Harper Green School

Ofsted **GOOD**

Leverhulme Trust

Sector:

🏫 Education

Products:

📶 MR – Meraki Wireless

🖥 MS – Meraki Switching

🖥 Meraki Dashboard

Services:

Onsite WiFi survey, full network audit, LAN prep, design, installation, configuration, support

Highlights:

- Leverhulme Trust has upgraded its legacy wireless networks with a future-proofed Cisco Meraki solution following a Connect the Classroom funding grant from the Department of Education

- Redway Networks was chosen to design, configure and install two campus-wide Meraki networks which included cloud-managed Wi-Fi and switching.

- Redway Networks went above and beyond to deliver an exceptional Connect the Classroom project

- Both schools are benefitting from a robust, high-speed network with a unified trust-wide login for seamless network management.

- Meraki has improved delivery uptime, capacity, and coverage with ten times faster wireless connectivity.

Leverhulme
Church of England and Community Trust

Leverhulme Trust schools' benefit from a tenfold increase in Wi-Fi speeds following high-spec wireless LAN upgrades from Redway Networks.

Rivington & Blackrod High School and Harper Green School, part of the Leverhulme Church of England and Community Trust, have upgraded their aging wireless networks with a Cisco Meraki cloud-networking solution to provide a reliable, high-speed backbone for digital learning.

The Leverhulme Trust successfully secured a Department of Education (DfE) Connect the Classroom grant and chose Redway Networks to provide two Meraki WLANS to future-proof the networks and deliver seamless wireless connectivity to 3,000 users.

Leverhulme Church of England and Community Trust (LCECT) is a multi-academy trust based in Bolton. Both its schools - Rivington & Blackrod and Harper Green - operate as secondary phase teaching environments and provide the highest quality of education.

Both schools had ten-year old legacy Meru wireless networks with a mixed estate of HP switches, which were struggling to cope with the throughput and density required by classroom environments.

The wireless performance was poor with slow connectivity speeds and the networks were difficult to manage. The Meru Wi-Fi support was also end of life which meant the trust's central IT team had no technical assistance in place for network troubleshooting. LCECT wanted to improve the wireless performance with better security and control over school devices and improve network autonomy and management.

Redway NETWORKS

New campus-wide networks with a DfE grant

Richard Pycroft is the ICT manager at LCECT and responsible for the smooth running of both schools' ICT systems.

Richard says: "With the existing network limitations we required a more sophisticated network with better performance that could be managed easier at a trust level. I'd worked with Redway Networks before, so reached out to them to conduct technical Wi-Fi surveys at both school sites to review the networks and provide us with a comprehensive report for a future-proofed solution suitable for the next ten years."

Redway Networks was aware of the DfE Connect the Classroom Programme and following the findings of the surveys - which included a detailed report of the network gaps - it was evident that both schools would be eligible for a CtC grant to upgrade the existing Wi-Fi and switching.

Richard says: "With the documentation of works in place it was of strategic importance for us to upgrade our networks so we could support the direction of our technology plan. We asked Redway Networks to help us with the application process for campus-wide networks that would support our future technology needs. Redway Networks provided us with a wealth of knowledge around CtC and looked after the whole process from start to finish and we were delighted to be awarded the grant."

With futureproofing in mind and to unify the networks, Redway recommended two separate Cisco Meraki WLANs, with a single trust-level login, to deliver reliable, fast wireless networks that would be easy to manage through the Meraki cloud dashboard. The Meraki solution which included MR Wi-Fi 6 access points and MS switching was designed to manage and optimise the network for improving security and compliance.

Leverhulme chooses Cisco Meraki

Redway Networks' designed Meraki solution includes 16 x enterprise-grade MS355 and MS425 cloud-managed switches with a 10-year enterprise licence and support agreement. The switches are managed through Meraki's intuitive cloud-based interface, providing full 10G multigigabit access switching for demanding high-density classrooms. Redway's engineer deployed the switches as an overlay solution to increase density and PoE availability and provide easy power utilisation for future ICT projects and additional IoT network devices.

Richard says: "With Meraki's switches we now have 10-Gigabit links so both schools are now benefitting from ten times the wireless speeds they had before. This means we can have more users on the network simultaneously accessing high-speed content which has created more inclusive learning styles."

The MS switches serve 200 x high-performance Meraki MR46 wireless access points, designed to deliver exceptional Wi-Fi performance and efficiency, with enterprise-grade security and management.

Richard says: "With Meraki, we now have different login flows for users with one SSID for teachers and admin staff, one for students with restricted access and one for guests. Meraki's Wi-Fi is delivering more bandwidth and the network is more secure."

Since upgrading to Meraki, the impact has been transformative. Both schools are now benefitting from secure access to a high-speed wireless infrastructure with vastly improved wireless coverage and speed.

School Wi-Fi speeds increased tenfold

Richard says: "Meraki is worlds apart from what we had before in terms of network reliability and speed. We now have a sophisticated, secure network which is the backbone to future learning. Meraki has improved delivery uptime, capacity, and coverage and users are now enjoying fast, reliable wireless connectivity. We now have the confidence to remove the wired network in our IT suite and lean on the Wi-Fi, meaning we can use our bank of laptops and Apple Macs whcih has saved on buying new IT equipment."

"Meraki has reduced network complexity and given us more control. All our devices are visible in the Meraki dashboard enabling us to resolve any issues easily which saves considerable time on network monitoring. The network is more secure, and I can now scale up new group networks based on distinct levels of access and security quickly. Staff can now login using their username and password instead of a pre-shared key and guests have a onetime-use password that's only usable for a day."

"Redway Networks was a great partner to work with and went above and beyond to install the networks out of school hours, so lesson time wasn't interrupted. From an IT perspective we can handle the day-to-day functions, but with a large wireless infrastructure project like CtC, it was great to have a trusted and knowledgeable partner like Redway Networks to work with."

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