







Outstanding Achievement for All

Chorus Education Trust

Sector:

 Education

Products:

-  MR – Meraki Wireless
-  MS – Meraki Switching
-  Meraki Dashboard

Services:

WiFi survey, network audit, professional services, DfE Connect the Classroom Project

Highlights:

- Chorus Education Trust benefits from a DfE Connect the Classroom grant to replace its aging wireless and wired networks at Eckington Secondary school and Hope Valley College.
- The trust chose Redway Networks to design, configure and install two separate wireless LANS to connect 1845 pupils with Meraki's cloud-networking solution.
- Cisco Meraki has delivered seamless, connected user experiences across both schools with robust, fast wireless coverage from anywhere on campus
- Network management has been improved and is always up to date with the latest security features.
- The Chorus Education Trust's partnership with Redway Networks has enabled both schools to provide their students with exceptional educational experiences.

Chorus Education Trust future-proofs its technology at two schools with Meraki from Redway Networks

Eckington Secondary School and Hope Valley College, part of the Chorus Education Trust, have both benefitted from a campus-wide network upgrade following a grant from the Department of Education's Connect the Classroom Programme.

Redway Networks was chosen to design and deliver a Cisco Meraki cloud-networking solution including MR wireless access points and MS switching to provide robust, secure wireless connectivity to pupils and staff at both schools.

The Chorus Education Trust is a growing trust that trains and develops its teaching staff to give pupils the very best educational thinking and practice in its primary and secondary schools across South Yorkshire and Derbyshire.

Hope Valley is a comprehensive secondary school in the Peak District with 570 students. It joined Chorus in 2019 to give students priority access into Silverdale, the best performing Sixth Form in Sheffield. Eckington is a large secondary school in Sheffield with 1275 pupils. It joined Chorus in 2023 to provide the opportunities that are not available as a stand-alone school including access to the latest technology.

“Redway Networks delivered an excellent Connect the Classroom Project and we are providing the very best educational experiences for our students.”

Richard Clough, IT Director, Chorus Education Trust



Aging Wi-Fi hinders connectivity

Both Eckington and Hope Valley schools had aging wireless and wired networks which were a mix of HP, Ruckus and Unify. Wireless coverage was poor and connection speeds slow which provided a challenge in high-density classroom areas where multiple devices are attempting to login simultaneously.

Chorus Education Trust knew the existing networks couldn't support its technology requirements and it needed to upgrade both schools' networks to alleviate connectivity issues.

The Department of Education (DfE) had launched the Connect the Classroom programme to help schools with old network technology by providing funding for enterprise-grade Wi-Fi 6 and next-generation switching to bring them in line with 2024 network standards. Eckington and Hope Valley schools were both eligible for a grant and Chorus Education Trust chose Redway Networks to supply the upgraded campus-wide networks as Redway has delivered several successful DfE projects.

Cisco Meraki chosen for network future-proofing

Redway Networks conducted a detailed appraisal of both schools' IT infrastructure, which included professional onsite Ekahau Wi-Fi surveys to identify access point locations and wireless performance metrics. Redway Networks provided the trust with a comprehensive network report with vendor recommendations and the trust chose a Cisco Meraki enterprise cloud-managed solution with a 10-year warranty to provide a future-proofed network for both schools.

Redway Networks then designed and configured two separate wireless LANs at both school sites which included a total of 101 x Meraki MR44 high-performance access points and 32 x MS225 switches all managed through Meraki's intuitive cloud dashboard. To improve student safeguarding, Redway's engineer then created a Meraki 'captive portal' for both networks with customised school branding for guests.

Secure, high-speed connectivity

Since upgrading to a Meraki solution Eckington and Hope Valley are now benefitting from secure access to a high-speed, robust wireless infrastructure with vastly improved wireless coverage from anywhere on campus.

The connection frustrations experienced before at both schools have gone and the future-proofed Meraki network is enabling the trust to support its technology plans with peace of mind it can seamlessly roll-out additional ICT in the future.

Network management has been improved, as before Meraki, the HP switches had to be individually managed and with various models and interfaces this was very time-consuming. With Meraki, all the switches are now managed through one single pane of glass which has made switching configurations a lot easier, and the network is always up to date with the latest security features.

Collaboration has been improved as both Hope Valley and Eckington now have a single Chorus Education Trust SSID (Service Set Identifier) which enables staff to teach at both school sites with their devices automatically connecting to the Meraki network. Redway Networks delivered an excellent Connect the Classroom project and with Meraki's advanced network in place, the Trust can rest assured knowing its pupils and staff will receive the best educational outcomes and digital teaching and learning experiences.

Chorus Trust supports its digital goals

Richard Clough, IT Director for Chorus Trust says:

"Eckington Secondary School and Hope Valley College, both integral parts of the Chorus Education Trust, faced challenges with aging wireless and wired networks. These issues hindered connectivity and impacted the learning environment, particularly in high-density classroom areas."

"Recognising the importance of providing students and staff with reliable access to technology, we sought to upgrade the network at both schools. Thanks to DfE's Connect the Classroom Programme, we secured funding to support this vital initiative and were recommended to Redway Networks to design and implement our upgraded networks."

"The Redway Networks' designed Meraki solution has vastly improved wireless coverage and high-speed connectivity at both schools who are now equipped to support our digital teaching and learning goals effectively. The benefits of Meraki are already evident with students, staff and guests enjoying secure access to a robust wireless infrastructure."

"Our partnership with Redway Networks has delivered tangible benefits to Eckington Secondary School and Hope Valley College and we are well-positioned to achieve our mission of providing the very best educational experiences for students across South Yorkshire and Derbyshire."