

Creating a Three-Tier Network Architecture to Support Outwood Grange Academies Trust's Staff and Students.

Outwood Grange Academies Trust (OGAT) grew from the success of Outwood Grange Academy. It's recognised nationally as a high performing Family of Schools and is the highest performing in the North of England. OGAT is a multi-academy sponsor and currently comprises of 21 schools.



The Challenge

OGAT wanted to bring its IT services back in-house, across the board. The existing LAN had grown organically and did not follow a hierarchy, creating traffic bottlenecks. Plus, most of the equipment had reached 'End of Life' status. Even the server's technology that had been keeping OGAT going was falling behind.

With the growing number of schools joining OGAT, they needed a solution that would work for thousands of staff and students. Being a Family of Schools, it also needed to be compliant with all appropriate national and international standards.

They needed to keep costs to a minimum and gain high levels of performance from an infrastructure that was robust, resilient, flexible and manageable. The hardware and software also needed to be scalable for a future-proofed network infrastructure.

Stuart Jones, Director of ICT said that, "The network had slow downs and bottleneck points. There were unusual issues that you couldn't pin down – was it the network, was it the servers or was it something else?"



Quick Overview

Outwood Grange Academies Trust's (OGAT) existing LAN had grown organically and had a lot of traffic bottlenecks. They needed a solution that would work for thousands of staff and students.

Insight presented a scalable, three-tier network solution with HP Networking LAN equipment that OGAT could use to upgrade their systems and roll out to any size academy.

OGAT will eventually expand the network across all of their academies.

"Insight was chosen based on the criteria we set out. They presented a sensible design that was scalable, from the smallest primary school to the largest secondary school. It fitted everything we needed and the predicted lifetime before even thinking of upgrades in ten years."

Stuart Jones, Director of ICT



The Solution

Insight was chosen based on the criteria that OGAT set out and the agreed solution was HP Networking LAN equipment.

Creating a three-tier network architecture using a core, distribution and access layer, OGAT IT team had a stable base to build on with help from Insight. The design was scalable and could be easily implemented in the smallest primary school or the largest secondary school.

The equipment and network architecture covered everything that OGAT needed and the predicted lifetime was 10 years.

Stuart Jones shared his thoughts, "Value is the key point. We don't always want the cheapest option, instead we like to see a strong return on investment over the designed lifespan. We have to benefit the students, the staff and ultimately aid teaching and learning".

HP offers a lifetime warranty, so the IT team knew that any replacements would be there the next business day. And with 1,200 devices supporting 2,200 students and 400 staff in just the first school, to cover the entire OGAT, the HP lifetime warranty is invaluable.

The network design was completed first and once that was stable, the servers were changed and upgraded. As Stuart Jones says himself, now OGAT has "an incredibly stable and reliable system".



The Benefits

OGAT were and are still trying to expand the network over time to all their academies, so that they can deliver the same level of service. They've upgraded 10 academies so far and Insight are always there to form part of the team, as a trusted advisor and 'critical friend'.

Stuart Jones saw the transformation instantly. "It was a 10 times performance increase across the board. Everything that was installed was 10 times quicker, in terms of the access speed, the switches and what the network is capable of."

"Our time window to upgrade a whole school is just four-weeks in the summer. Insight is there every time."

Stuart Jones, Director of ICT

The Results Highlights



10 times performance increase in terms of the access speed, switches and what the network is capable of.



HP has a lifetime warranty that is invaluable and will help stop OGAT from having to spend more.



The network is scalable and can be implemented in the smallest primary school or the largest secondary school.



OGAT's IT team are able to complete the network upgrades for two academies in just 4 weeks each summer.

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