



St Bernard's gets a faster network - for less cash!

St Bernard's High School and Arts College is a popular and successful Catholic bilateral girls' school and specialist college for the Arts and Science with a thriving mixed 6th form. The school has a proud history in providing a high quality Catholic education for the young people of Southend and the surrounding area.

Network Blues

The IT team at St Bernard's inherited a network which was proving so problematical they were concerned it might need considerable investment to put things right.

Logins were slow and access and running speeds were inconsistent across the network, and at times parts of the network would grind to a halt.

In addition, when the school implemented the new version of SIMS for the administration staff, some of the workstations were just not up to it. Also they needed to provide 20 PCs for a new 6th Form Study Centre.

Trusted Advice

Diane Burns, ICT Technician, contacted Jim Prendergast at DMS to look at the workstation issue. "I have worked with Jim for quite a while and I value his understanding of the ICT needs of education."

"When I asked Jim for a price from DMS he responded differently to other suppliers" said Diane, "Rather than buy new workstations" he said, "we can use Presentation Virtualisation and run applications from the server. The workstations can be modified to be faster too". With this in mind, Diane could see that they could use some old library workstations for the new 6th Form Study Centre.

Introducing DMS Omni

Jim's solution was Omni, a "Terminal Services" option developed by DMS on Microsoft 2008 Operating System and TS Gateway. It promised to deliver applications and data to users from the server (locally or remotely) at a speed that makes them appear to be on the workstation!

Rather than replace the workstations, St Bernard's took the Omni route. Omni was delivered on a powerful Intel Multi-Flex server, saving the cost of purchasing 20 workstations. Jim took the old models and adapted the software on them to make them run faster.

Diane is pleased to report that Omni is responsible for a much happier admin team at St Bernard's and a fully operational 6th Form Study Centre. "Omni really does

give faster access to data and applications, even on workstations that are several years old".

Comprehensive Report

Once the workstation problem had been addressed, Diane's boss David Clarke asked DMS to review the school's network and recommend a way forward.

Jim tested and mapped the network, finding the causes of the problems, with no interruption to the school timetable. Jim's aim was to offer a solution that would cause minimal disruption to the school's limited budget!

Jim proposed to bring the network to acceptable speed and consistency with some minor adjustments including firmware updates on switches. This would cost the school hundreds of pounds rather than tens of thousands that may have been needed for a full overhaul.

Plus, Jim left us with a full map of the network, to help us to plan our housekeeping more efficiently.

Omni is the way forward

"We were naturally thrilled with Jim's report" said Diane, "getting the network running smoothly again has cost just a fraction of what we initially expected. With the success of DMS Omni for the admin department and 6th Form Study Centre, we are considering using it in other areas of the school."

Access for Parents

One other plus of Omni is its high security set up. This appealed to Diane and the team at St Bernard's as it allows secure remote access for students and their parents, from anywhere. And, once set up, students will be able to bring their own notebooks from home with no risk to the network.

