



Case study

A year in the technology life of a growing multi-academy trust

A growing trust must consider what to change in its newly added schools to have the most impact. While doing so, it cannot put implementing its trust-level digital strategy on hold.

Brooke Weston Trust's (BWT) experience during the academic year 2023-24 shows what a trust can achieve quickly. Initially a ten-school trust, BWT added a primary school while also preparing to open a new secondary school.

Onboarding Thrapston Primary School

In September 2023, Thrapston Primary School joined the trust. Its IT support switched to a new regional hub managed by an RM engineer.

By having a handover period between RM and the previous support provider, we de-risked the process for the school and the trust.

The onboarding period set the foundation for more positive developments at the school during the year.

New MIS implementation:

In December 2023, Thrapston Primary School switched from SIMS to Pupil Asset, the trust's standard MIS for its primary schools. RM removed the on-site SIMS server from the school network and integrated all the third-party apps with the new cloud-based MIS.

Adding the school to the M365 central tenancy:

Using the experience gained from working with RM to add ten other trust schools to the M365 central tenancy, Thrapston Primary School joined the trust's central tenancy over the summer of 2024.

Wireless and wired network upgrade:

The school's wired and wireless network infrastructure was renewed following a successful application to the DfE for Connect the Classroom scheme funding.

Broadband, filtering and e-safety monitoring:

Thrapston Primary School now uses the trust's standard approach to online content filtering and activity monitoring. RM worked with the trust's broadband and monitoring providers, to ensure an effective transition.

Technology improvements across the trust

Cyber security:

Following the recent audit, RM and the trust have worked closely on a cyber plan based on the DfE's cyber security standards. The trust has tightened up its cyber security by completing projects related to Remote Desktop Services and firewall provision, and by standardising and securing all the schools' email domains.

SIMS Connected MIS implementation:

One element of the trust's IT strategy is to move certain school services to the cloud to reduce reliance on onsite servers. In October 2023, Thomas Clarkson Academy began moving its MIS from school server-based SIMS to SIMS Connected, where the SIMS owners (ESS) host it on their servers.

The initial project proved challenging, but the lessons learned were applied to make the process easier for the trust's other secondary schools.

Network upgrades with Connect the Classroom:

The DfE's Connect the Classroom scheme provided funding for four trust schools to refresh their network infrastructure. RM helped make the successful funding application for Thomas Clarkson Academy and worked alongside the PFI provider to install new infrastructure. The result is much improved coverage across the school and simplified network support.


Working with RM, the trust also secured retrospective funding of more than £80,000 for the upgrades at Peckover Primary School and Corby Business Academy.

Server upgrades and removals:

Maintaining up-to-date operating systems on any hardware is vital to combat cyber attacks and maintain reliability. During 2023/24, RM removed or upgraded any server still running Microsoft's Windows 2012 server operating system at three of the trust's secondary schools.

Upgrading network connections at Brooke Weston Academy:

Installing 10gbps fibre connections at Brooke Weston Academy was completed over summer 2024. The whole campus now benefits from super-fast network connections.



“The next iteration of our digital (and data) strategy will continue our partnership with RM this year as we move to the cloud, roll out new hardware, develop digital capabilities building on the achievement of our two current Microsoft showcase schools, review our broadband provision and implement our new integrated people, payroll and finance systems.”

Michelle Wenham, Chief Operations and Resources Officer, Brooke Weston Trust

Adding final school to M365 central tenancy:

Thomas Clarkson Academy was the final school in the trust (at the time) to join the Microsoft 365 central tenancy arrangement in August/September 2023. With all the trust's schools onboarded, there is a well-drilled process for adding new schools to the tenancy.

Canon UNIFlow implementation:

The trust chose a new common printing platform to manage printing for all BWT schools. Canon UNIFlow is entirely cloud-based, reducing the reliance on on-site servers. RM started working to implement the new platform

during summer term 2024 by removing the legacy print arrangements and associated servers. Every school has installed the new platform, except Thrapston, which will be completed early in the 2024/25 academic year.

New devices in classrooms and beyond:

Pupils at Beanfield and Thrapston primary schools have benefited from new iPads for their classrooms, and all trust catering leads now have iPads to help with their work. All new iPads are added to the central mobile device management system (Jamf) to ensure that they remain secure and up to date.

With RM's help, the trust has introduced a pool of staff laptops in each school. If a colleague's device develops a fault, this arrangement provides a temporary replacement quickly. It also means that when new staff arrive, they have a suitable device from day one.

Reaching for the stars:

No, not a visit from turn-of-the-century pop sensations S Club 7. Even better than that, Oakley Vale Primary School hosted a lesson from astronaut educator and inspirational space advocate Mike Mongo. As part of RM's partnership with the Saxavord Space Station, Mike visited Oakley Vale to speak about how children alive today would find their future in space and that it was open to anyone who dared to dream about it. Children from other schools in the trust and around the country joined remotely. The BBC Radio Northamptonshire breakfast show broadcast from the event and it was covered by national media outlets.

Building for a growing trust:

The Wisbech Free School welcomed its first pupils in September 2024. The first phase of work began over the summer to prepare, with the arrival of pupils being the second phase.

As the school develops and the building progresses, the trust will work with RM to embed all the technology infrastructure a brand-new school needs.



Contact us to find out more about how RM can help your school or trust - **rm.com/contact** or scan the QR code