



Customer story

The Romero Multi Academy Company (MAC) Catholic Academy

Skimming is when we read quickly to get a general understanding of the story.

Scanning



The Romero Catholic Academy accelerates IT strategy with Promethean

As highlighted on their website, 'nurturing the talent of tomorrow' runs through the very heart of the Romero Catholic Academy. This family of 1 secondary and 7 primary schools, offers a seamless learning journey for children aged 2 to 19 years, while its centralised operations enable the Coventry-based multi-academy company (MAC) to deliver economies of scale and operational efficiencies.

Committed to developing a self-improving and sustainable school-led system, the Romero Catholic Academy continuously looks for new ways to drive forward pedagogical approaches and enhance MAC infrastructure. Embracing digital transformation as part of this development path, the Romero Catholic Academy reviewed its existing IT estate to identify key areas for improvement.

Led by the head of IT, Hitesh Vara, this evaluation concluded that a move to cloud computing would deliver a stronger, sustainable foundation for digital development across the entire estate, starting with bringing all schools on to a shared network, "Our secondary school, Cardinal Wiseman was operating in a cloud-based Google environment, the primary schools had on-premise infrastructure with Microsoft 365," explained Hitesh.

With the decision made to transition all eight schools to cloud computing with Microsoft 365, Hitesh and his team simultaneously appraised how this would work with the teaching technologies.

"In the same way that we started with a mixed communication network, we were also faced with a

Image: Mrs Severs, year 4 class teacher

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Hitesh Vara, Head of IT

broad range of display technologies being used throughout the MAC. To achieve truly sustainable digital development and seamless transition for our learners, we needed consistency in all aspects of the IT estate.”

A consistent and commercially sound strategy

While Cardinal Wiseman used projector and screen set-ups to deliver secondary and sixth form lessons, the primary schools had been early adopters of the Promethean ActivPanel. “Staying focused on our long-term objective to deliver a sustainable strategy and consistent teaching provision MAC-wide, we concluded that the whole estate should be upgraded at the same time.” said Hitesh.

“We had already established a strong partnership with Promethean through our primary schools, and we could see the continued investment that was being made in the development of the ActivPanel. On this basis, we wanted to move forward with Promethean and the ActivPanel, and so put the contract out to tender,” Hitesh explained.

Responding to the Romero Catholic Academy's tender specification, CC Communications, a Promethean partner, was appointed to implement more than 200 of the latest ActivPanel interactive displays in 18 months.

Crucially for the Romero Academy, CC Comms structured a commercial agreement that combined a bespoke, value add ‘buy back’ scheme based on its existing ActivPanel displays alongside a new leasing plan.

“The flexibility shown by CC Communications enabled us to realise our IT vision, with the commercial arrangements expediting our MAC - wide implementation. Their personalised approach to our unique needs followed through to the installation, where CC Comms worked with us to deliver an ambitious programme that saw over 90 ActivPanels installed in one summer period,” explained Hitesh.

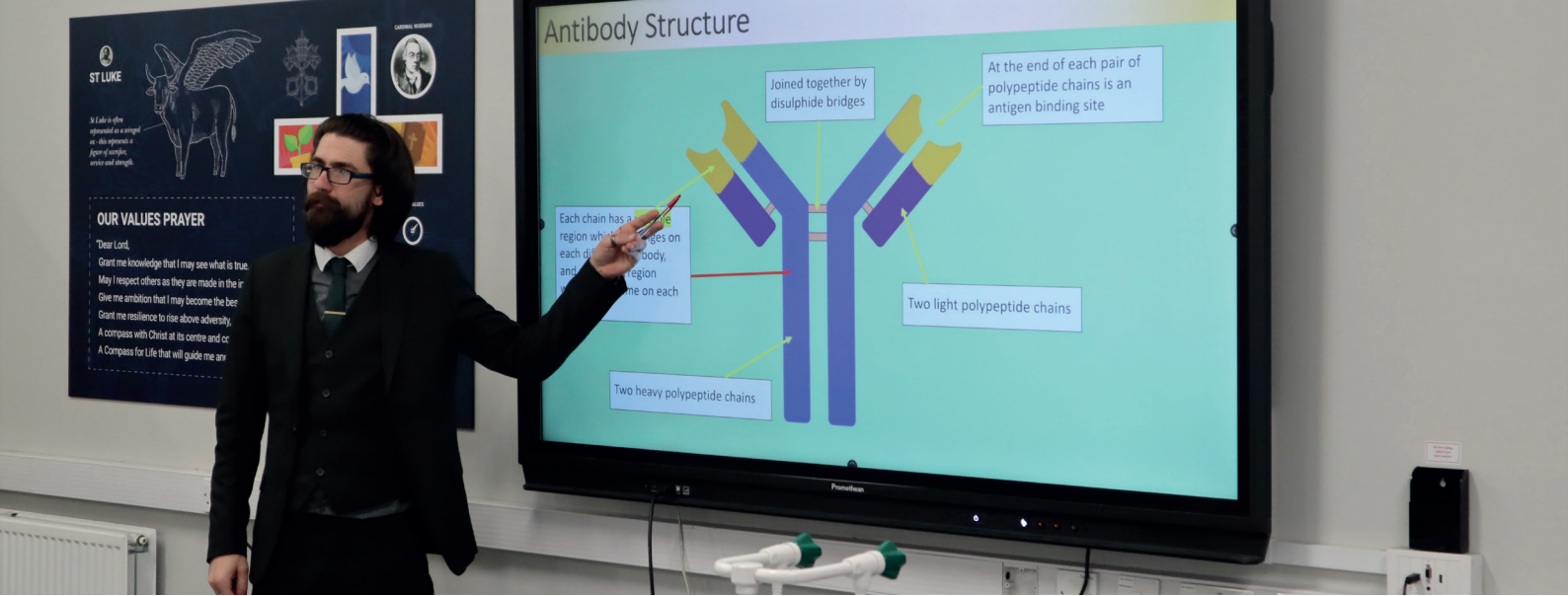
An accelerated approach

Speed of roll-out was just one part of the strategy to accelerate time to success. Alongside the introduction of the latest ActivPanel across the entire trust estate, the Romero Catholic Academy committed to Promethean's MAT Accelerator programme.

Available to all Multi-Academy Companies that invest in the ActivPanel, the MAT Accelerator improves effective adoption, embeds ActivPanel best practice, and fast-tracks educational value.

This is achieved through the development of a customised training and support programme that aligns with individual MAC needs. For the Romero Catholic Academy, the MAT Accelerator initially focused on IT staff and teacher training, as well as the creation of Digital Champions.

Hitesh explained through what this looks like in practice: “Delivered in partnership with Primary Goal, Digital Champions is supporting us to develop a new Digital Support Technician to apprenticeship standard. Crucially, this programme focuses on the ActivPanel specifically, as well as wider digital literacy, adoption of cloud technology, and online safety. This content aligns perfectly with the Romero Catholic Academy's priorities and IT roadmap.”



Mr Hermitage, head of science faculty

“We have one Digital Champion in place who works across several primary sites currently, and we plan to introduce a dedicated champion to Cardinal Wiseman. From a financial perspective, these are funded posts as we’re able to utilise the apprenticeship levy, which helps make our budgets go further while delivering greater value.” Hitesh continued.

Tailored training for targeted impact

For the teaching team, Promethean designed a flexible training programme that provided access to virtual and on-site sessions. Delivered against an agreed timeframe, this training ran simultaneously with the phased ActivPanel implementation to ensure that teachers were equipped with the essentials of using the key features from the start. “The transition from a mixed estate to the ActivPanel being used in all classrooms meant that a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach to training wouldn’t have been sufficient. Promethean invested significant time in planning the training provision to ensure that it focused on the areas that would deliver maximum impact,” explained Hitesh.

While Cardinal Wiseman was using interactive panels for the first time, the primary teachers were already familiar with some aspects of the ActivPanel, particularly the accompanying ActivInspire software that is supplied as standard.

Moreover, with cloud-computing now a key part of

the academy’s strategy, there is growing interest in Promethean’s ClassFlow, cloud-based software that connects classroom devices and supports interactive activities such as polling.

“As the ActivPanel comes with a choice of software, we’re able to give teachers the flexibility to choose which will best support pedagogy at a given time. By helping them to develop competence and confidence in using the full Promethean solution, teachers will then have the freedom to embed the technology in a way that best suits them,” explained Hitesh.

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The move to cloud-based computing has enabled the Romero Catholic Academy to add the ActivPanel to its IT network. In doing so, this has created even further flexibility and freedom - both for teachers and the IT team.

“Using Promethean panel management we can remotely manage the ActivPanel with essential updates and maintenance.” said Hitesh. “This helps to save us time travelling around sites, and instead means we can focus on driving value and making improvements. It also enables us to turn off panels at a specific time of day, which will help save energy and prolong the panel's life.

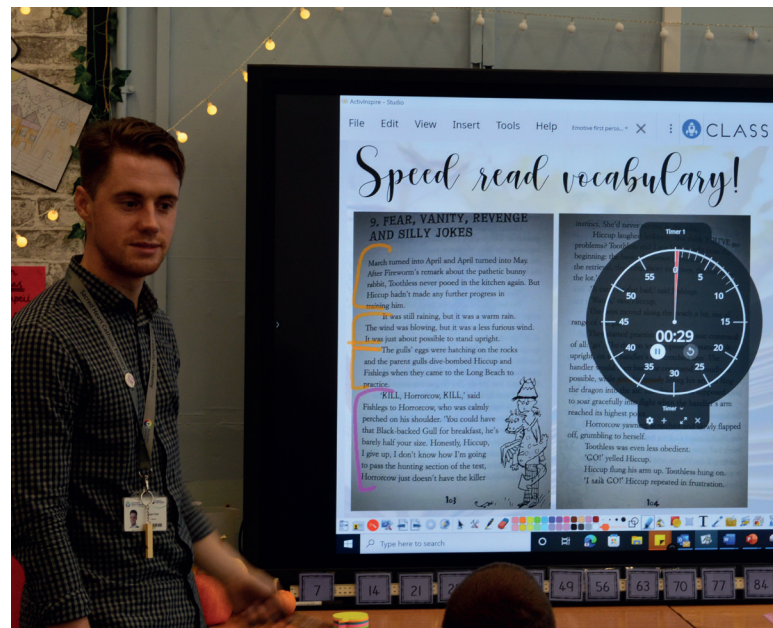
“As a fully networked solution we are confident in the security of the ActivPanel, so teachers can decide which apps they want to use and download them directly to the panel. This gives teachers more control over the technology in the classroom and the freedom to access resources they want to teach with.”

Sustainable foundation supports long-term vision

Although the Romero Catholic Academy has moved forward at pace to accelerate the ActivPanel upgrade programme, the successful installation of 200 panels is only the start of the Promethean journey.

Taking a moment to reflect on how far the multi-academy company has come in a relatively short space of time, Hitesh shared his thoughts on where the IT vision will take the Romero Catholic Academy next: “We’ve been successful in our aim to deliver consistency of teaching and drive operational efficiencies, from here we have a sustainable foundation to make more of the solutions available to us. We’ve started with the ActivPanel essentials but now want to make more of its cloud capabilities, and we will continue to work in partnership with Promethean to realise our ambitions.

“The MAT Accelerator proved a critical success factor for our MAC-wide IT strategy, giving us access to a structured programme that supported our unique objectives. It’s been an excellent springboard, but we recognise the real value lies in a long-term commitment, and we’re excited to move to the next stage of our journey in partnership with Promethean.”



Mr Finn, year 4 class teacher



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