



CLIENT: MADELEY ACADEMY
PROJECT VALUE: £120,000
PROJECT TIME FRAME: 3 MONTHS

MOVING WITH THE TIMES AT MADELEY ACADEMY

Madeley Academy is a secondary school and sixth form college in Shropshire, England. It converted to academy status in 2007, opening in 2009, and has always prided itself on delivering state-of-the-art facilities to students, including in its theatre space. However, as technology has moved on since 2009, it became clear that the theatre needed a revamp to bring it up to date.

PROJECT BRIEF

CDEC were called in to advise on the upgrade to the theatre at Madeley Academy. While the school had an idea of what they wanted to achieve with the project, they didn't know how to achieve this, so CDEC was tasked with designing, specifying and installing a system that would replace the aging setup while also reducing the complexity of the equipment, improving resilience and reliability, and enhancing the functionality of the space.

The Academy's Steve Barnes explains: "CDEC had done some



“Jon was our engineer on site and he was fantastic. He gave very clear, concise answers and kept us informed as he worked through any issues. The team were attentive and the communication was always there. They were great.”

STEVE BARNES, IT MANAGER
MADELEY ACADEMY

work at Thomas Telford, our sister school, last year and they were very impressed with the work they did, plus they were competitive on price and we knew the team having worked with them before, so they won the tender.”

The requirement was for a complete AV upgrade including a new projector and screen to replace the existing 4:3 orientation projector, which had failed after four years causing multiple problems, alongside an updated audio system for shows and performances. The academy also needed to replace its wireless microphones. CDEC sent a project manager to take a look at the existing setup with one of the technical architects and created schematics for a new design which was approved by the school.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

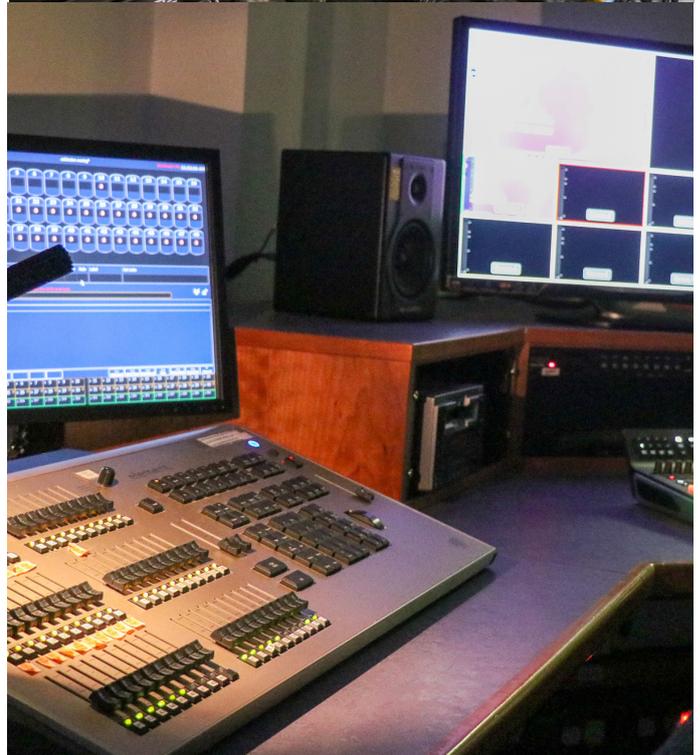
Having created a design that met Madeley's expectations, CDEC was charged with installing the equipment. A particular highlight for the academy was the new BenQ LU9915 projector, recommended by CDEC, which was both cost-effective and exceeded the academy's expectations. Barnes adds: “As a product, it's amazing. It's had the most profound impact on all of the presentations as images had previously been quite washed out and text wasn't always clear. Most of our staff and certainly the students have commented on the fact that the projector looks amazing.”

PROJECT CHALLENGES

As one of the main goals of the project was to simplify the setup, it was a case of taking out all of the equipment that had previously been used. This meant a site survey had to be conducted which picked up a number of issues, including how and where cables could be laid, however early identification meant these could be overcome.

Another unforeseen issue was the removal of the old projector screen. At about 6-7m long, weighing a significant amount and being bolted to the RSJs, it simply wasn't possible to get it down safely. “This turned out to be a positive really,” adds Barnes. “We're going to have it rewired in so if someone turns up with a 4:3 projector they can still use that screen.”

As in so many installs, integrating the old and the new also proved a challenge at times. For example, trying to get the house lights talking to the new Extron touchscreen control



panel took some time and required the engineer to work diligently through the options before finding a solution.

PROJECT OUTCOME

The theatre is now fully in use by students and teachers and feedback so far has been entirely positive. Barnes adds: “It's been brilliant. The staff love it, the projector and the screen are fantastic; we've been blown away by the image quality. We normally have a theatre technician who manages the theatre but we don't currently have anyone in that role so it's been split between a couple of other team members. Some of the functionality we've got is that a lot is now addressable over the network; we can fire up the house lights, switch sources and do lots more remotely from the office. This has taken the more onerous elements out of our hands and saved us so much time. It's probably changed the way we're going to work when we do replace that position.”