

Connect the Classroom at Westwoodside Church of England Academy

Meraki Wi-Fi and infrastructure upgrades with DfE Connect the Classroom.



Customer:
Westwoodside Church of England Academy
Locations:
Westwoodside, Doncaster
System installed:
Cisco Meraki cloud managed Wi-Fi

The challenge

Having invested in front-of-class technology and mobile devices to help improve curriculum delivery, the school's wireless and network limitations were to be addressed and planned for upgrade within the budgets available. The school network infrastructure was a mixed estate, refreshed and replaced roughly 6 years ago. Like many schools, the pace of accelerated device procurement meant the network was struggling with wireless coverage and capacity issues.

As a trusted Department for Education (DfE) framework provider, our infrastructure team were aware of the Connect the Classroom programme and it was quickly identified that Westwoodside would be eligible for funding. The DfE launched the Connect the Classroom programme with the aim of helping schools by providing grants to fund upgrades to enterprise wireless, switches and cat6 data cabling.

As the schools managed IT support provider, Primary Technology discussed the eligibility criteria and helped the school complete the application process with the DfE.

Overview

Westwoodside is an inclusive, compassionate and friendly school situated in the heart of the village of Westwoodside, Doncaster.

The school motto 'let your light shine' drives a culture of care, respect and hope. Proud of their strong academic attainment and knowledge that children make good progress across their time at school; this is a result of high expectations of teaching and learning by skilled staff. In March 2020, Ofsted graded the school as Good in all areas, and in June 2022 their SIAMS report graded Westwoodside as a Good Church School.

Each member of staff works tirelessly to provide students with an exciting curriculum and learning environment, with ICT in every classroom to ensure children are prepared for the modern world.

Key outcomes

- Future-proof network upgrades with improved performance and coverage
- 10 Year licensing and support
- Enterprise switching and wireless
- Designed to meet the DfE's technology standards
- Remote Meraki cloud management
- Increased Wi-Fi uptime, capacity and coverage
- Enhanced network security and compliance
- Improved wireless for visitors and guests

The solution

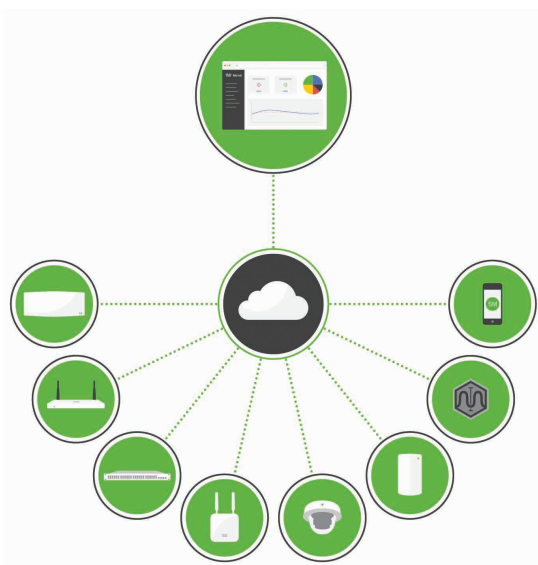
Primary Technology conducted a comprehensive technical survey and network audit that reviewed the existing data cabling, access points, switches and network cabinets. This detailed appraisal of the entire infrastructure at the school was used to produce a future-proof solution suitable for the next 10 years, designed to meet the DfE's technology standards for switching and wireless.

Primary Technology supplied, installed and configured enterprise-grade Meraki MS355 switches with a 10-year licence and support. As with all Meraki switches, the MS355 units are managed through an intuitive cloud-based interface, providing full 10G multi-gigabit (mGig) access switching for demanding enterprise and school environments.

The cloud managed switches serve eight high performance Meraki MR46 wireless access points. This series of access points are designed for next-generation deployments in offices, schools, hospitals and hotels, offering Multi-User MIMO technology to allow a larger capacity of connections at one time.

In addition to indoor coverage, an outdoor access point was installed with dual antennas to extend coverage beyond the school building and reach outdoor areas.

A floor standing network cabinet was installed to house the new network hardware and this was connected with Cat6A cabling to maximise network performance.



Testimonial

We had been planning to try and upgrade our wireless in the coming years, so it was fantastic to learn about the DfE funding that was available. Primary Technology helped guide us through the whole process and completed the works to a very high standard. We are delighted with the end result. We now have great Wi-Fi coverage, especially in areas where our old Wi-Fi struggled due to the number of mobile devices we have in school.

Carolyn Tuscher, Business Manager



The outcome

One of the major benefits of Connect the Classroom is the ability for schools to improve wireless coverage, right across their sites. Westwoodside has benefited by not only receiving fully funded enterprise-grade switching and wireless, but by having improved coverage and capacity in areas where Wi-Fi was especially poor.

The school now has the capacity to support their front-of-class technology and growing mobile device fleet, without any performance constraints.

The Meraki solution that was implemented provides seamless access to a high speed, reliable wireless infrastructure with a peace of mind 10-year licence and support.

The investment from the DfE to provide funded wireless will serve a positive purpose at Westwoodside, providing staff and students the best user experience and help them achieve their teaching and learning objectives.