

CASE STUDY



NETHERLANDS



EDUCATION

# AWARD-WINNING RELOCATION ENABLES THE BRITISH SCHOOL AMSTERDAM TO CREATE DIGITAL ADVANTAGE

THE  
BRITISH  
SCHOOL  
OF AMSTERDAM

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Graft a digital layer to the learning  
experience at award-winning  
conversion of city's former prison



There are more than 20 international schools in Amsterdam, one of Europe's more cosmopolitan cities. In a competitive market, it is important to create a point of difference.

The British School of Amsterdam (BSA) is the only school in the city to offer the full English National Curriculum. It is also the only school to be housed in a former prison.

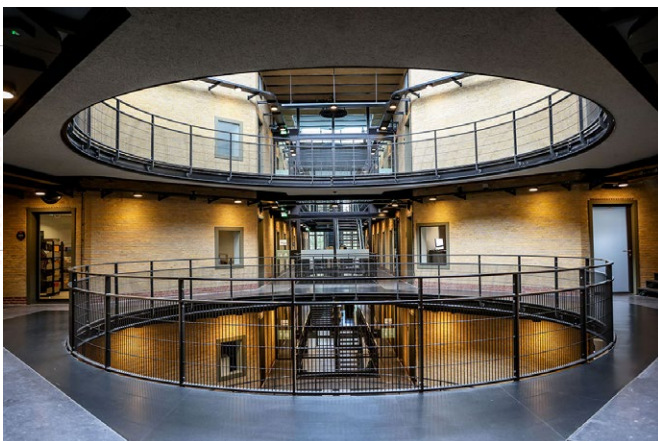
"There really is not another school building like it in Amsterdam," says school Principal Paul Morgan.

### CONSOLIDATING THREE SCHOOLS INTO ONE

BSA acquired the site in 2016, with plans to bring its early years, junior and senior schools under one roof. The architecturally stunning, award-winning conversion was complete in 2021 and is now home to 1,030 students, from ages 3 to 18. It also features a sports hall, a full-sized theatre, fully equipped science laboratories and specially designed music rooms.

The move presented a natural opportunity to rethink many aspects of the school, including the role of technology in the classroom.

"Education is changing," says Morgan. "There is a greater expectation on digital channels. Pupils want to be mobile, teachers want to incorporate technology and parents expect a modern learning environment."



### REQUIREMENTS

- Establish reliable connectivity throughout challenging conversion of former prison building
- Reduce resources and cost needed for network management
- Ensure clear security policies to govern network access

### SOLUTION

- Aruba 500 series Indoor and Outdoor Wi-Fi 6 Access Points
- Aruba 3810 Core Switches
- Aruba 2930 series Access Switches
- AirWave Network Management

### OUTCOMES

- Allows secure segmentation of network for visitors, students, operations and third-party suppliers
- Supports new digital teaching applications
- Delivers seamless mobility across the site
- Simplifies network management through managed service

### EXTENDING THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE

The new building is now overlaid with Aruba access points. There are nearly 200 500-Series access points throughout the site, both indoor and outdoor, with seamless mobility in all corners. This was a particular challenge given the spoked layout of the site and the thick walls and steel materials.

"This was a challenging installation set against some hard deadlines," says Klaas-Jan van Roekel, Commercial Director at Wentzo, the Aruba partner involved in the network design and implementation. "It's not every project that involves metre-thick walls. This needed a lot of planning."

The Aruba approach includes 48-port 2930 access switches, 3810 core switches and Aruba AirWave net-





“ Things can change quickly in a school environment. We need our network to be stable but we also need it to be flexible. We have that with Aruba. ”

**JEROME LAURET**

IT Manager, British School Amsterdam

work management. For security, the network is integrated with Fortinet next-generation firewalls. It is delivered by Wentzo as network-as-a-service on a monthly fixed rate, removing any of the management headache from the school. At present the service is managed via Air-Wave, with the ambition to upgrade to Aruba Central in the future.

“The school had previously three different network approaches at the three different locations, with a mix of hardware,” says van Roekel. “Our design provides consistency and clarity.”

**ENABLING SEAMLESS MOBILITY THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL**

Covid disruption required the school to accelerate the roll-out of laptops to teachers and the use of online learning platforms. Much of this flexibility remains as pupils return to the physical classroom. Students, many of which will connect two to three devices to the network, now have their own Office 365 account, and

access to cloud-based applications. The Aruba network now supports a digital classroom experience.

“All the pupils in the senior school already have laptops and we provide access to laptops in the junior school,” says Jerome Lauret, IT Manager, The British School Amsterdam. “We’re now able to provide complete mobility across the school, indoors and out, with secure access to the applications they need. Teachers have the ability to take the lesson out of the classroom.”

BSA, perhaps uniquely, provides two classrooms for each class: one for theory and one for practical. The Aruba network ensures a seamless link between both rooms, allowing teaching continuity.

“There is continuity of experience,” says Lauret.

**STRENGTHENING CONTROL OF NETWORK ACCESS**

Mobility is delivered without any loss of control. The managed service from Wentzo means Lauret has complete visibility over who and what is connected to the network. Access to certain applications and content is governed.

“You cannot just arrive and connect,” he says. “We have clear policies in place for different users. There is segmentation between staff, teachers and students, with different access permissions. With the different schools in different wings of the building, we can restrict certain types of access by location.”

Cybersecurity is big issue for schools. Aruba network management enables BSA to meet UK Government cyber credentials, a key component in its ability to provide the UK curriculum.

**DELIVERING NEW STANDARDS IN SERVICE**

As BSA is a fee-paying school, there is also a service benefit. Parents expect a superior level of service and this includes connectivity. Pupils can now connect to parents via video calls, when allowed, from anywhere across the site.





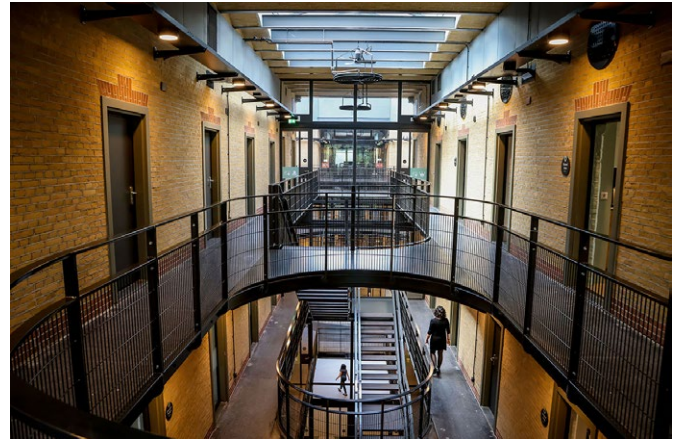
“This may seem a small detail but it is hugely important in terms of a sense of wellbeing,” says Morgan. “Parents want to know they can be in contact. We are a premium school and we need to deliver a premium service.”

Service matters. BSA currently accommodates over 1,000 pupils but is aiming to grow by 30% in the coming years. Service excellence will generate positive word-of-mouth and boost the school’s reputation.

### MANAGED SERVICE FREES SCHOOL TO FOCUS ON EDUCATION

The move to the new site, and the network upgrade, allows BSA to focus on its core objective: education.

The network-as-a-service, says Lauret, means the school has no need to hire extra IT staff. The service delivers transparency around SLAs and monthly costs. “I have all the reports I need from Wentzo and if I need



a new PA or to add a new profile they’re just a phone call away. Things can change quickly in a school environment. We need our network to be stable but we also need it to be flexible. We have that with Aruba.”