



Case Study

Willow Tree School benefits from significant network upgrades with Connect The Classroom programme

Client: Willow Tree Primary School Salford

Technology Partners: HPE Aruba and the DfE

Project Date: Spring 2023



Willow Tree Primary School is a large inner city primary school based in Salford. Under the Department for Education Connect the Classroom Programme, the school was able to receive funding to upgrade their ageing wireless network, network cabling for the wireless, and networking equipment to run the wireless.

The Challenge

The challenge for Willow Tree Primary school actually started before the initial funding was granted.

In December 2022, the school's old wireless system failed, leaving the school without any functioning wireless for the rest of the academic term and for the start of the new spring 2023 term. Computeam, working with the DFE, agreed to bring forward the new funding, enabling the new equipment to be purchased. Computeam then managed to plan the new network before the new spring term.

The Solution

Due to the urgency of the situation at the school, the solution had to be delivered in two parts.

Working with our partner Aruba, we provide a wireless map of the school, working out a requirement for 31 internal access points and seven external access points. To support the wireless solution, we provided the school with six Layer 3 Aruba Enterprise Switches and a 10GB backbone. At the start of January 2023, Computeam installed the new networking equipment and enough access points to replace the existing failed wireless network. This allowed the school to have enough coverage in the short term to allow them to use their wireless devices.

Next, Computeam liaised and devised a working plan with the school to complete the network cabling over a weekend and reinstalled all the new wireless access points in the correct locations. This was completed on schedule and allowed the school to continue to use the new wireless with minimal downtime.

The Result

On completion of this project, the school now has a whole school wireless solution, providing wireless access to outdoor areas of the school.

This also allowed additional teaching and learning to take place in areas previously not accessible. The specification of the equipment means the school now has a 10GB network backbone which is future-proofed for a 10-year period.



Client Statement

When we found out our wireless solution had failed, we were unsure what to do. Computeam advised us that the DFE were about to award Connect the Classroom funding in January to the school, and if we acted quickly, it would be possible to bring this forward. So, after liaising with Computeam and the DFE, a plan was put in place that would initially allow us a temporary wireless solution to replace the failed system. Once in place, we were able to agree a timetable to implement the remainder of the solution.

Throughout the entire project, from start to finish, Computeam were able to keep us informed of what was happening, which, importantly, enabled us to have continued wireless access. The project ran smoothly and was completed in a timely manner. The school now has the reassurance that the new networking and wireless will last 10 years, and we have been able to utilise more technology in areas of the school than we could before.

Elaine Patton, SBM Willow Tree Primary School

Our Statement

The implementation of the new wireless network for Willow Tree Primary School was a testing time for both the school and Computeam. With the initial wireless failing just before the holiday period, we had to move fast on behalf of the school.

With the DFE support, not only were we able to get the school up and running with minimal downtime, we were also able to complete the whole project within a timely manner. The school now has a whole school 10-year future-proofed solution.

Cris Cadby, CCO

Key Lessons

The most important lesson from this project was communication. With the help of the DFE and Computeam's project team, we were able to constantly update all parties on the ongoing works. This kept any downtime to a minimum and helped manage the school's expectation around the delivery of the new solution.