

# Gresham's case study

## **Gresham's**

Gresham's is a family of medium-sized co-educational boarding and day schools set in rural Norfolk, providing a warm school community with innovative teaching and modern facilities.

## **Microsoft Exchange**

Gresham's were looking to implement the Microsoft Exchange messaging platform, while retaining the ability to administer contact information in PASS, a specialist database customised for education. To achieve this, Blue256 installed Exchange 2007 and provided a bespoke application that converts PASS contacts and transfers them to an Exchange Public Folder. This has meant that staff can send mails easily in Outlook without needing to manually lookup email addresses in PASS, and administrators don't need to update contact details in two places, just concentrating on PASS with which they are already familiar.

## **Blackberry Enterprise Server**

In addition to being able to access emails from desktop computers, Gresham's wanted certain staff to be able to respond to email on the move, and so requested Blackberry Enterprise Server which would integrate with the Exchange server to push mail out to Blackberry handheld devices, with very little additional administration.

## **VMWare**

Gresham's asked for some future-proofing to be built-in to the new products being installed so Blue256 recommended building the servers on VMWare virtualisation technology. Doing this has meant that going forward, further servers can be installed without the need to purchase additional hardware, therefore reducing the budget and utilising redundant resources in existing hardware. Now that it is in place, Gresham's IT department can consider making use of the fault tolerance and high availability facilities of VMWare by implementing functionality that allows the IT administrator the ability to dynamically move a live server instance from one physical server to another while maintenance or repairs are being carried out.

## **Training and support**

For many staff it would be the first time they would have used Outlook, especially with the additional collaborative features provided by Microsoft Exchange, so Blue256 were asked to provide one-to-one training at each person's desktop, and remote support was made available by our helpdesk team for any further questions. To complement this, Blue256 produced training booklets for Outlook, Outlook Web Access and Blackberrys for staff to refer to at their convenience.

## **Backups**

To ensure data remains safe, Blue256 provided Symantec Backup Exec 12.5 Agent for Windows and Agent for Exchange, which enabled backups from Gresham's existing backup infrastructure to Terastation NAS boxes.

## **Summary**

Blue256 achieved the entire project brief on time and with minimal impact to Gresham's staff. Gresham's School now benefits from a reliable and fault tolerant industry standard messaging platform, future-proofed on VMware technology, enabling new servers to be installed more cheaply and for quick disaster recovery.

The export of contact information from Gresham's PASS system occurs every evening ensuring that up to date contact information is always available to authorised staff via Microsoft Outlook, secure web access and email-enabled phones such as iPhones and thirty four Blackberry handheld devices.

All staff at Gresham's School have been trained by Blue256, thus ensuring all key benefits of the system are utilised. To back this up, staff have the assurance of being able to contact our helpdesk for immediate assistance with any technical issues or questions.

## **Full details of the project brief**

- Install Exchange 2007 Server
- Install Blackberry Enterprise Server
- Both servers to be installed on VMware / Windows 2008 Datacenter Edition
- Develop an application to migrate contact information from PASS (the school's contact database / planning software) to Exchange 2007 Public Folders (with the necessary security in place)
- Provide secure web access to Exchange 2007 email
- Perform the migration on a client by client basis of email / calendar / contact information from their existing system to the new Exchange 2007 server
- Provide training on a per user basis for the new system whilst the migration takes place
- Produce training booklets for each type of email access (i.e. web access / Microsoft Outlook / Blackberry)
- Provide a full backup solution for both servers
- Provide remote helpdesk support for post migration users