

EDUCATION & YOUTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Thursday 19 th March 2020
Report Subject	Digital Projects in Schools
Cabinet Member	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education
Report Author	Chief Officer (Education and Youth)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is to provide members with an overview of Digital Projects being implemented in schools across Flintshire. It provides an update on how the local authority and the regional school improvement service GwE are supporting schools in being able to meet the requirements of the digital competency framework and preparing for the new curriculum.

This report also demonstrates how the work being undertaken with schools supports the high level actions in the Council's Digital Strategy 'Digital Flintshire – Supporting a Modern & Efficient Council'.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That members receive the report on Digital Projects within Flintshire schools and acknowledge the significant investment by Welsh Government in school IT infrastructure.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING DIGITAL LEARNING
1.01	The Digital Competence Framework (DCF) is the first element of the new curriculum to be made available.
1.02	<p>Digital competence is the set of skills, knowledge and attitudes that enable the confident, creative and critical use of technologies and systems. It is essential for learners if they are to be informed, capable and have the potential to be successful in today's society.</p> <p>Digital competence is one of three cross- curricular responsibilities, alongside literacy and numeracy. It focuses on developing digital skills which can be applied to a wide range of subjects and that are transferrable to the world of work.</p> <p>The DCF has been developed to be inclusive of all learners aged 3- 16 plus. It comprises four high level strands of Citizenship, Interacting and Collaborating, Producing and Data and Computational Thinking. Each strand is subdivided into elements which, in turn, are supported by classroom task ideas.</p> <p>From September 2022, settings and schools will be delivering digital competence on a cross-curricular basis. They will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• have embedded digital competence across the school curriculum• continue to adapt existing digital competence approaches to the new curriculum• continue to review and refine their approach to digital competence.
1.03	The Council, along with the regional school improvement service (GwE) is committed to supporting schools in the full integration of the DCF.
1.04	<p>In July 2019 the Welsh Government announced additional funding of £50 million as part of the Hwb transformation programme across Wales, with a focus on improving the use of digital technology for teaching and learning in schools. This will help schools comply with the Hwb programme's education digital standards.</p> <p>These digital standards are based around best practice and cover the whole school infrastructure and devices. They have been developed in partnership with Welsh Government and the society of Information Technology Managers in Wales to standardise and future proof school infrastructures.</p> <p>Funding will be allocated to each Council against agreed waves of eligible spend. Work must be fully completed within the local authority and meet the relevant digital standards before work may begin on the next wave. These funding waves are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Core Infrastructure• Wired and Wireless Networking• Servers• End User Devices

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational Software • Teaching and learning tools • Curriculum Delivery and support <p>Flintshire's total grant allocation for 2019 -2020 is £2,547,335.</p>
1.05	<p>All schools in Flintshire have access to Hwb. This is the digital platform for learning and teaching in Wales. Hwb provides users with access to a range of centrally- funded, bilingual, digital tools and resources. It is the Welsh Government's strategic digital channel to support the delivery of the curriculum in Wales. Hwb provides access to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Curriculum for Wales 2022 • professional learning information • bilingual resources • online safety materials <p>and Hwb users with login also have access to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a range of centrally funded tools to help practitioners create and share resources • a professional network • Google for Education • Microsoft Office 365
1.06	<p>The plan "Cracking the Code" was launched by the Welsh Government in June 2017. This is a four year commitment to developing coding opportunities within schools. Schools have been encouraged to set up code clubs where learners come together either during curriculum time, break or after school to learn how to code through exciting, fun and inclusive methods and experiences. GwE supports regional coding clubs by providing guidance and challenges to schools in partnership with Techno-camps, Code Club Wales, Bangor University and Lead Coding schools.</p>
1.07	<p>GwE have implemented a cluster support model across the region. Each cluster has appointed a digital facilitator to represent the cluster and work with the digital leads in each of the cluster schools to plan and implement improvement in digital learning.</p>
1.08	<p>360 Degree Safe Cymru is a tool that enables schools to evaluate and review their online safety policy and practice.</p>

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	<p>The Council commissions its school improvement services through GwE via an Inter-Authority Agreement with the other North Wales councils. This sets the value of the financial contribution from Flintshire which can be reviewed every three years.</p>

2.02	As part of the grant terms and conditions for the Hwb transformation programme each council has made a commitment in terms of the sustainability of funding for the infrastructure investment. This will be factored into the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.
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3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT
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3.01	Schools do not make best use of the support from the Regional Improvement Service (GwE) or the Council to ensure the best outcomes for their learners is a risk identified in the Council Improvement Plan. This is mitigated against by the Challenge and Support Programme, the regular interaction between senior LA and GwE officers and through the School Performance Monitoring Group.
3.02	Equalities Impact – The 2019 inspection of Flintshire's education services undertaken by Estyn recognised good practice in provision for pupils' wellbeing and additional learning needs. This continues to be reflected in Flintshire's values, strategy, provision and outcomes.

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
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4.01	Engagement with key stakeholders for the Hwb Infrastructure including Presentations to Education Directorate Management Team, the Schools Strategic & Operational ICT Steering Group and Primary and Secondary Headteacher Federations. Updates continue to be provided to all headteachers through regular correspondence as the project develops.
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5.00	APPENDICES
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5.01	None.
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6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
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6.01	Digital Competence Framework Guidance (June 2018). This document can be accessed from the Hwb website at hwb.gov.wales
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7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
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7.01	Contact Officer: Vicky Barlow, Senior Manager- School Improvement Telephone: 01352 704019 E-mail: vicky.barlow@flintshire.gov.uk
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8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	<p>Digital competence – the set of skills, knowledge and attitudes to enable the confident, creative and critical use of technologies and systems.</p> <p>Digital learning – the process of embedding digital technology to support learning.</p> <p>Digital Competence Framework (DCF) – a non- statutory framework outlining progression in digital competence for 3 to 16 year olds for the following strands:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital Citizenship • Interaction and collaboration • Production • Data and computational thinking <p>Information and Communication Technology (ICT) – a subject in curriculum 2008 which outlines statutory requirements to develop learners' ability in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication • Data Handling • Modelling <p>Code – code is what makes it possible for us to create computer software, apps and websites. Computer code is a set of rules or instructions. It is made up of words and numbers and when put in the right order, will tell a computer what you want it to do.</p> <p>Hwb - the digital platform for learning and teaching in Wales.</p>