

# Digital Learning Plan – Updated September 2020

## St Brigid's NS, Greystones, Co Wicklow

### 1. Introduction

This document records the outcomes of our current digital learning plan, including targets and the actions we will implement to meet the targets.

**1.1 School Details:** St. Brigid's National School is a vertical co-educational primary school in the town of Greystones. Currently there are 512 students on roll. There are 19 Class Teachers, 6 Special Education Teachers and our Principal. We also have 5 SNAs. Significantly we have a very active Parents' Association Digital Learning Group.

The School's Digital Learning Team consist of School Staff: Principal, Deputy Principal, Assistant Principal, Postholder whose role includes joint responsibility for technology in the school and two parents who also belong to the Parents' Association Digital and ICT Committee.

This Parents' Committee is divided into two key subcommittees.

- One subcommittee supports the technical aspects of implementing a school laptop management plan in conjunction with the staff mentioned above.
- The other is involved in the provision of computer skills and educational training (internet safety, digital literacy, Powerpoint, Word etc. in consultation with the staff named above).

Currently we have a bank of 33 laptops and a laptop caddy and this is being added to. With the purchase of SDD cards the Parents Association subcommittee that supports the technical aspects of implementing a school laptop management plan has reconditioned a portion of these laptops which in turn were donated, and are in the process are acquiring and reconditioning more. Each teacher has their own desktop or laptop and all classrooms have an interactive whiteboard.

Our current SSE focus is tables, handwriting and SPHE. Our school website includes Symbaloo webmixes for

Learning Tables <https://www.saintbrigidsgreystones.ie/useful-links/links-to-learn-tables/>

**1.2 School Vision:** As well as being an important educational resource, the ability to use IT effectively is a vital life skill in modern society. We aim to enable students and teachers, in so far as is practical, to be confident and effective users of IT. To this end we envisage that all participants would be active and learning. That the students have opportunities to be 'hands on' rather than observers is key to this. We note research which said

*'The range of online activities engaged in by 9-16 year olds in Ireland is substantially below European norms leaving many opportunities unexplored.*

*The 'ladder of opportunities' is a hypothesized sequence of activities through which children progress*

*beginning with information seeking, to interactive communication and gaming, to more creative and participative uses and activities... Some 57% of young people don't go beyond the second step of a 'ladder of opportunities'.*

*Cluster analysis shows that 'a low use, low risk' pattern to be the most prominent followed by a "moderate-use, entertainment and communication oriented" use of the internet.' EUKidsOnline (2014)' <https://www.webwise.ie/news/irish-children-show-low-levels-of-digital-literacy/>*

As we observe the current popularity of online games like Fortnite, we have no reason to believe that has changed. We would like students to be creators of content rather than consumers. We aspire to this being a 'whole school' initiative and to involve parents as partners. Teachers agree they will have to upskill in order to support such an initiative.

### **1.3 Brief account of the use of digital technologies in the school to date:**

- a) All classrooms have a SMARTboard and a desktop computer with internet access.
- b) We have laptop caddy and 33 laptops at the moment in total.
- c) A number of SEN students use laptops or i-Pads to support their learning.
- d) The school broadband is comprised of a combination of wired and wireless service.
- e) We have a
  - school website [www.saintbrigidsgreystones.ie](http://www.saintbrigidsgreystones.ie)
  - local history blog <http://thegreystones.edublogs.org/>
  - and a Green Schools blog <http://stbrigidsgreenschools.edublogs.org/category/litter-and-waste/>
- f) Aladdin to record student data, attendance and assessment results.
- g) "Text a Parent" software is used to contact parents.
- h) Payments are received electronically via Way2Pay and payments are made electronically via P2P system.

### **A survey of teachers found that currently teachers use technology for things like;**

1. Accessing 'Aladdin' to record student data, attendance and assessment results. Using the online noticeboard on 'Aladdin'; reading the information on there
2. For the Smartboard & Interactive Whiteboard (IWB) publisher content in Irish, English&Maths
3. Using bought software e.g. Jolly Phonics
4. IWB online educational games and activities particularly in Maths
5. Listening to audio files in Religion, Irish etc.
6. Watching educational powerpoint and video content
7. Using the online behavioural chart from Classroom Dojo <https://www.classdojo.com>
8. Using the exercise site 'Go Noodle' <https://www.gonoodle.com/>
9. Teacher Planning: word processing
10. Engaging with the 'Wordsworth' programme for reading. ('the flipped classroom' approach <https://wordsworthlearning.com/blog/wordsworthlearning-flipped-classroom/>)
11. Subscribing to sites like the Teaching Art website <http://www.deepspacesparkle.com/>
12. Blogging: Some teachers have had class blogs and student blogs. Two class teachers have participated in the annual global initiative 'Student Blogging Challenge' over ten weeks.

13. Watching RTE 2 Children's News Today if there is a 'big' story in the news e.g. 1916 commemorations
14. Creating slideshows of the children's art for the school website using <https://animoto.com/education/classroom>
15. Some teachers have tried Mystery Skype with other classes in Ireland and abroad.
16. A recent addition around the school is a number of QR codes on display for parents so that they can click into the school website on their iphones while waiting in the yard or school hall. 6th classes did a project for the La Touche Legacy 'Festival of History' in September 2017 and QR codes were used to link our audience to the history blog

### **Some students in turn have**

1. Used educational software like 'Wordshark.'
2. Use the Symbaloo webmixes on the school website to work independently on Maths or English during the time they are timetabled to have laptops e.g. <https://www.saintbrigidsgreystones.ie/useful-links/senior-webmix/>
3. Improved their comprehension using Readtheory.org <http://www.readtheory.org/>
4. Taken part in the Khan Academy 'Learn Storm' competition in Maths. Sadly that is not running this year. However students can use Khan Academy to learn maths. [www.khanacademy.org](http://www.khanacademy.org)
5. Learned how code; to programme; to use 'Scratch' and Code.org <https://code.org/>
6. Done word processing; typing up their own writing online and some blogging.
7. Learned how to present projects as Powerpoints (many classes from 3rd up – with the help of Parents' Association Digital & ICT Committee). Prezi is also used for this purpose <https://prezi.com/>
8. Taking care online. Observing online safety, etiquette and copyright.

Our work now in school is to continue to continue to develop our own skills as teachers and giving children these opportunities to engage with technology at a younger age in classes Junior Infants to First where we plan to introduce iPad. Again teachers will need to upskill.

Some skills we would like the children (and staff) to learn how to use include

1. take photos on digital camera, upload them and make Animoto or Photopeach slideshows.
2. use Class 2.0 Tools; digital tools and widgets; Storybird.com, Timetoast.com, Padlet, Tagxedo.com
3. make podcasts (sound recordings) using Audioboo or Audacity
4. make stop motion animations, and lego robotics (this would require an additional investment, or sponsorship)
5. engage with 'makey makey'; a form of engineering that turns everyday objects into touchpads and combines them with the internet. (However once again this would require an investment).
6. Buy a set of six iPads, so as to introduce this technology ; initially from infant classes to 1st – for use in 'station teaching'.

## **2. The focus of this Digital Learning Plan**

In preparing our application for the Digital School of Distinction Award we used the Self Evaluation tool on the Digital Schools website. We started this process in 2015. We took our time because we wanted our application to be authentic and to really reflect how technology was used in the school.

Over time the staff on the Digital School Team observed that while there was 'Leadership and Vision' and 'Resources and Infrastructure', The area 'Professional Development' was impacting on improvement needed in integrating 'ICT in the Curriculum' and the School's ICT Culture.

In the Summer Term 2017 we had our first meeting with members of the Parents' Association with an interest in Digital Learning. They are currently playing a significant role in supporting teachers upskilling the the area of technology.

-We continued to use the Self Evaluation tool on the Digital Schools website.

-We also evaluated our progress regularly at Staff Meetings, conducted a survey on Aladdin asking teachers 'How do you use technology in the classroom'

-and conducted a SWOT analysis reflecting on our strengths and where we needed to apply ourselves.

Though we found we were making some progress, as a staff we often came up against limitations on account of a percentage of the teachers having lack of confidence in themselves, and their perceived lack of skills in the area of technology. Additionally in staff meetings the 'overcrowded curriculum' and lack of time was cited in a SWOT analysis as a drawback to the use of IT in the classroom.

In the light of an analysis of the evidence gathered we decided that our focus at present should be staff development.

## **2.1 The dimensions and domains from the Digital Learning Framework being selected:**

**Dimension:** Teaching

**Learning Domain:** Individual Teacher practice

## **2.2 The standards and statements from the Digital Learning Framework being selected:**

**Domain:** Teachers' Individual Practice

**Standards:**

-The teacher has the requisite subject knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and classroom management skills Teachers use a range of digital technologies to design learning and assessment activities for their pupils.

-Teachers design or adapt learning experiences that incorporate digital technologies and make learning activities relevant and meaningful to support pupils' learning.

-When teachers use digital learning activities, they evaluate their effectiveness, and revise their teaching strategies accordingly.

### **2.3. These are a summary of our strengths with regards digital learning**

-All parties (staff, students and parents) are engaged, motivated and interested in digital learning

-WIFI is installed and is much more reliable than the broadband we had previously

-Currently classes from 2nd class up can be timetabled for a 1:1 device (laptop) opportunity

– Some students in the school are relatively proficient in using digital technology

-Most students are very motivated to learn using technology

-A proportion of the teachers report feeling 'confident and competent' when teaching technology

-The Parents' Association ICT & Digital Committee have a clear vision of what IT in the school should look like in terms of equipment, teaching, learning and the opportunities the children should have.

-Excellent technical support from a subcommittee of the Parents' Association's ICT & Digital Committee troubleshooting with day to day issues, and sourcing and reconditioning laptops

-Equally solid support from the other subcommittee of the ICT & Digital Committee in the area of teaching computer skills

-Opportunities presented for learning with the week long visits from a group of TY students each term

-Support from the BOM who are funding for purchases needed and have offered to fund EPV courses in the area of IT.

### **2.4 This is what we are going to focus on to improve our digital learning practice further**

-Staff will continue to engage in CPD in order to facilitate a greater use of digital technologies by pupils

-Staff meetings will include a section on Digital Learning

-We will extend peer support for staff members to increase competence and confidence in embedding digital technologies in teaching, learning and assessment.

-Staff will share technologies and websites that they have found useful on Aladdin

-Useful websites will continue to be shared on the Symbaloo websites on the school website

e.g. [Useful Class Tools](#)

[Junior Webmix](#)

More details of the Digital Plan for St. Brigid's:

- The specific **targets** for improvement we have set
- The **actions** we will implement to achieve these
- **Who is responsible** for implementing, monitoring and reviewing our improvement plan
- How we will measure **progress** and check **outcomes** (criteria for success)

can be downloaded by clicking on this link: [Summary-of-Digital-Learning-Plan](#)

#### **UPDATE 26th September 2020**

With the school closure on account of COVID teachers found themselves engaging in Remote Learning. Staff engaged in CPD in order to facilitate this. In particular they upskilled in the use of the platforms they were using: Seesaw, Class Dojo and Google Classroom.

Planning for the possibility that pods or bubbles may be learning from home in the future on account of COVID, teachers continue to upskill, particularly in the use of the platforms: learning to do more with them and keeping up with the improvements on these platforms.

Staff meetings have included discussion about using technology to teach remotely.

Staff supported each other to increase competence and confidence in embedding digital technologies in teaching, learning and assessment.

Staff shared technologies and websites that they have found useful on Aladdin

Useful websites were added to the Symbaloo websites on the school website

e.g. Useful Class Tools

Junior Webmix