



Case Study:

DfE Funded Cloud Platform

Client:

Forward as One

Technology Partners:

Microsoft Education
Department for Education

Project Date:

April 2020

FORWARD AS



ACADEMY TRUST

Silver
Microsoft
Partner



Department
for Education

The Forward as One Trust is a rapidly growing Church of England Multi Academy Trust operating in and around Bolton, Bury, Tameside and their surrounding areas. It currently comprises of 7 Primary Schools. The schools each have their own unique ethos and culture, which are celebrated both for their diversity and the shared commitment to excellence. The Trust delivers an engaging and inspiring curriculum across its schools, ensuring that children benefit from the highest standards of academic learning and a breadth of opportunities to understand and appreciate the world around them. The learning environments are collaborative and inspirational.

In April 2020, the Department for Education, in consultation with accredited partners, launched a nationwide initiative to fund and support schools and trusts to start using a free-to-use digital education platform. Through discussions with the CEO, Karen Bramwell and demonstrations from their incumbent ICT Support company, the Trust chose to move forward with Microsoft Office 365 for Education as their preferred digital platform.

The Challenge

The Challenge: How can you support a new Teaching and Learning strategy with technology?

The schools joining the Trust, like many schools around the country, have experienced the same budgetary constraints and the investment required to keep resources coherent and up to date has been difficult. Legacy student resources were limited to laptops and tablets, which had led to a fragmented mixture of technologies that had been installed over a number of years, and this had led to pockets of ICT being taught and embedded in the curriculum prior to conversion.

The Trust needed a coherent Trust wide strategy that would align all the schools, but also use the latest digital technology.

Elliot Costas-Walker, the Trust Learning & Teaching Lead commented, "We recognise that technology

is playing a significant role in children's lives and will increasingly do so in their futures. Our schools are committed to enabling children to become masters of technology, using it with skill, safely and in a positive way at all times."

"We have a recovery curriculum strategy, 'Beyond the Rainbow'. Our children have lost out on learning whilst schools have been partially closed. The greatest impact of this is upon our disadvantaged children who have lower starting points. The evidence shows us that, to diminish this difference, we need to prioritise what to teach and how to teach it - ensuring quality is at the heart." Anna Lister, a Headteacher within the Trust undertook a 'flipped learning' project at her school which had a powerful impact upon pupil learning, attitudes to, and independence in learning and attainment. This professional learning informed the development of the Forward As One recovery approach and digital strategy.

The Solution

The solution: Use Microsoft Office 365 for Education to standardise their remote learning strategy

Elliot worked closely with the Chief Operating Officer, Janet Carter, on the educational implementation of Microsoft Teams across the Trust.

"These times are an opportunity for innovation, for using technology to remodel the Teaching and Learning strategy, which is tied in very closely to using the digital platform to support the change in methods."

"We saw the opportunity for using Microsoft Class Teams as a remote platform, which is central to our vision and our approach towards Teaching & Learning."

The setup and configuration was completed over the summer, including a Salamander MIS synchronisation implementation, which automates the provisioning of staff and students and their relevant Class Teams and groups. This was concluded with a handover session, where the Trust is shown some basic admin, classroom and meeting capabilities.

The Trust is enhancing this training provision by organising a series of remotely delivered twilight sessions so that all teaching staff across the Trust, felt confident using the platform with the children from early on in the Autumn term.



The Result

The Result: An easy to use but feature rich digital cloud platform

“We are keen to embed ‘blended’ and ‘flipped learning’ into all our schools practice – not just because of COVID-19, but because we know this makes learning more powerful and permanent, it also strengthens children’s learning behaviours, habits and independence.”

“We know effective flipped learning relies upon a robust platform which is versatile in its functionality for both educators and children/parents. Through the use of Microsoft Class Teams and SeeSaw, we can provide children with a rich, blended learning experience. We assess regularly using formative assessment so that we can quickly identify who may need additional support. Microsoft Forms is perfect for this”

Remote education, where needed, is high quality and aligns as closely as possible with in-school provision. They use online teaching videos modelled by teachers to ensure clarity around learning and purpose. To support this digital provision, the Trust is reviewing a 1 to 1 device strategy in order to enable all children to access their Class Teams and resources and learn effectively at home.

Key Lessons

This project showed us that:

- *“We are keen to embed ‘blended’ and ‘flipped learning’ into all our schools practice – not just because of COVID-19, but because we know this makes learning more powerful and permanent, it also strengthens children’s learning behaviours, habits and independence.”*
- *“We know effective flipped learning relies upon a robust platform which is versatile in its functionality for both educators and children/parents. Through the use of Microsoft Class Teams and SeeSaw, we can provide children with a rich, blended learning experience. We assess regularly using formative assessment so that we can quickly identify who may need additional support. Microsoft Forms is perfect for this”*
- *Remote education, where needed, is high quality and aligns as closely as possible with in-school provision. They use online teaching videos modelled by teachers to ensure clarity around learning and purpose. To support this digital provision, the Trust is reviewing a 1 to 1 device strategy in order to enable all children to access their Class Teams and resources and learn effectively at home.*

Our Statement

“I have only worked closely with the Trust for a short time, so I’m really happy to see the changes come so quickly. I look forward to supporting the Trust going forward to help them implement their new strategies; to make a difference across the Trust. The work we completed and the ongoing relationship relates very closely to Computeam’s passion for improving educational outcomes using technology and our cloud-first approach was perfect for this project.”

Deb Gittens, Account Manager