Strengthening IT resilience and future planning

The MILL Academy, Oxfordshire

The MILL Academy multi-academy trust upgraded its cybersecurity and data back-up and disaster recovery systems by working closely in partnership with OX IT Solutions.



OX IT Solutions Ltd

THE MILL ACADEMY
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Project Brief

Reliable IT infrastructure plays a vital role in modern education. From enabling teachers to deliver lessons effectively to protecting sensitive pupil and staff data, schools rely on secure, resilient and well-supported technology environments.

The MILL Academy Trust, which operates three schools, including The Henry Box School in Witney, partnered with OX IT Solutions to support its IT infrastructure, cyber security and hardware requirements.

With around 1,600 pupils, 180 staff and approximately 800 devices across the Trust, the need for dependable systems and expert guidance is critical.

The MILL Academy Trust has been going through a period of change, reviewing how its IT environment can better support teaching and learning, both now and in the future.

David Fuller, Director of Operations at the MILL Academy Trust, said: "We've been looking at how we progress with IT. For us, the key bit is getting the right kit in the right place to enable teachers to deliver their lessons."

Alongside classroom technology, the Trust needed to ensure the underlying infrastructure was robust and future-ready. This included core switching, network links, Wi-Fi coverage and perimeter security.

With a clear focus on long-term planning, the Trust wanted an IT partner that could offer informed advice and help shape a five-year plan for its technology.

The Solution

OX IT Solutions worked closely with the MILL Academy Trust to provide a combination of cyber security solutions, network protection and hardware, alongside ongoing advice and support.

Across the Trust, OX IT supplies a significant proportion of laptops and desktop computers, and peripherals such as interactive boards, ensuring staff and students have access to reliable, fit-for-purpose devices. OX IT also provides the Trust's firewalls and supports its wider network infrastructure.

One of the key elements of the solution was implementing Acronis Cyber Protect to safeguard critical data, back up servers daily and provide reassurance and resilience in the event of an incident.

David said: "As a school and as an academy trust, we have lots of data that would be a prime target for malware and ransomware.

"Acronis is really good for helping me to sleep at night. It gives that peace of mind, knowing that someone else has got your back, that there's someone watching over your shoulder and making sure issues don't go unmissed."

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David Fuller, Director of Operations, The MILL Academy

The Solution





To strengthen perimeter security, OX IT supplied and implemented WatchGuard firewalls across the sites.

The enhanced monitoring and intrusion detection capabilities of WatchGuard have delivered clear benefits in a school environment.

“Students are remarkably good at trying to circumnavigate filters,” David said. “Even if they get around device filtering, the WatchGuard is saying, ‘no, you’re not doing that’.

“It’s been very good at blocking things our previous box wasn’t.”

“The WatchGuard solution gave us the **functionality we actually needed**. It worked really well with our existing setup and it was sensibly priced.”

David Fuller, Director of Operations, The MILL Academy

The Benefits

The MILL Academy Trust now benefits from a more secure, resilient and well-supported IT environment across its schools.

Daily server backups, combined with proactive cyber protection, provide confidence that sensitive data is protected and recoverable. Enhanced firewall security delivers better visibility and control, reducing risk from internal and external threats.

Just as importantly, the Trust values the relationship and support provided by OX IT.

David said: "Back in the era of Windows XP and Windows 7, we used a single network provider, and the downside was that they charged us whatever price they wanted and that was it. With that, you don't get the service, you don't get the support, and you don't get the backup.

"Where OX IT is really good is the level of advice they offer. Even if they don't have the instant answer, they'll come back with something that's a good fit for us. We've found that really valuable.

"If I've got an issue, I can pick up the phone and OX IT will go out of their way to help. That's invaluable, because if I'm messing around trying to fix something, that's just time going out the window.

"I can't really think of any other firm that's been better. OX IT have been brilliant over the last five years."

Contact Us

Get in touch to request a consultation with a member of our team.



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