Bespoke with Bromcom: Devising the ideal assessment solution.

In Conversation With

Excalibur
Academies Trust

Bromcom

Overview.

Excalibur Academies Trust is a 15-school organisation spanning Berkshire, Wiltshire, and Bristol. With a predominantly Primary bias, their focus centres on the best teaching and a broad and exciting curriculum, with an outward-facing perspective.

We sat down with School Business Manager, Shona Barker, to understand how they are maximising assessment with Bromcom and the support our education consultants have offered during the process.

> " **We use Bromcom in so many ways. Whether it's safeguarding, MCAS, attendance or behaviour, so many of our schools use multiple elements of Bromcom.** "

Steering in the right direction

I wasn't part of the initial procurement process; however, I was part of the steering group assessing the new providers on the block.

The reason for the change in MIS was simple. We felt that while SIMS prices were rocketing, their customer service was deteriorating. We entertained a few different providers, but Bromcom was the stand-out for us for several reasons. Firstly, they offered a phased rollout which was key to our plan of introducing a new MIS to our Primaries. Secondly, the training provision seemed to be stronger than that of their competitors. Finally, the ongoing support which was offered was a real draw to Excalibur. Knowing that we could speak to a dedicated team after the migration had finished was a big plus.

Making the change

The migration process was led, on the Bromcom side, by Louise Needham. She helped us with the phased rollout with different sets of Primaries at different times. This was based on geography and demographics, ensuring each small cluster could support one another during the transitionary phase.

Our pilot school, Burbage Primary School, was the first to migrate in December 2020. They had utilised SIMS more than others in the trust and had experience with some of their HR features. As they had embraced the previous system more than others it seemed like a logical place to begin (it also happened to be my school). Once they had championed Bromcom we then moved into the other Primaries to the point now where they are all established users.

The training was amazing. If Louise couldn't conduct it for whatever reason, then it was passed on to Adam Williams. I think he's great! In fact, everyone who we have interacted with at Bromcom has been brilliant!

We developed a plan where Louise would be told who she would be training in advance so she could give them the best information to succeed within their role. These one-to-one sessions were bespoke for each member of staff and all the calls were recorded so we could refer to them at a later date. Louise taught me how to do the training for teacher registers. This meant I could jump in at the end of staff meetings and give them a straightforward tutorial to get them up and running in no time.

The only sticking point from our side was user-defined fields. Because we span numerous Local Authorities, and they all have their own reporting procedures, it was difficult to come up with a solution which would ensure consistency. Again, Louise was great throughout this process, and we practically had her on speed dial throughout! She's done everything for us, apart from assessment…
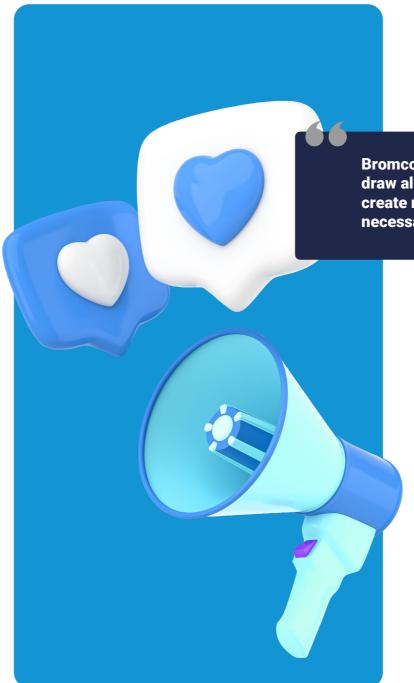
The assessment consultant

Lovely Dan! Dan Sears has supported our migration of all 10 (and soon to be 11) Primaries onto Bromcom's assessment module, from DCPro. We go live at the beginning of September!

We always knew that Bromcom provided assessment capabilities from our early days of training. Due to such a big change, we thought we'd just park that in the back of our minds, safe in the knowledge we could come back to it later.

We've been with DCPro for about four or five years but wanted to change for two key reasons. Namely, it was an additional cost which we didn't want and, on top of that, the Primary Improvement Lead was unhappy with the central reporting element of the software.

We were told that all the assessment data could be reported on easily from a central hub. In truth, it required a lot of data manipulation across schools. When reporting to trust members and key stakeholders, the process was lengthy, and we needed to change.

Dan came on board when Louise stopped training in an Account Manager capacity. We didn't actually need an Account Manager as, if any schools had issues, they could simply fill in the form on the Bromcom website and it would be dealt with swiftly. With that being said, I'm so glad he was with us during this project.

> **Bromcom's Vision X provides the capacity to draw all assessment data into one place and create reports which can be easily presented to necessary individuals.**

There had been frustrations on my side. Not from Dan or Bromcom but more from a change management perspective across the trust. Some of the leaders felt it wasn't their position to make suggestions and changes without the input of all the principals across the Trust. This meant it was hard to get a definitive answer, particularly on reporting, throughout the process.

To begin with, we implemented Bromcom's assessment capabilities in two schools. At the time, they were also getting to grips with safeguarding and behaviour. When this was combined with internal upheaval it was clear that we should adopt a different tact and try with another school. We moved to Liden Academy, their contract with Target Tracker had recently expired so they were a logical choice for the Bromcom pilot. This was going well but, as they had not used DCPro like the rest of the trust, it was difficult to compare. Finally, we moved to St Katharine's and I'm so glad we did because it worked brilliantly, Kevin

, the Year 6 teacher, is really tech savvy and was able to compare the two systems seamlessly. He offered great insight into how the principals across the trust could utilise the system in the future.

Dan worked with Kevin at St Katharine's to highlight all of Bromcom's capabilities. Kevin explained what he liked about DCPro and what could be enhanced with Bromcom. He was an instant convert and explained to the senior leaders across the trust that we should be implementing Bromcom assessment, trust-wide.

This bespoke package, created by Dan, was not without its questions. Our former Primary Improvement Lead wanted to introduce pre-year groups to better define the data recorded. Dan was candid and upfront that this would not be an effective way of reporting. Despite this, he delivered what was asked and showed how the reports would work with a small cohort. With his background as a Headteacher, he knew the reports would show meaningless data so once this was demonstrated, he revised the system knowing what would work for us.

" Dan has been with us every step of the way.

Aside from MAT Vision, the teachers are really excited by the different ways they will be able to view reports. They can now drill down into the data easily and segment for key groups, whether is SEN students or even exploring the progress of girls alone, this capability is now there.

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Not just assessment

Bromcom is certainly more user-friendly than our previous Primary MIS. It's more intuitive and reduces the need for teachers to approach admin staff with small tasks. They're now able to do it easily from their own desk.

In addition, HR reporting has become so much easier. Our HR manager now has all information about staff absences at their fingertips and doesn't need to send loads of emails to individual schools requesting a register.

We use Bromcom in so many ways. Whether it's safeguarding, MCAS, attendance or behaviour, so many of our schools use multiple elements of Bromcom.

Would you recommend Bromcom?

Yes, yes and yes!

Book a demo and begin your journey.

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