

CASE STUDY

ARUBA CENTRAL ENABLES UK COMPREHENSIVE TO MANAGE BYOD ACCESS FOR PUPILS AND STAFF, AND ENABLE SEAMLESS ROAMING



Crofton School is a successful English comprehensive. Eleven hundred students, 200 staff, popular with parents, oversubscribed each year, and rated 'Good' by the UK government's industry watchdog. In many respects it is typical of schools across the country.

Like others, Crofton also faces a thoroughly modern problem: how to limit students' access to their phones, while capitalising on the educational potential of a smartphone's features.

"We have strict rules on when and where a phone can be used," says Jonathan Hickey, operations director, Crofton School, "but we have to accept they have their uses. If we are to allow the occasional use of smartphones, we can't expect students to use their own data connection."

A PREFERENCE FOR WIRELESS

Student access is not the only issue. Increasingly, teachers at Crofton are moving between classrooms. They store lesson plans on the cloud. They're working at home, or they're working in groups away from the classroom.

"Even with a poor quality wireless network we found half of teachers preferred to connect wirelessly," says network manager, Julie Bowden. "The wired network was being ignored."



REQUIREMENTS

- Ensure wireless coverage across the school campus, indoor and outdoor
- Deliver high-performance connectivity, capable of supporting heavy media content
- Simplify guest access, while retaining tight control

SOLUTION

- Aruba Central & Clarity
- Aruba 802.11ac Wave 2 indoor and outdoor Instant access points
- Aruba 2930F Series Campus Edge switches
- Aruba 5412R Campus Core switches

OUTCOMES

- Supports BYOD for students and staff, and enables teachers to roam between classrooms
- Simplifies network management, with singular view of access and performance, easy-to-scale bandwidth, and granular reporting
- Provides flexibility around physical space, allowing classrooms to be converted into IT suites
- Allows the school to roll-out Office365, and explore further cloud-based applications

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JULIE BOWDEN
NETWORK MANAGER, CROFTON SCHOOL

Bowden says the school recognised it needed "robust coverage" across the entire site, indoor and outdoor. "We have five main buildings, large playing fields and a rolling programme of buildings refurbishment. We needed wireless connectivity across the school, but with the flexibility to adapt and grow as the school required."

Scalability and simplified management

The Aruba solution is built around Aruba Central which provides cloud-based remote management, monitoring

and security for the deployed infrastructure. The WLAN and LAN are composed of Aruba Instant Access Points and Aruba Campus Edge switches.

Aruba-accredited partners, Medhurst Communications, had a long-standing relationship with Crofton and a full appreciation of what it needed and how a future-proof solution should look. The final architecture and design by Medhurst was the perfect fit for Crofton and was critical to the reliability and superior end-user experience required at the school.

"We looked at Aruba and its main competitor, but quickly settled on Aruba," says Hickey. "The scalability and management features, plus the trust in Medhurst, were the deciding factors."

The solution includes two Aruba 5412R Campus Core switches, plus 22 Aruba 2930F Campus Edge switches, with 10Gb to core. There is a mix of Aruba 802.11ac Wave 2 310 and 330 series Instant access points for indoor, and two Aruba-275 outdoor Instant access points. Aruba Clarity is also used for gathering intelligence about the state of the network and to ensure predictive monitoring.

"All guest access is now managed through Aruba Central. Access is synced with Active Directory, there is no duplication of login details," says Bowden. "It is working perfectly, as expected."



Enhanced mobility, more productive staff

The solution was operational in time for the start of the 2017-18 school term. Both Bowden and Hickey say the impact has been felt across the school. Every student can connect to wireless, when permitted, rather than 3-4 per class as previously. More than 90% of staff connections are made through the wireless network. PE teachers take class registers in the playing fields, off an iPad.

"Staff are more productive, they can move from class to class without their connection dropping," says Hickey. "We get fewer calls complaining about the network, which we'll take as a positive!"

The school has begun the roll-out of Office365. It is also examining flexible classrooms. "We're looking at the option of leasing mobile devices and lending them to a class or subject teacher, rather than investing in fixed equipment," says Hickey. "We can turn any room into an IT suite."

Bowden says the plan is to hive off the phone system onto a separate VLAN (and that VoIP may become standard). There are also separate VLANs for the school's CCTV and fixed computers.

Hickey admits the school is at the earliest stages of its mobility journey: "Our focus is on getting the basics right and delivering a consistent service. The next phase will be to explore more innovative projects. We recognise there is an opportunity to exploit the new network."