

How Vision X allowed Consilium Academies to gain previously undiscovered insight.

In Conversation With



Consilium
Academies

Overview.

Consilium Academies is a nine school Multi-Academy Trust based in the North of England. Their mission is enriching lives and inspiring ambitions across their schools.

Bromcom sat down with Kirsteen Light, Trust Data Manager for Consilium, where we discussed their somewhat unconventional relationship with Bromcom and how Vision X has allowed them to gain insight previously undiscovered.

Changing Direction

I joined Consilium Academies two years ago and the schools across the trust were supported by numerous different MIS providers. At a similar time, our CEO, David Clayton, joined and wanted to ensure we had a standardised provider across the board. Because a number of our schools were already with one legacy system, we decided to stay with them in the interests of continuity.

We are geographically quite diverse with schools across the north of England. In the last two years our central team has grown exponentially and, with our base in Salford, it has required lots of travelling to different campuses.



Despite the switch to one system across all nine schools, we still had major issues with reporting. At the time of the change, it was a real difficulty trying to get any kind of consistent data from across all the different schools. Our CEO would request pieces of information from each of the schools and there was no way to quality assure it. Having come from a single academy trust to Consilium, this was a significant task to undertake. We were finding that the schools were used to displaying data in different ways, which was far from standardised.

**I'd give Bromcom
Vision 10/10.
Definitely.**

Additionally, a lot of the reports being run by our schools were often not including the same pupil demographics that were required, this meant we were telling people exactly what information to provide which was labour intensive and cost a great deal of time. We still want the schools to feel empowered and make their own decisions, but it was crucial that we had some way to report on the trust as a whole.

Ultimately, we weren't using data efficiently to make strategic decisions. On top of this, I had to gain remote access to every single school which, if I'm honest, was a nightmare! Eight different remote servers, eight server logins and eight passwords.



Having Vision

It was at this time we had a call from Bromcom. I assumed it was just a sales pitch and having recently converted to an MIS we were not in the position to entertain change. However, it was to do with Bromcom's Vision product and, having already had a demo on the product, our minds had been blown about what it could do for us as a trust. With costing an issue, we were informed we could have the Vision product free of charge which was huge. We had tried to build something internal already to replicate what Bromcom had shown us but due to all the technical complexities, it was too big a job. Bromcom fell into our lap at the perfect time, and we were able to start utilising Vision X and the Power BI Dashboards.

The opportunity itself was an absolute no brainer for me. Having all the data in one place without the need for multiple logins would already be a massive time saver. The prospect of Power BI was incredibly interesting, and I felt it could be of real benefit to the trust. For the first couple of months, we didn't use it to its full capacity because we were getting to grips with the Vision platform and all the schools were on different tenancies with different email addresses. Once this was resolved, the sharing of information cross-academies became far easier.

To begin with, I was the only one who had



visibility over Bromcom Vision due to information about individuals across the schools. We did, though, issue Power BI dashboard access to relevant members of staff who would be able to harness its abilities. They looked at all the dashboards available to them and it's fair to say it has completely revolutionised reporting for Consilium.

One example is that we brought in an assistant data trust manager who knew his stuff when it came to coding. He took inspiration from Bromcom's dashboards to create reports relating to attendance during lockdown. We were able to produce 14 report dashboards in total which covered topics including: student engagement; teachers with highest levels of engagement; periods in which the most effective learning took place; best days for attendance and many more. We already had some contingency plans for when lockdown came in, but this allowed us to be totally prepared and to address student issues during this time. The analysis that came out during lockdown was fascinating and we connected some of the contextual data directly into our own dashboards using Vision. We had previously thought that EAL students were struggling to engage with content throughout lockdown, but the dashboards actually informed us to the contrary and that they were generally engaging more than non-EAL pupils. Without this Power BI capability, we never would have known this.



There have been so many benefits, particularly from an attendance perspective. The role of an attendance officer can often be quite isolating but now we have an area in which we can communicate across all the schools and look at different strategies to try and get students to come to school.

Using the Power BI dashboard map, one of our Attendance Officers at Consilium was able to use the postcode functionality and buddy up a vulnerable student who was scared to come to school with someone in the immediate vicinity. This encouraged them to come in together and improved the persistent absentee's attendance.

Now, all our trusts are on the Office 365 network, and we have attached Power BI licenses to key individuals within each school. I am now going round, school by school, to show them how they can maximise Bromcom and make more efficient and informed decisions in the future. In 2022, all SLT will have access to the product, alongside attendance officers, safeguarding leads, Heads of Year, and data and exams officers.



Working with Bromcom

As I said, this opportunity to use Vision really did come at the perfect time. No one else had approached the trust about a product remotely similar and we were actively looking for one to help us. The transition to Bromcom's vision was quick and as it's a really intuitive system, it didn't take me long to get used to it. I have a couple of suggestions for development, but they continue to improve the product anyway which we see as a massive benefit.

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As the product is free until 2023, we clearly haven't made savings, because we haven't needed to! Honestly, we are currently sucking out all the possible benefits of the system and if it continues to be the product it currently is, I will be putting a case in for us paying for it in the future. It has become a vital part of my day-to-day life as a Trust Data Manager.



The Best Bits

The biggest benefit of Bromcom's Vision X product has been the time saving element. There is no way I would have been able to gain the data insights anywhere near as quickly with our previous system. I would have had to download from multiple schools, process, reformat and then send out. I can now export in a matter of seconds, put the aggregated data into a Consilium document and send to trustees and the executive team to look at.

School improvement at Consilium can now really occur at a nitty gritty level, thanks to Bromcom.

Another huge aspect of why Bromcom has been so good for us is attendance. Again, I've already mentioned how it has benefited our attendance officers, but we are now able to use the comparison reports to study trends over time and make changes that benefit students across the trust. Since we've been with Bromcom they have developed their attendance offering to include, authorised, non-authorised, persistent absentees and authorised absence which all help to paint an image of what's going on. I could talk about it for days! Also, the charts and tables are great. The CEO loves a chart but I'm all about a table, and you can have both, it's about knowing your audience and catering to them.

One thing that terrifies people is data. So, one great aspect of Bromcom is that people can



go and explore without breaking the product. They can simply reset to default if they get lost. This freedom means people can get to grips with the product and look at areas they might be reluctant to, in other circumstances.

Full Marks

I'd give Bromcom Vision 10/10. Definitely. I don't know what I expected in the first place, but they have certainly exceeded anything I initially envisaged and again the continual development is huge. Power BI really is the future in schools and in other industries and we are able to utilise it now. We have all our information in one place, we don't have to worry about manual updates as it's all automatic. My CEO can go into a dashboard and see the five worst performing students in a particular year group, go to the school and see the students. We can start to have conversations informed by data and make changes that couldn't have been done before. Well, technically we could have done them, but it would have taken about six different lengthy steps and Bromcom Vision just allows the whole process to be simplified.

School improvement at Consilium can now really occur at a nitty gritty level, thanks to Bromcom. We can now spend more time giving support to the team to inform best practice and improve student outcomes. The way we can use Bromcom, and Vision is just incredible.



Book a demo and begin your journey.



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Bromcom Cloud-MIS In Conversation With

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