



Anthem Schools Trust

Sector:



Education

Products:



MR – Meraki Wireless



MS – Meraki Switching



Meraki Dashboard

Services:

WiFi survey, network audit, professional services, DfE Connect the Classroom Project

Highlights:

- Anthem Schools Trust chose a Cisco Meraki unified, cloud network to provide an easy-to-maintain approach to centrally manage 6,714 students at eight locations with limited staff
- Redway Networks delivered an estate of 425 Meraki devices
- Meraki's robust, fast wireless connectivity has improved digital teaching and learning
- Data quality and security has improved
- Network management time has been reduced and switching deployment and configuration is now simple
- Redway Networks delivered a great project with the network blueprint to roll out to additional schools

Anthem Schools Trust supports its digital strategy with a unified, cloud-first Meraki solution from Redway Networks.

Anthem Schools Trust has rolled out a cloud-first Cisco Meraki network, designed and installed by Redway Networks, to provide an easy-to-manage network across multiple locations for delivering seamless learning experiences across its schools. The Meraki WiFi6 and next-generation switching is providing secure, reliable wireless connectivity to eight schools within the trust on one network with 6,714 students connected.

Anthem Schools Trust is one of the most well-established schools' trusts in the UK. For more than a decade, it has been running a group of state-funded, non-selective schools in the East Midlands, London and the Thames Valley. As a multi-academy trust (MAT) Anthem is responsible for ensuring that the children at its schools receive the education they deserve to realise their incredible potential. Information technology plays a vital role in all aspects of education for the Trust, as it not only enhances e-learning at its geographically spread schools, but also promotes collaboration and communication.

Anthem Schools Trust was facing the ongoing challenge of ensuring robust, connected experiences for its schools who all had a different legacy wireless network. Anthem's key education specialists regularly taught at each school site and the slow WiFi was impacting lesson time. Its IT team was also having to manage several school networks with limited resources, whilst prioritising the student experience.

Recognising the importance of a standardised approach to IT so that each school could benefit from an agreed level of service, Anthem decided to upgrade eight of its schools to a future-proofed network that would support its digital vision.

Future-Proofing and Cloud Networking required

Ross Weeks, Head of IT & Digital Strategy for Anthem Schools Trust says: "A trust the size of ours needs standardisation with not pockets of success, but a blanket of success. Our focus is to provide the best technology for delivering exceptional learning experiences to our students whilst delivering efficiency. We wanted a cloud-first, centrally controlled network without the need of on-premises controllers that could be managed through a single dashboard. We also wanted superior wireless coverage and capacity for supporting our high-density school environments. I'd worked with Redway Networks in the past and knew that Redway had the knowledge and skill set in the education-sector to provide the professional services and next-generation products we required to get our schools on the same, high-performing network infrastructure."

Redway Networks took all of Anthem's needs onboard and proposed a Cisco Meraki enterprise cloud-networking solution with a 10-year licence agreement to deliver a transformative network that would future proof its schools and simplify network management.

Following the WiFi surveys and network audits, Redway Networks designed the network with a comprehensive suite of Meraki solutions including an intuitive cloud-dashboard, indoor and outdoor MR WiFi 6 access points, and cloud-managed MS layer 3 switches for core and edge.

Ross says: "Redway Networks delivered a great project and we now have a secure network in place with reliable WiFi for improving the user experience."

Convenient and efficient network management

Meraki has delivered seamless, connected experiences for all eight schools with fast wireless connectivity from anywhere on campus whilst providing the IT team with a convenient and efficient way of managing the network.

Ross says: "The static classroom has been replaced by more diverse learning styles and we're providing better technology to support a curriculum with less time in the classroom so we can point the resource where it's needed. Redway Networks was very helpful in populating the Meraki dashboard with the right views our teams needed to support our schools. Having a unified approach means configuration and deployment of our switching and network infrastructure is now simple. Before Meraki updating all our switches could take days, but this task is now accomplished quickly and ensures the network remains up to date with the latest security features."

Redway Networks makes an impact with Connect the Classroom

Redway Networks was also instrumental in helping Anthem's largest secondary school with its Connect the Classroom project for a new campus-wide IT infrastructure, aimed at bringing its network in line with that of a new build school.

Ross says: "One of the biggest impacts Redway Networks had was helping us with our DfE Connect the Classroom (CtC) project at Deepings School. CtC is such a time-consuming task for everyone within the trust, so having the support from Redway Networks and its extensive knowledge of the CtC process was really beneficial."

"Meraki has been a game-changer for us"

Anthem's schools' benefits from future-proofed digital learning

Meraki has given The Anthem Schools Trust a future-proofed foundation for delivering safe learning experiences with an easy-to-maintain approach to network management across the trust's multiple locations.

Ross says: "Meraki's single, secure platform has been a game changer for us. Data quality and security has improved, and we now have complete visibility of our schools from one intuitive, easy-to-use dashboard. Our inhouse mantra is "one solution – one problem – one fix" so anything we do doesn't just impact one school but all schools, which has enabled us to raise IT priorities even higher which is testimony to our Redway Networks' designed Meraki solution."

"We've built a great partnership with Redway Networks"

Anthem, Redway and Meraki make a great partnership

Ross says: "I have regular operational meetings with key members of staff who report back much faster WiFi speeds with none of the login issues we were seeing before Meraki. Staff can now access their digital teaching resources from any school site. Having Meraki's external access points means we can extend learning outside of the classrooms. This is especially important to our primary school children in delivering science lessons outside in the fresh air. We can also take live pupil registers for fire drills in external locations which has improved student safety."

Ross concludes: "We're committed to delivering the best possible educational outcomes and learning experiences across all our schools. We've built a great partnership with Redway Networks who've been instrumental in taking us through a journey that we are now able to replicate throughout all our schools."