Ten-fold broadband speed increase prepares Mary Webb School and Science College for the future of education

RM

Mary Webb School & Science College

TrustEd CSAT Alliance

Mary Webb School and Science College is a secondary school of about 600 pupils in Pontesbury, a village eight miles southwest of Shrewsbury in the diverse rural county of Shropshire. RM has been the school's technology partner for over 15 years.

RM has provided the school's broadband since October 2020, replacing the connection supplied by the local authority. The previous broadband line was rated at 100Mbps upload and download, but network manager Ashley Morris remembers that a good day was when it reached 80Mbps. Occasional but disruptive outages proved frustrating, as did the level of support when they happened.

The school felt that the existing speed could not support the school's technology vision, so explored other options. Having obtained quotes from three suppliers, RM's offering of a 1Gbps upload and download fibre to the premises (FTTP) connection was the quickest and most cost-effective option.

Following the fuss-free installation of its new 1Gbps FTTP line, the school began to reap the benefits of a super-fast connection.

Benefits for teaching and learning

In the classroom, pupils benefit from access to new learning experiences with the streaming of multimedia content now standard. Instead of having to download videos or use physical media, English Literature lessons can now watch quality productions from the National Theatre Collection in 4K in several classes simultaneously.

In Computer Science lessons the resources each child needs for coding projects, such as sample data, arrive at the click of a mouse. Every pupil has instant access to what they need, meaning momentum is preserved during a lesson instead of waiting several minutes for a file to download.

Improving IT infrastructure

The quicker connection has brought several benefits in terms of IT infrastructure. It has allowed fast and secure cloud storage and backup of critical data to replace energy-hungry onsite servers. Restoring from backup, when required, is practically instant.

Now, when buying new devices, the school can choose leaner cloud-first hardware that is cheaper and consumes less power.

By shifting certain functions to the cloud, the school benefits from specialist organisations' expertise in areas such as power management and data security. It can focus its own IT resources on improving student outcomes.

Existing devices that used to provide slow network connections have gained a new lease of life because the increased bandwidth allows them to operate nearer full speed.

Cost savings

Mary Webb school's RM broadband connection includes RM SafetyNet web content filtering. By having the filtering and broadband connection in one contract, the school saves £4,000 per year. Previously the school had to buy separate web content filtering with onsite hardware.

> "This is one of the biggest selling points. I've saved £4,000 a year because we don't pay for a separate web filtering solution any more. It was a massive deal for us that we got RM SafetyNet on top of the connection."
>
> **Ashley Morris,** Network Manager

RM SafetyNet is a fully cloud-based solution that meets the school's requirements for protecting pupils from unsafe online content. With no onsite hardware to maintain or update, product developments are deployed automatically, removing the risks and time associated with installing updates yourself. Ashley finds it simple to set rules for groups of users or block and unblock specific sites as well as access comprehensive logs of internet activity.

> "You can tell that RM SafetyNet was designed by someone who knows about user interface. From a qualitative standpoint, for me and the school, it's way better. It's always being improved."
>
> **Ashley Morris,** Network Manager

Positioning the school for the future of teaching

Mary Webb is one of the smaller secondary schools in its trust, but it has a strong commitment to using technology to prepare its pupils for the next stage of their lives. By investing in the right technology now, like super-fast broadband, the school is ready for the future of education. Ashely feels that digital methods could play an increasing part in high-stakes assessment, and the school has the connectivity to handle such developments.

> **"That was what the upgrade was all about - that first key step to next-generation teaching, learning and network management."**
>
> **Ashley Morris,** Network Manager

One example of Mary Webb School using its technological advantage in an unexpected way was the first trust-wide awards ceremony held in the summer term of 2022. Looking to make it available to as many of the pupils, parents/carers and staff of the trust, the school live-streamed the whole event without problem, thanks to its extra bandwidth.

By preparing for an increasingly digital teaching and learning environment now, the school will not find itself playing an expensive game of catch-up later. With RM as its supporting technology partner, the school can continue its determined preparation for the future of education.

> **"I feel that RM want to push as well and that's what is really good. I don't want to hear the stop-gap solution from anyone; I want to hear the future solution that we can buy into now."**
>
> **Ashley Morris,** Network Manager

Find out more about our services :

Visit: rm.com/education
Email: contactus@rm.com
Call: 01235 645 317

RM™