case study

background

RSA Academy Arrow Vale became an academy in September 2012, joining the Redditch RSA Academies Trust. With a focus on innovative learning, the school's results are at an all-time high with recent GCSE results placing it in the top 5% of schools nationally. With 450 PCs and 70 laptops, it is essential that Arrow Vale has the tools in place to carefully control its network and online learning environment.

issues

Arrow Vale had several software solutions in place, each addressing a different aspect of network and classroom management. Policy Central was used to address e-safety, Lanview was in place to shutdown dormant PCs (saving on power) and RM Tutor was set up to control lessons in computer labs where multiple PCs were in operation. Staff found all these solutions difficult to operate and, with such a high priority placed on e-safety at Arrow Vale, the shortfalls in this particular software were deemed unacceptable. Rather than being alerted to violations on the network or being able to run quick reports, staff would have to dig around and find the information they required - this proved time consuming and often ineffective. The software didn't run well on the network and was eventually removed, prompting the search for an alternative solution.

solution

Desperate to address these issues, Arrow Vale's Systems Manager, Maria Jenkins received a well-timed phone call from Impero and, keen to find out more, attended the company's stand at the Bett show 2012. Established in 2002, Impero is the author of Impero Education Pro, a consolidated suite of software features, designed to address classroom, network and desktop management in the learning environment. Impero Education Pro would not only provide Arrow Vale with an intelligent, automated e-safety function (using blocks and keyword monitoring), it would also cover the power and classroom management functions that were currently being managed with separate solutions. This consolidated approach appealed to Arrow Vale, and when a business case outlined the cost savings that could be made through Impero, the school was sold.

implementation

Installing the software was simple and Arrow Vale was up and running in no time. Technical staff and the ICT department received Impero training and became internal 'champions' for the product, running refresher courses for staff and new starters when required. Users have commented on the system's simplicity and ease of use which, along with the immediate benefits, has helped to embed this new way of working across the School.

benefits

Since installing Impero Education Pro, Arrow Vale has realised a number of core benefits:

reduces risk – the extra layer of filtering with regards to e-safety ensures students are safe in an online environment. Students recognise this as a deterrent and there's been a reduction in violations since the software was installed. Any incidents that have occurred have been evidenced and dealt with promptly.

saves time – Impero takes care of all the technical admin involved in setting up and managing a computer-based learning session, so teachers can focus on teaching. Technical staff no longer dash between computer labs, as they can use Impero to access desktops remotely and resolve support issues as and when they occur.

increases productivity – the blocks on certain websites, applications and keywords keeps students on task and focuses their learning without distraction

Below: Maria Jenkins' summary of Impero.

"I love it; it does what it says on the tin without any fuss."

Q&A with Maria Jenkins, systems manager

why has Impero worked where other software solutions have failed?

Impero Education Pro incorporates so much functionality it has become the foundation of our IT infrastructure. Because we use it for everything, it has fast embedded itself in the way we work and now I couldn't imagine life without it. Teachers and technical staff find it easy to use, which is important because in the past this has been an issue for us. The software is also very well supported with the Impero team resolving issues the day they're reported.

how has Impero been beneficial to you in role?

Impero saves me time as I can deal with IT requests and solve problems remotely. This spares me running from classroom to classroom and speeds up the time in which I can respond to other members of staff.

what are the next steps?

One of our feeder schools joined the Redditch RSA Academies Trust in January 2013, and over the summer we plan to merge our two networks and roll out Impero on their additional 200 PCs. We're also looking to explore some of the functionality we haven't yet utilised fully, including the cost saving reports so we can calculate ROI statistics.

how would you sum up Impero?

I love it; it does what it says on the tin without any fuss.

impero