

## Tradition and innovation combine to improve outcomes

The Priory School launches blended learning with Dell Chromebooks, deepening student engagement and enhancing access to learning.



### Customer profile



K-12 Education | United Kingdom



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Lead Practitioner for Blended Learning,  
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## Business needs

The Priory School wanted to adopt blended learning to inspire students, teachers and parents, but needed the right devices to deliver its full transformative power. It sought to roll out Chromebooks to take full advantage of the Google applications at the heart of its strategy for anywhere, anytime education.

## Business results

Survey results about the Dell Chromebooks revealed:

- 79% of staff said that students were more engaged.
- 72% of teachers felt more homework was being handed in on time.
- 97% of teachers were confident using the Chromebooks.
- 76% of students found their Chromebooks either useful or essential for English/Maths/Science.
- 50% of students rated their Chromebooks 9 or 10 out of 10 in improving their learning experience.
- 35% of Year 11s said they used Chromebooks for finishing work at school or at home.

## Solutions at a glance

- [Dell Chromebook 3100 for Education](#)
- [Dell EMC VxRail](#)
- [Dell Financial Services](#)



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K-12 education is an exciting area to teach in right now. Whilst the challenges schools face may be daunting — cost pressures, safety concerns, low student engagement and greater parent expectations — technology is helping tackle these issues. And vendors are tailoring solutions to the specific needs of educators, integrating hardware with software in devices for anytime, anyplace learning.

The Priory School, in Hertfordshire, is showing how technology in K-12 schools can have a real impact in helping students thrive. The school has more than 1,100 pupils from 11 to 18 years of age, and technology has supported classes for many years via a range of devices, such as desktops and laptops.

## The drive towards blended learning

The school wanted to take its technology strategy up a gear, following a style of education called blended learning that combines online learning with face-to-face teaching. The beauty of this solution is that it supports learning outside the classroom, including the home, minimising disruption. Moreover, this teaching style can boost pupils’ soft skills, helping them flourish in tech-driven workplaces. Says Sam Hankin, lead practitioner for blended learning at The Priory School, “Students need to know how to live well in a digital world. We owe that to them, and it’s what parents expect.”

The school’s ageing Windows-based laptop devices weren’t capable of delivering a blended learning strategy. The devices were coming to the end of their working lives, needed constant attention and were a cause of frustration for both students and teachers. Students with special education needs and disability (SEND) requirements were reluctant to use the devices as being the sole users attracted unwanted attention.

The school looked to replace the laptops with Chromebooks running the Chrome operating system. The cost-effective devices are easy to use and work seamlessly with Google Workspace for Education, which the students at The Priory School use day in and out. Hankin says, “Our aims were to enable students to become independent digital learners while allowing teachers to facilitate digital education. We needed both suitable hardware and the teaching strategies to use it appropriately.”

## Creating the right blend

With the backing of parents, The Priory School launched its Chromebook Blended Learning Scheme, which aimed to give every student a device. It tested Chromebooks from multiple vendors and found the Dell Chromebook 3100 for Education had the necessary durability in both strength and battery life to survive an average school day. “The relationship with Dell was great, and it gave us a great deal,” remembers Hankin. Despite the short time frame Dell was easily able to provide the required number of devices. “The communication was consistently excellent,” adds Hankin.

## Having the full support of teachers

When the Dell Chromebooks arrived, teachers were well prepared, having already integrated digital learning tools into their lesson plans. Says Hankin, “They were committed to developing their pedagogy to enhance learning and promote creativity using the Chromebooks.”

He continues, “All of my colleagues were amazing throughout the change. I’m really proud of what we’ve managed to achieve together and how we’ve enabled students to learn independently, creatively and collaboratively.”

## Chromebooks get top marks

Validation of student enthusiasm occurred as soon as the Chromebook Blended Learning Scheme got into full swing. The devices, in conjunction with the Chrome OS, delivered improved user experiences across a suite of Google applications. Accessibility tools like Read&Write better supported students in the SEND program, who felt more comfortable using the devices. Furthermore, if students had an issue with their Chromebooks during a class, spare devices were on hand to minimise any disruption.

## Greater engagement, better accessibility

To prove how well the devices were supporting the blended learning scheme, Hankin surveyed staff and pupils across the school. Staff stated that 79% of students were more engaged in their learning, and 72% of teachers felt more homework was being handed in on time. It was particularly gratifying to see how well staff responded to the Dell Chromebooks because it showed the work that went in beforehand to prepare them had paid off. “Ninety percent of staff strongly agreed that the Chromebooks were effective. And 97% felt confident using them in their lessons. It was great to see,” he says.

## Learning anyplace, anytime

The results also confirmed what Hankin had heard anecdotally about students using the Dell Chromebooks to study during their lunchtimes. The feedback was almost unanimous: students were taking responsibility for their own learning, allowing the school to extend education beyond classrooms.

Based on the survey, the school also learned the following:

- 76% of students said they found their Chromebook really useful or couldn’t live without it for English/Maths/Science.
- 50% of students rated their Chromebook 9 or 10 (out of 10) when asked “I think the Chromebook helps me with my learning and education.”
- 35% of Year 11s use their Chromebooks for finishing schoolwork, doing homework or revising at lunch some or most days.

## Uninterrupted learning year-round

The power of the blended learning program came to the fore just after the Dell Chromebook rollout when Hankin was moving between classrooms. He noticed an empty desk where a pupil he knew normally sat. He continues, “The student was shielding at home, but she was there virtually in the room. She was collaborating on her school work with her colleague in the classroom via Google Meet so her situation never put her at a disadvantage.”

Following the Dell Chromebook rollout, The Priory School also deployed Dell EMC VxRail hyperconverged appliances, with the support of Dell Financial Services. The project was part of an ongoing digital transformation strategy, which has also included an upgrade to the network, to future-proof the school’s IT as it moves towards a hybrid cloud strategy with workloads shared between on-premises hardware and public clouds. “VxRail provides us with the stability to deliver our long-term IT goals and continue to help pupils improve their digital skills to navigate the wider world in later life,” Hankin concludes.