

## Supporting multi-academy trusts with strategic ICT procurement

### Case Study

**Client:** Ormiston Academies Trust (OAT)

**WEBSITE:** <http://www.ormistonacademiestrust.co.uk/>

**SECTOR:** Education/multi-academy trusts

“We have been very pleased to work with Novatia throughout this project and are delighted with the results we’ve seen so far.”

*James Miller,  
National Director of  
Estates and Technology,  
OAT*



### Summary

Ormiston Academies Trust (OAT) is a not-for-profit sponsor of 36 primary and secondary academies.

Following a strategic review of procurement processes at both a Trust-wide and academies level, James Miller, OAT’s National Director of Estates and Technology, identified that the time was right to engage in Trust-wide strategic procurement for the essential IT services of broadband, telephony, and e-safety.

One of James’s key drivers was concerning e-safety across all of OAT’s academies, something which OAT takes very seriously. As a growing Trust with different academies using different systems and providers, the OAT management team felt that this posed a potential risk to e-safety that they were not willing to take.

James knew that Novatia had extensive experience in setting up, running, and managing large IT procurement exercises for Trusts. He wanted external experts who could be technical advisors to work alongside his internal Procurement Team to procure the right solutions at the right price which significantly reduced risks to safeguarding.

Novatia were happy to adapt their usual approach of completely running large IT procurement projects on behalf of Trusts to work with James and his team in this way.

In total, Novatia supported the OAT team in two procurement exercises, procuring four types of services. Novatia are also project managing the phased roll out and migration to the newly procured services over a three-year period.

### **What OAT wanted:**

Several things had happened which had led OAT's James Miller to want to procure ICT services at a strategic level.

First, James had carried out a strategic review of all of OAT's procurement to identify a more appropriate procurement process, potential cost-savings, and other benefits, such as greater collaboration.

At the same time, some of the Trust's academies were coming to the end of their BSF (Building Schools for the Future) contracts; they needed new telephony, broadband, and e-safety services. Meanwhile, other schools across the Trust had IT needs that were emerging, such as managed IT services.

Crucial to his decision though was e-safety. E-safety is of paramount importance to OAT and, as such, James was very focused on having a coherent view and control of all the ICT systems and infrastructure across the Trust and its academies. James felt that the inherited approach of each academy having its own suppliers and systems was too big a risk to e-safety.

All of these combined led James and the OAT management team to decide that essential ICT services were strategic procurement decisions which had to be made and purchased centrally. Instead of procuring these services "piece meal", James chose the strategic option of improving and procuring the end-to-end IT requirements of all the academies in the Trust, thus building a robust ICT infrastructure.

This meant that OAT were now going to market to procure telephony, broadband, e-safety services and fully managed IT services and it was vital that this large procurement exercise was handled in the right way. As James says:

**"I wanted to ensure that we had well-negotiated contracts with high-quality suppliers that delivered the services specified to meet the unique needs of the Trust and its academies – and all at an excellent price."**

James decided that OAT needed an external partner to be the technical advisors to work alongside his internal procurement team, bringing in the skills to procure and roll out these detailed and specialist IT functions.

Novatia had the combination of technical and commercial expertise that James and his team wanted. Novatia has a proven track record not only in scoping and specifying ICT procurement needs but also in ensuring there are high-quality responses and significant interest in the bidding opportunities. Crucially, Novatia always procured for their customers what they wanted and at the right price.

Novatia were delighted to be chosen to work with James and the OAT Procurement team.



## Novatia's solutions:

### Phase 1: Procurement

First, Novatia engaged with OAT's academies to determine their individual ICT and technical service requirements. Novatia used a combination of questionnaires and interviews and used the responses to build up a comprehensive picture.

As Novatia's Director of Operations, Alex Wood, observes: "This crucial first step allowed us to build up a picture of what was needed at both academy and Trust-wide level. We then developed detailed service specifications and service level requirements for the Trust and its individual academies' ICT and technical needs. These were used as the basis of the documentation to go to tender with."

Novatia continued to support OAT's Procurement team in a number of ways, for example producing further documentation, including 'Evaluation Criteria' and 'Pricing models'. Novatia also supported procurement clarification during the tender process and tender evaluation.

Alex continues: "As part of the tender evaluation we scored the responses; supported the moderation meeting to agree the short-list for interview; attended interviews to support selection of the preferred bidder; and then helped the OAT team to reach contract close, supporting them in negotiating contract terms and schedules."



## Phase 2: Implementation

Once the Procurement Phase was over, it was time for the implementation.

Alex from Novatia explains: "Procurement is just the first stage of improving an IT infrastructure. The next is implementing it successfully."

James recognised this, so he invited Novatia to project manage the activities that the academies needed to do so they could migrate successfully on to the new contracts.

Novatia were delighted that they were chosen to project manage and migrate OAT and all its academies onto the new contracts. This began in October 2017 and will take place over three years.

As Alex says; "We work hard so that the implementation phase causes as little disruption to the academies' staff and pupils as possible."

"We also ensure that the new services work as they should from day 1 and are set up correctly so that they carry on doing what they need to do."

The Novatia team is the liaison between the contractors, the Trust and the individual academies, using their practical ICT expertise to ensure that everything is being rolled out and established as it should be.

### Results:

As a result of this strategic approach to procurement, OAT successfully appointed the right suppliers for broadband, telephony, e-safety and managed IT services.

They were able to leverage their greater purchasing power to create an ICT infrastructure that supports delivering educational outcomes while reducing risks to e-security.

The cost savings will be significant. Over three years, the intention is to recoup for telephony and broadband alone savings of between 10 to 15%. They are paying substantially less for the IT Managed Service than they were paying for similar levels of service previously.

Novatia has also successfully established the project to migrate all OAT's 36 schools on to their new telephony, broadband, and e-safety providers, as well as the fully managed IT service. To date, the migrations have occurred on time and with no major issues or disruptions. James Miller concludes:

**"We have been very pleased to work with Novatia throughout this project and are delighted with the results we've seen so far. Novatia has met all of our requirements, providing an effective and attentive service."**



Ormiston Academies Trust

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*James Miller, OAT*

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