



Case Study

# Harris Federation Teams Up with Cloud Design Box



# Harris Federation Partners with Cloud Design Box to Enhance Microsoft 365 in Education

The Harris Federation is an education charity led by teachers, dedicated to closing the inclusion gap.

It serves disadvantaged communities in London, striving for educational excellence and improving pupils' life and career prospects. Harris is one of the highest achieving MATs in the country, with 100% of its academies rated 'Good' or 'Outstanding' by Ofsted.



Founded by Lord Harris of Peckham, the Federation opened its first school in 1990. Today, it educates over 40,000 learners and employs 5,000 staff across 54 primary and secondary academies in London and Essex.

As one of the four founding trusts of the National Institute of Teaching, the Federation trains thousands of teachers annually. The Trust's policy of centralised and standardised services ensures better value for money and improved support for all academies.

# Maximising the Investment in Microsoft Tools

The Federation commissioned an internal steering group, led by an Assistant Director, to investigate best practices for using Microsoft 365. The goal was to drive consolidation, continuous learning, and improvement.

Edd Amos, M365 Infrastructure Manager, said:

“We spoke to similar-sized MATs and considered other offerings, including in-house systems. However, we wanted to work with a partner to maximise the impact of Microsoft 365 in our Academies.”

**Edd Amos**  
M365 Infrastructure Manager

Harris chose Cloud Design Box to overhaul and improve their SharePoint configuration. They decided to roll out the solution in stages, starting with three pilot schools in 2022.

The initial project was successful, and everyone was excited about the cost and time savings alongside the potential impact for teaching and learning. The team unanimously decided to adopt Cloud Design Box across the entire estate.

# Robust Planning for a Large-Scale Roll-Out

As a large MAT, Harris needed to standardise the deployment of Cloud Design Box at scale. Andy Murden, Digital Learning Lead for Harris, commented:

“Planning a roll-out across fifty-four academies is quite an undertaking. We spent considerable time planning our adoption and settled on a phased approach, onboarding batches of academies during holiday periods over 2023–24. We also adopted ‘Harris 365’ as an in-house brand to heighten communication and visibility of the programme.”

**Andy Murden**  
Digital Learning Lead



## Robust Planning for a Large-Scale Roll-Out

Crucial to success was ensuring buy-in from all stakeholders which was achieved by presenting the vision and strategy through a series of briefings to directors, assistant directors, academy principals, and digital leads.

At each stage, feedback was gathered and the strategy refined. The result was that the H365 programme had full support from all levels of leadership, ensuring that academies were committed to fully engaging with the programme and completing their required actions according to the agreed timeline.

The Harris team developed a bespoke communication, engagement, and training strategy to ensure successful adoption. Design workshops were held to capture details of existing SharePoint Sites and Teams, and the requirements of each academy.



## Robust Planning for a Large-Scale Roll-Out

This information was used by Cloud Design Box to create the required Sites and Teams, and by the Harris M365 team to create the scripts to run the data migrations and apply bespoke permissions.

Building on this, the Harris team provided in-depth training and bespoke training resources to digital leads in each academy to complement the resources provided by Cloud Design Box.



Data migrations from old to new SharePoint sites and Teams were conducted over holiday periods to avoid downtime affecting teaching and learning.

This ensured that when schools returned, they had a new Teams and SharePoint system ready to use, fully populated with their data. The amount of work done before and after migrations to ensure they ran correctly was considerable.

## Robust Planning for a Large-Scale Roll-Out

Lee Mallin, Assistant Director and sponsor of the Harris 365 programme, commented:

“This partnership has worked very well. Cloud Design Box now has a tried, tested, and successful delivery and deployment system planned in depth with a large MAT leadership team. This includes a communication strategy, planning documentation, and training programmes. In return, the Harris Federation has a partner who can deliver and support according to the agreed plans. Any medium to large MAT considering a project of this scale is welcome to reach out and discuss this project with a member of our team.”

**Lee Mallin**  
Assistant Director & Sponsor



# Benefits of Cloud Design Box

One of the many benefits of Cloud Design Box is its integration with school timetables.

This ensures that staff and students automatically access only the Teams and SharePoint sites relevant to their subjects, simplifying navigation. This is especially important for students with SEND.

Another significant benefit is the reduction in IT support requests, as users find the system more intuitive. Edd said:

“The Cloud Design Box ‘Mega Menu’ gives clear and straightforward access to users’ files and data, which is much better than the ‘out-of-the-box’ SharePoint — users only see what they really need to see!”

**Edd Amos**  
M365 Infrastructure Manager

The system features a menu like those on smartphones and websites, making it easier for lower ability students to find what they need.

“Cloud Design Box provide additional features like adding student folders for staff access and integrating them into Class Teams, which is a vast improvement on the standard Microsoft solution.”

**Edd Amos**  
M365 Infrastructure Manager

## Benefits of Cloud Design Box

“Feedback from users has been extremely positive. When we asked users for feedback, **92% of ratings were good or excellent**. Ease-of-use has been rated highly by all schools. Standardisation has also led to greater collaboration between schools within the Trust.”

**Andy Murden**  
Digital Learning Lead



# User Confidence

Rolling out a new IT platform and getting every stakeholder on board was always going to be a challenge.

Cloud Design Box and the Harris 365 team treated this as a large change management project, working closely to ensure smooth adoption. Compliance and security were high priorities, with the team focused on understanding sensitive data and access control.

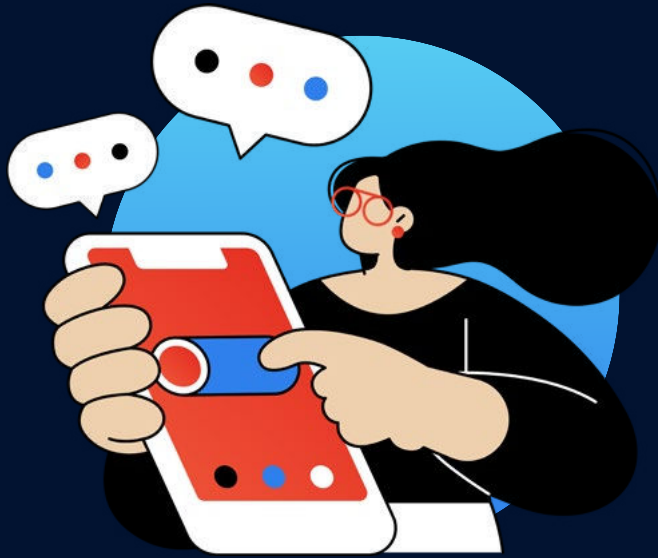
“Cloud Design Box work behind the scenes but have been brilliant in collaborating with us and understanding the issues we face as a large organisation.”

**Andy Murden**  
Digital Learning Lead

“It’s all about intuitiveness and ease of use, saving time for teachers and IT teams. Cloud Design Box makes SharePoint easy to use, which makes academy staff happy! Additionally, the support from Cloud Design Box is exemplary which adds peace of mind for administrators.”

**Edd Amos**  
M365 Infrastructure Manager

Andy concluded: “I am impressed with the quality of the product Cloud Design Box has produced. It demonstrates their commitment to education and their customers.”



# About Cloud Design Box

We are Microsoft partners and SharePoint and Teams experts, based in the UK, who support over 700 schools and school groups internationally by providing state-of-the-art intranets.

We enhance working and learning through unified communication and collaboration, driving opportunities for greater success and improved wellbeing.

To arrange a demonstration and learn how Cloud Design Box can ignite teaching and learning across your organisation, please contact our team of experts:

---

## Let's talk

CALL

+44 (0)1482 688890

VISIT

[clouddesignbox.co.uk](https://clouddesignbox.co.uk)

EMAIL

[info@clouddesignbox.co.uk](mailto:info@clouddesignbox.co.uk)