St. Bede's Catholic High, Ormskirk

St. Bede's Catholic High School is a co-educational Secondary School in Ormskirk, Lancashire. Educating around 700 students aged 11-16, St. Bede's employs approximately 100 staff.

St. Bede's had accumulated a number of aging servers, which, while heavily relied on by their staff and students, were very unreliable. They were beginning to buckle under the pressure of the school's growing infrastructure.

The Challenge

Aging servers where impacting school administration, teaching and learning; frequent disc failures caused downtime. There wasn't a robust disaster recovery (DR) solution in place either, meaning a server failure would be catastrophic. St. Bede's needed to find a reliable, flexible and scalable alternative to their entirely on-premise solution, and fast.

The server infrastructure was a growing concern for the Leadership, Finance and IT Teams when five discs on one server went down at the same time, giving St. Bede's the impetus to act. Having worked with Virtue in the past, Adam turned to Virtue for help and advice.

"We didn't want to have to upgrade again in a few years so we needed a flexible platform that could grow with minimal additional investment," explains Adam Green, Network Manager, St. Bede's Catholic High School. Together, we identified reliability, availability, cost and scalability as key criteria.

x7 Reduced Risk of Downtime	**270** Minutes Per Month Freed for Other Areas of IT	**x3** Faster Server Performance for Speedier Access

> " Even though we performed the migration during the summer break, GCSE exam results were due out so the new system had to be up and running in a very tight timeframe," says Adam. "Virtue Technologies pulled out all the stops to migrate 5TB of data and applications in just a week so we could meet the deadline."
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> **- Adam Green, Network Manager, St. Bede's Catholic High School**

Key Considerations for Building Virtue's Suggested Solution

"We rely on our servers for everything from the management information system to file servers, databases and data analysis programmes so we could not afford the risk," explains Adam Green, Network Manager, St. Bede's Catholic High School. *"Our DR was very simplistic and would have taken a long time to get back up in the event of significant failure."* adds Adam

Together, we identified reliability, availability, cost and scalability as key criteria.

5+ Year Relationship Working with St. Bede's High to enhance learning through technology	**100%** Customer Satisfaction Averaged total scored on surveys by customer's answered surveys	**2.5** Hours Saved By New Setup When Provisioning New Servers in the Future

The Benefits

St. Bede's Catholic High's primary priority was to eliminate risk and implement a robust disaster recovery solution. Working with Virtue, this has definitely been accomplished. However, there were numerous additional benefits, including speed of performance, ease of maintenance and reliability.

St. Bede's new Fujitsu server and storage solution boasts a much faster performance, meaning users across the school and the IT Team themselves are less frustrated and more productive. The new Fujitsu server and storage solution also It has relieved the burden on the IT team. The previous servers required constant firefighting by IT and the new setup has eradicated this demand, freeing up precious time. It's made the delivery of new applications and services quick and simple.

Prior to this, the provision of a new server took at least a couple of hours, it's now possible in minutes. More than that, it can be done without interrupting and impacting workflow or service for users.

> " The speed is tremendous, and the hardware works perfectly; we haven't had to reboot or call Virtue Technologies for help - it simply sits in the corner and gets on with the job, it's really easy to manage and all the documentation is very clear so it has given me much more confidence in our overall IT infrastructure."
>
> **- Adam Green, Network Manager,**
> **St. Bede's Catholic High School**

The new setup also requires minimal maintenance and management, which has further reduced the burden the infrastructure was placing on the IT Team and freed up their time to work on more effective technology development projects for the school. This in turn allows the IT Team to add more value to the school.

When the school onboards new applications, they can now be provisioned in minutes, rather than hours, which provides further time savings for the IT Team and provides the school with more optimal flexibility.

By providing a disaster recovery solution, we've helped the Leadership and IT teams peace of mind ensuring continuity and eliminating the risk of downtime. Because we built the solution with the IT Team at St. Bede's we know it's fit for purpose and designed for their needs.

With this initial project being such a resounding success, St. Bede's has continued to explore other areas of IT to partner with Virtue Technologies. We've now been working together for over 5 years, continuing to provide support, software licenses and advice on new technology projects.

The Solution

Knowing the school's needs and working through their requirements with Adam, led us to suggest deploying a combination of new servers and a new storage setup from Fujitsu to replace the legacy hardware.

Adam sums up our advice "Virtue Technologies recommended a virtual server and storage solution from Fujitsu and it was clear that it ticked all the right boxes."

We deployed two Fujitsu Primergy RX2530 servers to replace the legacy equipment. The rack servers provide high usability, scalability and cost-efficiency and work in conjunction with the new memory and processors to optimise the performance.

Disaster Recovery

Understanding how important reliability was for the school, and understanding it was lacking, we installed two Fujitsu Eternus DX60 storage arrays. They deliver reliable operation at an affordable price. It's the perfect storage solution for St. Bede's because management software is included at no extra cost, and there's flexible support for different network connections, better still the solution offers remarkable scalability. While a large part of the solution building was creating a new server infrastructure, another key concern was St. Bede's disaster recovery setup, or lack of one. After installing the Fujitsu storage arrays, we designed one of the Eternus SANs to act as the DR host, using Veeam software for backup. The other array supports the servers, which use VMware to host 20 virtual machines.

The Virtue Difference

Virtue had a rapid response, eliminating the failing equipment & delivering a new solution quickly & within budget.

St. Bede's were able to consolidate their five original aging servers down to just two, with significantly more capacity and better performance. We then worked with St. Bede's to transition them across to the new platform during the holidays. We used a DFS replication for data transfer so the old servers could still be used.