

# Microsoft 365 future proofs IT for Multi Academy Trust

## About The Education Alliance

Established in 2015, the Education Alliance is an established Multi Academy Trust comprising four secondary schools and two primary schools across the Humber region, located in the North East of England. Representing over 600 staff and 6,000 students across all six schools, the Trust is dedicated to making great schools and happier, stronger communities so that everybody has better lives.

## Business Drivers

“The Education Alliance Multi-Academy Trust was initially made up of two schools and over time, a further four schools have since joined the Trust,” explains **Matt Wadsworth, IT Director at The Education Alliance**. “We had therefore acquired and were managing a variety of different learning environments across each of the school sites.” One school was operating on Exchange on premise, one school was using Google, one primary school operated within a secondary school and three schools were using different Microsoft 365 tenants, where each tenant was individually managed.

**Matt explains:** “With multiple domains, multiple tenants and different platforms, this was a complex and somewhat costly IT environment to manage. Users were unable to collaborate effectively and share resources securely which was creating real frustration. Our purpose here at the Trust is to promote ethical leadership and the IT environment was letting us down.” The IT team were initially looking at introducing SharePoint sites to create a virtual learning environment in order to share local directories with colleagues at other schools. **Matt continues:** “This wasn’t the simplest way, as we would have to juggle permissions and guest access, but it did present a solution to get these individual networks talking to each other.” A visit to Bett 2020, the EduTech event in London ensued, with the goal of identifying a SharePoint site solution. **Matt reveals:** “At Bett, we were introduced to AspiraCloud and the concept of a Cloud Hosted Server came up – a solution we were yet to consider. This was a great option for the Trust.”

## The AspiraCloud Solution

Microsoft Gold partner and Cloud Productivity expert, AspiraCloud, worked with The Education Alliance to design and deploy a single tenancy in the Microsoft Cloud to create a modern teaching and learning environment. **Matt goes on:** “With Covid-19 lockdowns just coming into place – it wasn’t the easiest time to migrate 600 staff members to the Microsoft Cloud as most of them were at home – but it was critical they had access to Teams and One Drive to support home learning.”

The Education Alliance adopted a uniform, school by school approach to move each school onto one single Microsoft 365 tenant, commencing with the school working with the Exchange on premise site. “We had some challenges on along the way and some networks proved tricky to access, but we got there with the support of AspiraCloud,” **says Matt**. From initial scope to final implementation, this 12 month project is now complete. All six schools within the Trust have migrated to the same virtual server environment within Microsoft Azure.

## Key Benefits



Improved collaboration across schools



Easy to manage



Reduced licence costs



Secure remote working & file sharing



Modern teaching & learning environment

**Our purpose here at the Trust is to promote ethical leadership**

## Business Benefits

The new Microsoft Cloud environment has delivered several benefits to this Multi Academy Trust. All staff have access to the Microsoft 365 suite of productivity applications, including Microsoft Teams, SharePoint and OneDrive, helping teachers stay in touch with students from any location with video calls and chat. The Trust is confident that staff and students can work remotely and resources can be safely shared between schools to drive collaboration between colleagues.

**Matt adds:** “Migrating to Microsoft Cloud has made life so much easier! It is much faster to roll out updates across the Trust, such as two-factor authentication policies to multiple sites under one admin console, it’s really simple to add permissions as and when required, and we can manage users so much better. Moreover, with all schools on one single tenancy, we have significantly simplified our licensing renewals.”

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**Introducing Microsoft 365 has really improved collaboration between our schools. This new cloud environment designed and deployed by AspiraCloud is helping us future proof our IT and achieve our purpose of delivering the best possible experience for our students.**

- Matt Wadsworth, IT Director at The Education Alliance

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## Why AspiraCloud

AspiraCloud has a full understanding of Microsoft 365. With extensive experience acquired from working with schools, the AspiraCloud team also comprehend the requirements of the education sector. **Matt concludes:** “AspiraCloud really understood our frustrations and developed a clear cloud migration plan for us. They are approachable and supportive – and above all enthusiastic – it feels like we’ve worked with them for ages! Any issues we have experienced have been swiftly resolved by the extremely responsive support team.”

## Future Plans

The Trust is looking to enhance their BYOD scheme working with Microsoft Intune to manage device policies, as well as applying additional application protection policies to increase data protection.



AspiraCloud empowers organisations with the best-in-class productivity of Microsoft 365 Cloud solutions and services, such as Microsoft Teams, SharePoint, and Azure, to confidently kick start your cloud journey for today’s modern workplace. Combined with advanced security and device management capabilities to help safeguard your business, we can work with you to build the right, most cost effective and productive Microsoft Cloud solution.

**Trusted Digital Delivery.**

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