

Education Bradford

serco

Getting lessons up to speed



At a glance

Education Bradford started in 2001 with the job of making things better for schools in the area. The internet has always been part of that. And so have we.

Organisation Education Bradford

Industry sector Education

Location Bradford, UK

Challenge To make sure teachers and children can always get what they need from the internet when they're at school.

Solution A managed internet service.

Products Managed Internet Access

Benefits

- Schools can get the educational content and resources they need.
- Always-on network reliability.
- It's safe and secure for everyone to use.
- Schools can link up and build for the future.

“Virgin Media Business offered us a flexible and scalable solution at an affordable price.”

Mark Chambers
IT Curriculum and Learning Manager
Education Bradford.

Schools used to be all about chalk dust and textbooks. Today, websites and downloads are just as important. But browsing can all too quickly turn into drowsing if children don't get the facts they need fast. So for the best results, schools need internet access that works at warp speed rather than walking pace. Enter Virgin Media Business.

Education Bradford – a strategic partnership led by Serco – chose to work with us because they wanted a nicer, newer, faster way for children to learn in their schools. They knew that better results and higher all-round standards would follow.

They liked our experience in education, our knowledge of their local area and the fact that we could give them as much or as little of the internet as they needed. Fast.

That's why our managed internet service – called Managed Internet Access – has supported the organisation from the beginning, starting with a contract to supply low bandwidth Broadband communications to Bradford schools.

Since then, there's been even more focus on using information and communications technology (ICT) to support learning and teaching. High speed internet access has become the norm. We've kept pace with that development and made sure that Education Bradford – and the schools it looks after – haven't been left behind.

“Our relationship with Virgin Media Business is crucial to our ability to deliver on our commitment to transform teaching and learning now and in the future. It’s their reliable, available network that enables us to provide access to educational content and services and support personalised learning. We couldn’t manage it without them.”

Mark Chambers
IT Curriculum and Learning Manager
Education Bradford.

Harnessing technology, broadening learning

A big step forward in the relationship came in 2003.

The Government’s ‘Harnessing Technology’ strategy, and the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) ICT guidelines that followed, set out some very demanding standards.

Right from the start, Education Bradford set out to do even better than the guidelines required. They asked us to ramp up their Managed Internet Access to 10Mbit/s network connectivity to primary schools and 100Mbit/s to secondary schools – well above the minimum requirements and providing plenty of capacity for growth in the future.

Mark Chambers, IT Curriculum and Learning Manager, Education Bradford, explains: “The aim of the Bradford Learning Network was to develop a collaborative education infrastructure linking 164 Bradford schools. However, this required a significant network upgrade to meet the minimum Government guidelines.”

Wider partnerships

We also worked with other specialists – like Synetrix – to make sure that Education Bradford gets everything it needs including firewall provision, content filtering and security services.

164 sites in the Bradford area are now able to get e-learning applications, instructional tools and multimedia resources. Lessons can be more fun and more effective – which is good for everyone.

Looking ahead

Things are looking good for the future too.

We’re making existing connections even more reliable, with second supporting links at speeds of 2Mbit/s for primary schools and 8Mbit/s for secondary schools. These schools can now be even more confident that their connections won’t crash.

Mark explains: “Internet access is an increasingly essential service for schools, and as a result their investment in IT is considerable. In an average-sized secondary school there’s probably up to 1,000 PCs, so we have to offer a service that is able to support that many users and that amount of technology. Our latest project with Virgin Media Business will ensure that, if the fibre link fails, there will still always be continuity of services so that learning and teaching will be unaffected.”

Key benefits

- High speed internet access.
- Resilience: learning isn’t interrupted if there’s a glitch with the internet.
- Future-proofing: the service flexes up and down in response to changing needs.
- Peace of mind: it’s a managed service. So everything is taken care of.



To find out more, call 0800 052 0845 or visit www.virginmediabusiness.co.uk