

St Margaret
Clitherow
Catholic
Academy
Trust

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Overview.

The St Margaret Clitherow Catholic Academy Trust is a collection of 17 schools of mixed phase from across the Diocese of Middlesbrough. As a high performing and respected Trust, they are willing to break the mould for the benefit of their students and local community. They have high aspirations and are building strong foundations to achieve their goals.

We spoke with Jane Luxton, Head of Data and Information for the Trust, about how data and their management information system tie into this strategy.

The development team at Bromcom have been brilliant. I've never worked with a development team within a software company that have been so amenable to what we want to do and really do see our vision

Jane Luxton
Head of Data and Information

Introduction

I am the Head of Data and Information for the trust and have been in the post since August 2020. Currently, I am in the process of putting together an overarching trust data strategy, with an emphasis on making sure the schools have got the tools required to make their own autonomous decisions and strategies.

With the turbulence in education over the last year, there has been a specific focus on areas including assessment, attendance, exclusion and behaviour. Additionally, safeguarding has been central in our thinking across the trust. My role not only centres on the systems that house this data, but also that the data provided is of sufficient quality.

Recently, we have been analysing teacher-assessed grades. Our process has involved reviewing the measures that our schools have put in place and ensuring, from a quality assurance perspective, that everything is methodical and there is clear guidance on the procedures educators should be taking.

We are also helping with the implementation of a recruitment system. It is hoped this will go hand in hand with what we are building in Bromcom HR. This all feeds into our long-term vision to be more streamlined.

Our primary aim is to have access to data whilst avoiding unnecessary administration. The more that we can automate or utilise functionality such as API links, the more efficient we will become. This, in turn, will allow us to focus more readily on areas of importance and development.

Our main body of work is to combine smaller working parties and processes into one overarching trust strategy. This will include the aforementioned safeguarding, behaviour and attendance. We are currently in the process of signing off an assessment strategy which is a positive step.

The idea behind initiating these changes is that, when it comes to September, we can engage the necessary tools and reporting within Bromcom's MIS and start the academic year on a strong footing.



Migrating at scale

We currently have nine primaries using Bromcom. We have six primaries left to migrate at the end of July followed by one secondary which we're due to migrate in August. The other secondary is already using Bromcom.

When we came back from Easter, we went live with the nine schools that were previously on SIMS. We were prepared to face technical difficulties due to such a large transition. As a central team, we provide the first line of support to schools. If we are not able to resolve the issues completely, we subsequently report it to Bromcom.

We provided our own support page which was built into Google detailing how to undertake certain procedures. Nonetheless, we naturally assumed there may be some teething problems and emails asking questions or addressing problems with the new system. This was far from the case. Aside from one email questioning login credentials which was solved by using an alternate browser, our schools seemed delighted with how the software worked and were able to get on with their day-to-day with minimal fuss.

Across the board we were delighted with how the transition went. There was no negative feedback despite expectations that people would struggle to acclimatise to this new MIS.



With quite a small timeframe to implement these wholesale changes and with only two of us manning this operation, it was a great relief that the schools were able to use Bromcom effectively from day one. Even now, it seems that there have been very few ramifications with changing MIS providers.

Growth is incredibly important for our trust and we are hoping to extend our reach by taking on additional schools. With Bromcom, we now have an infrastructure which is scalable meaning we can add another school to our trust with relative ease. Our processes are already clearly mapped so from a technical perspective, this transition should be fairly straightforward.

It honestly couldn't have gone better. We didn't have a single bit of negative feedback, which blew my mind

Jane Luxton
Head of Data and Information

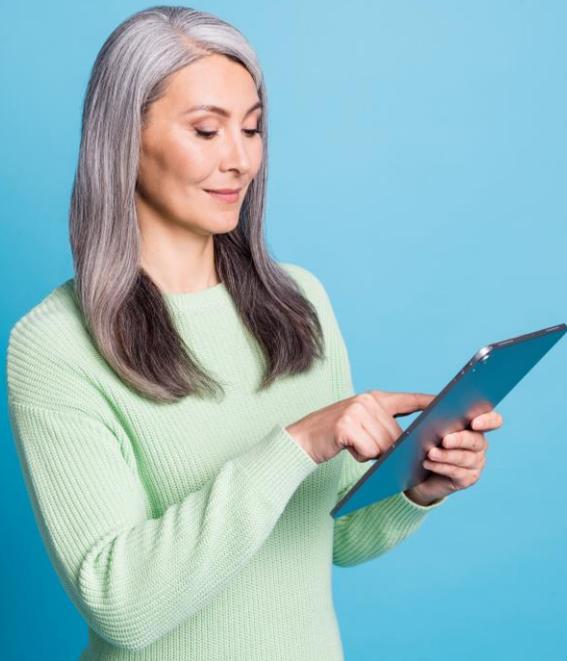


HR system

We required an HR system which could hold all our HR information across the trust. Be it salaries or leave requests, we needed a service which covered all of resourcing needs. Costing was a concern here and we elected to utilise Bromcom's existing services as an alternative.

Though we were aware that an HR system was not Bromcom's core remit, we were able to take parts of the system to create a functioning HR hub. Our desire was that all information, for all staff throughout the trust, was held and administered in Bromcom and that we would then work towards building a link to the North Yorkshire County Council HR and payroll system, as they process our payroll for us.

We currently submit returns in Excel which is fairly labour intensive as it is all done manually. The idea is that from the point a member of staff has been recruited, the data capture point begins within Bromcom, all the way through to payroll submission.



It works incredibly well with what we do allowing staff the facility to manage their own data.

Jane Luxton

Head of Data and Information

It is our intention to use the HR self-service that Bromcom have developed with our input. It works incredibly well with what we do allowing staff the facility to manage their own data. Again, this supports the idea of autonomy and does not put an unnecessary burden on administrative staff who are having to manually enter data and complete various forms.

The process has involved a lot of work from our side. There is a lot of data mapping that needs to take place. It is probably the most ambitious project we are currently undertaking as there are a great number of moving parts which need addressing. Fortunately, our process has been thorough and we have collaborated with Bromcom throughout discussing the logic behind our plans. At present, our primary issue is that the Local Authority don't use a system with an API.

To navigate this problem, Bromcom are creating bespoke, high-level reports that export to Excel. This allows us to manage all the data in Bromcom, but it exports out in the required format for North Yorkshire County Council to process.





Reporting

An important principle for our trust is being permitted the freedom to dictate how we quality control our schools and not relying on a system to do this for us. We want to ensure we have the power to report and assess based on our own criteria. These reviews we are undertaking can provide effective guidance for individuals across the trust and can support accountability measures and intervention, should it be required.

As a result of these reviews, we can use our system with full confidence knowing that we have consulted everyone and they are now are of the measure that are being used trust-wide. Hopefully, this will support pending Ofsted inspections, as well, in demonstrating that not only have we put considerable thought into our process but that we can also measure impact more effectively.

I am currently in the process of writing a detailed report. With the Bromcom MIS I have been able to extract all the relevant data in a matter of minutes. However, with other systems that have not yet migrated, the process takes approximately one hour. This highlights the advantages of Bromcom's service.

Our plan is to modify the way we present our data, moving forward. We intend to use the data to tell a story rather than simply put together a collection of graphs and charts which may not demonstrate our journey as succinctly as we would like.

Forthcoming projects

The majority of the schools within my remit are looking forward to the online payments through MCAS (Bromcom's Parent Portal and App). We had always intended to launch this functionality but did not want to do it all at once as it may have been overwhelming. It is our intention to launch all of the MyChildAtSchool features included in the app, around October half term.

Most of the excitement regarding this product centres on the online payment system. Instead of a reliance on cash payments, we will now have the capability to take online payments, including parent and guardian payments for trips and school dinners. It is easily managed in one system.

The Parents' Evening module is another highly anticipated element of Bromcom's system. Additionally, our IT team are gearing up to use the equipment-booking features for the secondaries, predominantly because we have just received new laptops. This functionality will allow them to monitor the assets but also the bookings and ensure they are returned promptly when not in use.

We intend to use the data to tell a story rather than simply put together a collection of graphs and charts which may not demonstrate our journey as succinctly as we would like.

Jane Luxton

Head of Data and Information



Strategic partnership

This has been crucial in our development. Bromcom identify what we are trying to achieve at primary and secondary level. Schools on their own seldom have the capacity to deal with all of these additional tasks: the extra reporting, the payroll and the HR recording, to name but a few.

We would like to highlight to everyone across the education community that we as a trust are ambitious. Additionally we want to demonstrate that we are successful, not just in progress and attainment but across several areas. We are able to provide a high level of service that continues to improve.

I think our schools have witnessed that we are able to help develop them and achieve better outcomes. At the same time, we have trusted them to do what works for them, simply offering guidance and quality assurance along the way. We have given them the tools to succeed and make positive decisions independently.

Bromcom has been instrumental in what we have been able to achieve and allows us to continue pushing forward. The product has enabled us to expand and improve and we want to continue this long into the future.

FOOTNOTE - Thank you to Jane Luxton and the SMCCAT team for providing their valuable time to being part of this discussion. If you would like to know more about how we can help your school or MAT, please get in touch.



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begin your journey.**

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Prepared: February 2022
Version 1

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