EXCEED
ACADEMIES TRUST

Exceed Academies Trust is a seven school Multi-Academy Trust in Bradford, West Yorkshire consisting of five primary schools, an all-through school catering for students aged 3-16 and an alternative provision academy. Their improvement model reflects the preferred DfE approach and is designed around building capacity, dynamic leadership and a relentless focus on raising standards.

Having worked with the Trust alongside another IT provider for several years, we were keen to tender for their support contract and after speaking with them about strategy, relished the opportunity to provide so much more...

The Challenge

As the existing support provider for Appleton Academy, we knew there wasn't a joined-up approach to IT across Exceed's school. This led to a disjointed approach to recommendations, resulting in different products and solutions across different schools.

Having worked with Appleton Academy for over 6 years, providing a fully managed support service and strategic IT guidance, we were aware that the Trust-wide support arrangement was due for renewal. Rather than just quote for a support contract, Virtue's Directors met with the Trust to discuss their requirements and vision for the future. Following this we recommended Exceed put a temporary support agreement in place while they considered and formalised their requirements. They awarded this 12 month support agreement to Virtue.

As an education focused IT Company with over 14 years' experience delivering fit-for-purpose solutions, we stabilised Exceed's IT support during the interim period and delivered savings of c.£12,000.

While their current plans for Trust-wide support were helping them to maximise their budgets, they could further improve by developing a long-term strategy for all the schools to work towards. It would enable them to create a Trust-level vision, meaning they could standardise their IT and implement a joined-up approach. They could then ensure a fit for purpose IT foundation and systematically use technology to improve teaching and learning across all the Exceed schools.

c.£12k
Cost Savings Already Made Across the Trust through Virtue's Help

4%
Uplift in Staff Perception following first Strategy Meeting

4,861
Students & Staff Supported

2+
Years Working Together

> " I've been really impressed by Virtue. We were working towards standardisation and implementing cost-saving ideas but for a business to focus on that with us, rather than simply wanting to make more money from us, was incredibly refreshing. It's clear that they understand education and they're as focused on learner outcomes as we are, that's why we know they're the perfect IT partner for us. "
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> **- Ruth Jarvis, Chief Operating Officer, Exceed Academies**

The Solution

01

Helping the Trust standardise and improve
First, we assessed the technology in place at each of the Trust's schools individually. We produced a full site audit of each school so we could fully understand each school's current situation and the ways in which we could improve and standardise the approach across the Trust. Like Exceed, and in line with the DfE guidance, our approach is focused on using IT to maximise productivity. With that in mind, we looked at the outcomes required by the Trust, and assessed the infrastructure upgrades and changes required to enable this. However, we knew we'd need to work with the stakeholders of the Trust, not in isolation, to create a strategy in order to ensure successful implementation.

02

Ensuring all stakeholders have a voice
As we've done with other Trusts, we worked with the key stakeholders: Leadership, Finance, IT and Teachers across Exceed schools to develop an IT Strategy and vision that everyone was working towards. Virtue Operations Director, Will Stead, working alongside Philip McNair our Sales Director, worked with the Trust to create an ever-moving 5-year plan so the Trust can always take equipment refreshes and technological advances into account and never feel like their IT stands still, because the industry is too fast moving to allow it.

03

Regular meetings to discuss a Trust-wide approach
To ensure the strategy's clear and always being worked towards, we'd have regular meetings with short and medium-term plans clearly defined and agreed. We'd also provide guidance on solutions and services. We explained that having a Trust-wide approach would help them achieve cost savings by centralising services, like their IT support and delivery. They'd also save by purchasing and procuring IT hardware and software as a Trust, rather than as individual schools.

04

A clear vision with a clear delivery schedule
As well as outlining the plan to work with the Trust to develop and deliver an IT Strategy, we also set-out a clear delivery schedule. Exceed, chose to work with us because we committed to helping them achieve the pre-defined government minimum standard for IT use across all schools in the Trust within 6 months. We also outlined that we could deliver their vision within 12 months. On top of this, because we'd already completed full audits of each school, we were able to outline a fixed cost price for the combined minimum standard and IT vision delivery.

The Benefits

We are starting a new chapter of our relationship with Exceed Academies, and while we continue to work with them successfully and deliver more for them, we can also already reflect on the benefits working with us has brought to Exceed.
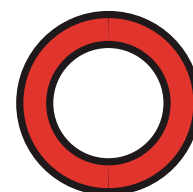
Their existing IT staff have got extended support through our Service Desk and experienced Engineering Team who have dedicated areas of expertise providing opportunities for the Exceed Team to learn and grow their IT knowledge.

In a matter of 12 months or less, the Exceed Academies will all benefit from a consistent service and improved IT standard due to the Trust-wide strategy we're helping them implement.

- 14 years' experience of maximising budgets to achieve most effective fit-for-purpose solution
- Expertise in reducing costs without reducing service
- A proven track record of delivering a consistent service across Trusts thanks to our understanding and focus on Education
- Ability to articulate a Trust-wide strategy with implementation plans and budgets that'll facilitate the delivery of outstanding teaching and learning
- We've got experience working alongside existing teams as well as in providing fully managed services
- As a business, we're able to provide more staff opportunities for development, increasing productivity & morale
- Delivered a single IT Team for the Trust, working together to support all member schools with a common and flexible approach

Providing 94% of Exceed's Software

100% Project Satisfaction
Averaged total scored on customer's Project based satisfaction surveys since their implementation in 2016.

Providing 88% of Exceed's IT Hardware