



# DEBT CHALLENGES RESOLVED WITH ONLINE PAYMENTS

## WHY WESTON ALL SAINTS WENT CASHLESS

School Business Manager, Alison Holbrook at Weston All Saints CofE Primary School in Somerset, shares her reasons for collecting payments online:

“I already used ParentPay to top up my child’s account in another local school, and had seen first-hand how useful it is from a payers perspective. Naturally I was interested to see how it could benefit our school too, so I recommended ParentPay to our Head and the Governors.

We wanted to cut down on the amount of cash being manually collected and banked, in terms of time taken and security when banking too.

A number of disputes to ascertain if cash payments had been received by the school didn’t make our Finance team’s job any easier. By introducing an online payments system, we could have an easily accessible audit trail so both parents and staff are able to view statements online and their payment history per item is clear.”

Alison also recognised pupil debt was an issue that needed to be addressed by providing their parents with an easier and more convenient method of paying for their children’s meals, trips, clubs and other school items available. “Now we have significantly reduced the amount of debt we saw prior to introducing ParentPay.”

## WHY PARENTPAY WAS SELECTED

“Our key drivers were to offer parents a reliable, proven and convenient online payment solution to help us reduce parental debt; so it was important that the solution we put in place should be coupled with proven debt reduction / mangement features. We wanted to ensure that our staff and parents had up to date visibility of account balances and were alerted if they went low.

ParentPay provided both the transparency we needed and also automatically alerted parents by SMS Text and/or email when balances got low, encouraging them to top up. I also knew how user friendly it was, being a parent user of the system myself.

Alison continues: “We also wanted a facility that would give us the ability to contact parents by email and/or text, and ParentPay provided us with this flexible option.

What’s more is ParentPay also allows collection of multiple payments at one time, which are then settled to numerous bank accounts of our choosing.

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### OBJECTIVE

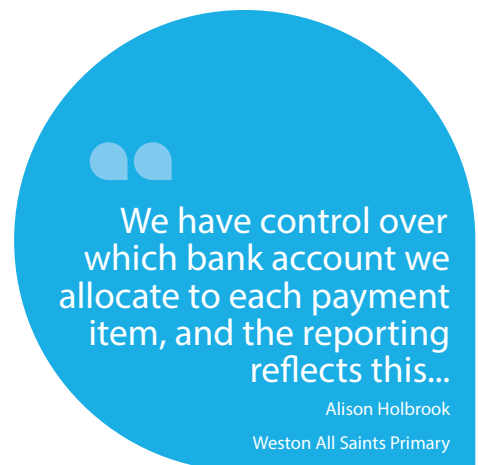
To cut down the amount of cash being manually collected/banked and make the process more secure

### SOLUTION

Source an online payment facility to automate time consuming tasks.

### OUTCOMES

Easy and secure payments, reduced debt, time saved and convenient for parents.

We have control over which bank account we allocate to each payment item, and the reporting reflects this...

Alison Holbrook  
Weston All Saints Primary

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## ENGAGING PARENTS

More and more people are taking to the Internet to shop for groceries, clothes, holidays, and the same can be said for school meals, children’s trips and clubs too.

“We gave parents plenty of notice, along with explanatory leaflets and posters prior to the launch, and we now have over 94% of our parents paying via ParentPay. We are very pleased with the improvements we have seen as a result of introducing ParentPay. Our staff and parents are a lot happier with this process compared to manual payments.

The majority of our parents are IT competent and have been very receptive to the change. Part of the reason I introduced a system was because parents often asked if they could pay online. There are only a few that don’t.

For parents who are unable to pay online for any reason, there is the added option of paying via PayPoint in their local store, and the school still has a full online audit trail.”



## USEFUL TIPS

### 1. **AGREE A CASHLESS STRATEGY WITH SLT AND COMMUNICATE THIS TO ALL STAKEHOLDERS**

Your strategy could be something as simple as: From next term we’ll be offering and encouraging parents to pay for items online, helping us reduce cash in school. Our aim is to be totally cashless in 5 years. Or your strategy could be more aggressive: All parents must pay online or through PayPoint from next term.

### 2. **HAVE A PLAN THAT CAN DELIVER YOUR STRATEGY**

Plan key timescales including an onsite system demonstration, getting sign-off by SLT/Governors, staff training and roll-out. ParentPay advisors can help you with this.

### 3. **RAISE AWARENESS AND INTEREST**

Central to your plan should be communication with parents and staff. Keep communication simple and positive. Our advisors can work with you to plan communications to suit your school. Aside from using your website, you could also use letters and emails as well as parent’s evenings and events.

### 4. **SPARK ACTION**

Consider a promotion to encourage parents to pay online or through PayPoint. Eg: for a specific event or school trip.

### 5. **BE INCLUSIVE AND PROVIDE FOR CASH BASED PAYERS**

94% of parents prefer to pay online, but for those who don’t or can’t, sign-post them to PayPoint. There are over 33,000 local shops offering PayPoint across the UK.

### 6. **REMEMBER ALERTS AND REMINDERS**

Provide balance or new payment notifications via ParentPay’s email and text system to increase early payments and drive uptake

## GET STARTED, IT’S SIMPLE

Our experienced advisors are ready to help, they can answer any questions you may have; provide a quote for your school; or give a demonstration of our system. You can even arrange to see us in person; we’ll visit your school and show you and your staff how it all works.

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