

INSANELY GREAT!

St Bernard's Catholic School

Installing audio recording and editing facilities

Awarded Specialist School Status for the Arts in September 2004 and for Applied Learning in June 2009, St Bernard's Catholic School in Rotherham is a hotbed of musical talent. When they decided to build a new recording studio and audio editing suite, a teacher from a nearby school suggested they give Jigsaw24 a call.

Having recently decided to up their music education game, the school wanted a modern studio facility to record students' live performances, but to be able to produce and edit the results in a separate classroom. Our consultant, Rob Williams, visited the school to see exactly what it was that St Bernard's needed. With them, he came up with a solution that covered both the soon-to-be-built recording studio and the existing music classroom.

The studio...

St Bernard's wanted a tactile solution with plenty of inputs for recording bands and choirs. Rob suggested the Tascam DM3200 digital mixing desk, which would allow the school to produce professional quality recordings and still stay well within budget. One of the main benefits of the Tascam is that, with the addition of an IF-FW/DM FireWire expansion card (which we also provided), it becomes a 24-channel computer audio interface. This, along with a powerful 8-core Mac Pro tower, lets students mix live tracks digitally and would give St Bernard's a complete studio solution.

The school was already in the process of building a dedicated recording space, but they quickly realised that they would need to use the existing classroom for recording larger groups of students. After visiting the school's site and looking at their needs, we provided a range of microphones that would suit a number of different recording setups, and installed cabling and wall boxes that would enable recording and monitoring from both the live room and the classroom. With up to 16 feeds, they can now record whole bands or the full school choir, without students having to crowd into a single live room.



Working with...



In a nutshell...

Who are St Bernard's Catholic School?

St Bernard's Catholic School is a large high school in Rotherham with a focus on music and the arts. They were Awarded Specialist School Status for the Arts in September 2004 and for Applied Learning in June 2009.

What did they need?

The school wanted to improve their music education courses with a modern studio facility to record students' live performances, then produce and edit them in a separate classroom.

How did Jigsaw24 help?

We updated both their studio and music classroom, with a tactile Tascam control surface, DJ equipment, a new suite of Macs and Apple Logic music software to run it all.

What were the benefits?

- The school can now record whole bands or the full school choir, without students having to crowd into a single live room.
- Students have chance to gain a wide range of skills, using both Mac and PC, industry standard software and new DJ equipment.



It was important the new music studio looked impressive so that it would wow prospective students and parents. We worked with AKA Designs to build a custom desk specifically for the edit suite, including space specifically for the Mac Pro and rack mounts. We then gave the studio and the classroom full acoustic treatment using RPG acoustic panels. These would get rid of any sound interference and help teachers and students control the aural environment.

Not every installation goes according to plan, and there are some things you just can't anticipate. St Bernard's proved to be one of those cases. When we attached the foam panels to the walls of the classroom and recording space, some of them didn't attach correctly. We realised straight away the issue was with a defective batch of adhesive, and paid them a visit the next morning to secure the wayward panels.

The music classroom...

In the music classroom, we installed 18 new iMacs and connected them to the school's network. These would be more than powerful enough for the whole range of planned activities, yet would also give them the chance to get more experimental. The department was already using Cubase audio software on a number of

PCs, but wanted to integrate a Mac solution into their existing setup to give students the widest range of options. Rob suggested they try Apple's Logic. This would run alongside Cubase and provide students with the chance to get valuable experience on two industry-standard applications. Keen to add extra skills to the mix, we also supplied a pair of M-Audio Torq Xponent DJ software and hardware controller systems that let students fine tune their DJ skills.

To finish off the setup, we provided an Apple Xserve. This lets IT staff lock down certain features or programs machine by machine, or year group by year group – for example, while KS4 students can be given access to all the software and shared network areas, younger students are restricted to features only to do with their modules. It also gives students and teachers the ability to access data on Macs and PCs easily, using a single login and password, no matter what machine they are using. They were even looking for a laser printer, so we threw one of those in too, and configured it to run on the network.

The finishing touch...

From providing all the music equipment and computers, installing the wiring and acoustic treatments, configuring everything to make

sure it was running efficiently, then integrating it on to the school's network, we worked with St Bernard's at every point to make sure they had everything they needed and that teachers felt comfortable with the new setup. And because we installed the solution during the school's summer holidays, there was no disruption to teaching. This also gave the staff time to get familiar with the Tascam, Macs and accessories before the new term started.

“ Jigsaw24 have done a fantastic job in helping us set up a new Music Technology department at St Bernard's Catholic High School. Originally we had a few companies come along to provide us with a solution for setting up Music Technology and Jigsaw24 were by far the best. They provided us with detailed solutions for the studio setup, the classroom and the listening/ DJ room. The installation process ran very smoothly over the summer and the final setup was better than we could have imagined.”

Michelle Lockwood, **Music Technology teacher, St Bernard's Catholic School**

For more information about recording and editing facilities, get in touch with us on the details below.