



CASE STUDY

Simplifying Complexity



Stonyhurst College's move towards a connected digital ecosystem, tested through ISI inspection



STONYHURST

FOUNDED 1593 • LANCASHIRE, ENGLAND



WRITTEN BY

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Bringing school life together — why we partnered with Involve

Stonyhurst College is a Catholic Jesuit boarding and day school in Lancashire, educating pupils from 3 to 18. Founded in 1593, the College has a long tradition of forming young people of competence, conscience, compassion and commitment. As a busy boarding school, our daily life is broad, ambitious and complex. Academic lessons, boarding routines, co-curricular activities, sport, trips, events, interventions, parent communication and pastoral care all sit alongside one another as part of the formation of the whole person.

That richness is one of Stonyhurst's greatest strengths. It also creates a significant operational challenge. A school like ours does not only need good individual systems, it needs those systems to work together. Staff need to know where information sits. Parents need a clear and consistent experience. Pupils need access to the right routines and opportunities. Leaders need visibility across the whole school, not isolated snapshots of separate areas.

Before Involve, our challenge was not that we lacked digital systems. In many ways, the issue was the opposite. Like many schools, we had accumulated a number of platforms, each doing a particular job. Systems for trips, fixtures, calendars, parent communication, pupil information, reporting access, co-curricular activities and internal administration. Individually, many of these systems had value. Collectively, however, they created fragmentation.

Information existed, but not always in one place. Processes worked, but not always in the same way. Staff were often required to move between platforms, duplicate information, or remember which system held which part of school life. For a complex boarding school, that is not simply inconvenient, it creates friction, reduces visibility and makes it harder to provide the seamless experience that staff, pupils and parents rightly expect.

Our decision to work with Involve formed part of a wider digital strategy at Stonyhurst, which was to simplify the digital ecosystem, reduce unnecessary duplication, improve the quality and accessibility of information, and create a clearer whole-school operating model.

That strategy has already been tested in a very real context. During our ISI inspection in April 2026, Involve was scrutinised carefully as part of the College's wider operational and co-curricular infrastructure. The platform was not simply present in the background, it helped inspectors see how the school organises, communicates and evidences the breadth of pupil experience beyond the classroom.

A strategic decision, not just a software decision

We did not view Involve as another platform to add to an already crowded landscape. The attraction was the opposite. Involve offered the possibility of bringing more of school life into one coherent environment.

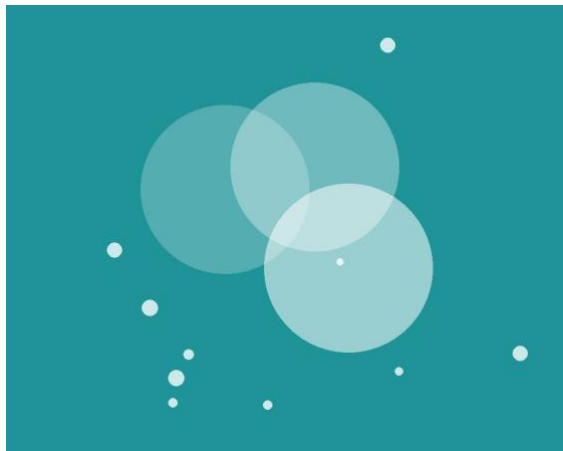
For us, this mattered because digital strategy should not be about collecting systems. It should be about improving the experience of school. The question we kept returning to was simple. Can we make daily school life easier to see, easier to manage and easier to understand?

Involve aligned with that ambition. It gave us a platform through which co-curricular activity, fixtures, trips, attendance, events, communication and operational workflows could begin to sit within a more connected framework. Rather than asking staff to navigate a patchwork of systems, we could start building towards a more unified picture of each pupil's experience.

That has been especially important in a boarding context. Our pupils' lives are not divided neatly into academic, pastoral and co-curricular boxes. A pupil might move from registration to lessons, from a clinic to a fixture, from boarding to an evening activity, from a trip to a rehearsal, and from an intervention meeting to a parent conversation. The systems that support them need to reflect that reality.

Involve has helped us move closer to that goal.

Making the co-curricular life of the school more visible



ISI SIGNIFICANT STRENGTH

Co-curricular life, made visible

Activities, fixtures, trips and events brought into one connected view.

One of the most significant benefits has been the increased visibility of co-curricular life.

At Stonyhurst, co-curricular provision is not an optional extra. It is central to our Jesuit educational mission. Formation happens in classrooms, but also on pitches, in theatres, in chapels, on expeditions, through service, through leadership opportunities and through the daily rhythms of boarding school life.

Historically, much of this richness was happening, but it was not always easy to capture or communicate in one place. Activities, fixtures, trips and events could be recorded across different systems and workflows. This made it harder for leaders to see the whole picture, for staff to coordinate efficiently, and for pupils and parents to access a single, reliable view of what was happening.

Involve has helped us bring that picture together. It has made the co-curricular life of the school more visible, more structured, and easier to communicate. This matters because visibility changes culture. When staff can see what is happening, they can support it more effectively. When pupils can see opportunities clearly, they are more likely to engage. When parents can understand the breadth of what is on offer, they gain a stronger sense of the value and distinctiveness of the school.

It has also helped senior leaders evidence the strength of what is taking place. That is an important point. Involve did not create Stonyhurst's co-curricular culture; that culture was already deeply embedded. What it has done is help us organise, coordinate and evidence that culture more effectively.

This became especially clear during our recent ISI inspection, where the College received an 'ISI significant strength' for its co-curricular provision. Involve was part of that story because it helped make the breadth, structure, and quality of provision visible. It enabled us to show not just what was happening, but how it was organised, accessed, and embedded across the life of the school.

For us, this was a powerful validation of the direction of travel. It showed that digital strategy is not separate from educational quality. When the right platform improves visibility, communication, and coordination, it strengthens the school's ability to deliver and evidence its mission.

ISI inspection — evidencing the strength of co-curricular life

APRIL 2026

Tested through ISI inspection

Involve helped evidence the breadth and structure of school life beyond the classroom.

ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

A particularly important moment in our Involve journey came during our recent ISI inspection.

As part of the inspection process, the platform was scrutinised closely. Inspectors were able to see how Stonyhurst uses Involve to organise, coordinate, and evidence the breadth of school life beyond the classroom. This included co-curricular provision, activities, sport, events, pupil participation, and the wider operational structures that support a busy boarding and day school.

The outcome was significant. Stonyhurst was awarded a 'significant strength' for its co-curricular provision. Involve was not the sole reason for that judgement, and it would be wrong to suggest that a platform creates the culture of a school. The strength of Stonyhurst's co-curricular life comes from our pupils, staff, boarding community, coaches, tutors, activity leaders, and the College's long-standing commitment to educating the whole person.

However, Involve played an important part in helping us make that provision visible.

In an inspection context, this matters. Schools need to be able to show not only that opportunities exist, but that they are planned, communicated, accessed, monitored, and understood. Involve helped us demonstrate the structure behind the experience. It gave inspectors a clearer view of the scale, coherence, and ambition of our co-curricular programme, pointing to a school life that is broad, active, purposeful and deeply connected to our Jesuit mission of forming the whole person.

Reducing friction for staff

The most successful digital systems are the ones that reduce friction. They do not ask staff to work harder in order to serve the system. They help staff do the work they are already trying to do, but with greater clarity and efficiency.

That has been one of the key gains with Involve. It has helped us challenge unnecessary duplication and ask better questions about how workflows should operate. Why should similar information be entered into several places? Why should staff need to check multiple systems to understand a pupil's commitments? Why should trips, sport, activities and events feel disconnected when, for the pupil and parent, they are all part of one school experience?

The move towards Involve has allowed us to simplify a number of these routines. It has also created a more consistent language around events, activities, registers, attendance, and communication. That consistency is important. In a large school, small inconsistencies quickly become significant operational problems. A clearer system helps reduce avoidable uncertainty.

This does not mean implementation has been effortless. Any meaningful digital change requires training, communication, patience and a willingness to review practice honestly. But the direction has been right. Staff increasingly see the value of having more school processes brought into a single environment, particularly when it reduces the need to move between multiple platforms.

Improving the parent and pupil experience

For parents and pupils, the benefit of digital consolidation is clarity.

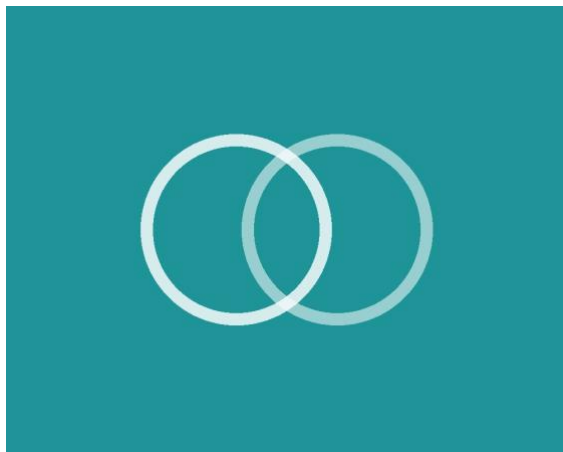
Parents do not necessarily think in terms of systems. They want to know what is happening, when it is happening, where to find information, and what action they need to take. Pupils need the same clarity. They need to understand their commitments, activities, fixtures, events and routines without having to piece information together from several places.

Involve has helped us move towards a more coherent experience. It supports the idea that school information should be accessible, timely and logically organised. That is particularly important in a school where pupils may be involved in a wide range of academic, boarding, sporting, creative and service activities.

The ambition is not simply to make administration easier, although that matters. The larger ambition is to make school life easier to navigate.

That is where the real value lies. When systems are clearer, relationships improve. Staff spend less time chasing information. Parents feel better informed. Pupils understand expectations more easily. Leaders have a stronger view of the lived experience of the school.

A genuine partnership with the Involve team



FOUNDING 50 SCHOOL

A genuine development partnership

Shaping the platform through real dialogue, not a feature request list.

One of the most distinctive aspects of our work with Involve has been the nature of the relationship.

This has not felt like a traditional supplier arrangement, where a school purchases a fixed product and then works around its limitations. It has felt much more like a development partnership. The

Involve team have listened carefully to feedback, responded constructively to challenge, and shown a genuine willingness to understand how schools operate in practice.

That matters because schools are complex organisations. A workflow that appears simple from outside can become much more complicated when it intersects with safeguarding, boarding, co-curricular commitments, parent communication, staff workload, inspection evidence, and day-to-day operational reality.

Our conversations with Involve have often focused on those real world details. How should medical information be visible to staff in the right context? How should external events and lettings be classified and filtered? How should sports fixtures, cricket scoring and live updates work in a way that reflects the reality of school sport? How should room booking approvals operate? How should behaviour notifications reach the right staff without overwhelming those who do not need them? How should analytics allow leaders to move from a dashboard to the pupils behind the data?

These are not abstract software questions. They are school leadership questions. They affect safeguarding, communication, workload, accountability, and pupil experience.

What has impressed us is that Involve have been willing to engage at that level. They have not simply asked, "What feature do you want?" They have listened to the problem behind the request. That is the difference between a vendor and a partner.

Helping shape the future of the platform

As one of Involve's Founding 50 schools, Stonyhurst has had particular opportunities to contribute to the development of the platform as it grows. That has been valuable, because it means the product is being shaped by the lived experience of schools.

The best educational technology is not built in isolation. It is built through close dialogue with the people who use it every day: teachers, tutors, coaches, boarding staff, administrators, senior leaders, pupils and parents. Involve understand that.

Our feedback has covered a wide range of areas, from co-curricular visibility and sports functionality to attendance workflows, analytics, room bookings, communication and safeguarding-related access to information. In each case, the principle has been the same, in that the platform should reflect how schools actually work.

This is particularly important as schools look to rationalise their digital estates. Many schools are paying for multiple systems, some of which overlap, and many of which are not used to their full potential. The financial argument for consolidation is clear, but the educational and operational argument is even stronger. A more connected system gives leaders a better view of school life and gives staff, pupils and parents a more coherent experience.

Involve is helping us move in that direction.

From information management to school improvement

The most important shift is cultural.

At its best, a platform like Involve is not just about information management. It is about school improvement. Better systems should lead to better conversations, better decisions and better support for pupils.

When leaders can see patterns more clearly, they can intervene earlier. When staff can access information more easily, they can act with greater confidence. When parents and pupils have a clearer view of school life, they can engage more fully. When co-curricular provision is visible, it becomes easier to celebrate, evaluate and develop.

Our recent ISI inspection reinforced this point. The inspection did not simply look at whether systems existed. It looked at whether the school could demonstrate the quality, coherence and impact of what pupils experience. Involve helped us show that more clearly, particularly in relation to co-curricular provision.

That is why Involve matters to us. It supports the operational backbone of the school, but its impact goes beyond administration. It helps connect the different parts of school life so that the whole picture becomes clearer.

For Stonyhurst, this aligns closely with our Jesuit mission. *Cura personalis*, care for the whole person, requires us to know pupils well. Knowing pupils well means understanding more than their academic profile. It means understanding their commitments, interests, routines, relationships, opportunities and wider formation. A more connected digital ecosystem helps us do that with greater precision.

What we would say to another school

Schools considering Involve should not think only about which individual systems it might replace. That is important, but it is not the full question.

The better question is this — how coherent is your current digital ecosystem?

If staff are moving between multiple platforms, if parents are unsure where to find information, if pupils' activities and commitments are held in disconnected places, if leaders cannot easily see the full picture of school life, then the issue is not just administrative. It is strategic.

Involve gives schools an opportunity to rethink that picture. It allows leaders to ask what should be brought together, what can be simplified, what can be made more visible, and what experience they want staff, pupils and parents to have.

At Stonyhurst, our work with Involve has helped us move from a collection of separate workflows towards a more connected model of school life. The platform has helped us reduce fragmentation, strengthen visibility and think more ambitiously about how digital systems can support the formation of the whole person.

It has also helped us evidence the strength of that model externally. During ISI inspection, Involve formed part of the wider picture of how Stonyhurst organises and communicates the breadth of pupil experience. The College's significant strength in co-curricular provision was rooted in the quality of what happens every day, but Involve helped make that quality more visible, structured and accessible.

Involve has helped us simplify complexity. For a school like Stonyhurst, that is exactly what effective digital strategy should do.

Involve did not create the strength of Stonyhurst's co-curricular life, but it helped us make that strength visible. During our ISI inspection, that mattered. It helped us evidence the breadth, structure, and quality of what our pupils, staff and parent experience every day.

— Mark Evans, Director of Studies, Stonyhurst College

Find out more

Want to bring your school's digital ecosystem together?
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