Digital Schools Award Evaluation Report

School: Ringville N.S. Co Kilkenny
Roll No: 06621p
Date of validation: 11th April 2018

Leadership & Vision

Ringville N.S is 3 classroom school located in a tranquil setting close to the river Barrow and between New Ross and Waterford City but in Co.Kilkenny. The school is led by a principal who is committed to the integration of digital technology as a means to enhance teaching and learning within the school. She is ably assisted by an innoavtive ICT co-ordinator and two more class teachers both of whom show a high level of commitment and skills and a preparedness to try new things.

The school sees Digital Technologies as being an important educational resource. The ICT plan focuses on the ability to use ICT effectively as a vital life skill in modern society. They aim to develop learners (pupils and staff) who are confident and effective users of ICT. Digital technology is seen as an integral part of the children's lives and beneficial to their learning. The school is very aware of giving children access to technology in a controlled environment.

An ICT Policy and an Acceptable Use Policy are in place and provision has been made to update and review both policies annually. Policies have the approval of the Board of Management.

Digital technology is seen as a valuable educational tool for pupils with special needs. It helps children with particular challenges to access the curriculum. Plans student records and digital resources are stored inhouse on a shared drive. The school has moved on a lot in the last two years in its digital technology integration and is not resting on its laurels and currently they plan to implement G-suite in the school.

ICT in the Curriculum

Ringville N.S use Digital Technology to offer teachers and children educational tools and resources which extend the learning environment and augment classroom learning and teaching.

Classes engage in project work in a multi-class environment for all subjects. Children have access to a controlled list of websites for their research. MangaHigh was used to support numeracy but now the cost has become prohibitative and the school is looknig for similar applications as some classes use this for home-work also.

Skype and Greenscreen with iPads and video are used on a regular basis for preparing projects and school work Scratch is also incorporated into lessons Symbaloo is used for sharing resources. Scoilnet and PDST resources are also available to all classes.
Ringville NS has begun using SeeSaw E-portfolios for 3rd-6th class since September 2017 and are very happy with their progress. The school also engaged in Blogging their school projects on school website which gives the children the opportunity to publish on the school blog.

IWBs are used in all classes.

An outline of the digital activities include:P

- School Administration
- Research and accessing information
- Adventure games that stimulate higher order thinking skills and problem solving
- Critical thinking and problem solving activities
- Word Processing of children's work
- Reinforcement of key literacy activities
- Communication via email and social media
- Storage of Records of achievement/portfolio assessment
- Supporting Special Needs pupils.
- Digital Photographs, video recording and generation of posters.

The school has a clear progression for Digital Technology usage form class to class laid in its ICT Plan. .

School ICT Culture
There is strong evidence of commitment to digital technology in Ringville. The school corridors are adorned with colourful displays of printed material and photographic displays.
The school website is www.ringvillens.ie and News items will regularly be added to the website. School policies that are relevant to parents are also added to this site. It is used as an important means of communication between school, home and the wider community. The website keeps parents and the wider community up to date on ICT initiatives taking place within the school as we work towards achieving Digital Schools status.

The school participates in an annual Heritage Project and bring in a tutor to work on Scratch with sixth class each year. There iis an excellent Parents Association and many of the parents support the school in is acitivties.

The school has engaged in interschool collaborations with Mullinavat NS and I feel this is the beginning of this type of activity. The school also develops an ongoing ICT team consisting of children form 4th, 5th and 6th classes who take on the role of helping to setup the ICT equipemnt and solve problems. This builds confidence in the children and is a win win for this small rural school.

Professional Development

Continuing CPD for staff members(summer and online courses) is undertaken continuously. There is training for staff and secretary on new school blog/website
Staff are informed about all CPD through posted on the notice-board in the staff-room. Teachers regularly engage in ICT training in the local Education Centres and/or summer courses. Time is allocated during Croke Park hours for teachers to share that learning with their colleagues. Regular and just-in-time peer to peer training is ongoing in the school and there is a positive since of achievement and innovation regarding CPD in the school and among the staff.

Resources & Infrastructure

The school has a good supply of resources and are planning more infrastructural implementations in the form of G-Suite and Google Apps for education. Their internet coverage is acceptable. The expect this to improve even more in the near future and will make their implementation of G-suite more effective.

The Schoo's Current Infrastructure is in keeping with their mission statement, They see ICT being used as a tool of teaching and learning in each classroom. Therefore, they have supplied each classroom with a desktop, IWB as well as access to a school set of iPads and laptops.
All computers are networked for printing and Internet access. This networking is provided through a series of wireless hubs as well as hard-wired access points.
The broadband is provided through the schools' broadband network and avails of the PDST/Technology in Education filtering service. (Currently Level 4 – allowing access to YouTube)
Staff have Microsoft Office installed on IWB laptops for teaching and learning.
The secretary's office is equipped with a PC and printer, as well as network printing access.
They currently have 6 iPads and 10 laptops available to all students in the school.

Current Software Provision

The school has a library of computer software, particularly in our learning support room.
Each mainstream class has an IWB with Promethean and samsung software installed.

Current Usage of Facilities

Laptops are used as a medium of teaching and learning in all of the classrooms, therefore it is not necessary to timetable computer hours.
The school set of iPads and laptops are rotated on a flexible basis

General comments and recommendation
It was a pleasure to visit Ringville N.S. and I commend the staff I spoke with for their enthusiasm and the very fine work that is happening. The children are given lots of opportunities to express themselves and develop their digital skills in a supporitve environment.

I would recommend that; the school website become a forum to display the schools achievements currently it has aspects of the children's work i.e. some video or audio clips, samples of visual arts, poetry, etc. The staff and students should develop skills to facilitate updating the site themselves. It is a wordpress blog and would be easily facilitated.

The school meets all criteria for DSOD.

Neil O'Sullivan

12.4.2018