

ievo® Biometric Fingerprint Readers



ABOUT

The Oratory School is an independent day and boarding school for boys aged 11-18 years, located between Reading and Oxford, with a capacity for over 400 pupils. It boasts outstanding facilities, including a Performing Arts Centre and £5m Sports Centre, set on a magnificent country estate.

The school's accommodation is divided into five houses – a junior house and four senior houses. The houses are all either recently built or completely modernised. The accommodation ranges from small, comfortable dormitories to well-equipped study bedrooms for the majority of older boys.



CASE STUDY

MEETING THE REQUIREMENT

The Oratory School takes the safety of its pupils very seriously. As with all independent schools it receives an inspection every three years by the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI), which judges on whether or not a school has met each of the Independent School Standards, as well as the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools.

One aspect of the school that the inspection raised as having room for improvement – and that had already been identified by the school - was the security of the boarding houses. These five properties were fitted with mechanical push button locks, which have the benefits of keyless access control. However, the level of security is relatively low as anyone with the code can gain access.

Rob Squizzoni, Estate Manager at The Oratory School, investigated the alternatives, including swipe card based electronic access control systems, but cards can easily be lost or thrown out of the window to other pupils or visitors wanting to gain access. The most secure solution, Rob concluded, was a biometric based access control system.

Following a recommendation from STANLEY Security, Rob turned to CIA Fire and Security who conducted a site survey at the school. "They looked at our existing security and recommended re using existing equipment where possible, even if that meant moving it to a different area" states Rob. "I liked this approach. I didn't feel as if it was just about sales. The advice they provided was driven by service not sales."

CIA recommended the levo biometric access control system, which it has been successfully installing in a range of applications. The system features advanced image reading sensors that take a detailed scan of your finger from the surface and subsurface levels of the skin, to capture a highly accurate digital image. Specific data from the image is converted into a digital template used for fingerprint identification. Providing a user presents a finger that matches a stored user template, then access will be granted.

CIA installed the levo biometric system across all five houses. Two houses have nine internal and external doors protected and the remaining have three external only doors covered by the system. The external reader has an IP65 rating and built-in environmental controls to remain operational over time in harsh weather conditions.

THE RESULT

Whilst a biometric system involves a larger capital outlay than more traditional technology, The Oratory School will see financial benefits in the longer term as the ongoing cost of issuing and managing swipe cards – the other system under consideration by the school – is removed. Plus, the school has already benefited from the new system in other ways, as Rob explains: "A biometric system is more expensive than the other options, but it provides us with flexible control. We can now restrict 90% of boarding house traffic. If a boy wants to let someone in, he has to physically open the door.

"The system is simple to manage which suits our needs. The 'batch remove' feature is particularly useful as, when an entire year leaves – especially in the case of sixth formers which tend to be a large number – we can remove them from the system in one go, rather than individually. Instantly they are no longer able to gain access to their former house."

To ensure data protection requirements were met, the school needed parental consent to take their sons' fingerprints and store that data. "This is a new, unfamiliar technology for most parents" states Rob "and there was some understandable caution in relation to data protection, but we explained that the personal data, including the fingerprint image, is captured within a barcode which is highly secure."

Whilst the biometric system is currently being used solely for security purposes, The Oratory School is already looking to benefit from some of its other potential uses. The Bursar, for example, is considering its use in the refectory as a cashless payment method and a means of identifying which pupils pay and which aren't required to.



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