Newquay Education Trust
Mark Braham, Director of NET IT & Media Services

Tell us a little about Newquay Education Trust…

We are a Multi-Academy Trust, founded in 2014 by Newquay Junior Academy and Newquay Tretherras. NET has the fundamental principle of collaboration to secure educational opportunity and excellence for all. We want the children and young people in all our academies to become happy, healthy and well-educated people, well prepared for the next phase of their education, and capable of enriching and improving our communities.

What is the main IT challenge you faced?

Having used Impero across our secondary school estate for numerous years, we were once what could be considered a 'happy customer'. In fact, before making the decision to implement the solution we conducted reviews of various other solutions and arrived at the decision it offered best value for us at the time. In recent years however, we became disillusioned with the solution for a number of reasons – high maintenance costs, a noticeable drop in the quality of support and, perhaps most importantly for us, a loss of functionality inside the product following product upgrades, which often them needed to be retrospectively patched.

It was clear that we needed to review our position, not just from the teaching and learning side of functionality, but also from the network administration side, which was arguably used even more frequently.

How has NetSupport DNA helped across the Trust?

While other products in the marketplace were looked at, NetSupport DNA quickly became the clear front-runner. Now with 1,000 software licences deployed across the Trust, we are well equipped to manage our IT and deliver IT-led teaching to enhance our students' learning experience.

NetSupport's solution approach differs from most in that they separate products, making a clear distinction between what is a teaching and learning tool, what is a technician's tool, and what is a network management or safeguarding resource.

NetSupport DNA is the solution for network management and safeguarding, and offers a vast amount of additional functionality compared to the other solutions we tested, and what we were used to in Impero. Not only is there a rich safeguarding element which can be assigned out to relevant staff to help support Prevent and other strategies, there is a wealth of functionality for network administration, asset management, queries and reports, energy, internet and application metering, remote monitoring and control, and much, much more!

How do your schools use NetSupport School and DNA on a day-to-day basis?

NetSupport School (offering a dedicated teacher console, student agent and technician console) is a complete toolkit which replicates the core features of Impero and other products but, for us, actually work! The interfaces are well-designed, intuitive and allow functionality that each user type requires. There are multiple ways to deploy the solution, multiple ways to allow students to connect, options to allow technicians to react to in-product support requests, and pretty much everything you could ask for – again – that just works!

For us, core teaching and learning plus technical support is to be delivered via NetSupport School. Higher level network management and safeguarding will take place almost exclusively inside DNA, with the whole product set complementing each other.

What is it like working with NetSupport?

From pre-sales support through to ongoing support, NetSupport rates extremely highly. They are responsive, proactive, know and understand their products inside out, and are a pleasure to deal with.

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