

From Spreadsheets to Community:

How The Crossley Heath School **Reconnected** Generations of Alumni

About The Crossley Heath School

The Crossley Heath School is a leading grammar school in West Yorkshire with a history stretching back hundreds of years.

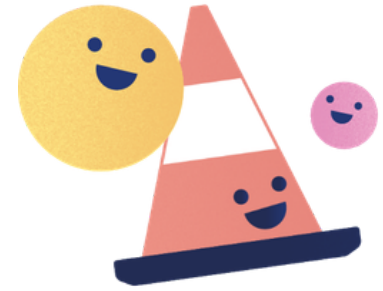
The school's current identity was formed in 1985 when two historic schools merged. As a result, its alumni community spans multiple generations, thousands of former students, and a rich heritage that continues to shape the school today.



When Alumni and Development Officer, Becky, joined the school in early 2025, she was tasked with strengthening relationships with former students, helping alumni reconnect with the school, and creating opportunities for graduates to share their experiences with current pupils.

**There was just one challenge.
There was no alumni programme in place.**

The Challenge



The school had a wealth of alumni stories.

Former students had gone on to achieve remarkable things across a wide range of professions and industries. Becky regularly heard about successful graduates and saw opportunities to bring them back into the school community.

The problem was there was no effective way to stay connected with them.

"We wanted to bring them back into the family, get them connected with us and attend our events. Getting them to meet with the students and share their insights, seeing what connections and industries we have, and making them feel connected with the school."



Alumni records were stored in spreadsheets, communications were managed manually, and there was no dedicated space for former students to connect with each other.

At the time, Becky was sending occasional emails from Outlook to a small contact list.

"It didn't look nice and there wasn't really anything else in place."

The school also faced wider challenges around data management, GDPR compliance, engagement tracking, and community building.

Without a dedicated platform, alumni had little reason to stay involved.

"There was nothing to entice them in. It's been really nice to have this platform to say, come in here, come and talk to people, come and have a look at our content. It gives them a draw to come in and get engaged."

For a school with a small team and limited budget, finding the right solution was essential.



Finding the Right Platform

As part of the selection process, Becky evaluated multiple providers. While some platforms offered useful functionality, they either felt outdated or exceeded the school's budget.

As Becky explains, alumni engagement is often viewed as a desirable addition rather than a core operational function, making affordability an important consideration.

VeryConnect stood out because it combined multiple capabilities in a single platform.

"VeryConnect has a bit of everything. Emails, events, payments and donations."

The ability to manage alumni data, send professional communications, organise events, and build an online community from one place gave the school a practical foundation for launching its alumni programme.

A Supported and Straightforward Implementation

Although Becky describes herself as "not techy", she found the implementation process approachable and well supported.

Working alongside the VeryConnect team, the school migrated its alumni data and established the foundations of its new alumni hub.

"Iola was fabulous and really patient with me when I asked a thousand questions."

"The process of uploading the data was really simple."

Training and onboarding were designed to support both day-to-day users and senior stakeholders, helping ensure the platform aligned with the school's wider objectives.

When technical challenges arose, the support team remained closely involved. At one stage, the school experienced difficulties accessing the platform through its internal systems. The issue ultimately sat outside of VeryConnect, but the support team helped identify the cause and guide the school towards a resolution.

"Anything that I am struggling with, I know that the support team is very useful."

Early Results:

One Third of Alumni Engaged Within Two Weeks

The platform launched in September 2025, and the response was immediate.

Within just two weeks, approximately one third of the school's entire alumni database had registered and created profiles.

Former students began reconnecting with each other, updating their profiles, sharing memories, and participating in discussions.



"Lots of people have emailed me to thank me for the platform."

"Overall, it has been really positive."

The newsfeed quickly became one of the most popular features, giving alumni a dedicated place to interact in a way that felt more personal and community-focused than traditional social media platforms.

For the first time, alumni from different eras of the school's history had a shared space where they could reconnect with each other and with the school.

Saving Time While Building Better Relationships

Alongside stronger engagement, the platform has significantly improved day-to-day administration. Creating and sending emails is now faster and more professional, removing the need for fragmented manual processes.

"VeryConnect has saved me a lot of time."

As the alumni programme grows, Becky can now see who is opening emails, attending events, interacting with content, and engaging with the school.

This visibility is helping the school move beyond simply sending communications and towards building meaningful relationships.

"It's really useful to see who's opening emails, who's engaged, who's attending events, what are they saying, what kind of things do they want."

These insights are already helping identify alumni who may be interested in mentoring students, attending future events, supporting fundraising initiatives, or becoming long-term ambassadors for the school.



Looking Ahead

While the initial launch has exceeded expectations, Becky sees this as just the beginning.

Her focus now is on encouraging more conversations within the community, increasing participation in groups, and developing a deeper understanding of what alumni want from their relationship with the school.

The long-term goal is simple: create stronger, lasting connections between alumni and the school they once attended.

"Overall, I am really enjoying using the VeryConnect platform and I am excited to use it more. It will be really valuable for us."

Key Outcomes

- Launched a dedicated alumni community platform for the first time
- Migrated alumni records from spreadsheets into a centralised system
- Achieved registration from approximately one third of the alumni database within two weeks of launch
- Created a dedicated online space for alumni to connect with the school and each other
- Reduced administrative effort through professional email and engagement tools
- Gained visibility into alumni engagement, communication activity, and event participation
- Established foundations for future mentoring, fundraising, events, and alumni engagement initiatives

The Crossley Heath's membership platform helps their staff save time better connect their alumni.

[Get in touch](#) to see how we can help you do the same.

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