

**SUCCESS STORY**

# Rural UK primary school more than doubles pupils' access to ICT thanks to NComputing's desktop virtualisation solution

**Key benefits**

- Increased access to e-learning
- Transformed learning environment with ICT integral part of lessons
- Smooth implementation and ease of manageability
- Durability and resilience ideally suited to classroom
- Competitive price point enables maximisation of budget
- Significant space, time and cost savings

Hipsburn First School is situated in the north of England, in the rural village of Lesbury, which has a population of just under 900. The school works hard to deliver the very best education to its 90 pupils and constantly strives to make curriculum improvements that will enhance the classroom experience. Yet, as many schools in the UK will attest, trying to do so under ever tightening education budgets brings with it serious difficulties.



**Partner**



**alncom**

## The challenge – maximise the school's ICT budget to deliver high performance technology solutions that last

Struggling with a suite of outdated temperamental PCs and a tight budget, Hipsburn needed to find a way to replace all of these, whilst at the same time getting more computers on pupils' desks.

With only 20 PCs previously in place, meaning almost five pupils to every one computer, the school was keen to widen each and every pupil's access to ICT and make it an integral part of the learning process. What's more, given the age of the PCs, not only did their varying boot up times cause major disruptions to lessons, there were always some that were in need of repair, which became extremely frustrating for teachers. It meant that every time a teacher planned a lesson which incorporated technology, they would also have to plan a backup lesson as the PCs were so unreliable. This was so time-consuming for them that it got to the point where the teachers were simply avoiding using the computers at all costs. This was a major factor in deciding that now was the time to update the suite. Before the upgrade, the Country Council IT Technician, who visits the school for half a day per week, was spending his whole time trying to repair these tired computers, rather than being able to administer a proper ICT plan.

The school came to the decision that it was time for an upgrade and budgeted to buy 20 new PCs for their ICT suite, replacing like for like. However, one of the school's governors who was familiar with virtualisation technology suggested that this could be a better alternative. He brought the school's situation to the attention of Alncom, a local IT reseller, who was able to demonstrate to the school how with virtualisation they could really make the most of their available budget.



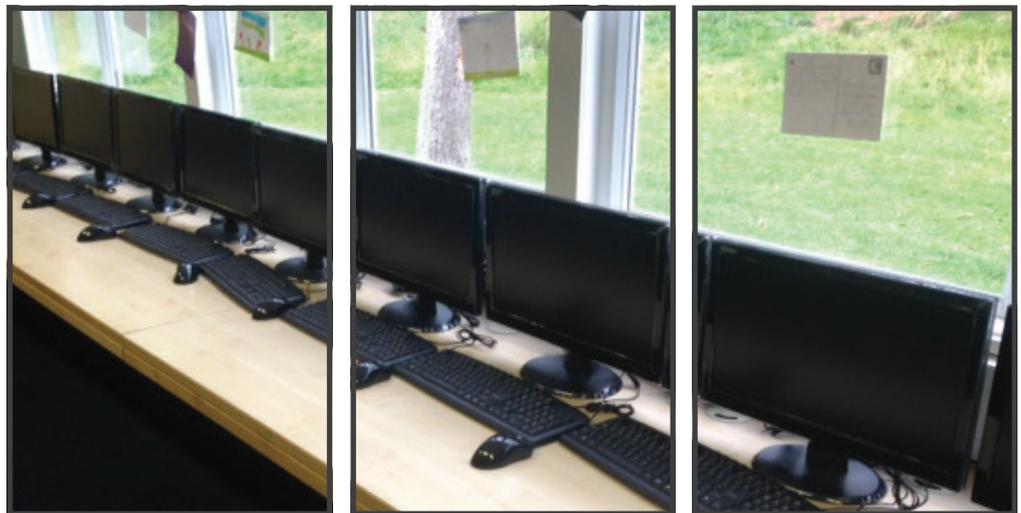
## Deploying NComputing's desktop virtualisation solution

Well familiar with desktop virtualisation offerings on the market, Alncom could easily see that *NComputing's* solution would be the best suited to Hipsburn's needs, optimising low resources and delivering an excellent performance.

Comparing traditional PCs with *NComputing's* **vSpace** platform and **L300** thin clients, Alncom was able to demonstrate that the school could make significant cost savings with this virtualisation solution. In addition, the **L300** thin client's resilient and durable nature makes it an obvious choice for classrooms where daily wear and tear can wreak havoc on traditional PCs. They also take up very little room which is essential for a small school such as this, where space is at a premium. With *NComputing's* solution, the school was able to make cost savings of 47 percent, which meant that there was additional budget remaining to spend on replacing monitors and also purchasing three new multi-function printers and a projector.

*NComputing's* **vSpace** platform, with **L-series** thin clients, provided an ideal solution for Hipsburn, offering simple, flexible and secure management of desktop computing environments that can be controlled centrally, all at an extremely competitive price point.

The upgrade took place in October 2013, when Alncom supplied the school with two physical hosts with **vSpace** and 35 **L300** thin clients, in addition to new monitors. They also re-purposed five existing laptops and five existing PCs to use vSpace, which effectively gave the school 47 computers for their budget of 20, all managed onsite. So, as well as the 18 in the ICT suite, Alncom were able to install computers in every classroom, as well as three in the staff room, allowing teachers to more easily and efficiently plan their lessons while at school. Although the rollout took place during term time, it caused minimal disruption to lessons as Alncom ensured they worked around the school day to allow everything to continue on as normal.



The school was particularly impressed with how quickly the ICT suite was upgraded, taking less than a day. This transition to desktop virtualisation was also eased by the support that Alncom received from *NComputing*, including a two day training course and the loan of equipment. The Alncom team is now fully up to speed with *NComputing's* desktop virtualisation solution and can always assist Hipsburn with any queries and offer back up support to the school's IT technician.

Furthermore, when it comes to maintenance, the school has seen a massive difference compared to the old PCs, with no major problems reported. Now the IT technician is able to spend the valuable time he has in the school looking at new educational software and upgrades, ensuring the school is on track with the ICT curriculum and helping to widen pupils' knowledge of ICT applications.

## Positive reaction from teachers and pupils

The new desktop virtualisation solution has received a very positive reaction from both pupils and teachers alike. With more computers on more desks, a greater proportion of children can access ICT in lessons. Whereas before there were two pupils to every one machine in the ICT suite, now whole classes can get involved, with each pupil having access to their own computer. This is without mentioning the positive environmental impact the new solution has had on the school, with a 90 percent reduction in energy consumption.

According to Dot Charlton, headteacher at Hipsburn: "We've been extremely impressed with how this desktop virtualisation solution from *NComputing* has answered our ICT needs. It's so much more reliable than the PCs we had in place before which means teachers can be confident in integrating technology into their lesson plans. They can make lessons even more engaging for pupils by using a range of educational software programs, as well as video clips and the internet. This is a major benefit to our pupils. Additionally, the hands on and frequent access to ICT means pupils are building the digital skills they need for the future. "

## Looking to the future

The IT technician previously had limited experience of virtualisation technology but thanks to this solution's simplicity and reliability he has become an advocate. So much so that he has already identified several schools which would benefit from a change to the *NComputing vSpace* solution.

Given the success that the new technology has had so far in extending pupils' learning and ICT access, the long-term plan will be to install additional **L300** units as the school's needs grow. This means that ICT can play an even greater role in learning, with more pupils able to access a computer during lessons. This is integral to improving their ICT literacy even further and ensuring they're well-prepared for their ongoing education and ultimately their future career.