DELLEMC

(intel®)

Streamlining support, doubling compute power and cutting costs by half

Shrewsbury School triples storage capacity by deploying a single-vendor, hyperconverged Dell EMC solution designed by Nviron, a Dell EMC Platinum Partner

Shrewsbury School

Secondary Education | United Kingdom

Organisation needs

Shrewsbury School wanted to find a single vendor for compute, storage, networking and virtualization technologies so it could ease IT management and better support the school's critical applications.

Solutions at a glance

- Dell EMC VxRail
- Dell EMC S-Series 10GbE networking switches
- Dell EMC VMware vSAN software-defined storage
- Dell EMC ProDeploy
- Dell EMC ProSupport Plus

Organisation results

- Simplifies IT management and streamlines support

- Seamlessly recovers from power outage

- Doubles the compute power and triples the storage capacity

- Consolidates infrastructure by 75 percent

50%

cut in power and cooling costs

4

terabytes of data backed up in 10 minutes instead of 1 hour

Shrewsbury School has been educating students ages 13–18 since it was founded by King Edward VI in 1552. Although many things have changed over time at Shrewsbury School, in Shropshire, the mission has remained the same: offering the highest quality of education.

The school's IT team supports the mission by providing a reliable, high-performance IT infrastructure that delivers critical student learning applications and other systems. Maintaining the infrastructure was a challenge because the school relied on multiple vendors for IT support. "We had separate vendors and support for servers, storage, networking and the VMware virtualization environment," says the school's IT manager. "This caused major issues with support. I often had to work with all the different vendors to find a solution to a problem, which meant I was taken away from important IT functions." In addition, the school's storage and server technologies were aging and nearing the end of their support agreements. "It was basically time to upgrade everything," the IT manager says.

Implementing a Dell EMC hyperconverged solution

Shrewsbury School considered new technologies from different solution providers but chose Dell EMC after being invited to Dell EMC hyperconverged infrastructure demonstration in Manchester and Birmingham by Dell EMC Platinum Partner Nviron. "We loved the hyperconverged performance and the overall price of the Dell EMC solutions," says the IT manager. "Ultimately, we liked the idea of a single point of contact for everything, from servers to storage to VMware."

Once it chose Dell EMC, the school worked with Nviron to implement a Dell EMC VxRail Stretched eight-node hyperconverged solution powered by VMware vSAN software-defined storage. The school also deployed Dell EMC Networking S-Series S4128F-ON 10 Gigabit Ethernet (GbE) switches to connect four VxRail nodes at the main campus with four nodes at a secondary data centre for active-active always-on operation. Dell EMC ProDeploy helped with the VxRail deployment, and the school adopted Dell EMC ProSupport Plus for all technologies.

Taking advantage of a single vendor for all IT support

By working with a single technology provider, Shrewsbury School has improved its overall IT management capabilities. "Our entire IT environment is easier to manage because the compute, storage, switching and virtualization all come from a single provider—Dell EMC," says the IT manager. The school saw the benefit of unified support when a power outage occurred on campus shortly after the solution was implemented.

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IT Manager, Shrewsbury School

"We dealt with the power failure easily because we were supported so seamlessly by Dell EMC," says the IT manager. "We received email updates throughout the entire process, and the entire environment was back up and running overnight—with no impact to the school at all."

Shrewsbury's IT team now spends less time communicating about and identifying technical problems and more time on IT initiatives. "This frees my time because I no longer need to worry about where a problem is and who to contact," the IT manager says. "I can focus more on new projects, like an upgrade of core switches to Dell EMC."

Twice the compute power, three times the storage

Shrewsbury School has considerably improved its compute and storage performance by implementing the Dell EMC hyperconverged solution with Nviron. "We have twice the compute power and three times the storage capacity we had previously," says the school's IT manager. "As a result, our performance is faster, particularly for Nviron data backups." For instance, backing up the school's 4 terabytes of resource data now takes 10 minutes, rather than the full hour the process used to take.

The school can also complete a 30-day backup before moving the data to tape. "Previously, we had to pick and choose the most critical data to back up, but we can back up everything now with the Dell EMC solution," the IT manager says.
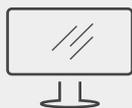
Cutting power and cooling costs in half

After working with Nviron to implement Dell EMC VxRail, the school consolidated its server and storage footprint by 75 percent. "By reducing our data centre footprint using Dell EMC VxRail, we only spend half what we used to spend on power and cooling," says the IT manager.

With improved technical capabilities and support, Shrewsbury School can continue enabling the school's educational mission well into the future. The IT manager concludes, "We can ensure strong application performance with the Dell EMC solution, so we can better support our students and faculty."

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