



**the first choice**  
for organisational improvement

Case Study:

## Watford Grammar School for Girls



Helen Hyde Headmistress with her Head Girls

### About the organisation

**Name:**

Watford Grammar School for Girls

**Size:**

1250 pupils, including a sixth form of 340 students

**Industry Sector:**

Further Education

The school was the first to be awarded the Customer Service Excellence (CSE) Standard by EMQC Ltd, one of only four National Certification Bodies in the UK which can assess organisations against the Standard. The school also was one of the first organisations throughout the UK to achieve the Standard within the first month of the launch in March 2008.

### Why choose the Customer Service Excellence Standard?

Headmistress Helen Hyde wanted the school to be assessed to ensure that it was delivering the highest standard of education and provision for all its students and staff.

Founded in 1704, the school cherishes its long-standing, continued commitment to serving the wider community, and its distinguished history and traditions of academic excellence. It was felt that achieving the CSE Award would further its success in building upon that legacy.

Mrs Hyde explained: "We want to set our standards really high. To do that successfully, it's very important to have an outside assessor come in and have a good look at our provision to see that we are doing what we say we are doing."

The school's business objectives include being a respected place of academic teaching where learning takes place in a caring, stimulating and supportive environment and where students are helped to become independent life long learners. These objectives were believed to fit well with the CSE Standard's aim of driving up customer service levels in all public service organisations.

### Implementation

The school already undertook regular surveys and record keeping to help assess its achievements in customer service. It continually reviews and develops these.

"Self evaluation is deeply embedded into our systems and processes," Mrs Hyde explained. The school's processes include keeping records of evaluations and how new developments and improvements take place. Complaints, suggestions and compliments are also recorded, and regular surveys conducted so that the school can be sure it is meeting its targets.

CUSTOMER  
SERVICE  
EXCELLENCE



---

In addition, she said: “Pupil voice is well integrated into our processes and we have a strong school council which is regularly consulted.” The evidence gained from these regular surveys and talking to client groups helps the school to measure where it is meeting its targets.

All staff have a performance review where targets are set with line managers and in support of the school. “They must ensure that the individual and the school move forward,” said Mrs Hyde. “Every head of department sets departmental targets which are in line with the school development plan. This is drawn up using the individual and departmental targets and the plan goes to every department for comments and additions.”

An example of the school's efforts to maintain high standards is its review and subsequent improvement to the way references are prepared for Year 11 students.

### **What benefits have been gained?**

Helen Hyde pointed out: “We measure our success on our provision of a high standard of education along with high levels of care and support for all our students and staff. Ultimately, it's about staff, student and parent satisfaction.

“After working with the CSE, we are aware that we are working to a high standard and we know what to do to maintain this. We feel that our assessment against CSE has contributed towards meeting the OFSTED standards and also the wider public service standards that this award upholds.”

Deputy Head Stephen Johnson added: “The award acts as an independent benchmark against which we can evaluate our service. It helps us better understand what we do, how we do it and how we can do it better.”

### **Assessor Leon Winston highlighted:**

“This is a school where customer insight is understanding everyone's needs and preferences and is a genuine key driver that is being achieved through placing engagement and consultation at the heart of the schools day- to- day activity.”

