



PublicSector*Views*

Education Disruptors and innovators 2026 RM

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Contents

Education: Disruptors & innovators 2026

About this report	03
Disruptors and innovators	04
RM	05
About the author	06

About this report

Education: Disruptors & innovators 2026

The Education subsector is experiencing unprecedented disruption as traditional boundaries between EdTech (Education Technology) and enterprise software dissolve. This report profiles ten of the most disruptive and innovative Software and IT Services (SITS) suppliers currently active in the education market, analysing how they're reshaping competitive dynamics across schools, colleges, and universities.

We classify disruptors and innovators across nine distinct categories—from adjacent sector specialists transferring proven capabilities, to AI-first innovators fundamentally reimagining assessment and teaching support. Our analysis examines not just what these suppliers offer, but how they're achieving market penetration (whether through partnership-enabled infrastructure positioning, government-backed free provision, or enterprise platform consolidation strategies that leverage existing customer relationships).

The report reveals fundamental shifts in market economics, competitive positioning, and procurement strategy that have profound implications for incumbent suppliers, institutional buyers, policymakers, and investors alike.

Why read this report?

- **Understand your competitive landscape.** See how disruptors are achieving scale through infrastructure partnerships rather than traditional direct sales, and which categories pose the greatest threat to education-native incumbents.
- **Identify partnership and positioning opportunities.** Learn which strategies are proving most effective for market entry and expansion, from land-and-expand approaches to embedding functionality within national infrastructure.
- **Navigate the changing vendor landscape.** See how sector permeability and platform strategies are threatening education-specific point solutions; understand which enterprise platforms are expanding into student lifecycle management, and the implications for institutional architecture decisions and switching costs.

Disruptors and innovators

Classification

Education SITS disruptors and innovators broadly fit into nine categories, with some crossovers (see Figure 1):

- **Adjacent sector transfer.** Specialists bringing proven solutions from non-education sectors (typically solving admin/support challenges rather than core teaching/learning).
- **Pure EdTech natives.** Suppliers born in education and scaled in education.
- **Vertical specialists.** Suppliers with a focus on (sometimes 'boring but essential') specific education sub-segments traditionally underserved by enterprise platforms (often with UK-specific requirements).
- **Enterprise platform expansion.** Global enterprise software giants entering education vertically with a land-and-expand strategy.
- **International EdTech expansion.** Established education-focused (as opposed to horizontal enterprise) suppliers with proven market positioning overseas that are aiming to disrupt the UK market.
- **Cloud-native first-movers.** Suppliers with an architecture advantage over legacy on-premise systems, exploiting institutions' desires to migrate to the cloud (with an advantage over legacy incumbents constrained by technical debt).
- **AI-first innovators.** Suppliers with Artificial Intelligence (AI) / Machine learning (ML) capabilities built from the ground-up (not bolted onto existing offerings), with varying levels of maturity.
- **Market structure disruptors.** Not technology innovation but business model innovation (e.g., offering 'X-as-a-service' or representing government intervention).
- **Partnership-enabled scale.** Suppliers leveraging established distribution to achieve (national) scale impossible through direct sales.

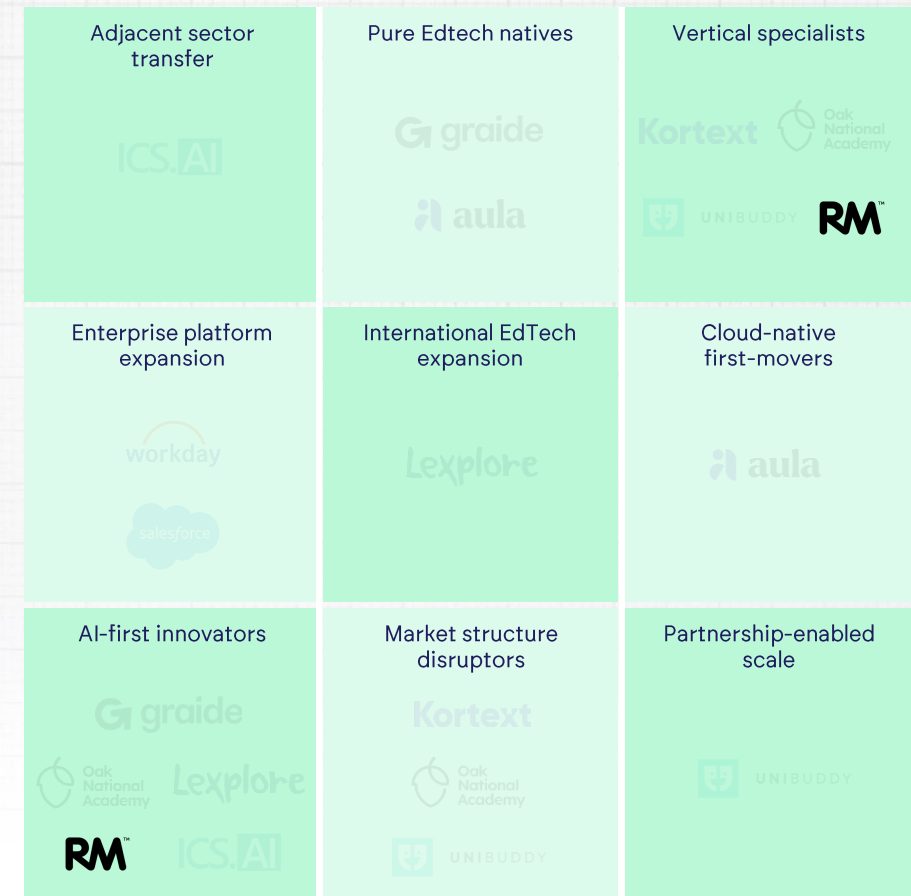


Figure 1: Education disruption and innovation categories

Source: TechMarketView

Disruptors and innovators



AI-first innovator / vertical specialist automating labour-intensive tasks.

Despite being a 53-year-old education incumbent, RM's assessment platform with AI enhanced modules represents genuine disruption to traditional marking and accreditation, rather than incremental enhancement of legacy systems.

[RM Ava](#) brings together the company's existing assessment tools onto a single digital accreditation platform that supports the full assessment cycle (from content creation and online testing, through to AI marking and feedback). RM has also grappled with the issue of assessing authentically in the age of AI, developing [RM Echo](#)—a content analysis solution designed to help educators and examination boards detect plagiarism, collusion, and improper attribution as AI-generated student work becomes increasingly common.

RM's technology is used by awarding bodies to handle millions of exam scripts annually in over 160 countries, and the company is now [running Proof of Concept projects](#) with customers to evaluate how AI can enhance marking and improve feedback across various subjects and professional qualifications.



About the author



Craig Wentworth

Research Director

Craig Wentworth joined TechMarketView in April 2023. He launched and now leads the SustainabilityViews research stream while also serving as a member of the PublicSectorViews team, with a focus on Education, Local & Regional Government, and social value across the Public Sector.

With over 30 years of experience in technology and change across commercial and public sectors, Craig has held a broad range of roles including analyst research, consultancy, technology strategy, innovation, and service delivery. Before joining TechMarketView, he ran the UK-based analyst firm Independent Thought, focusing on blockchain, IoT, AI, and innovation. His career also includes analyst positions at IDC, MWD Advisors, and Ovum, as well as nearly 20 years in UK Education sectors – working in universities and national bodies, managing IT services, and leading large-scale national innovation programmes.



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