

Case Study

Choosing an MIS

Interview with Alison Hughes, Director of Quality Assurance

KWEST Multi Academy Trust (MAT) began on March 1st, 2018 and is a collaboration of like-minded schools that share the same commitment and passion for engagement in life-long learning. At the core of our growing organisation is a desire to provide the very best of education, and be at the centre of the communities we serve. Our role is to facilitate our schools' response to the needs of the children and families. Every individual child and young person, every adult and every school in KWEST MAT will be supported to achieve in every aspect of their development.

We collectively practice Inclusion at the heart of our community and celebrate difference. We believe that outstanding Multi-Academy Trusts are inclusive. In our day to day lives, we aspire to become as independent as possible, irrespective of our levels of individual need. We aspire to achieve and recognise that excellence is achieved in everything we do by remembering that we are all lifelong learners.

We are currently made up of seven Academies, with approximately 1000 pupils including, over 20% special needs (EHCP) and over 350 staff:

- Churchill Park Academy - Complex needs all through 4-19 Special School
- Greyfriars Academy - Urban primary
- Highgate Infants School - Small urban Infant
- King's Oak Academy - Large Infant and Nursery
- Magdalen Academy - Small Rural
- St. Germans Academy - Small Rural
- Wimbotsham and Stow Academy - Small Rural

KWEST

- Multi Academy Trust
- 6 Primary School and 1 Special School
- One Stop Shop package



Question:

Why the change to Bromcom MIS?

Answer:

3 different providers were being used across our schools prior to Academisation. An early decision was made to standardise Management Information, citing opportunities for collaboration and aggregated data. We also saw the benefit of using a cloud-based MIS to facilitate the implementation of GDPR and new Assessment systems for the ever changing assessment requirements.

Our final decision was narrowed down to:

- SIMS - we felt a 'sledgehammer to crack a nut' - with complex reporting modules which we were unfamiliar with.
- RM - good option but had used this platform in the past and felt we would be a 'small customer' therefore the end of the queue for development.
- Bromcom

We opted for Bromcom as they are a cloud-based provider with a proven track record. They develop products that capitalise on technology and appeared to be slightly ahead of RM in terms of development and ambition. The My Child at School parent app and Multi-Academy Trust dashboards were key to our decision and offered significant advantages.

Question:

Who was your previous MIS supplier and why were they not suited to you?

Answer:

We were using SIMS - Staff felt that it was quite convoluted to use, e.g. generating lists for specific events took too many actions to produce so staff worked around the system generating a list and saving it to desktop rather than following the process on SIMS each time.

Pupil Asset; Scholar Pack - Neither of this provided primary, secondary and MAT solutions

These individual Schools liked Pupil Asset and Scholar Pack and had previously moved away from SIMS. However, apart from SIMS, none of the others were able to provide Multi-Academy Trust access and associated services reliably as they were still in development.

Question:

How did you find the transitional period?

Answer:

Being a small and a new MAT, developing frameworks from scratch, with a very small central team we were not in a position to provide local support during the migration. With the transition from several different MIS platforms, there were differing requirements for each school which made things much harder to manage. The initial part of the transitional period was challenging and support was required. Bromcom were notified and additional support was provided to correct and smooth out any wrinkles.



Question:

What features do you find have benefitted your trust since moving?

Answer:

1. The involvement of developers in helping us to design and operate bespoke KWEST wide assessments.
2. MAT Vision has enabled us to access, aggregated figures and a degree of analysis easily.
3. The addition of Power BI dashboards has enabled Executives, School Leaders and Trustees to see real-time assessments.
4. Swift response to our requests for support.

The aforementioned benefits will save substantial time for the teaching staff and administration staff. Reducing time spent on generating information, to have it in analytical form in “real time”, and to apply immediately as it needed. Financial savings are a real bonus. KWEST will be quantifying these benefits in the coming months and intend to publish as a follow up to this case study.

We are still rolling out MCAS and online payments which we hope will be fully operational by the end of the Academic year. We’ve noticed Bromcom have introduced a customer service team which is a valued addition and will provide a one-stop-shop for new and existing customers.

Taking all of the associated benefits into account, we believe that switching to Bromcom Cloud MIS will have a direct impact on improving outcomes for the children attending our schools. We intend to monitor this and report in due course.



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