

# CAPITA

## Case Study

### St Mary's College and Capita working together to achieve migration from Oracle RDBMS to Microsoft SQL Server 2008

#### The background

St Mary's College is a Catholic sixth form college serving the wider community in east Lancashire and has Beacon College status. It has a total enrolment of over 2,000 students, including full-time 16-18 year olds, adults, those studying Skills for Life and a number studying for degrees. The College's pass rates are well above the national averages and it has a consistently good record in Ofsted inspections.

The College is proud of its innovative approach and is introducing the International Baccalaureate in 2009, making it the only centre offering this qualification in east and central Lancashire.

St Mary's College has had a long and well established relationship with Capita Further and Higher Education (FHE) and has been using Capita's UNIT-e software for almost a decade.

#### The problem

The College was using Oracle 9i as its relational database management system but was aware that many other colleges were now using Microsoft SQL Server.

Paul Holmes, IT Manager at the College, comments,

**“ through attending the Capita FHE User Groups that we really became aware that many other colleges had moved to SQL Server. ”**

It was clear that SharePoint would be easier to run using SQL Server rather than Oracle. In addition to this the College's IT team were finding it increasingly difficult to obtain information from easily accessed sources, such as the web, if they had problems operating Oracle.

#### How Capita became involved

In order to get an assessment of their options the College contacted Capita FHE for advice. This contact proved very helpful and Paul feels that Capita were highly professional in their assessment and responsive to the College's requirements. According to Paul, the input was very useful in the College's decision making process. Overall he feels,

**“ Capita performed really well and explained issues and dealt with our questions swiftly. ”**



## The solution

It was agreed that a test migration should be carried out. The College sent its data to Capita and a new server was installed which the College configured with Microsoft Windows and SQL Server 2008. Capita also carried out a comprehensive technical audit and the College had a new server for its UNIT-e requirements.

Capita then carried out the testing remotely accessing the College server and making the necessary configurations. In the view of Paul Holmes

**“ This process was swift, easy and went absolutely brilliantly without any disruption at all. ”**

The data testing process was seen as vital by Capita. To ensure that things went smoothly a developer then attended the College to carry out on-site testing. This also went very well and the College and Capita then prepared to go live. Work at the College included the IT team configuring all PCs and other hardware. As a back-up the College's staff were asked to maintain paper records for the first week.

Overall Paul feels that Capita's very flexible and accommodating approach, often responding to short notice changes, meant that there was very little downtime even during the actual migration process.

## The results

It is clear that SQL Server suits the College's purposes much better than the Oracle management system. Paul agrees,

**“ SQL Server blends in very well with what we do as a Microsoft College and I am confident that this has been a very positive development. ”**

He believes that SQL Server is much more straightforward to grasp than Oracle and the College's IT team are already developing a strong in-house learning ethos.

Other benefits include potential savings on licensing now that the College has moved to SQL Server. The College is now keen to develop its own SharePoint applications. To assist this process Capita has arranged for IT staff from St Mary's College to visit other colleges to see how they are making use of SharePoint.

## The future

With guidance from Capita, the College is looking forward to developing SharePoint's extensive document management and assessing potential additional capabilities. This development will allow it to improve communications with its various stakeholders. This will deliver real benefits, particularly when the system is fully implemented over the summer leading up to College enrolment.

One thing that Paul Holmes will continue to do is attend the regular Capita FHE User Group meetings.

**“ I found the information obtained from the user groups really helpful in this process and I always find that I get something useful from attending. ”**

For further information on SQL Migration Services, please contact your Capita Account Manager.



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