



Why a large Secondary School in North London believes that investing in a fully managed outsourced technology contract will help them deliver better educational outcomes for their pupils

The Background

Hendon School is an Outstanding School, passionate about education and working with their young people to give them the best opportunities in life. They are a large Outer London mixed comprehensive in the London borough of Barnet with over 1,200 students (aged 11-18). The school also has a large sixth form with over 200 students following a range of pathways.

They celebrate the fact that they are a large and diverse family – given that despite being situated in a relatively affluent part of North London, they have a well-above-average proportion of students eligible for free school meals, and a proportion of students whose first language is not English and who originate from minority ethnic heritages. The proportion of students who have statements of special educational needs is also well well-above-average with specialist provisions in both hearing impairment and Autism Spectrum Conditions.

Against this background, it is no surprise that the school has a clear strategy... and one that recognises the importance that technology must play within its delivery. With that in mind, they took the decision to replace their two-year old network management contract with RM with a fully managed IT service, incorporating an onsite engineer supporting the entire school.

The Challenge

Schools are very complex ecosystems. They have many moving parts, and multiple stakeholders – from teachers to non-teaching staff, from pupils to their parents, and from school governors to governmental regulators. With 1,200 pupils – many with very individual needs – ensuring this ecosystem operates smoothly is no mean feat.

Earlier in 2020, Hendon School undertook an internal review of their IT support, and – recognising that their own skills lay in teaching and learning, not in technology – they decided to extend their ICT contract with RM to a fully managed outsourced contact, from September 2020.

“The knowledge of our network and quality of our infrastructure had developed beyond recognition based on the support and advice of the two RM Engineers, who our staff held in the high regard. It was a natural progression”.

Ron Spicer, Assistant Headteacher

The Need

For Hendon School, there was much that needed to be done. With support from RM they have now fully mapped their network, advised on a range of development priorities to make their IT systems far more robust and efficient. New servers and firewalls have been installed, many switches replaced and they have rationalised several parts of the core network.

"RM have supported us with prioritising which areas of the IT development plan to work on first via the RAG-rated roadmap they developed for us".

Ron Spicer, Assistant Headteacher



All staff and students have been moved onto Office 365 – giving them cloud-based email access – and they are now helping the school to understand how else they can use cloud-based learning through platforms such as Microsoft Teams.

"The whole of our network was extremely unstable and regularly went down prior to RM coming into the school. Those dark days are unrecognisable and our IT systems have been completely transformed since we started working with RM a little over 2 years ago".

Ron Spicer, Assistant Headteacher

The Approach

Hendon School is a forward-looking school, seeking to ensure that they keep pace with the ever evolving world of technology. In making the decision to outsource, they were looking for a technology partner who truly understood this, had staff who only worked in schools and hence appreciated the nuances of an educational regime, had strength in depth should they need to call upon it, as well as having connections with all the right partners (Microsoft, Google etc.) to ensure that the school were accessing the very latest thinking.

In selecting RM for this broader role, they also recognised the importance of engineers who set high standards, were enjoyable to work with, with an infrastructure behind them that enabled them to be even more efficient.

"The quality of support from RM over the past two years has been first class and we fully expect the high standards to continue with this new model. The support from both our Account Managers and remote technicians has been excellent and we have benefited from the RM team on site guiding us through our IT development plan".

Ron Spicer, Assistant Headteacher

The role of IT is always to be an enabler for those who rely upon it. This is especially true in a school setting where the focus is – quite rightly – on educational outcomes. It is therefore refreshing to find a school who recognise how technology can be used to enrich those results – ensuring the school operates more efficiently and freeing teachers up to do what they do best – teach.

“RM certainly help us all do our work more effectively. I have been especially impressed with the ticket system and how quickly IT issues are resolved. The RM team also offer fantastic advice on making our IT systems more robust and developing new teaching and learning opportunities though Office 365”.

Ron Spicer, Assistant Headteacher

The Benefits

As well as the functional benefits, staff perception of IT within Hendon School has improved hugely. The network not only is – but genuinely feels – more stable and the dark days of no email or internet connection on a daily basis are forgotten. Pupils are also feeling the benefits as the school updates its computer rooms systematically.

“I think the shift to online lessons has forced many staff to embrace the new technology and IT systems. This can only put us in a stronger position to further enhance teachers’ use of these platforms in the months ahead”.

Ron Spicer, Assistant Headteacher



Collectively this is a good demonstration of how the foresight of a leadership team has benefited everyone within the school. Technology can help a school operate more efficiently; help address teacher workloads by helping teachers assign and assess work remotely and provide feedback seamlessly; make lessons more enriching; encourage pupils to collaborate effortlessly; and enhance communication – from pre-recorded assemblies, prepared lessons, to communications home to parents.

The Lessons Learnt

- 1. You can't be expected to know everything.** Hendon School recognised where their strengths lay – in teaching and learning – and willingly brought in experts to fill the gaps in their knowledge and ongoing capabilities

2. **Build an IT strategy into your school strategy.** The foresight that the Leadership Team at Hendon showed in recognising the importance of including technology in their school roadmap, has borne successive benefits – from how they responded to the pandemic, to how they are perceived by potential parents in delivering outstanding education for their children
3. **Think in partnerships.** Hendon selected RM as their technology partner, making their selection on a range of criteria – from capability to culture fit with the school. It is important to gain the buy-in from staff if these partners can both do the job, but do it in an engaging and re-assuring way.
4. **Sometimes you have to invest money.** All schools have suffered from reduced investment for many years. However when it comes to children’s education, there are some things that just need to be done. For Hendon School they recognised that a fully managed technology service contract would deliver better quality and operational efficiencies across the school. They also recognised that to deliver the outcomes they were seeking, selecting an organisation with a strong reputation – even if they were not the cheapest – would enable the school to focus more on what they did best.

A Closing Thought

Whilst the pandemic may have hastened the speed of change, the move towards the greater use of technology in schools – and especially the adoption of cloud-based technologies – was already here.

Not all schools recognise how the latest technology can help them, and that is why schools – like Hendon School – have brought in a company who they believe does know what is possible, has experience in developing solutions that address the needs of specific schools, and has the scale to do this at pace and in a way that keeps educational outcomes paramount in their approach.

"The staff at RM have been first class and extremely knowledgeable and professional in all of our dealings with them. If you give them a problem they are excellent at providing a range of solutions and don't hard sell their own products and services in the process. It feels like a partnership and they want the best for the school like we do".

Ron Spicer, Assistant Headteacher

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