

Case Study

Wheatley Park School

- Customer:** Wheatley Park School, Oxfordshire
- Technology:** LED lighting
- Funding:** Leasing arrangement with Utility Rentals
- Outcomes:** Annual savings of £8.5k on energy and £4.5k on maintenance, return on investment of less than 3.5 years

Cash-positive lease package delivers energy efficient LED lighting upgrade to Theresa May's former school

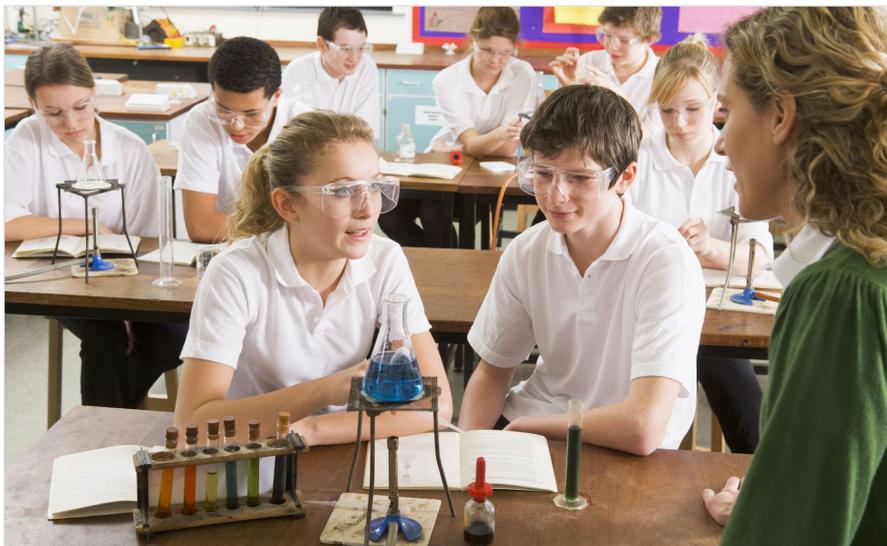
Occupying the site of UK Prime Minister Theresa May's former school, Wheatley Park School in Oxfordshire is one such institution, having recently utilised a leasing scheme operated by lighting specialist Energys Group and Utility Rentals to undertake a comprehensive lighting upgrade.

The school is no stranger to the benefits of energy efficient lighting, having engaged Energys Group five years ago to undertake the successful retrofit conversion of fluorescent T8 tubes to energy-efficient T5s. With the T5 adapters coming to the end of their life, Energys proposed an LED upgrade using the latest technology from New Vision, that would bring significant benefits in terms of energy consumption and lighting quality.

THE SOLUTION

Raj Gunasekaran, Business Development Manager at Energys Group, suggested to Wheatley Park Senior Site Manager David Jones and School Business Manager Kevin Heritage that they might wish to explore the opportunities presented by a unique lease package funded by Utility Rentals. The scheme enables schools to upgrade their lighting to energy efficient LED with no upfront cost.

By contrast to some other available funding schemes, the Utility Rentals scheme is "fast and guaranteed and is available for any school in the country – no matter what size or establishment type. The rental scheme is cash-positive from day one, with repayments covered by the energy costs saved.



PROJECT BACKGROUND

The number of schools across the UK deciding to make the journey from traditional lighting to the latest LED-based systems is increasing all the time – thanks in no small part to the availability of innovative financing schemes that make it possible to cope with the investment expenses over an extended period of time.

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The repayments are also fixed and won't go up year on year and can even be deferred until 12 months after the lighting has been installed," says Utility Rentals director Steve Matthey, who highlights the scheme's compliance with the Academies Financial Handbook.

For Kevin Heritage, the business case for the lease package was a 'no brainer' and helped the project to get approved by governors. "There is no upfront investment capital needed and the repayments are covered by the money we will save on energy. All of the lighting is fully maintained for the duration of the lease, so there will be no surprises."

Encompassing both indoor and outdoor areas, the installation resulted in new LED lighting being brought to classrooms, offices, science labs, workshops, common areas, science labs and the drama block, among other spaces.

RESULTS AND OUTCOME

Remarkably, the fit-out was completed in just over one week, but its benefits are set to be long-lasting indeed. With annual energy savings expected to be £8.5k, and maintenance costs reduced by £4k, the project's Return

on Investment is predicted to less than 3 and a half years.

The school is evidently delighted by the results of the project. "The lighting is now 30% more efficient and it has actually been possible to reduce the amount of lighting as the output is so much brighter – so there's a further notable saving to be taken into account," David Jones observes. "The funding scheme's five-year repayment terms allow us to meet the costs in a reasonable way that complements the long-term budgeting of the school."

Kevin Heritage adds that teaching staff have commented positively on the upgrade. "A number of studies demonstrate the importance of good lighting for student performance, and for us it stands to reason that the excellent illumination levels, pleasant daylight colour and uniformity of the new lighting has improved the learning environment."

Final word goes to Raj Gunasekaran, who helped plant the seed of the entire project in the minds of the school staff. "The Energys/Utility Rentals scheme has brought obvious and immediate advantages to Wheatley Park, which is terrific news," he says. "With many other projects currently in progress funded by the scheme, numerous other schools are set to experience similar benefits from new LED lighting fit-outs in the months and years ahead."



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