

# Why Bromcom was a perfect match for Dixons Academies Trust.

In Conversation With





## Overview.

Dixons Academies Trust is a group of 15 schools based in Bradford, Manchester, Leeds and Liverpool. The mission of the trust is to challenge the educational and social disadvantage in the North. Dixons achieve this by establishing high-performing schools to maximise student attainment, develop character and build cultural capital. This was reflected in the Trust's 2019 Progress 8 data, ranking it as well above average – something just about 6% of trusts in England have achieved.

We met with Peter Gower, Senior Data Manager at Dixons, to discuss his needs from an MIS supplier and how Bromcom has helped Dixons to achieve their goals.



**When talking about savings, you're talking about several thousand.**



**I had high expectations and I haven't been disappointed**



### Appetite for change

Previously, we were using SIMS as our MIS supplier. The lack of development, innovation and the general clunkiness in this platform prompted us to look for better alternatives. In March 2020 we began looking for an improved MIS supplier, particularly one that was cloud-based. Aside from cloud-based benefits, Bromcom's promise of a 'One-Stop-Shop' is something that really appealed to us. Bromcom isn't just a standard MIS, the additional built-in features such as seating plans and booking systems mean that these things can be done without leaving the platform. We loved the idea of that.

Initially, the idea of moving a large number of schools across to a new MIS supplier can be daunting, and a few of our staff were reluctant to the idea of change due to a lack of confidence in their IT skills and their familiarity with the previous MIS. But now, coming up to one and a half years since we began using Bromcom, those that were hesitant are now onboard. They have seen the clear benefits of the change. Now that they have seen how Bromcom helps with their daily work, for example the quick access student lists, the ability to run reports and to schedule these to run automatically, they are more than happy with it.



## The transition

We transitioned our schools in waves to ensure that the migration was as smooth as possible, when it came to migrating the first set of three schools over to Bromcom, it was the height of lockdown. Although this was a difficult time for everyone, especially in schools, we had the opportunity to complete the full suite of training sessions remotely. Chad Taylor, the Customer Success Manager from Bromcom, was excellent in the demonstrations and training sessions.

## “The level of bespoke analysis and data we can get is amazing”

He was very calm and patient with everyone. He would answer all our questions – no matter how ridiculous! Having recorded these sessions at the time, we were able to save the files in a MS Teams folder for future reference, which has really helped. On top of this, the test system was also massively beneficial. We were able to work through the processes that we were learning about during the training sessions, helping us to understand these processes by using real examples.

Overall, the transition period to Bromcom was a success. After the first set of three schools, we learned some lessons about how to better implement the transition for our remaining schools.



Since then, the next sets of three schools went very well as we were now familiar with Bromcom as a system to smooth over any bumps experienced in setup.

## Meeting high expectations

From the start, we have had high expectations of what we can expect from an MIS provider and for what it can provide for our staff in our schools. Bromcom has managed to match the high expectations that we had set from the start. For example, in conducting our most recent assessments, it was the first time that we had used the Key Stage 4 Dashboard. The staff much preferred this built-in system rather than the previous third-party application we had. This improved solution is precisely the reason why we wanted to change MIS supplier, and what we hoped to expect from Bromcom when we chose them. Inevitably we have experienced some teething issues, but the service desk, the online support portal, and working closely with our MAT Relationship Manager has all been great in getting things resolved quickly.

With Bromcom, we have been able to save money in several areas. In numerous instances, we have been able to stop using costly third-party systems, in exchange for built in Bromcom systems. There is no need for us to pay additional money to third party applications for managing performance data, seating plans, Parents' evening, resource and room booking systems. We can simply use Bromcom instead. Although, with the lack of face-to-face meetings with the parents over the pandemic, we haven't had the chance to get some new Bromcom systems rolled out – typically, we would help the parents set up their accounts in person at





parents evening. My Child at School (MCAS) is one system that we are keen to roll out more comprehensively across the trust. An audit showed that schools that have already rolled this system out have saved a substantial amount of money on things such as texts, letters and reports sent to parents.

### Top features

For me, the best thing about Bromcom is the usability of the interface. The look and feel and how easy it is to navigate through the platform. It is easy to understand and intuitive to use. The fact that it is a One-Stop-Shop, with applications such as MCAS, Parents evening booking, seating plans all work so well within the platform. One of the most useful things for us at a MAT like Dixons is how easy it is to access data from schools across the trust. Thanks to MAT Vision, we can seamlessly switch between our twelve schools at the click of a button just by applying filters. With the legacy software, I would have to access each of our schools separately on my desktop which was inconvenient and slowed things down.

The opportunities for analysis with Bromcom is a gamechanger in comparison to our previous MIS. The built-in dashboards are fantastic. The attendance, behaviour, KS2, and KS4 dashboards are so simple and interactive. You can edit the date ranges that you want to look at, select different cohorts of children and more. We were never able to get anything remotely like this with our previous MIS.

On top of this, the Power BI integration that comes with Bromcom is also massively important for us. The ability to make bespoke reports, to be able to delve into specific behaviour types that we look at across the trust is great. This is the kind of thing that we hoped for when looking to change MIS supplier, and Bromcom has certainly delivered.

Reporting also extends to our community. Having moved campuses, we are now working with corporate parents alongside pupil's parents in their own homes. Vulnerable children can often come from vulnerable households and so we do our best to support them in whatever way possible. MyChildAtSchool is fantastically helpful in this endeavour. Be it group emails or text messages, this functionality means everyone is in the loop with what's going on. It is the entitlement of all children, including vulnerable learners, to have the ability to experience day school and all of the services that Bromcom provide are helping us to become an increasingly modern school.

### Don't hesitate

I would tell other MAT leaders that the benefits of switching to an MIS like Bromcom far outweighs any level of nervousness or apprehension you may have beforehand. The extra functionality that it provides, the cost savings – honestly, it's like blue skies! I would absolutely recommend Bromcom as an MIS supplier to other Schools or MATs that are looking to change.

**The training sessions were excellent; everyone knows and loves Chad!**



# Book a demo and begin your journey.



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Bromcom Cloud-MIS In Conversation With

Prepared: February 2022

Version 1

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