Milngavie Primary School and Early Learning

and Childcare Centre - Digital Strategy

September 2022

Introduction and Aims

This digital policy paper aims to set out the background to digital learning and teaching within Milngavie Primary School by looking at the supporting documents from the Scottish Government and East Dunbartonshire Council and explaining how the use of Digital Learning can enhance learning and teaching in all areas of the curriculum and raise attainment for all our learners.

We are committed to investing in digital technology in all areas, including hardware and software, to ensure that our learners have access to the most recent innovations in digital technology. This will guarantee that they have the essential skills they will need for life and work.

Rationale

Scottish Government

In 2015 the Scottish Government commissioned an independent review, Literature Review on the Impact of Digital Technology on Learning and Teaching, with specific focus on five educational priorities:

1. raising attainment;

2. tackling inequalities and promoting inclusion

3. improving transitions into employment

4. enhancing parental engagement

5. improving the efficiency of the education system.

(Enhancing Learning and Teaching Through the use of Digital Technology; 2016)

The conclusion of this review was that, with sufficient access to resources and training for educators in Digital Learning, digital technology can have a positive impact on all five areas with evidence that digital technology supports raising attainment in Maths, Science and Literacy and can assist some learners in overcoming challenges as well as improving employability skills. This is particularly

important when the digital economy is thriving within Scotland's economy. In 2016, 82,700 people worked in digital jobs in Scotland (Annual Population Survey, Jan 2015–Dec 2015). Almost every job and industry in Scotland now uses some form of digital technology.
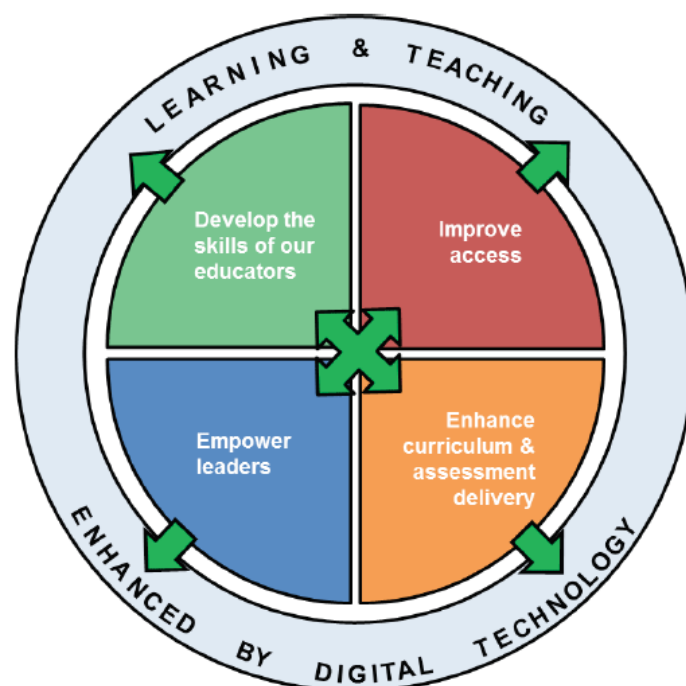
In 2016, following on from this review, the Scottish Government published its Digital Learning strategy paper; Enhancing Learning and Teaching Through the use of Digital Technology.

John Swinney, Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills (2016 – 2021) introduced the strategy by saying:

Digital technology can make a significant contribution. Where our educators are supported through professional development, resources and leadership, digital technology can enrich learning and teaching, help to raise levels of attainment and close the attainment gap. The skilful deployment of digital technology in our schools and early learning settings will also ensure our learners develop a level of general and specialist digital skills that are so vital for learning, life and work in an increasingly digitised world. I want to unlock this potential – to the benefit of the individuals, Scottish economy and society as a whole.
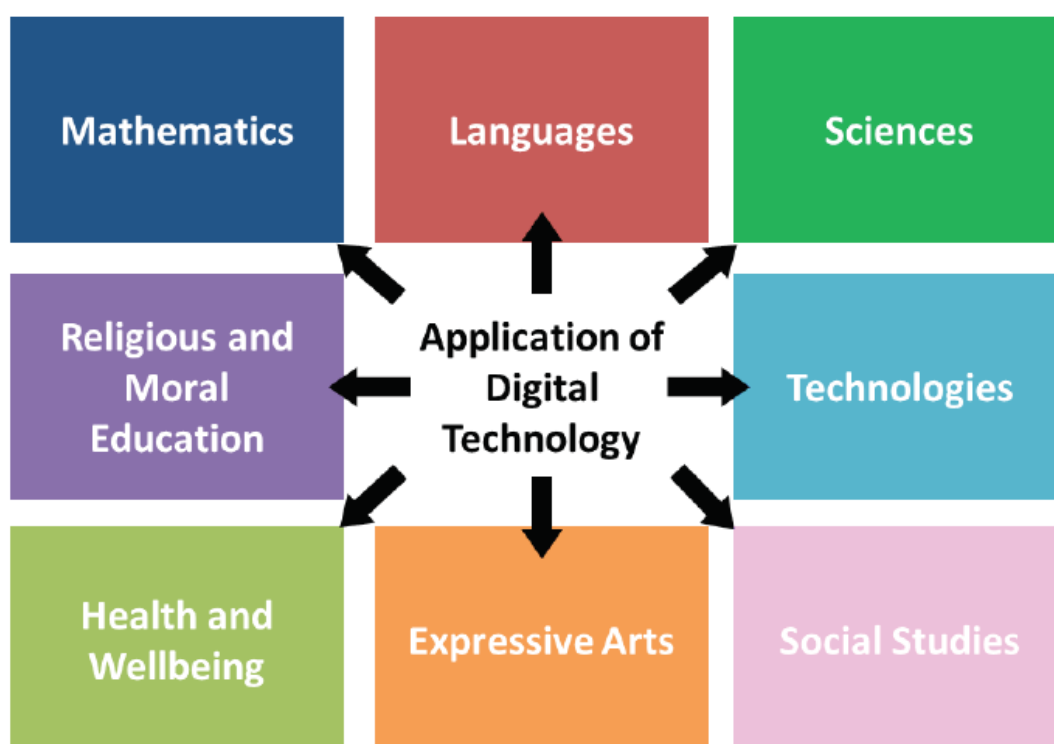
The strategy is structured around four key areas:

- The skills of our educators
- Access to technology
- Curriculum and assessment
- leadership

Through these four areas the Scottish Government believes that digital technology can make substantial contributions to raising attainment and achieving equality by enhancing learning and teaching, providing increased digital skills and improving educational outcomes.

The strategy paper points out that local authorities, schools and early learning and childcare establishments should have the independence to use digital technology in a way which best supports their own local context. It states *"It is only when digital technology finds a place in all curriculum areas that our learners will be able to fully benefit from an education enhanced by digital technology."*

Developing the skills of educators can be achieved by sharing practice with both staff and students; engaging parents and carers; and providing career-long CPD.

Access can be improved by ensuring that local authorities provide appropriate digital technology for teaching and learning and that all learners, including those with additional support needs, are able to access digital technology. It is also important to ensure that all learners are aware of online safety at all times.

Digital technology should be one of the core resources when planning and delivering Curriculum for Excellence and the appropriate assessments necessary. Learners should have a variety of opportunities to develop their digital skills in all areas of the curriculum.

To empower leaders, school leaders should identify staff with existing skills in digital technology and learning and ensure their knowledge is shared with senior leaders; cyber resilience and internet safety

should be at the heart of all digital technology use, by staff and learners; and parents should be involved in discussions around the use of digital technology.

In April 2021, the Scottish Government published A Changing Nation: How Scotland Will Thrive in a Digital World. Education was a main component of this document. Again, it was highlighted that basic digital skills are needed for almost every job, from farming to car mechanics, and that the level of skills and understanding in this area must increase rapidly. It is the ambition of the Scottish Government to teach digital skills at the earliest possible stage of the curriculum.

East Dunbartonshire Council

In 2019 East Dunbartonshire Council published a Digital Learning document, East Dunbartonshire Digital Strategy 2019-2024. Here they called the way digital technology was rapidly changing the Fourth Industrial Revolution, stating that digital technology has changed the way we live and work.

The Council has developed a Digital Learning and Teaching Strategy that sets out how Education will enhance learning and teaching using digital technology. As part of the actions to deliver the foundations outcomes, it states the intention to upgrade the capacity of school networks and to expand school Wi-Fi networks. The Council's strategy is based on the National Digital Learning and Teaching Strategy with four key areas:

- skills of our educators
- access to technology
- curriculum
- assessment and leadership

The need for blended and remote learning in schools from March 2020 has led to the prioritisation of improvements in Digital Learning at both authority and school level. Published in January 2021, East Dunbartonshire Council's Education Service Guidance for Blended and Remote Learning in Schools including Digital Learning includes the following targets:

- Develop the skills and confidence of education staff in the appropriate and effective use of digital technology in teaching and learning.
- Develop the skills and confidence of pupils in the appropriate and effective use of digital technology in learning, life and work

These will be achieved at an authority level through the Digital Learning Community, which was set up prior to remote and blended learning but which became a focus for support during this time, and through cluster working encouraging a support network and sharing best practice across the authority. This has been initiated with Promethean Train the Trainer course. Professional learning opportunities have been

provided for all staff to ensure their digital literacy meets the requirements of the GTCS. Staff are also encouraged to participate in safeguarding and cyber security training where appropriate.

At a school level, schools are encouraged to ensure that digital learning is clearly detailed on the School Recovery Plan and to provide all learners with access to GLOW and Teams. Staff are encouraged to use the Digital Learning Community and the role of Digital Leader should be promoted.

<u>Milngavie Primary School</u>

At Milngavie Primary School, the four key areas highlighted by both the Scottish Government and East Dunbartonshire Council are very much at the heart of our Digital Learning.

- skills of our educators
- access to technology
- curriculum
- assessment and leadership

Our Digital Staff

Our Digital Learning Leader has taken part in many courses over recent years including Promethean's Train the Trainer course and various Google and Microsoft courses, such as Microsoft Innovative Educator. Our Digital Learning Leader is a Promethean Certified Trainer. This has led to in house training to improve the use of Activpanels which has in turn improved learning and teaching within the classroom.

Training for staff is available through Promethean website, as well as through Teams: Education Scotland Digital Team and EDC Digital Learning Community. Individually staff have completed many of these online courses to improve their digital teaching skills as part of their Continuous Professional Development. All teaching staff have also completed training in Marty the Robot, and Digital Learning Training will continue during in-service days and in twilight sessions held in school.

All staff have access to the EDC Digital Learning Community through Teams. This is regularly checked by the Digital Learning Leader and relevant information on new technology and courses is shared through the Milngavie Primary School Teams.

More recently the Digital Learning Leader has engaged in courses for Micro:bits and has completed individual research into the use of Code Club. Staff training on Micro:bit will be held during in-service days and in twilight sessions held in school.

Our Digital Learners

There are many ways in which our learners are supported in their digital learning within the school and at home. Every stage has a curriculum planner which shows clear progression. Each planner incorporates

digital skills as well as using technology to enhance and reinforce learning in other curricular areas. The role of the Digital Learning Leader includes teaching the Digital skills within the planner. These are then reinforced by class teachers in relevant, cross-curricular areas. Learners in all stages have Glow log ins which can be used for communication with parents and carers through Teams as well as accessing emails further up the school. This contributes to learning in the wider community such as P7 Spanish pen pals. We also use Learning Journals for communication with parents on a regular basis.

Children in P5-7 are engaged in My World of Work which involves several activities over the three years to encourage pupils to think about the world of work beyond school. To reinforce the world of work ethos pupils in Primary 7 are encouraged to apply for a role as a Pupil Digital Leader. This involves completing an application form and being interviewed for the role. Pupil Digital Leaders take part in many activities, including supporting the Digital Learning Leader, supporting pupils and staff in new learning, updating technology and ensuring internet safety.

All pupils have access to iPads and laptops throughout the week to learn both digital skills and to enhance and reinforce learning in other curricular areas. Digital Learning sessions are timetabled several times per week as well as teachers having access to class laptops, computers, Promethean Activpanels and class iPads.

Pupils participate in Safer Internet Day activities, and online safety and cyber resilience is a key feature of our digital learning programme. The e-safety message is reinforced by Police Scotland and/or class teachers and learners participate in Thinkuknow education (from CEOP - UK organisation that protects children online and offline).

Assistive technology is available to support ASN pupils, including the use of laptops and iPads for Word Processing, Immersive Reader, Text to Speech, Seeing Ear, Clicker and many more. Reader pens are used for dyslexic pupils and iPads are used to support pupils with challenges in reading, through Rapid Readers. A 'Wheel of Apps' is available for teachers to help them source appropriate apps that may support learners with Dyslexia/Reading & Writing difficulties.

Our Digital School

Within the school setting we constantly strive to provide the best, most up to date resources for our learners and teachers. Digital Learning is integral to the School Improvement Plan, covering many areas, such as the introduction of Micro:bit and Marty the Robot, access to technology to improve literacy and staff training.

New Activpanels have been installed in every class since 2016. Both upper and infant buildings have an iPad trolley and a separate laptop trolley available for teachers to use with their classes. These are fully timetabled and used in an interdisciplinary way. An additional laptop area is also available in the upper school building.

Internet Safety and Cyber Resilience are always in the forefront of our minds when allowing learners to access digital resources. We ensure all parents have given permission for their children to access the internet through the use of East Dunbartonshire Council's School Internet and Email Permission form. All Staff also sign East Dunbartonshire Council's Compliance with Information Security Policies form.

Keeping up to date with the latest software is important within our digital school. Activinspire software has been updated in 2022 on all desktops accessing an Activpanel. Software has been purchased to support other curricular areas including modern languages. Every class also has access to software purchased by East Dunbartonshire Council, such as Nelson Thorne maths, Heinemann RLPS, Roamer World and Bee-bot 2. Doorway Speller is an online resource used throughout the school to enhance common word knowledge and improve spelling.

Interactive learning engages all our learners and brings new skills in coding to even our youngest learners. Primary 1-3 regularly use Bee-bots to learn coding and to enhance other curricular areas, such as Maps and Mapping in Primary 3. The knowledge and understanding of coding through Bee-bots is also enhanced in Primary 2 and Primary 3 through the use of the Bee-bot app on the iPads and the Bee-bot 2 software available on the laptops. For our older learners, Marty the Robot has recently been introduced to Primary 4-7. This interactive robot has a variety of ways in which coding can be learned through a progressive series of lesson plans. To prepare the learners for Marty the Robot, they learn how to use the ScratchJr app in Primary 3 and Scratch coding from Primary 4. The school has also received Micro:bits which are being used in P4-7 to engage in coding.

The school is a member of the Code Club and pupils enjoy afterschool activities in coding to reinforce their learning within the class.

Equipment within Our Digital School

Equipment is organised to enable staff and learners in both the infant and upper buildings to have easy access to resources.

We currently have the following equipment:

- 1 x infant i-pad trolley (25 i-pads)
- 1 x upper I-pad trolley (27 i-pads)
- 1 x infant laptop trolley (15 laptops)
- 1 x upper laptop trolley (25 laptops)
- 1 x upper school laptop area (14 laptops)
- 10 x ASN laptops
- 1 x ASN i-pad
- Every classroom has an Interactive Whiteboard

- Every classroom has at least one desktop computer and at least one laptop
- Every classroom has a call i-pad
- Every classroom has a HUE visualiser
- Both assembly halls have a computer projector
- 6 Bee-Bots
- 15 Marty the Robots
- 20 Micro:bits
- Music has one i-pad
- 35 Headsets

Our Digital Early Years Centre

Focus on Digital Learning starts in the Early Years Centre where children have access to a computer station and Bee-bots. Children are encouraged to draw pictures on the Activpanel, which can be saved and used as a record of their achievements. This early use of graphics is vital for progress within the school when using paint programmes and later the manipulation of graphics in Word, Power Point and movie making. A new Activpanel has been installed and staff are participating in training to ensure this is an interactive resource. All staff have their own iPads and communication with parents, which is crucial at this stage, is made easier by their use through Learning Journals.

Conclusion

Within our school community we consistently strive to improve access to Digital Learning, through the purchase of new hardware and software and authority wide updates. Staff continue to improve their digital skills through training available online and in person and are supported in their learning to build on their confidence. This leads to more effective and innovative teaching which in turn encourages the learners to thrive in their learning. Digital Learning is an ongoing process which is continually changing and adapting to the needs of the school, teachers and learners.

Documents used

Literature Review on the Impact of Digital Technology on Learning and Teaching (Scottish Government, 2015)

Enhancing Learning and Teaching Through the use of Digital Technology (Scottish Government, 2016)

A Changing Nation: How Scotland Will Thrive in a Digital World (Scottish Governent, 2021)

East Dunbartonshire Digital Strategy 2019-2024 (East Dunbartonshire Council, 2019)

East Dunbartonshire Council's Education Service Guidance for Blended and Remote Learning in Schools (East Dunbartonshire Council, 2021)