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Education

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# The Constellation Trust

Case Study



**The Constellation Trust is a forward thinking and innovative Multi-Academy Trust based in Hull. Providing the best learning opportunities for their pupils, the Trust comprises primary, secondary and an alternative provision school. Each school services its own community and has its own identity. Together they benefit from working in partnership, sharing good practice and have a joint central service support team.**

## **Choosing the right ICT partner**

Trevor Taylor is Chief Operating Officer at the Constellation Trust and has worked with RM for 10 years since the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme. With their BSF contract coming to an end, Trevor went out to formal tender to identify the best long term provider for their IT Managed Service Solution.

“In January 2017 we met with all of the ‘market leaders’ that we thought might be able to provide the services we needed and shortlisted two, including RM. Most of the other providers wanted us to return to a vanilla network, flatten everything and start again; but with our budgets, 1500 pupils to consider and just one 6 week summer break to complete the work, this was clearly a concern.”

To enhance service delivery post BSF, the Trust worked with 9ine Consulting to review their IT strategy. Throughout this process RM gained the confidence and respect of the Trust and were selected as their long term ICT partner. RM provides a fully managed IT support service to all schools in the Trust.

When asked why the Constellation Trust chose RM to be their ICT partner, Trevor answered that cost and flexibility were both important factors.

**“Cost was a big factor, there was a significant cost difference between RM and other providers. We wanted a bespoke service and RM offered this. They were very accommodating in helping to shape the ideal service for us.”**

## **The whole RM team working together makes a difference**

As part of their IT support service the Constellation Trust have unlimited access to our Helpdesk, with a range of proactive updates and services from their Remote Network Manager. To ensure issues are identified and resolved before the start of the school day, the remote team carry out 180 daily checks from 3am. Trevor is realising the benefits of our remote capabilities.

“RM’s remote network support means we have reassurance that systems are being monitored and checked. RM are at the forefront of IT education and are specialists in what they do. I really like the wrap around service with the extended team in India doing updates overnight. Meaning there is no interruption to lessons. It’s a total care package.”

Trevor continues “It was great to meet our remote network manager Suneeth. He came over from India and met the school staff, spending time to get to know us and our setup. When I speak to people and tell them the remote team in India will fix it overnight, they find it a little incredible.

Trevor explained that RM support the personal development of their IT technicians and that this, combined with the overnight proactive checks, has resulted in less impact in the classroom. They now have fewer calls logged, no interruption to teaching (as updates take place outside of school hours) and confidence that the IT will just work when they start a lesson.

“David Brooke is our UK-based Technical Operations Manager and he sorts out any higher level issues but now there is a real lack of problems. In the past we used to log so many calls but now we’ve got to the point where IT just works. We log very few calls these days.”

### **“I’d say we’ve seen an 80% reduction in support calls.”**

Trevor mentions that his RM Relationship Manager, Louise, is key to the successful delivery of ICT across the trust. “Louise has shared solutions and ideas from other schools that has meant a smoother operation for our trust.

“Over the years a strong relationship has developed between ourselves and RM. As the Director of Operations, I am the link between our teaching staff and RM. Likewise, Louise has been the filter between us and the RM team and has a real depth and understanding.”

“We understand each other and although we have had occasional challenges, she cuts through problems like a hot knife through butter. She talks my language, we don’t talk in technical terms unless we need to. She deserves to get rewarded because she’s incredible.”

## **Trust-wide consistency**

The Constellation Trust aim to deliver consistent ICT across all of their sites and currently have RM Flex, RM Unify, Microsoft Office 365 and SharePoint as the standard suite across all of their schools. Trevor has found that having a consistent infrastructure in place has really helped to improve communication and collaboration between the schools.

“Having consistency makes a big difference when you want to do something at a trust-wide level. We wanted to be able to communicate with the schools on one platform and for there to be collaboration and consistency of teaching resources between schools in the trust and the sharing of ideas. Before introducing RM Unify there was very little communication between the schools and they all existed on their own systems.”

“We’re hoping that this consistency will have an increased positive impact on teaching and learning and will help to raise attainment. Having the same tools in primary will help the transition to secondary school and in turn support the raising of literacy levels.”

As well as this, Trevor explained the importance of technology to teaching and learning, suggesting that it is fundamental to teaching these days. Pupils want a lesson that is engaging, both visually and with text and audio. Lessons need to engage the pupils as well as educating them.

“Teachers have enough to do without having to worry about the technology working. The value of being able to take that worry away has been priceless.”

## Journey to the Cloud

The Constellation Trust have recently moved their software and services to the Cloud with the help of Blair, RM's Regional Technical Authority in the North of the UK. Trevor recalls that the implementation and project management offered by RM was critical to the successful transition. "Without Blair we couldn't have done it. It took six months to set up and then six months to start using it properly. We would not have got SharePoint off the ground without the help of RM and their understanding of "Tenancy".

"RM's implementation and project management capabilities differ from the skillsets that we have available in school. I can take it part of the way but I also understand my limits and there are times when you need specialists. We are trained to be teachers not IT experts. Working with RM we each play to our strengths in a complementary way." "We have reaped the benefits of RM unify, it now accommodates email, SharePoint and as a platform it works. The benefits of Single Sign-On to staff are enormous. All those individual logins mount up. At first we were reluctant to use it but now we've personalised it to the academy with tiles for each subject specialism."

## A recommendation to other Trusts

As well as saving around one third on his IT support costs compared to his previous BSF provision, the Constellation Trust have found RM's services to be good value for money.

"The IT support we get from RM is absolutely excellent value for money. You receive a professional service that gives peace of mind and the reliability of technology that works.

I would choose RM every time. It gives you an all-encompassing wrap around package and you know that RM have got your back if we have any issues with our network."

**"To other Trusts looking for an ICT partner, I absolutely recommend RM. They are affordable, reliable, thorough, talk the right language and there's longevity in the partnership for as long as you want it to be there."**

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To find out more please visit

**RM.com** or email

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