



## Steyning St Andrew's Primary School

### Viewpoint

*"Steyning St Andrew's CE Primary School is committed to providing a dynamic learning environment for 460 children in West Sussex.*

*We're responsible for raising the profile of ICT in the school, facilitating its use in different subjects and for tracking children's progress through their school life."*

**Julian Scott**  
Teacher & ICT Technician



### Creating a brighter future

Steyning St Andrew's CE Primary School is committed to providing a dynamic learning environment for 460 children in Steyning, West Sussex. As its slogan states, it is 'creating a brighter future', not least through the construction of an entirely new school and major investment in technology and teaching skills.

The school's adoption of Thin Computing using Wyse Winterm thin client terminals has transformed its ability to satisfy the demand and enthusiasm of teachers and pupils for inspiring education. Today they work confidently with technology, even from an early age, to enliven learning and accelerate individual progression. It has empowered teachers to deliver interactive and exciting lessons and simplified day-to-day ICT management.

### Taking Action

Primarily a classroom teacher, Julian Scott is the school's ICT Technician and has been responsible for managing technology across the school for several years. "I'm responsible for raising the profile of ICT in the school and facilitating its use in different subjects" he adds. "I'm also part of a team of three that is responsible for tracking children's progress through their school life. Until now we've not really had an ICT infrastructure that could be used effectively in the teaching programme."

The school's first serious investment in ICT was in the late 1990s. Seventeen mid-range desktop media PCs were installed in two small suites (a former library and a converted kitchen), with two PCs in each Key Stage 1 classroom and one in each Key Stage 2 classroom. "Over time we implemented around 35 PCs" says Scott. "They were connected to a file server so that the children could save their work and we used an ISDN line for the Internet." The school also provided 17 laptops to teachers, some under the Government 'Laptops for Teachers' programme. Pupils used a number of applications on the PCs such as Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, Flowol, Animated Alphabet, Talking Stories, modelling, painting and databases.

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As teachers' and pupils' confidence in the technology grew, so did the problems. Scott explains: "They could see the functions that the technology offered them, but their enthusiasm was reduced by failing desktops and a slow Internet connection. Printing was also a problem. The willingness was there but the equipment wasn't always able to cope."

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By 2003 their needs were outstripping the technology's capabilities and they began using ICT less. "I love bringing ICT into everything and I could see their frustration" says Scott. "I maintained a log book for teachers to detail problems and had to fix them in my allotted five hours per week Technician time. As time went on, I was using all of it to fix problems. Eventually we needed to buy in additional time from an external source. We realised we had to take action." This realisation coincided with the announcement that an entirely new school was going to be built and that its development would include a new ICT infrastructure.

With experience of using thin clients before, Scott was convinced Thin Computing was the right technology approach for the school. With the backing of the Head Teacher and the support of the Chair of Governors who also had experience of thin clients, Scott expressed his vision for the school and overcame external agencies' preference for PCs. So began a tendering process in which several potential suppliers were invited to bid for a Thin Computing solution. The contract was awarded to Serval Systems, a full service ICT company also based in West Sussex. "Serval Systems were chosen because they are local, have a proven track record and are very knowledgeable about thin client technology" comments Scott. "These were critical requirements as our project was going to be a challenging one. It required input from design right through to implementation."

## Achieving Objectives

With the guidance of Serval Systems, Scott undertook a trial of numerous Wyse thin clients. "We chose Wyse because of its reputation and track record, which is very important for a school like ours" he says. "We gave Serval Systems the applications we were using which we felt would present the thin clients a stiff challenge. The right device would need good graphics and processing capabilities." The decision was made to use the Windows XPe based Wyse Winterm S90. "The S90 was by far the best device for several key reasons. It fulfilled all our requirements. The graphics were good and so was the sound. One key driver was that I only wanted to have a monitor, mouse and keyboard on the desktop. I didn't want to see the terminal. The S90 has a very small footprint and flexible mounting options to facilitate this. Also, its diskless nature makes it quiet and it is very energy efficient and robust. If one did go wrong it would only be a question of plugging in a replacement and carrying on as normal. You can't do that with a PC."

### Conclusion

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With the new school completed by October 2005, Scott has implemented over seventy Wyse Winterm S90 thin client desktops - 32 in a specially constructed ICT suite and the rest in the classrooms. All are connected via a 1Gb backbone to the school's Windows Terminal and Citrix servers, with Internet access provided by a 6Mb broadband connection. "Serval System's contribution throughout the whole process was excellent" says Scott. "They've listened to what we want and given us great guidance, delivering a solution that we're very proud of and which works brilliantly."

The adoption of thin client technology is already delivering significant benefits, as Scott explains: "The fact that we now have a terminal for each pupil in the ICT suite is fantastic. Even the 5 year olds are logging into the system themselves, which is increasing their confidence. As we can teach them the basics from this young age, such as mouse control and keyboard skills as well as using word processing, drawing, database, spreadsheet and painting applications, their progression through the school is greatly improved." Importantly, the teachers are no longer thinking about whether the system will work, but rather where they can use the technology in every lesson. "The enthusiasm and hunger that the teachers and pupils first had when they started to use the PCs in the late nineties has returned" he adds.

Thin Computing has made a major impact on ICT management too. Scott's allotted 5 hours per week Technician time is now dedicated proactively to developing the system further, exploring new possibilities such as digital imaging and video conferencing. He comments: "I'm not stressed out because things don't go wrong like they used to. My log book doesn't exist anymore either. Neither do we need to call on external resource at extra cost to the school."

The technology has enabled teachers to login securely from home to secure work areas that Serval Systems set up, enabling them to plan and prepare lessons when convenient outside of school hours. "The thin client technology has also enabled us to reduce paper usage in the school" says Scott. "Any paperwork such as lesson observations and memos that the Head wants to distribute to teachers can be delivered to individual work areas rather than printed out and left in the staffroom."

He concludes: "Thin Computing has opened a doorway for us. With teachers and pupils realising what they can now do, the world has become closer to them and they can really shine. We can already see a huge change in students' level of confidence in what they can do, and I'm confident that in a year's time we'll be able to say we haven't had to replace a single terminal."