



CASE STUDY

# Providing rapid threat response for British schools trust BMAT

Barracuda Email Protection and Barracuda Managed XDR have all bases covered as risks mount

## Customer

- BMAT is a growing multi-academy schools trust supporting junior and senior high (primary and secondary) schools across Essex and East London
- It manages 12 schools with over 7,000 staff and students and 4,000+ devices

## Challenges

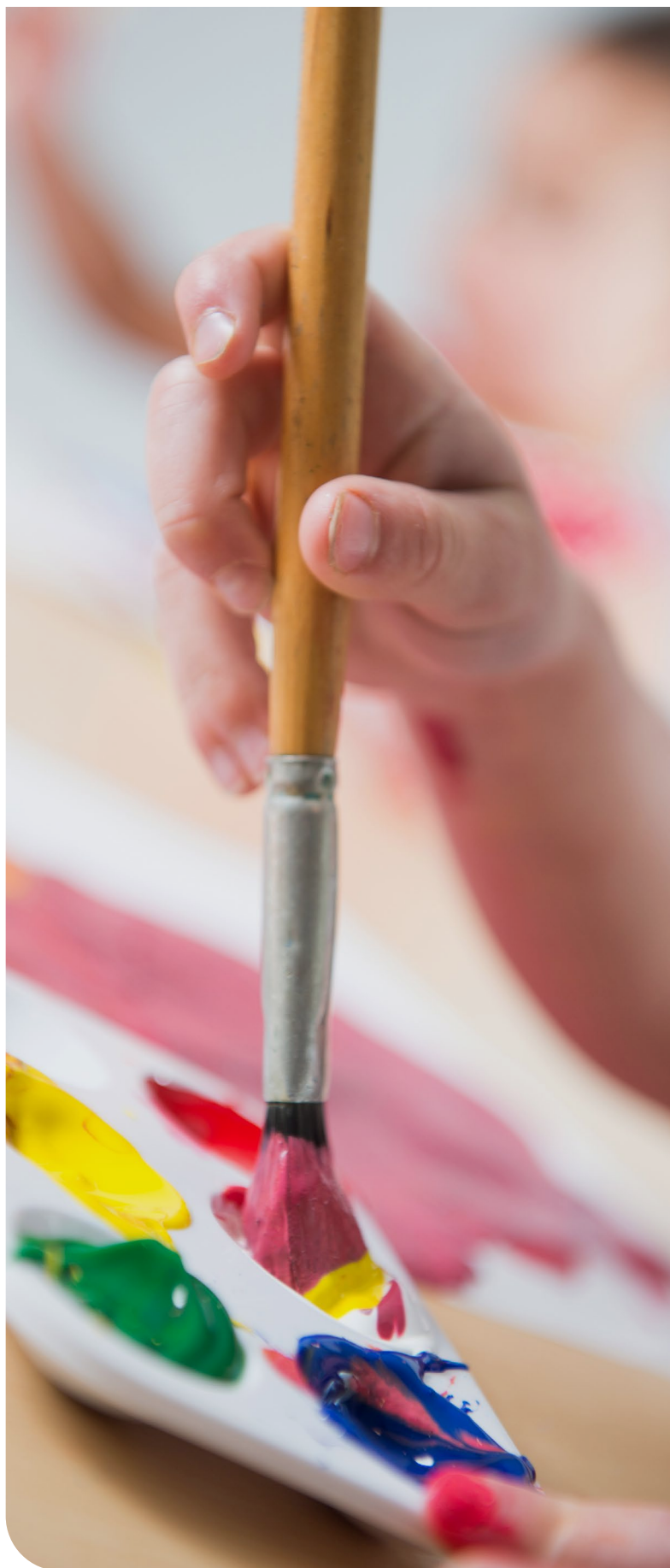
- A surge in business email compromise (BEC) targeting staff
- A limited IT team

## Solutions



## Benefits

- Rapid response and containment of threats to mitigate reputational/financial risk
- Small IT team has more time to work on vital infrastructure upgrades



On both sides of the Atlantic, ransomware is rampant in the education sector. But a different threat concerns Roger O'Connor, IT Director of UK schools trust BMAT.

"Spear-phishing targeted at specific individuals in our finance department, spoofed to come from the CEO or CFO, is our biggest risk at the moment," he says. "People are obviously doing their homework about the organization to understand who the core staff and decision makers are."

A credential phishing incident involving a hacked email account at the start of 2025 made Roger's mind up. It was time to improve the organization's cyber defenses. And [Barracuda Email Protection](#) and [Managed XDR](#) offerings were the perfect fit.

## A first line of defense

"The malicious email in question was difficult for even well-trained staff members to spot, because it had come from a legitimate external account that was hijacked," says Roger.

"It took them to a portal that was obviously malicious, where they entered their credentials and then it took their account hostage and started sending out spam emails," he explains. "This started at 3am. We corrected it by 8.30am the same day. But obviously that was a five-and-a-half-hour period where that bot had free reign over that particular account."

After being introduced to Barracuda Email Protection, Roger was particularly impressed with its [Impersonation Protection](#) capabilities. It uses AI to learn an organization's "normal" communications patterns, in order to better spot advanced threats like phishing attacks sent from compromised accounts. A Barracuda representative suggested BMAT also take a look at Barracuda Managed XDR, which immediately appealed.

"The fact is that Callum is the single resource we have in the infrastructure team, so his time is obviously precious to us," Roger says. "We felt that Barracuda and the SOC team could do a lot of the leg work, meaning we wouldn't have to micromanage that particular element of security. As soon as we received a Barracuda recommendation, and we had the demonstration, we were sold."

## Intelligent email protection and rapid threat response

[Barracuda Email Protection](#) is a comprehensive suite of offerings that cover awareness training for staff, cloud-to-cloud backup, and Advanced Threat Protection to block spam, viruses, and malware. It also features AI-powered Impersonation Protection and Account Takeover Protection, which work in a similar way. And there's an [Incident Response](#) module designed to expedite remediation for IT teams by directly removing malicious emails from inboxes.

[Barracuda Managed XDR](#) enables rapid threat detection and response across endpoint, cloud, network, email and server layers. Barracuda's award-winning security operations center (SOC) team monitor customer environments 24/7/365, so Barracuda Managed XDR can contain threats before they have a chance to impact the organization. It can reduce the time taken to resolve malware infections from days and weeks to just seconds.

BMAT Senior IT Technician, Callum Lane, says it was simple to get both products up and running.

"I used the Barracuda Campus article which was shared with me, and it was very helpful. We had screenshots step by step, which I just worked through in a few hours," he explains.

"Once I'd done everything I could, I contacted the SOC team. Within a few hours I had an engineer who was able to remotely check all the settings. They were also able to explain how each setting worked, which I found really helpful."

*"I know that if there is anything that transpires, we'll be notified within a matter of minutes, and we'll be able to deal with it instantly, even if it's three in the morning."*

**Roger O'Connor, IT Director**  
BMAT



## Time saved means infrastructure improvement

With Barracuda in place, BMAT has been able to minimize the financial and reputational impact of incidents, and free up time to spend on important IT infrastructure upgrades. In fact, Barracuda Managed XDR picked up a high-risk issue within just a couple weeks of being switched on, “raising huge concerns about what we may have been missing historically,” says Roger.

A malware script was uploaded to OneDrive via a student account, according to Callum.

“It was detected, and we received a phone call from the SOC team at Barracuda pretty much instantaneously. We were able to then disable the account and any other accounts that the file was shared with,” he explains. “I was actually in a server room at one of the sites at the time. So it would have been a few hours before I got back to my desk and was able to check the dashboard.”

Callum has also been impressed with the Barracuda UI.

“The reports are very useful and can be scheduled daily, weekly and monthly. As soon as you log in, you can see quite clearly the inbound alerts on certain accounts that are receiving a lot of blocked emails,” he says. “So we can narrow down where specific accounts are being targeted — whereas on the previous system, with Microsoft 365, it was quite a challenge to dig through all of the alerts and find the high alerts that needed more attention.”

*“Our infrastructure project list is huge. We would have a really hard time getting any of it done if we didn’t have Barracuda.”*

**Roger O’Connor, IT Director**  
BMAT





This translates into significant time savings for the small BMAT IT team, as well as saving the group the cost of taking on another employee, says Roger.

“Let’s put it this way. We were looking at either employing an apprentice or taking on Barracuda Managed XDR. So essentially it saves Callum a fairly significant amount of man hours on his daily checklist,” he adds.

It means Callum can get on with vital server and network upgrades.

“The infrastructure project list is huge,” argues Roger. “We would have a really hard time getting any of it done if we didn’t have Barracuda.”

More than anything, though, Barracuda lets Roger sleep at night, knowing an expert third-party SOC team has everything covered.

“I know that if there is anything that transpires, we’ll be notified within a matter of minutes, and we’ll be able to deal with it instantly, even if it’s three in the morning,” he concludes. “From my perspective, particularly given all the cyber-attacks ongoing at the moment in the UK, it gives me a little peace of mind.”

## Learn more:



[Barracuda Managed XDR](#) is a fully managed next-gen cybersecurity solution powered by Barracuda’s 24/7/365 global SOC. It leverages advanced AI analytics and threat intelligence to detect and eliminate cyberthreats in real time across the attack lifecycle. This open XDR solution integrates seamlessly with the organization’s existing technologies, enhancing operational efficiency and delivering true defense-in-depth.



For organizations that want to protect their businesses, brands, and people against the most advanced email-borne threats, [Barracuda Email Protection](#) is a comprehensive, easy-to-use solution that delivers gateway defense, API-based impersonation and phishing protection, incident response, data protection, and compliance capabilities.



# About Barracuda

Barracuda is a leading global cybersecurity company providing complete protection against complex threats for all sized businesses. Our AI-powered platform secures email, data, applications, and networks with innovative solutions, managed XDR and a centralized dashboard to maximize protection and strengthen cyber resilience. Trusted by hundreds of thousands of IT professionals and managed service providers worldwide, Barracuda delivers powerful defenses that are easy to buy, deploy and use.