Harold's Cross N.S.

Clareville Road,

Harold's Cross, Dublin 6W.

Roll Number: 19924i

School Self-Evaluation Report

Cycle 2 of

School Improvement Planning in the Area of

Digital Learning

(April 2021)

School Self- Evaluation Report: Digital Learning

1. The focus of the evaluation

A school self-evaluation of teaching and learning in the area of Digital Learning took place during the 2020 -21 school The following is the report on the findings of the evaluation.

2. School Context

Harold's Cross NS is a vertical, co-educational national school with DEIS Band 2 status. The school is a developing school for the last decade and now has 2 of each class level. Pupil enrolment currently stands at 409 with 16 mainstream classes, a SEN team of eight staff and five SNAs. The school serves the surrounding parishes of Harold's Cross, Mt. Argus, Kimmage Crumlin. The school also has a Montessori managed by the Board of Management, a very active PTA and a Home School Community Liaison teacher.

3. The findings:

Teacher Feedback:

Following the steps in the Digital Learning Framework, a team of 7 members of staff including the principal met to carry out a review of the Digital Learning Framework Domains and Standards and identify areas of strength and weakness (see _appendix 1_).

The staff felt that in general the pupils have a very good attitude towards using digital technologies and demonstrate an awareness of the benefits, limitations and risks. The breadth and variety of technologies currently available in school is huge positive and the teachers and pupils have regular access to a range of technologies for whole class learning and to support differentiated learning when required. The digital interactions, among pupils and between pupils and teachers, are respectful and support the well-being of all pupils. Teachers demonstrate highly effective use of digital technologies in their teaching and many have participated in CPD in the area of digital learning, this has been most evident during remote learning. They engage in professional online communities to help them continuously design, evaluate and modify learning opportunities for pupils.

Whole staff collaboration is supported by the management and teachers often work together to share data, design activities and review policies using digital technologies.   There is a preemptive approach to policy making in the area of Digital Learning being implemented by the school and the school fosters a commitment to inclusion and equality for its pupils, this was highly evident during remote learning with the device loan scheme.

The staff felt there is a need to provide more opportunities for the pupils to carry out self-directed learning through use of digital technologies. Currently pupils use digital technologies in a variety of ways, especially in the senior end of the school, but this is usually teacher directed. The pupils are aware of the technology available but do not always think of their own ways of applying it to problem solving. The pupils could be given more opportunities to extend their learning by creating new solutions or products using digital technologies, choosing the digital technologies they use and reviewing their effectiveness.   It was noted that pupils can access information stored digitally on their learning (e.g.Google Classroom) but it is not always shared with parents at this point (with the exception of Seesaw) and is not always evaluated by the pupils. A continued focus on developing early digital skills is needed in the junior end of the school and indeed the importance of retaining and extending good digital practices developed by staff

during remote teaching was highlighted. Coding lessons have been provided for pupils in 4th to 6th and have been successful to some extent but will need to be altered in structure to ensure that pacing of the lessons is matched to the students ability.

Teachers identified the need for the vision for Digital Learning in the school to be reviewed, agreed and shared with the wider school community. The staff also felt that there was a need to ensure that Digital Citizenship training is provided and applied in light of GDPR updates and that using digital technologies to build partnerships with other schools, external organisations, industry and the wider community could be explored further and we could focus more on embedding digital technologies to explore civic participation.

Pupil Feedback:

A questionnaire was drawn up by the Digital Learning team and given to 5 classes (2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th) and a focus group was carried out with Senior Infants pupils in April 2021 (see appendix 2 and 3).

In the focus group, the majority of pupils felt that they were good at using digital technologies and of those who completed the questionnaire 84% felt they were good at using digital technologies with 14% responding "Don't know" to the statement. Most pupils also use digital technologies at home with 10% stating they use them "Often" and 65% stating that they "Sometimes" use them to help with homework. Most pupils enjoy using digital technologies in school. 63% of pupils surveyed and two thirds of those in the focus group would like to spend more time using digital technology at school with 60% of pupils recognising that they use technologies for a lot of subjects. Two thirds of pupils surveyed responded that they use digital technologies collaboratively. 80% of all pupils recognise that digital technologies help them to learn and the vast majority are confident in using devices.

Over a third of the pupils surveyed (33.8%) responded that they feel they need to improve their digital technology skills with 2 of the pupils in the focus group stating that they would like to learn how to type and use different apps.

The students showed a keen interest in doing more activities that involve the use of digital technologies and 81% stated that they would like more opportunity to choose which technologies or apps they use to complete assignments.

Parent Feedback:

All parents received a Google Form focusing on their awareness of the school's use of digital technology and their child's experience of using digital technologies for learning.   128 responses were received (see appendix 4).

Through their responses, it is evident that the majority of parents believe their children enjoy using digital technologies for learning and use their own devices at home when carrying out school related learning.   70% reported that they are satisfied that the technology used in school is the right level of difficulty for their child and whilst they may sometimes need to assist their child at home, 86% stated that they are confident in their own ability to do this.

70% of parents surveyed believe both they and their child have an appropriate understanding of what being a good digital citizen involves. This possibly demonstrates the success of the school's provision of internet safety talks for pupils and parents, though it contradicts the view of the staff that up to date training in digital citizenship is required.

The majority of parents (70%) would like more opportunity for their child to carry out self-directed learning through use of digital technologies and be provided with more opportunities to choose their own strategies for completing assignments (e.g. choosing the medium through which to present a project etc.).

Parents were, for the most part, unaware of the school's vision with regard to digital learning and it's Digital Learning Plan and many suggested the sharing of details of these (and indeed other digital learning activities carried out by the pupils) with parents via the school website, email, online presentations and newsletters.

Parents responded that they are viewing their children's work through a number of platforms/apps including Seesaw, Google Classroom, the school website and via email, though it is possible that this may refer more to the learning taking place during remote teaching due to Covid.

4. Progress made on previously identified targets:

The previous SSE in Digital Learning was carried out in 2017-18. Areas for improvement identified at the time were:

- The continued development of the school website.
- The use of e-portfolios as an assessment tool to track students progress.
- The use of digital learning tools in music to support the implementation of a spiralised musical literacy programme.
- The regular use of Digital Learning tools in all classes
- The use of Digital Learning tools to create content, in particular in senior classes
- The establishment of a shared Drive for staff to collaborate and share plans and resources on and off site.

- The school website has proved to be a success and is currently updated regularly by most members of staff. It was felt that fortnightly updating is difficult to maintain and monthly would be more manageable. Parents now regularly use website for information.
- Training in use of the Seesaw app was provided to all staff members and the app was used regularly to record the progress of tracker children in a variety of areas (which have since been reduced). Seesaw is now used as an effective way of recording progress in the areas of Oral Language and P.E., however, due to the Covid 19 lockdowns of 2020 and 2021, the amount of content recorded will be affected.
- The Dabbledoo online music programme was adopted by the school and training provided to staff members. This has proved to be a success among staff and pupils.
- A programme of ipad skills for the pupils in classes JI - 3rd was developed collaboratively between the teachers of those classes in the 2019-21 school year, in order to ensure continuity and development of skills among their pupils. Initial feedback from teachers about the success of the programme with their pupils is positive, though this has been affected by the Covid 19 lockdowns. This is an area that staff agree would need to be a continued focus in the coming school years.
- Establishment of the G-Suite (now called Google Workspace) has been a huge success and influenced the level of collaboration between staff in particular but also between the students. This area has further been enhanced through the introduction of the Google Classroom in the senior end of the school.

5. Summary of School Self-Evaluation Findings

Identified strengths:
- Pupils' motivation, engagement and enjoyment of learning through use of digital technologies is evident in teacher, pupil and parent feedback.
- Pupils recognise that digital technologies help them to learn and are confident using devices.
- Variety, quantity and access to digital devices available in school is excellent and coding lessons are provided yearly to all pupils in 4th - 6th Class.
- Staff have participated in CPD in the area of Digital Learning and regularly engage on online communities to broaden their skillset.
- Collaboration both formally and informally is scheduled and occurs informally between staff members.
- A preemptive approach to policy making in the area of Digital Learning is implemented effectively.
- The school fosters a commitment to inclusion and equality for its pupils, this was highly evident during remote learning with the device loan scheme.

Identified areas for improvement:

- The Digital Learning Vision needs to be reviewed by staff, communicated to all stakeholders and the wider school community.
- Need to develop pupils' involvement in deciding how to use digital tech to support learning. Focus on encouraging pupil led/self-directed learning using digital technology.
- A continued focus on developing digital skills at the junior end of the school is necessary.
- Information about the pupils' learning is not always evaluated by the pupils and it is not shared with parents digitally (with the exception of Seesaw).
- Emphasis should be placed on teachers using digital ts to create complex, real-world problems for the pupils.
- Focus needed on personalising and facilitating pupils' ownership of their learning.
- Importance of retaining good digital learning practices now we have returned to classroom teaching.
- More opportunity needed to experiment with, reflect on and review digital ts individually and as a staff and then to revise teaching strategies to include use of these.
- Opportunities need to be identified and supported for staff to engage in research that actively impacts on the use of digital technologies for learning, teaching and assessment.
- Procurement, maintenance, interoperability and security of the digital infrastructure is a task far too complex to be managed by just the school and maintenance in particular is constantly an issue.
- We could focus more on embedding digital ts to explore civic participation.
- Reflection/Review of ipad skill list created by teachers of JI - 3rd Class needs to be reviewed.
- Digital Citizenship training needs to be repeated in light of new staff/GDPR etc.
- Need to explore using digital ts to build partnerships with other schools, external organisations, industry and the wider community.
- Joining a professional network focused on digital technologies in school would be of benefit.

Areas for prioritisation:

The following areas have been prioritised for improvement over the coming three years 2021-2024:

- Providing opportunities for the pupils to self-direct and extend their learning through use of digital technologies. Focus on creating new solutions or products using digital technologies and to evaluate the effectiveness of their choices.
- Reviewing and developing the school vision regarding Digital Learning.
- Developing systems of communicating the school vision regarding Digital Learning and the role it plays in the pupils' learning with the parents. Including a review of the school website and how best to realise its potential.
- Embedding the pupils' digital skills within the school. Continuing teaching of iPad skills in Junior Infants to 3rd Class and Coding in 4th to 6th Class.
- Exploring Digital Citizenship and developing a solid understanding of the same for pupils, parents and teachers.
- Using digital technologies to build partnerships with other schools, external organisations and the wider community.