



Why have 5,000+ schools moved to a cloud-based MIS?

Wondering why 1 in 4 schools have moved away from SIMS to a cloud-based MIS? Our schools & MATs explain why they decided to switch, and we answer some common questions about the cloud

A little bit about us

Arbor makes a smart, cloud-based MIS for primary schools, secondary schools, special schools & MATs.

Our MIS helps to transform the way schools & MATs work by putting essential data at the fingertips of senior leaders, teachers & office staff, and by automating and simplifying administrative tasks to reduce staff workload.

Find out why 800+ schools and 70+ MATs have moved to Arbor at www.arbor-education.com

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Introduction



By James Weatherill, CEO at Arbor Education

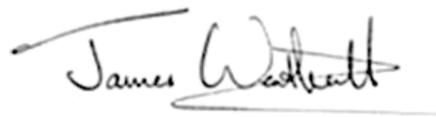
Over the last 4 years, over 5,000 schools in England have moved their MIS to the cloud in order to save money and reduce teacher workload. In fact, the rate that schools are changing their MIS is now so fast that 1 in 4 schools across England have left SIMS/CMIS to use a cloud-based system!

With more and more schools moving to simpler, smarter, cloud-based systems, we often hear from schools & MATs who want to know more about the cloud, but who are worried about how to navigate implementing a new MIS system across their school. With that in mind, we've created this guide to answer some of the most frequently-asked questions we come across, including how much it costs, how secure it is, and how it differs from SIMS/CMIS. We've also included a few stories about schools using Arbor, so you can hear first hand why they chose to switch, and how the cloud has helped them save time & money.

At Arbor, we're passionate about providing schools with the tools they need to transform the way they work, so we're really excited that more and more are embracing the cloud - after all, we've been talking about its benefits since we were first founded!

Hope you find this guide useful - if you've got any other questions that we haven't answered (or if you just want to let us know what you think), feel free to get in touch - my contact details are below.

Look forward to hearing your thoughts,



James Weatherill
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Why do schools move to the cloud?

Moving your MIS to the cloud isn't just cheaper and more secure; it's a chance to transform the way you work. We've rounded up the 4 top reasons that schools & MATs switch systems

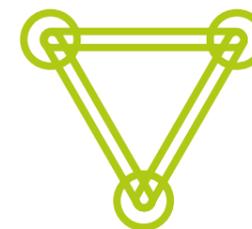


Save money, and reduce the number of systems in school

Cloud-based MIS systems are typically 20%-30% cheaper in terms of license fees and support. They also help to reduce the number of systems you need in your school, as functionality isn't modular and comes as standard (e.g. SMS, online payments, parent evening booking etc). This is important when budgets are tight!

Bring all your school data together in one system

Cloud-based systems can help consolidate all core student and staff data, including attainment, progress, behaviour, payments and messages into one system, improving reporting



Free, simple integration with third-party systems

All new, cloud-based systems can integrate easily with other apps in your school, meaning no more Excel uploads and downloads, and one password to sign into all those systems!

Access from anywhere, and any device

This seems simple, but it means staff can enter marks from home, and aren't tied to their desk in school



FAQs: Moving your MIS to the cloud

How many schools have already switched their MIS to the cloud (mostly from SIMS)?

1 in 4 schools have already switched their MIS to the cloud, and this number is increasing at around 24% each year - we expect 1,200 schools to switch this year alone! The vast majority of primary school MIS switchers are moving away from SIMS, whilst secondary schools are typically switching from SIMS and CMIS/Progresso.

How much cheaper is a cloud-based MIS?

Typically you can save ~30% on your total systems costs, meaning the cost of support and license fees together. Be careful to compare like-for-like functionality to calculate this accurately. Oh, and you can get rid of your server, which is an additional cost!

- **Primary schools:** Can typically save £1k-£2k+ per year by reducing MIS pricing as well as reducing the number of different systems they need (e.g. payments, SMS, progress tracking etc)
- **Secondary schools:** Can typically save £3k-£6k+ per year by reducing MIS pricing as well as reducing the number of different systems they need (e.g. payments, SMS, progress tracking etc)

How secure is a cloud-based system?

Much more secure than your school server! MIS systems like Arbor's simple, smart cloud-based MIS have passed security standards such as ISO27001, have been accredited by the DfE to hold sensitive information from ASP, are penetration tested each year and are GDPR compliant.

Below are just some of the ways Arbor takes care of ever-changing security requirements (so you can rest at peace knowing your school is compliant!):

- **Bespoke, permission-based access:** Only view the data that's relevant to your role with role-based access control (RBAC) planned in collaboration with you when Arbor is implemented
- **Secure logins for every user:** Choose from a range of additional security features, including password rules, enforced regular password changes, and two-factor authentication. Arbor also automatically logs out after a period of inactivity
- **Easily retrieve data to comply with Subject Access Requests:** Download a complete record of all data stored in Arbor about a student or staff member directly from their profile page
- **Data retention dashboard to help you delete unnecessary data:** Arbor will automatically flag records that have passed your data retention period, meaning you can easily find and remove all students (and staff) who left your school more than six years ago

What about the brand new cloud-based SIMS - I've heard that's coming out soon. How is it different to old SIMS?

SIMS has embraced the cloud and will be launching SIMS8/SIMS Primary, their completely new cloud-based MIS, so it's now a question of when (not if) your school will move to the cloud. Here is what we know about SIMS8 at this point (accurate as of 30th August 2019) - if you use SIMS we'd urge you to ask your contact for their version as we're biased ;). Better yet, ask to hear from the schools who use it to see what they think!

- **They've had a lot of delays with pilot for primaries:** This has meant that SIMS8 is unlikely to be ready for full launch with primary schools until late 2019 at the earliest...
- **It appears expensive:** Pricing is very similar to SIMS7 but includes a £500 hosting charge. SIMS have been reluctant to release pricing, so ask your rep to see if you'll be charged more
- **Third-party integrations haven't been built yet:** As third-party suppliers are waiting to see how many schools pick it up
- **You'll need to retrain your staff:** It's a brand new system, and although there are some similarities to old SIMS, you'll need to retain your staff on how to use it

So what should I do as a school?

With SIMS working on its first cloud-based product, it's now a question of when, not if, you'll be moving to the cloud. The question is simply which provider you go with - whoever it is, you should ensure they provide value for money and fit your ethos as a school. If you're with SIMS or CMIS, compare them to 2 or 3 other providers to see who you like the best and make a choice by inviting them to pop in. You'll be with them for a few years at least, so it's worth making a considered choice, and it's as much about the people and service as the product. Oh, and if you're a MAT, LA or group of schools then you will likely have to conduct a slightly more formal process via a tender as a cloud product is a brand new product and service, so can't be grandfathered in under the same terms.

We are a MAT and have both primary and secondary schools in our trust. What should I do?

Good question! If you decide to stick with SIMS across your trust, you won't be able to get the full benefits of a cloud-based MIS for your central team & schools until 2021 (at the earliest) as SIMS Secondary isn't ready yet. It's worth thinking about whether you're willing to wait this long, particularly as it means you'll need to maintain multiple different systems across your trust until then (which is costly, time-consuming, and less efficient than having standardised systems). It's also worth checking whether the MIS provider you go with lets you manage data, workflows and reporting for all the schools across your MAT from just one system - Arbor's Group MIS for MATs brings your schools' core student and staff data together in one place, giving you a single system to analyse performance and take action centrally. Head over to our website to find out more.

Why our schools moved to the cloud

We now work with 602 primary schools, 81 secondary schools, 101 special schools & 67 MATs. A few of them explain why they chose to move MIS to the cloud with Arbor

“We knew that moving to the cloud would give us easy access to our information and mean that we wouldn’t have to maintain servers, which is a big plus. We found Arbor very intuitive to use - in particular, staff and leadership teams can now use the system for smaller day-to-day tasks, and very quickly access data that they need. We’ve been able to contain a lot of information in Arbor - before, we had various pieces of third-party software and Excel workbooks that were holding key bits of information in separate places, and Arbor has helped us to successfully bring all that information together”



Alan Pike
KS4 Science Teacher & Data Manager
Glenmoor & Winton Academies, United Learning

“We chose Arbor as the MIS for all our schools as we knew we wanted to have a cloud-based product. This was important for our Trust as our schools cover a wide geographical area. We can access all of our data and information wherever we are, whenever we need it”

Mark Greatrex
Chief Executive
Bellevue Place Education Trust



The biggest win for us is having family information, attendance, behaviour logs, assessment data and interventions all in one place so that we can track an individual or group or cohort easily and produce reports quickly. Arbor has transformed the way we operate because we now work in real time and update information constantly - the data and information we hold is easy to access and dynamic, allowing teachers and support staff to use the system from anywhere at a time that suits them



Tony Berwick
Headteacher
Jubilee Wood Primary School

“We were looking for a more modern MIS that suited the needs of us as a modern organisation. We went through the tender process and found that Arbor was the best solution for those needs - it’s intuitive and easy-to-use - and it gives the people in our trust back the ownership over the data that they need. Now, we can easily access key bits of data in a few clicks, whereas before, we had to ask someone to run a report to get basic bits of information”

Peter Bradburn
Director of IT & Communications
Aspire Academies Trust



The first word that comes to mind [when describing Arbor] is ‘simplicity’. It’s easy to grasp, and new users can quickly work their way around the system’s functions – you don’t feel like you need hours of training, as you do with other systems. Something I love about Arbor is the fact that it’s multi-functional across the school. By that I mean that most areas of the school use Arbor, whereas with our previous MIS provider, we found that it was only really the School Office staff that were using it - classroom teachers were using it to take the register in their classes, but that was about it! Now everyone in school knows how to use it. Arbor is a school-wide tool, not an office-based MIS system



Julie Smith
PA to Headteacher
Parkroyal Community School

We genuinely love the Arbor system and the team behind it who seem to just want the whole system to succeed at the Lakes. There’s always a bit of heart in the mouth when you instigate such change in a school and I would just like to say a huge thank you to yourself and your team who really have looked after us and who have wholeheartedly helped us confirm that the decision to change to Arbor was the right one”

Andy Cunningham
Headteacher
The Lakes Secondary School



How to move MIS

Whilst more and more schools are realising the benefits of moving to a cloud-based MIS system, many aren't sure exactly how to go about switching. This quick guide should help you navigate the process

1. Get in touch! (Always the first step!)

Email tellmemore@arbor-education.com or call us on **0208 050 1028** and we'll connect you with your local Arbor Partnership Manager.

Your Partnership Manager will visit you to learn more about your requirements & demo our MIS. They'll also answer any of your questions while you decide when you'll switch.

When you've decided which package suits you best, they'll send your contract and introduce you to your Customer Success Manager.

2. Go to tender

If you're a medium/large MAT or a larger school with more complex needs, you might want to take the time to write a tender outlining your requirements.

You can find lots of great procurement advice from the Crown Commercial Service at www.gov.uk/guidance/buying-for-schools.

We can still give you a demo whilst you work out your requirements, and once you go to tender we'll respond to all your questions and outline the contract we think will be right for your school or trust.

3. Buy through a framework

You can also buy Arbor through several trusted frameworks, giving you the peace of mind that due diligence checks have already been made on our product and company.

Arbor is a member of the government's G-Cloud framework for approved cloud suppliers, and the ThinkIT framework.

To use a public framework, check their website carefully as the rules for each are different. Generally, you'll be able to send us your requirements and have a demo, before signing using

Arbor's simple interface is easy to use, and we love the MAT reporting tool – the ability to see MAT data in one place without having to contact all schools individually has saved us so much time!



Lisa Sarikaya

Deputy CEO and COO at St Bart's Multi-Academy Trust

4 ways a cloud-based MIS will change the way you work at school



Stephen Higgins

Arbor Product Lead and former Secondary Middle Leader

We've written before about the fact that more schools than ever are choosing to switch to a cloud-based MIS.

It's not just potential cost savings which are compelling schools to move (primary schools save upwards of £2,000 by switching, and secondary schools could save around £6,000) – increasingly schools are realising that moving to the cloud offers a real opportunity to transform the way they work. We explore the 4 key ways your MIS could do this below.

1. Your school can go paperless

Put an end to paper registers, incident forms, and classroom context sheets! A cloud-based MIS will let you record all this information quickly & easily via a browser so you never have to worry about printing or losing a sheet of paper again. Not only is this better for data protection, compliance & safeguarding (contrary to popular belief, the cloud is a lot more secure than using a server-based system or arch lever files), it also means you'll eliminate unnecessary data duplication (never again will you have to transfer information from paper to screen!).

2. Let your MIS do non-teaching tasks for you

The second benefit to putting key information about attendance and behaviour in a cloud-based MIS is that you can start to set up smart workflows which mean your MIS ends up doing a lot of admin for you. For example, you could tell your MIS that everytime a "Level 3" incident is recorded, the Head of Year should be automatically informed by email and the student should automatically be registered for the next detention. This helps to cut out a lot of manual chasing & scheduling – and also helps your school to maintain a consistent behaviour policy.

3. Stop your staff being tied to their desks

When you use a server-based system, staff can only access your school MIS from specific stations (normally the desktop in their classroom). This limits the usefulness of the information inside it, since it can't be viewed, discussed or put to use outside of that one room. With a cloud MIS, your staff automatically have the flexibility to work on the move around school and bring up important information quickly & easily in key meetings.

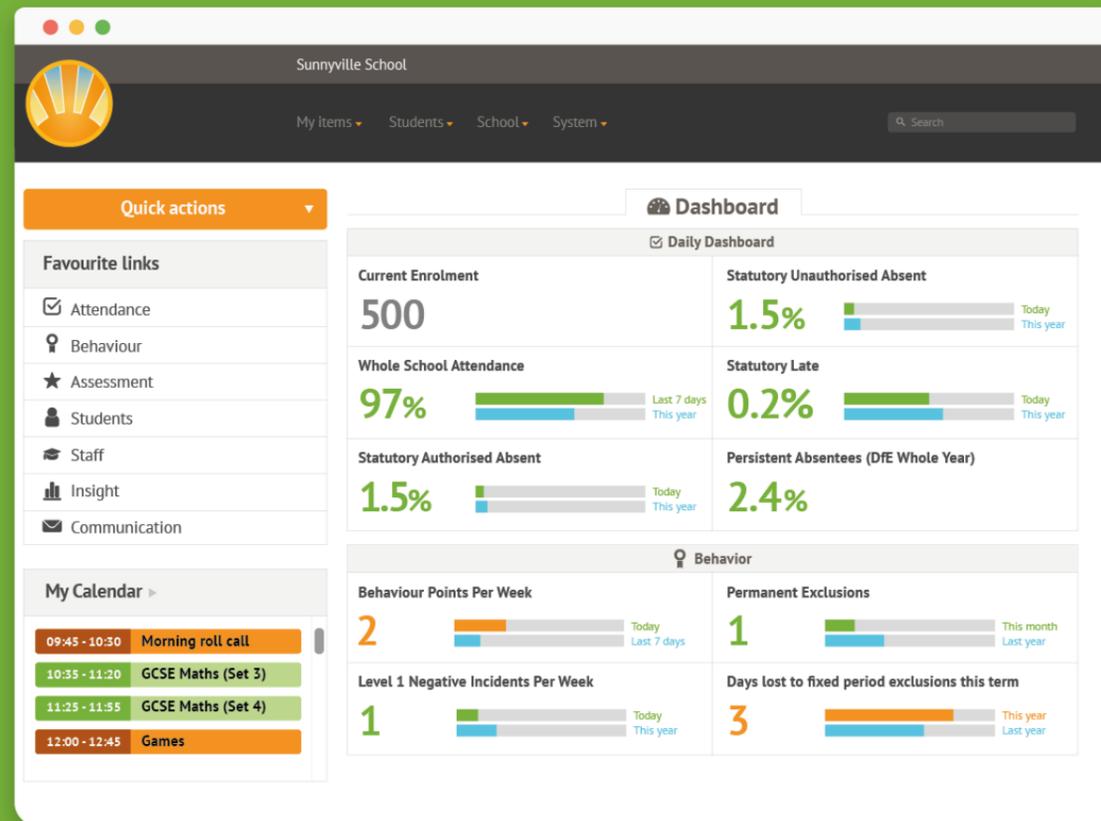
4. Reduce your "data workload"

Far too often, schools end up using a patchwork of different systems for different school areas (such as attendance, behaviour, parent communication, interventions, and so on). This normally means that in order to look at patterns between different areas, add demographic data into assessment results, or follow up with parents about absence, staff have to manually download and compare different spreadsheets, find contact details in one place to use in another, and juggle multiple logins. All of this leads to lots of manual work to make data any use. By contrast, most cloud-based MIS systems replace your patchwork of systems with just one – making your data instantly accessible, comparable and useful.

With so many schools moving to the cloud, we've found the question has become when and not if the decision is right for your school. We'd be more than happy to discuss how you currently use your MIS and explain how our simple, smart cloud-based system could help you transform the way you work.

Transform the way you run your school or MAT with our simple, smart cloud-based MIS

Notes



Over 800 schools & 70 MATs have moved to our MIS to transform the way they work.

- **For schools:** Our MIS gives you instant insight into your performance & saves hours of time by automating workflows and administrative tasks
- **For MATs:** Centralise your data reporting, streamline your operations, and support & manage your schools remotely - all from just one system

Get in touch to find out more on:

☎ 0208 050 1028 ✉ tellmore@arbor-education.com

Book a free demo at www.arbor-education.com

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Interested in learning more about our MIS for schools & MATs?

Get in touch

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 www.arbor-education.com