

Outwood Grange Academies Trust protects vital student data with Arcserve



CLIENT PROFILE



INDUSTRY: Education

COMPANY: Outwood Grange Academies Trust

EMPLOYEES: 3,500

Outwood Grange Academies Trust is an education charity and not-for-profit sponsor of 32 primary, junior and secondary academies. Established in 2009, it's one of the highest performing families of schools in the north of England, with 25,000 students.

PROBLEM

The trust needs to ensure data protection across multiple sites and safeguard its reputation. It decided to replace unreliable tape and hard drive backups with a faster and more efficient disaster recovery solution.

SOLUTION

Arcserve UDP protects 569 servers – 10% physical and 90% virtual servers – across 32 schools. The total volume of raw data protected is 2 petabytes, which is reduced to 270 terabytes through deduplication and compression.

RESULTS

With Arcserve, Outwood Grange Academies has an effective, scalable data protection solution for its ever-growing student and staff population.

THE PROBLEM

Trust in tech imperative as student body grows

Outwood Grange Academies Trust is the successful sponsor of a high performing family of schools in the North of England. The education charity works with 32 primary, junior and secondary academies, many of which are taken on as requiring improvement, to help them achieve record exam results. With a reputation for excellence, the trust ensures that all children – regardless of background – receive an excellent education and improve their life chances.

Launched in 2009, it has grown rapidly over the decade and acquired many new schools. As it scales, the trust increasingly relies on IT for day-to-day operations, including payroll, student registers and medical information, as well as lesson plans and all internal communications. Any IT downtime would be catastrophic.



However, the trust realised it could simplify IT management by standardising data protection on one effective solution for all schools. “There was too much disparity between academies – some used tape, some used hard drives, and there was no consistency,” explains Mathew Lister, Assistant IT Director at Outwood Grange Academies Trust.

Each site had its own backup tools, disparate data retention policies and various approaches to disaster recovery, and limited reporting capabilities meant the trust lacked complete visibility of its estate. “We couldn’t rely on our old system to do successful restores, and tests took hours,” comments Mathew.

Mathew and his team would start the backup at one of the larger schools on Friday night and could still find it struggling to finish on Monday morning. “The incremental backup for Monday wouldn’t run until that had been completed. So if someone had done some work on Monday, but deleted the file on Tuesday morning, we might not be able to restore it.”

He adds: “We wanted to find a new solution that was accurate, easy to use and reliable.”



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– Mathew Lister, Assistant IT Director



THE SOLUTION

Arcserve UDP ensures comprehensive data protection across the trust

The trust first chose Arcserve UDP four and a half years ago when it had eight schools to help it protect its spiralling student and curriculum data, and rolled out the system across four months. Due to the amazing success and ease of growth with Arcserve, it committed to another five years in 2018. Today, its 569 mainly virtual servers are protected across 32 sites, with a separate datacentre in Leeds, storing up to 365 days’ worth of data. More than 2 petabytes of recoverable data is protected, which is deduplicated and compressed to just 270 terabytes. Its largest academy – Outwood Grange Academy in Wakefield – has seen its 1,500 terabytes of recoverable data reduced to just under 30 terabytes.

“It’s just phenomenal,” says Mathew. “We have a backup server in each academy which we backup to each night, with the data then automatically replicated to our datacentre. If a school ever experienced significant data loss, the data is safe because it’s replicated. We can then spin up any of the servers within three or four minutes.”

The ‘set and forget’ process means network managers are only prompted to make weekly physical checks of the backup platform, while Mathew also conducts periodic test restores in the datacentre to make sure data and servers can be successfully recovered.

Data replicated to the datacentre also provides an additional layer of disaster recovery, allowing the group to restore a typical server for any academy within a few minutes and an entire school’s IT infrastructure within 48 hours. “I’m really happy that 99% of what we do succeeds first time. It’s very rare that it doesn’t, but if not, Arcserve will automatically retry, further reducing these minimal failure rates,” adds Mathew.

The trust is so satisfied with Arcserve it has signed up to use the solution for another five years.

THE RESULTS

A robust and scalable solution

Arcserve’s data deduplication capabilities means the trust hasn’t had to invest in any more storage. And while the amount of recoverable data increases exponentially, the data it stores in the backend doesn’t. “At one of our central datacentre servers, in one seven-day period, the amount of recoverable data had increased by 120 terabytes, yet the amount of stored data had only increased by 0.5 terabytes,” says Mathew.

Arcserve provides the granularity to restore up to 365 days’ worth of data on the servers, and Mathew’s team is so confident that Arcserve UDP can take care of all its backup needs, that it has only configured alerts to notify them if something isn’t working.



Success for us is a stress-free solution that does its job quickly and reliably.

– Mathew Lister, Assistant IT Director



“The dashboard tells us everything’s good – and that’s something we can easily show our executive board, to demonstrate that the backups are complete,” he comments.

With Arcserve UDP, Outwood Grange Academies Trust can:

- ▶ MINIMISE THE RISK OF DATA LOSS
- ▶ SAFEGUARD EDUCATIONAL PROCESSES
- ▶ FREE UP RESOURCES WITHIN THE IT DEPARTMENT
- ▶ REDUCE THE BACKUP WINDOWS AND STORAGE NEEDS

“Success for us is a stress-free solution that does its job reliably and quickly. It’s also freed up resources, so we can deliver cloud benefits without the associated costs,” concludes Mathew.



For more information on Arcserve, please visit [arcserve.com](https://www.arcserve.com)