



Success Story

Goodstart Early Learning: Giving Children the Best Possible Start



KEY HIGHLIGHTS

Industry

Early learning

The Challenge

Improve childcare centre operations, including enhancing IT support services and accelerating ongoing business reporting.

The Solution

Deploy NetApp® All Flash FAS (AFF) to support the Microsoft SQL Server data platform for QikKids childcare management software and financial analytics.

Benefits

- Enhances educators' access to student information
- Enables critical applications to run smoothly, without affecting other workloads
- Sustains submillisecond latency for the SQL Server database on All Flash FAS
- Supports business growth while the organisation focuses on high standards for early learning

A Great Start for Australian Children

Goodstart was created by a partnership of four of Australia's leading charities who saw the potential of early learning to transform Australia. Its mission is to provide high-quality, accessible, affordable, community-connected early learning in all their centres, and to partner and openly collaborate with the sector to drive change for the benefit of all children. Goodstart, a not-for-profit social enterprise, is Australia's largest early learning and care provider, caring for 71,500 children from 60,000 families across 643 centres in all states and territories of Australia.

The Challenge

Keeping the focus on learning

Goodstart employees use childcare management software from QikKids to perform a range of functions—from tracking attendance and accessing medical information to processing financial transactions. QikKids is at the core of Goodstart operations, including managing revenue—of which all surplus is directed back into early learning initiatives.

When the organisation upgraded its SAP environment for business analytics to

facilitate regulatory reporting, the CIO's directive was clear: keep focused on using technology to improve childcare and learning, not troubleshooting applications. At the time, however, certain reports were beginning to affect the performance of other applications.

"Our financial analysts are running increasingly complex reports," explains Chris Williams, team leader, ICT Infrastructure and Applications, at Goodstart Early Learning. "We couldn't allow storage performance to constrain our business or interfere with our day-to-day operations."

The Solution

All-flash storage for Microsoft SQL Server

To support this directive, Goodstart began looking for a flash-based storage solution for Microsoft SQL Server, the data source for SAP and QikKids. "We needed to accelerate the performance of high I/O workloads," says Williams. "If an application needs higher performance, we want the option to move the database or even the application tier to solid state drives."

An existing NetApp customer, Goodstart decided to store the databases on

NetApp AFF8020 systems. It deployed one 2-node cluster for production and another for disaster recovery and testing and development. Data is protected by using the same NetApp SnapMirror® replication software as with Goodstart's other NetApp systems. The All Flash FAS controllers run the NetApp clustered Data ONTAP® operating system, simplifying day-to-day activities for IT staff by providing a unified data management platform and by eliminating planned downtime.

"We have a true partnership with NetApp, and they've worked with us to solve previous challenges, such as scaling our virtual desktop environment," says Williams. "By selecting NetApp for an all-flash solution, we can combine the speed of flash with nondisruptive operations. We can also set storage quality-of-service policies in clustered Data ONTAP to avoid contention between workloads."

Business Benefits

Getting robust performance where it matters most

By running its hardest-working SQL Server databases and testing and development environments on NetApp All Flash FAS, Goodstart has improved its application performance. The organisation is sustaining submillisecond latency for its SQL Server database on All Flash FAS. As a result, QikKids and other critical applications can run smoothly and I/O-intensive SAP reports complete faster, without affecting the performance of other workloads.

Because contract database administrators (DBAs) no longer need to be actively involved in managing performance on a day-to-day basis, their time can be spent more strategically. "We're increasing the value of our managed services contract by making better use of our allotted DBA time," says Williams.

Boosting productivity for developers and caregivers

After seeing the increased performance in its production systems, Goodstart moved its entire testing and development environment for QikKids to NetApp All Flash FAS. Developers can now bring new application features into production faster, helping the staff to offer individualised services to families who are engaged in Goodstart's services.

"Our development and QA teams no longer experience long wait times during testing," says Williams. "They can accelerate time to market for new customisation and integration of QikKids into our organisation."

Maintaining a high standard of excellence

With NetApp All Flash FAS, Goodstart is continuing its focus on high-quality outcomes. Any workload that requires higher performance can simply be moved to flash storage. And if Goodstart wants to expand to the cloud in the future, NetApp's vision for a Data Fabric will deliver the right level of application performance and data management wherever it's needed most.

SOLUTION COMPONENTS

NetApp Products

NetApp AFF8020 systems

NetApp clustered Data ONTAP 8.3

NetApp Snapshot® and SnapRestore® technologies

NetApp SnapMirror

Environment

Applications: SAP HANA, QikKids childcare management software, Citrix user profiles or login performance

Database: Microsoft SQL Server 2012, 2008

Server platform: Microsoft Windows Server, Hyper-V

Protocols

iSCSI



Leading organizations worldwide count on NetApp for software, systems and services to manage and store their data. Customers value our teamwork, expertise and passion for helping them succeed now and into the future.

www.netapp.com

© 2016 NetApp, Inc. All rights reserved. No portions of this document may be reproduced without prior written consent of NetApp, Inc. Specifications are subject to change without notice. NetApp, the NetApp logo, Data ONTAP, SnapMirror, SnapRestore, and Snapshot are trademarks or registered trademarks of NetApp, Inc. in the United States and/or other countries. All other brands or products are trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective holders and should be treated as such. A current list of NetApp trademarks is available on the web at www.netapp.com/us/legal/netapptmlist.aspx. CSS-6880-0216

Follow us on:

