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Best practice case study

Integrating ICT

With a clear vision of how technology can enhance the classroom experience, **Casllwchwr Primary School** in Swansea has embedded ICT into all aspects of school life.

Handheld IT devices have become as fundamental to everyday work as pen and paper.

Learners and staff have embraced a variety of the latest technology to enhance the learning experience, develop skills, improve communication and engage parents/carers.

iPods and iPads are used as part of literacy, and learners create their own films as part of Welsh lessons.

Learners use technology to check their work, research, find the meanings of new words and check spelling. By recording their own work and uploading to the school's website, learners are also contributing to the development of new learning resources.

Learners are able to work on devices and then e-mail learning to the class accounts, save and print their finished product.

Using a variety of sources including sponsorship and grants, Casllwchwr has invested in Apple technology but also use PCs to ensure learners are engaged with different platforms.

The school has invested in 18 iPod touch devices which are used for all sorts of tasks across the curriculum as well as cameras and video cameras.

They plan to start allowing learners to bring their own iPods and iPads into school to aid learning. They have also started a parents/carers training club to allow them to learn alongside each other.

At Casllwchwr, they have recognised that leadership is a crucial consideration when introducing new technology. An E-learning Manager has been appointed to oversee the use of technology and experiment with ICT to find new ways to enhance teaching.

Learners are involved through their Apple Ambassador Scheme. Each Ambassador helps maintain equipment, mentor younger learners on new apps and even train new members of staff on the technology.

Codi Safonau Ysgolion
Raising School Standards

Headteacher, Simon Pridham, outlines six critical areas that schools need to plan and consider when interested in introducing the new technology:

- leadership
- cost
- network function
- security
- philosophical frameworks
- pedagogy.

He said:

“As with all technological initiatives, the goal is not simply to deploy the technology, but to harness its power to change or improve the environment in which it is used. At Casllwchwr we believe that introducing mobile technology will fundamentally alter the learning environment, providing learners with the opportunity to learn twenty-first century skills to be productive and informed citizens and it allows staff to completely engage with our learners ‘in their world’, as it were.”

But simply acquiring the latest hardware and software is not enough to improve learners' outcomes. Mr Pridham added:

“We consistently tell colleagues that technology, pedagogy and curriculum are the three factors which together can make a huge difference.”

The school has noticed improvements in performance, in particular boys' literacy. Using the new technology, Year 6 learners embarked on a project to produce a book, based on their interviews with Welsh sporting stars. The book was published with proceeds going back into school technology.

Since that project boys improved English Level 4 by 25 per cent and started outperforming girls. Last year the school was ranked 1 in all three core subjects within their Welsh family group for Level 5 achievement.

Casllwchwr was awarded NAACE's Third Millennium Learning Award in December 2011 – the only Welsh primary school chosen to receive the accolade.

They now plan to share their best practice with other schools in Wales and have already written a blueprint for schools wanting to introduce twenty-first century technology.