

## CASE STUDY | MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

# Salterns Academy Trust

iplicit



Sector  
Multi Academy Trust



Previous Finance System  
PS Financials



Number of iplicit users  
5 full users



Go Live Date  
September 2023

## Time and cost savings with iplicit has 'life-changing' impact for Salterns Academy Trust

"It's life-changing for us," says Renee Davies of the Salterns Academy Trust after switching from the trust's old finance software, PS Financials, to iplicit.

The trust's previous software had CFO Renee and her team bogged down in manual tasks and feeling the pressure. Up to a week of her time was tied up every month by the need to manipulate figures for reports.

"iplicit is already making things much more slick and streamlined, which is what we should be doing. We should be bringing ourselves up to date," she says.

“

We have more control with reporting, I can easily build reports myself, whereas in PS Financials there was a very standard way of reporting which we couldn't really change and which was often not up to date.



**Renee Davies**  
Chief Finance Officer



+44 (0)20 7729 3260 | [info@iplicit.com](mailto:info@iplicit.com) | [www.iplicit.com](http://www.iplicit.com)



+353 1 592 0850 | [info@iplicit.ie](mailto:info@iplicit.ie) | [www.iplicit.ie](http://www.iplicit.ie)

## Why a multi-academy trust's accounts are so complicated

After deciding the finance team at the Portsmouth-based multi-academy trust could not struggle on as it was, Renee led the hunt for a new software system.

“It’s a statutory requirement to produce a set of management accounts for our chairman every month, showing budget figures versus actuals in cash flow, the balance sheet and so on,” she says.

“That was very time consuming with PS Financials because we were pulling those reports off and the data wasn’t accurate. It would take me three or four days to get the data how I wanted it and I was spending nearly a week out of my working month, just manipulating data.

With another school joining the trust in January 2024, other things were getting pushed back because Renee was having to dedicate so much time to pulling this information together and getting it into order. This meant Renee couldn’t help resolve other queries that came up.

“It was having a massive knock-on effect and I was under pressure because it was taking up so much time and I was feeling the weight of not being able to do other things.

“The lack of support from our previous provider was awful. Lots of aspects of the software weren’t working properly, but when we raised a query it didn’t get resolved.

“It was very costly as well. This is public money we’re spending but even bringing in another user to the system was hugely expensive – and adding another school would cost thousands of pounds.

“We were also heavily paper-based. Emails involving spending were printed out and a paper copy sent to the person who had to approve it – then the piece of paper came back and someone had to manually put it on the system! It was crazy and very costly. We also had to pay for two storage units so that all these documents could be stored, as well as having cupboards in the office.”

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**Renee Davies**  
Chief Finance Officer

## How Salterns chose iplicit

“Having worked in industry previously, I thought, why are we putting up with this way of working when there have got to be other things out there?” says Renee.

The finance team looked at products from Iris and Sage but were not impressed.

“We went through three demos and we were really disheartened because we really hoped that we would have found the right thing for us,” she says.

“Then we found iplicit. I got the whole finance team together for the demo and at the end, we all said, ‘We think it’s great’,” she says.





## iplicit's advantages over PS Financials

iplicit “just seemed to make sense” to the team, says Renee.

“It is very simple to use, and also very powerful, with great reporting” she adds.

“The workflow approvals are simple to set up and we can attach documents to entries in the books, which was quite complicated with PS Financials.

“We can set things up in iplicit the way we want them to be, for our own specific needs, which we couldn’t with other systems.

Adding another school to the accounts is a fraction of the cost of other systems and is not expected to be a big project. In fact, “adding the new school onto the system will be straightforward as we can add them ourselves. It will be a case of running through the same sort of process with the templates we’ve been using already.”

Renee also liked that iplicit can be integrated with other software used by the trust.

## Enhanced reporting with iplicit

Renee’s favourite feature of iplicit is the reporting and Excel Add-in feature that allows live data to update her own bespoke-created reports.

“We have more control with reporting, I can easily build reports myself, whereas in PS Financials there was a very standard way of reporting which we couldn’t really change and which was often not up to date,” she adds.

“iplicit will drastically improve financial reporting. Our trust board and our chairman will be able to see accounts that are up to date, minute by minute.

“We are required to provide a lot of reporting to different boards. The school governors need separate reports for their schools along with the trust board, which needs a consolidated view.

“With iplicit, each group can access the required information easily. Users have their own logins and can view information, in the way they want to see it, for their part of the organisation.”



I would say to other multi-academy trusts, go for it. Don’t be frightened. I would give iplicit 10 out of 10, it’s made that much of a difference already.

**Renee Davies**  
Chief Finance Officer

Salterns Academy Trust expects to make increasing use of iplicit’s budgeting features, as well as integrating the finance system with the Arbor school management system.





## The onboarding process

“The implementation was quick and problem-free and training was delivered virtually to the whole team, which meant we could refer back to the recordings at any time or play them for those who had not been present. This approach differs to many of the other software vendors who use a ‘train the trainer’ approach, leaving it up to them to deliver training to the wider finance team.

“The onboarding process wasn't painful at all,” says Renee, “iplicit was willing to listen to our requirements, so it was very much a collaborative approach, which worked really well. You don't always necessarily know exactly what you want at the beginning – and that was very different from what we were offered by other software vendors.”

## Advice on changing MAT finance software

“I know it sounds a bit dramatic to say iplicit has been life-changing,” says Renee.

“But we had put up with PS Financials for so long and I speak to other CFOs who are with PS Financials or some other clunky software and they talk about the same problems.

“You don't have to stick with these systems just because of fear of change.

## Accounting software for multi academy trusts

iplicit is empowering multi academy trusts to take control of their finance operations and focus on what really matters. iplicit can help you upgrade with a number of solutions to support with accounting software for MATs.

True-cloud accounting software without the sky-high pricing. iplicit is the award-winning accounting solution that pays for itself.

With iplicit's automation tools you can close month end fast and with unlimited reporting dimensions, get critical insights quickly.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

“Of course, there's going to be a little bit of pain in change, as with anything, but it's worth it because we've got something that we didn't think we would ever have. We're in a place we didn't think we'd ever get to.

“I would say to other multi-academy trusts, go for it. Don't be frightened. I would give iplicit 10 out of 10, it's made that much of a difference already.”