



# Why and how Red Kite Learning Trust moved their schools to Arbor

**Red Kite Learning Trust (RKLТ) is a 13 school mixed phase trust with three secondaries, one all through and nine primary schools in North and West Yorkshire.**

Now with over 8,000 students, the RKLТ was formed by three founder schools working together in 2015, but doubled in size in 2018 when seven Leeds schools joined the MAT. The first Red Kite schools moved to Arbor in 2019, beginning with a year-long trial with a primary and secondary school. Since then, all their schools have moved to Arbor, which integrates with their Finance and HR systems for a joined-up user experience.

9 Primaries  
3 Secondaries  
1 All through  
8000 students

## The challenges faced by Red Kite

The move to a new MIS was part of Red Kite's wider IT strategy. Many of their systems were in the cloud, and it felt like the right direction of travel for their MIS as well, particularly as the trust had experienced rapid growth in 2018.

The main challenge they faced as a trust was that their legacy MIS was holding data, rather than surfacing valuable information, making it harder to share value across the trust and work collaboratively.

## Choosing and moving to Arbor

After working on the project in a strategy group and reviewing other cloud-based MIS in detail, Adam and the team decided Arbor was likely the best fit for their trust. They trialled this with two of the academies in their trust, a primary and a secondary, in 2019. The Red Kite team worked very closely and regularly with Arbor in terms of the implementation process, giving feedback along the way to the trust.

Following positive feedback, the rest of Red Kite's schools implemented Arbor in February 2020. It was reassuring to have Arbor's support package, linking up the schools. An Arbor team member was in place to make sure that each individual school was on track throughout, and there was a nominated key user in each school who had an Arbor contact. All the training was booked in, all the daily calls, and the support was crucial. According to the Red Kite team, "It was a fantastic success." On the first day after Red Kite's full go live, all the staff were taking their registers and doing reports without issue.

## The impact Arbor has had on trust-level reporting

In Adam's words, "Arbor produces information, as opposed to holding data, which some MIS focus too much on... It gives you the right information in the right places to make the best decisions, whether those are financial, school improvement or HR."

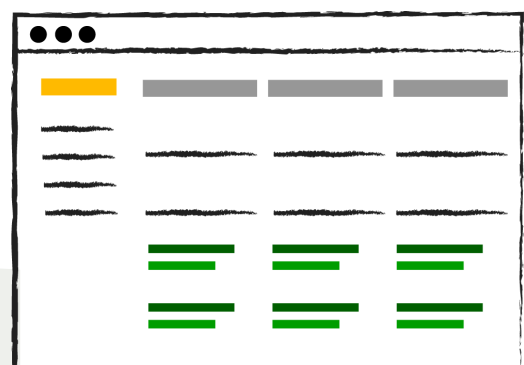
This is largely exemplified in the trust-level dashboard, where Adam and his team can now look at attendance or assessment patterns, and then drill all the way down to a class or student from a trend - the power is there to make an impact straight away. Previously, the trust would have to send spreadsheets to one another, with different formats, resulting in "dead data" that was already out-of-date. Sharing information is a key part of what makes any trust be able to function as it should, with schools constantly needed to share information in order for the trust team to play their role. With Arbor, people at any level, be this trustees, trust staff or school staff, can have the information they need in real-time.

The trust-level dashboard has helped to fulfil the trust's wider aim of bringing their schools together. One example of this would be in their trust-level reporting during Covid, when they were instantly able to organise students in line with DfE policy and see which schools had capacity.

Crucially, according to Adam, Arbor still allows for schools and their data to function in their own contexts, whilst still providing information at trust-level. For instance, schools may have different behavioural standards, but the system is flexible enough so that schools can set these preferences in the context of their own circumstances, but trust-level reporting still gives you a coherent view of the data. This makes the data all the more meaningful.

## The impact Arbor has had at a school level

Adam continues to emphasise the importance of this meaningful information from a teaching point of view. Dashboards for school staff have information, rather than meaningless datasets or tasks. The biggest difference to Red Kite's previous system is that the dashboard provides staff with the context for the day: with trends, their classes, important information to note and their calendars. "All the bits of the system join up to give-you real-time context for your school. Parents see that, students see that, staff see that - it's been invaluable."



## Hear from three Business Managers across Red Kite's schools

Dawn: “Arbor’s made a world of difference for the better.

Holly: “Arbor is key to our daily operations. Much better formatting, much better accessibility.”

Kirsty: “Parents being able to input their own data has made a world of difference to their workflows in school.”



### Hear from Adam Daly, Executive Lead for IT at Red Kite Learning Trust

"Our decision was based on Arbor's approach to providing information rather than simply holding data, together with their willingness to work with our schools to make their data insightful.

During the course of the trial year the relationship with Arbor developed well and we had an incident free change of MIS for the trial schools This led us to start a staged migration of all our schools to Arbor, completed in January 2022. As a trust we have been very impressed with the product and the service provided by Arbor. Their migration process is extremely effective, support is always available and they respond to users requests for product improvements. As such we have seen the product continue to evolve in our relatively short time with them.

Perhaps their greatest strength is the integrity with which they conduct their business. They do not, as so many do, 'over promise and under deliver', they are open about which areas of their product need to be improved and their senior management team is accessible, all the way through to the CEO, very refreshing indeed. Our new Arbor MIS is now integrated with our finance and HR systems to provide us with the information we need to ensure we can deliver on our trust mission.”