Smooth Transition: Migrating 29 primaries to a modern MIS.

Overview.

Brett Webster is the Director of Information Technology at Enquire Learning Trust and has recently overseen the transition of 29 primary schools to Bromcom's cloud-based MIS. He sat down for the newest instalment of Bromcom's Short Stories to discuss their smooth transition, how the Bromcom team have supported Enquire's needs and some advice for those considering a new MIS.

Can you describe how the process has been transitioning to Bromcom?

A lot more straightforward than we ever thought, in all honestly. We had been with our previous providers for years as a Trust. We had some experience of schools migrating from different systems to the one we used for all primaries and it was a nightmare. Aside from pupil data, migrating assessment and attendance data didn't work so we always had to start from scratch. This was one of the elements that scared us when moving to a new provider and what state we would be in converting 29 schools to Bromcom's MIS.

In terms of the migration itself, we couldn't be happier and the information that came across was above and beyond our expectations; the migration of data went incredibly well. The transition as a whole, the people involved, the amount of positive meetings organised to understand expectations and getting the right people around the table to discuss the timeline all helped us to get accustomed to Bromcom step by step. From being with our previous provider in July to all 29 primaries being on Bromcom in September, the process was handled really well by everyone involved.

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How has the Bromcom team supported the migration?

The training element was a key part of the migration, this happened before the move and was put on for all schools to attend internally. At our end, we also set up a mini support site to host all of the Bromcom training recordings so schools could refresh their memories. In terms of the supporting team, it's all been really good. Throughout the transition they were really helpful and now when it comes to using it live where difficulties can arise, the team are dealing with requests and issues promptly as and when they occur.

Did you feel the bespoke training programme fulfilled the needs of the trust?

When we originally got the training agendas, we invited all of our schools and had multiple sessions to ensure each school could get the training required. We found that in the introductory sessions the information was more generic but they were subsequently tailored to ensure the questions that arose from the first look were then answered. These session were certainly bespoke to how we works as a trust and how we needed certain items to be set up.

From an MIS perspective, the training was quite straightforward, we just needed to understand the different processes to get to each piece of information. The main area tailored for the Enquire side was related to MCAS and online payments. That's been the biggie really as we had specific requirements and needs which we wanted written into our partnership with Bromcom to ensure they were in place for our schools. We needed to work in a specific way here and the training absolutely catered to that and answered all the questions that arose, and developments agreed to tailor it further.

Do you feel that if you had a question or query, the Bromcom team would be on hand to assist?

Yeah definitely. We've developed a clear escalation process which is not to say we're not happy but that we would like to discuss development or ask if Bromcom can do 'x, y or z'.

We've had schools using the system for two months now and we can go to the Bromcom team with questions about alternative methods for different processes and they're incredibly accommodating. It feels like a good partnership and not only are Bromcom supporting us, we're also coming up with ideas that might support others in our position.

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What would you say to people considering joining Bromcom?

From our perspective, I would advise them to not be scared of making that jump. We'd been with our previous provider forever and a lot staff have come from a similar MIS background so there was obviously some resistance. However, we're now two months into the Bromcom journey and the majority of people across the trust are saying how much better this system will be for us. For the remaining, we're collaborating with Bromcom to ensure everything works as smoothly for us as possible.

If I was asked whether or not I would recommend Bromcom I would say without a doubt. Where we are at now and what we can see as a longer-term vision is far more advanced than what it was six months ago.

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