio communication system that would provide new functionality and flexibility and hopefully meet the school’s needs for many years into the future,” he says.

Effective communication in different situations

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“The Axis system gives us so much flexibility”, explains Tim. “Instead of using the same sound throughout the day, I was able to pick appropriate samples for different times. I edited 20 second samples, for each of our three daily bells. We use a bird chorus for the start of the day, *'I Like to Move It'* from the Madagascar movie to mark the end of morning tea and *'Tubular Bells'* for the end of lunch”.

Through the Axis audio management software, Tim can schedule all the sound samples in advance, and modify them if the timetable changes for any reason. This includes quick changes, like an extended morning tea break, or turning them off during school holidays, so that the neighbours are not disturbed.

The Axis system can also be used to make announcements, either to the whole school, or just to specific zones. For example, a message for teachers during lunchtime could be transmitted just to the staffroom zone, or a message for the Year 3/4s to their zone.

The volume levels on individual speakers, can be managed remotely from the console. For example, when the sound level was too high in the staff room, it was a simple measure to turn it down without affecting the other zones. In the same way, being able to adjust the volume of external and internal speakers independently has been very beneficial, to prevent noise pollution onto neighbouring properties.

Looking to the future, Tim is aware of the need that all schools have to be able to handle emergency situations other than fire evacuation. “There are situations where we need students to return to the safety of the buildings”, he says, “and in this type of ‘lockdown’ security situation, we need to consider what audio or sound sample would best assist us to do that, without causing panic. With this new Axis system, we’re far more confident that we can select and be able to activate an appropriate signal rapidly and effectively”.

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**Tim Kong, Deputy Principal,
Thorndon Primary School.**

An easy and flexible system that enables a different environment

For Tim, the new system has been a success. “I really enjoyed being able to choose audio signals that bring some joyfulness to the school environment. The kids love it and have responded well”, he says. “The bird song first thing is a welcoming sound, it is nice to be able to use a sound that’s uniquely New Zealand, and ‘Move it’ has them all singing and dancing along as they head back to class. I really like the fact that these tones could be refreshed in the future, for example, the school band could record a jingle to use.”

He continued, “For the school, it has been a great way to deliver significantly more communication functionality with minimum extra cost, by incorporating it into the new build. The system is very easy to use and operate - Pure Tech did the set up and configuration, and I only had to spend an hour on training and we were ready to go.”

The system uses the IP network, with the power and signal over Ethernet, which keeps maintenance simple and makes it easy to add or replace speakers if required.

“The system has been designed for the future”, says Tim, “and we expect it to meet the school’s needs for the next 30 to 40 years”.

“The Axis audio solution is a great fit for a school like ours, and working with Pure Tech made the whole process very smooth”, says Tim. “The project has been a success and we’re no longer having to ring that fire bell!”



About Axis Communications

Axis enables a smarter and safer world by creating network solutions that provide insights for improving security and new ways of doing business. As the industry leader in network video, Axis offers products and services for video surveillance and analytics, access control, and audio systems. Axis has more than 3,000 dedicated employees in over 50 countries and collaborates with partners worldwide to deliver customer solutions. Founded in 1984, Axis is a Sweden-based company listed on the NASDAQ Stockholm under the ticker AXIS.

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