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Best practice case study

Integrating ICT

Since becoming one of the first schools in Wales to embrace online apps, **Olchfa Comprehensive School** in Swansea has integrated ICT into every aspect of school life.

All learners and staff have access to shared Google Apps meaning learners can submit work instantly from home, as well as check their progress and attendance online at anytime. Staff can share lesson notes with learners and best practice with other teachers instantly.

ICT is used across a wide variety of subjects to enhance learning and research, and involve learners more in the lessons.

In history lessons, learners use technology to create a more collaborative approach to research in the classroom.

Using Netbooks allows the technology to be put into the hands of learners in their normal classroom environment, without the disruption of moving to a dedicated computer room.

Learners have shared access to a Google Presentation, which they add their findings to as they go along. A version is also projected on the whiteboard at the front, giving instant feedback from peers and the teacher.

This has changed the way they learn and brings many benefits including allowing a wider variety of sources, enabling the teacher to adapt the focus of the lesson in response to the learners which in turn encourages deeper questioning and discussion between learners.

The school also runs a GCSE in Vocational ICT. For their controlled assessment learners create a web application. The lesson is designed to allow them to practice and experiment with a series of new technical skills which they will go on to implement independently in their assessment.

In art and music lessons learners have access to Apple hardware and software.

ICT is used to support every aspect of school life, and they have developed a Moodle Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) and successfully integrated with the local authority portal.

Olchfa Comprehensive was awarded the BECTA ICT Mark in 2010 for its work on integrating digital technology into the classroom.

Codi Safonau Ysgolion
Raising School Standards

Nick Francis, who has been leading the development of ICT at Olchfa, said:

“ Six years ago we decided that we really wanted to push the virtual learning environment at Olchfa. We became one of the first schools in Wales to adopt Google Apps and now every learner and member of staff has an account with access to e-mail, calendar and document apps.

This allows learners to check their own progress and attendance, which we found has given them a greater sense of responsibility for monitoring and improving progress and attendance. ”

In lessons, Nick said the use of ICT has brought many benefits to teachers and learners including better communication, more independence and collaboration for learners, and sharing of resources between teachers. He said:

“ Teachers can create learning resources that learners can now access twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week and they have ‘indestructible coursework’ that can be uploaded as soon as they’ve finished, no more excuses like ‘the dog ate my homework’! ”

He added that learners and teachers alike can instantly see the benefits ICT can bring and it has now become embedded into all areas of school life.

For the future, they will continue to develop the school portal, including a login for parents/carers and create greater collaboration with other schools.