



DIGITAL SCHOOLS

AWARDS SCOTLAND

Portlethen Primary School

Validation Report	
School Name: Portlethen Primary School	Name of Validator: Catherine Cunningham
Cookston Road Portlethen Ab12 4pt United Kingdom	Date of Validation: 13/03/2019
Head Teacher / Principal Name: Sandra McKechnie	Digital Technology Co-ordinator: Rachael Roebuck
School SEED Number: 5251125	Time of arrival:

This report includes validator's comments based on a review of the online submission and the validation visit.

Leadership and Vision

90%

Summary Comments

The school have a clear vision and have worked with staff to identify their needs to ensure their vision can be realised. Staff have embraced the use of technology as a tool for learning and are working together to upskill themselves and deliver rich learning experiences for their pupils. The commitment to creative and safe use of technology throughout the school was very much in evidence through my conversations with staff and pupils.

#	Descriptor	Validator's comment
1	The distinctive contribution of digital technology is integrated into the whole school vision and the School Development Plan	<p>School staff have come together to create a Digital Literacy Policy and have a clear vision set out, which everyone is working towards, supported by a comprehensive menu of CLPL.</p> <p>Making effective use of digital technology has been a priority within the school improvement plan for the past few years and the school are seeing the impact of this coming through. Last year's priority was 'improving profiling and pupils' progress to parents' and this has been implemented with great success with the Book Creator app now being used with pupil input for twice-yearly reports and parents are finding these extremely informative and enjoy the pupils' contributions. This year, digital technology is central to 'achieving consistency in high-quality learning, teaching, assessment and reporting' and staff are focusing on developing the use of digital technologies to support early literacy and mathematics and embedding the use of digital technology in play-based learning indoors and outdoors. They are well on the way to meeting these targets. The school self-evaluated themselves as partially met for this statement but because of the documentation provided and professional discussion I had with members of staff, I have upgraded this to fully met.</p>
2	The digital technology policy is approved by the local authority and is informed by wider research and regional/national policy.	<p>The school's Digital Literacy Policy is based on guidance from the Digital Learning and Teaching Strategy for Scotland and sits alongside the school's E-safety Policy. The staff are all aware of CfE Digital Technologies Es & Os and associated benchmarks and they also refer to Education Scotland documents for guidance. The school has raised the profile of Cyber Resilience and Internet Safety by linking these aspects of the Digital Technologies curriculum to Article 34 of UNCRC.</p>
3	The digital technology leader/coordinator has a proactive, operational and evaluative role in supporting learners' digital capability and teachers' pedagogical deployment of digital technology.	<p>The Digital Technology Co-ordinator has a clear remit and is fully supported by the headteacher who recognises the educational value of digital technologies and is keen to exploit these effectively, using them as a tool to support and enhance learning. Mrs Roebuck displays strong leadership in terms of her own teaching and of the critical role she plays as Technology Co-ordinator in the development and implementation of the whole school policy. This role has expanded since the headteacher took on responsibility for a second school and Mrs Roebuck has been disseminating her skills and knowledge across schools and has included all staff in her CLPL sessions and has also provided informal support through team teaching.</p> <p>She has also delivered training to the P4-7 Digital Leaders and the Technology Pupils' Group. She has facilitated the delivery of code club and pupil teaching groups, whereby pupils fundraised for dot and dash robots and taught other children in the school how to use them.</p>

#	Descriptor	Validator's comment
4	The school frequently and collaboratively reviews its digital technology policy by evaluating the potential of emerging technologies and best practice scenarios.	<p>The Digital Policy is reviewed annually and was last reviewed in January 2019. During the next review, they may wish to include a section about CLPL, highlighting what is clearly available to all staff. They might also want to consider adding a short section on 'ensuring equality of opportunity' and this would include the use of assistive technologies which are being used extremely well in school.</p> <p>In addition, they might along with their pupil digital leaders think about writing an appendix on 'security and maintenance', which would detail how each device should be stored and handled etc. If this was child-friendly, it could be displayed as a reminder in each classroom or storage space to encourage children to look after all equipment.</p>
5	The policy supports digital technology CLPL/CPD in a range of formal and informal contexts including whole-school teaching, peer-to-peer learning, the use of external organisations/personnel and formal training.	<p>There is a comprehensive programme of CLPL relating to the priorities of the School Improvement Plan. Regular in-house training sessions are delivered according to the identified needs through staff skills audits. There are additional learning opportunities in digital technology, which are optional but well attended. The Digital Technology Co-ordinator has set up 'Busy Breakfasts' and after-school workshops where staff can opt into sessions geared to a specific digital outcome or a particular piece of software.</p> <p>Ideas for teaching plans are stored in Sharepoint and staff plan for digital learning in a collaborative way. Staff also have a Digital Learning 'Team' and share resources and planning notes within this Microsoft Team. Some team teaching has taken place and staff are encouraged to visit other classrooms and to apply new learning with their own pupils.</p> <p>I have upgraded the school's self-evaluation from partially met to fully met as I feel the level of support for all staff is excellent. The school need to remember that digital technology is one of many developments within the school and, as such, we would not expect this to monopolise CLPL time. The fact that there is a range of designated digital CPD, opt-in additional sessions and informal peer-to-peer support, demonstrates the balance the school have between core provision and staff choosing to exceed this through opt-in and informal learning. It was interesting to note the number of teachers who felt they had learned new skills from the pupil digital leaders and there was a feeling of everyone learning together which was lovely.</p> <p>As the HT has responsibility for another school, both schools are now working together to develop a common approach and policy. This has included training and team teaching as part of the joint CLPL programme.</p>
6	Outlines the rationale for the use of digital technology and recognises the distinctive contribution of digital technology in learning and teaching.	The school have included their rationale and how they plan to achieve this in their policy. They have included a section on learning and teaching, including assessment and also how they use technology as a communication tool to support home-school links. The school, through the policy and their CLPL opportunities, promote a range of pedagogical approaches.
7	Includes both external and school-generated curriculum links.	The policy has drawn on national and local curricular guidance but these are not as clearly referenced and they might be. This is simply a case of the school not fully communicating the range of documentation they researched and are fully familiar with, prior to devising their policy. More importantly, the staff are knowledgeable about national guidance and are ensuring they are translating this into action and policy/guidance is being followed and this is evident through the embedded digital technologies being used across the curriculum.

#	Descriptor	Validator's comment
8	The digital technology policy supports the inclusion of learners with additional support needs and provides guidance on the use of assistive and other technologies for their support.	I have upgraded the schools' self-evaluation of this statement. Although the policy could include more detail about the range of additional support needs provided by the school, they deliver a wide range of assistive technologies extremely well. There was clear evidence when talking to staff and pupils of the use of digital technology to support the inclusion of learners with additional support needs and a child with a visual impairment explained how she could do everything her classmates could do through her use of technologies. This included linking her iPad to the teacher's smart board, taking photographs of texts and zooming in, the use of Splashtop, Teams for homework etc. She felt fully supported in the training she received in school and from her Visual Impairment teacher and she also appreciated being able to attend an ASPECTS group to improve her touch typing skills. The school is fully symbolised and is one of three schools in the LA who have the Total Communication Award.
9	Plans for progression in teachers', parents'/carers' and learners' understanding of the importance of e-safety and how they can remain safe online.	The school has a separate e-safety policy which is comprehensive. Cyber resilience and internet safety are fully covered within the progression pathways which are currently being trialled.
10	Provides guidance on the management of digital technology so that learners have regular access to digital technology in a safe environment.	The e-safety policy has very detailed instructions on how digital technologies should be managed and used responsibly.
11	Outlines how the internet is best used as a resource for learning, and teaching.	The Digital Literacy Policy and E-safety Policy, between them, provide guidance on the effective use of the internet as a resource to support and enhance learning.
12	Includes an Acceptable Use Policy that is implemented throughout the school.	The LA Acceptable Use policy was last reviewed in 2012 and, in the light of changing technologies and increased internet access, is likely due for refreshment. The school have drawn up a school acceptable use policy which is based on activities children will currently experience and includes permissions for media publications to ensure the school is GDPR compliant in this area. The school might want to devise a child-friendly version of their acceptable use policy as this would complement their child-friendly version of the School Improvement Plan.

Use of Digital Technology to Deliver the Curriculum

93%

Summary Comments

Children from a variety of stages spoke to me about a range of learning experiences they have engaged in. They were able to describe these activities clearly and were very enthusiastic and assured to me their learning had improved since being able to select the appropriate digital tools to support their learning. The school has a well-run system of digital leaders and a technology pupil group. The digital leaders were very hands-on and were able to troubleshoot common problems for staff and pupils. They also fundraised specifically for digital devices. They were instrumental in helping the younger pupils. All of the children I spoke with were highly motivated children who were very articulate in explaining their digital learning journey and how it has benefitted them.

#	Descriptor	Validator's comment
1	Digital technology is a central consideration in all curriculum and assessment delivery across all year groups and all curricular areas.	<p>Through discussion with staff and pupils and following the work of the school on their social media twitter feed, I saw and heard of many examples of high-quality learning throughout the school and teachers reported they were growing in confidence and appreciating the support given, to enable them to embed digital technologies across the curriculum.</p> <p>I spoke with many pupils who were able to describe the activities they had experienced. They all spoke proudly of the work they had been doing and the older children enjoyed sharing their skills with younger pupils and teachers. Good use of QR codes was being made by older children, recording stories for younger pupils to access via the QR code. The children had been introduced to a variety of presentation tools and were able to speak of the differences and described how they would select the appropriate tool for the task. The children I spoke with were confident in their understanding of the use of digital technologies and they felt this reflected the world in which they lived. Older pupils identified themselves as independent learners and were more confident in the organisation of their workflow and were keen to use their digital skills when they transitioned to High School.</p>
2	Digital technology is used to enhance and extend learning experiences and to foster independent learning within and beyond the school	<p>I have upgraded the schools self-evaluation from partially met to fully met as I learned of many ways in which digital technology had been used to enhance and extend learning experiences. Digital technologies were almost fully embedded across the curriculum and very effective and creative use was clearly demonstrated. Some examples were of Micro:bits being programmed to play games such as rock, paper, scissors; lego people being used in stop frame animation movies to deliver a road safety message; Dot and Dash being programmed to dance along during the school's Disney Extravaganza performance; green screen movies using DoInk, to name but a few. Staff used Book creator to illustrate learning in French, poetry and literacy. I-Movies, Adobe Spark and Apple clips were all used to differentiate by task, but still enabled pupils to meet the learning intention. Text readers were employed to support children with difficulties. Teachers felt their use of digital technology promoted equity for all children. Quizzes were created for assessment and good use of Plickers was used to encourage all children to answer, safe in the knowledge that a wrong answer would only be picked up by the teacher.</p>

#	Descriptor	Validator's comment
3	Digital technology has a demonstrable impact on learning. Learners and teachers can articulate how learning has been enhanced	Pupils were able to talk about the impact they felt digital technology was having on their learning. Most of them said it was a fun way to learn and they enjoyed helping each other. They liked being able to create ways to demonstrate their learning. Some children said they enjoyed fundraising to buy new devices and others said they enjoyed teaching younger pupils and teachers how to use programs or to code. It was obvious they were motivated and keen to share learning. The shared reports, using Book Creator was appreciated by parents and also by pupils who liked contributing to their own reports. It gave them an element of ownership of their learning as they were becoming skilled and self-evaluating and setting next steps for themselves. Teachers also spoke about the positive impact technology was having and how they were confident in using digital technology tools to support independent learning, for assessment and as a presentation tool. I have upgraded the school's self-evaluation from partially to fully met.
4	Digital technology is used to help learners create content as well as organise content provided by teachers.	I have upgraded the school's self-evaluation from partially to fully met, as, from my discussions with staff and pupils, it was apparent that the digital technology co-ordinator was instrumental in ensuring all children were having experiences of using technology in creative ways. Coding using Scratch, stop animations, Micro:bits, programmable robots, green screen movies, Microsoft Clips were all examples of creating content. From these examples and many more described to me, along with those shared on social media, it was apparent that content creation was happening at all stages across the school.
5	Teachers integrate digital technology into their daily teaching and learning and provide learning experiences that support cross-curricular skills and the development of positive attitudes and dispositions.	Digital technology is planned for and there is a good balance of discrete teaching of skills and incidental teaching as children apply skills across the curriculum. New progressive pathways are being trialled and these are a work in progress. These will be reviewed and refined over time and staff may wish to build up a bank of activities with examples of tasks to assess against benchmarks.
6	Assistive Technologies and appropriate software are deployed across all age groups in ways that provide additional and/or differentiated learning for students with additional support needs.	As mentioned before, excellent use is made of assistive technologies at universal, additional and intensive level. As an enhanced provision, there is a body of expertise built up within the staff and LA support staff are also available in a consultative and advisory role.
7	Progressively, learners are provided with opportunities to learn independently.	There was evidence from speaking with older children that they were becoming increasingly independent and self-directed. Some were accessing Glow at home to complete work started in school and on occasions, were working collaboratively with others. Children engaged in 'teaching sessions' were taking on responsibility for sharing their skills and interests with others.

School Culture

91%

Summary Comments

Staff are becoming increasingly confident in their use of technology and are embedding this within all areas of the curriculum. They are working together to improve the technologies curriculum across the school. At the heart of this is their wish that their pupils get the best possible chance of a successful future and they recognise the need for children to be digitally competent, which includes them having an awareness of digital safety, netiquette and exposure to appropriate applications.

#	Descriptor	Validator's comment
1	There is evidence of a strong digital technology presence throughout the school.	The use of digital technology to support and enhance learning across the school is very strong. This is a result of a wide range of CLPL opportunities and collaborative working. There was evidence of a variety of digital technologies being used very effectively. I felt the children had a sound understanding of the tools they were using and knew how they could apply these in different ways.
2	Teachers and learners demonstrate the motivational capacity of digital technology.	There is a strong culture throughout the staff team in the use and application of digital technologies and this has been strategically and purposefully cultivated by the headteacher and the digital technology co-ordinator. Learning has been enhanced by a range of digital experiences which have been embraced by all and the children have become leaders in the promotion of this culture. The children are proud of the school's immersion in digital technologies.
3	The school has a website that is updated regularly and features learning and achievements.	I have upgraded the schools self-evaluation from partially to fully met. The school website is up-to-date, very informative and easy to navigate. This, alongside the school's Twitter feed, features recent learning and achievements and gives a flavour of the work of the school.
4	The school exploits the use of digital technology as a means of communication between learners, parents/carers, staff and the wider community.	There is a mixture of communication tools with parents. The school are aware of different audiences and tailor their communications accordingly. For example, Twitter allows the local community to learn about the work of the school and share its successes, the website has clear concise information about the school and its policies, and more specific school news would be sent by email or paper copies.
5	Teachers use digital technology in their own planning and administration.	Good use is made of digital technologies for administrative tasks, such as pupil tracking and also for curriculum and lesson planning. Staff feel this has streamlined their workflow enormously. Office 365 productivity tools are being used e.g. Word online, Teams, One Note.
6	The school recognises and celebrates learners' use of digital technology for their own learning.	The school has a variety of ways of celebrating success in digital achievements, as in other areas of the curriculum or wider achievements out of school. Children can record their achievements in Book Creator. Assemblies are also used to recognise achievements, as is Twitter where achievements can be celebrated with a wider audience.

#	Descriptor	Validator's comment
7	The school uses a range of digital technology formats to collaborate with other schools or organisations in local, national or international project work.	I have changed the school's self-evaluation from not met to partially met. P7 children delivered a session to pupils in another school to show them the capabilities of Dot and Dash and also to show them some coding. This was well received and I would suggest a short programme is planned to expand the content of these learning sessions and to share with more schools. Portlethen has much to share with others but equally can learn from others. They are in an ideal position to work collaboratively with the other school the HT is responsible for and to expand this further. We discussed some joint projects which might be worth exploring but I am confident the school, along with other schools, will be able to generate ideas for effective collaborative working.

Professional Development

87%

Summary Comments

There is a comprehensive programme of professional learning available for all staff. The training needs of staff are constantly under review and everyone feel supported through LA events and formal and informal CLPL within the school.

#	Descriptor	Validator's comment
1	The digital technology policy facilitates professional development in, about and through digital technology.	A range of core and additional training had been offered to the staff. Most staff opted into extra training and were integrating these skills into classroom practice. There were also informal learning where teachers could observe others in class or buddy up to learn new skills. Pupil digital leaders also received training from the digital technology co-ordinator.
2	The majority of staff have engaged in school-based and other relevant professional development programmes that are focused on enhancing learning and teaching through the use of digital technology.	Regular skills audits are undertaken and CLPL planned accordingly. Staff discuss strengths and plan next steps during annual PRD meetings. Staff are encouraged to take ownership of their learning and to share their expertise with others.
3	Teachers are encouraged to be innovative and self-directed learners by exploring new ideas in digitally enhanced learning and teaching.	There is a recognition that staff are at different stages in their digital skills journey and while there is core and supplementary training, as well as peer support for all, some teachers are self-directed and are exploring ways of integrating digital learning even further. As they share new learning, this will provide leadership opportunities, which will also ensure the sustainability of the digital skills programme.
4	The school utilises the expertise in digital technology acquired among staff and collaborates with other schools and organisations to inform practice.	I have upgraded the school's self-evaluation from not met to partially met. Some teachers keep abreast of what is happening in other schools through networking and social media and bring ideas into school to develop in their own classes. P7 children linked up with another school to share their learning about coding and the capabilities of Dot and Dash. The school worked with Microsoft to give them feedback. The school have the capacity to collaborate with other schools and I feel this would benefit all who become involved.
5	There is an ethos of self and collaborative review, supported by systematic review processes that focus on improvement in teacher competence in digital technology.	Regular audits of staff digital skills are carried out to offer tailored CLPL. Core and additional training is available.
6	The majority of teachers are confident in the safe, secure and appropriate integration of digital technology in their daily teaching.	Teachers are very aware of their responsibilities in teaching pupils how to operate in an online environment in a safe and responsible manner. The progressive pathways include cyber resilience and internet safety lessons and these themes are revisited throughout the year. Pupils I spoke with were all aware of ways to keep safe online and how to report anything of concern. They were able to speak of the need for secure passwords and how to check the reliability of a web site.
7	The school keeps abreast of developments in technological and professional practice in relation to digital technology and staff are aware of their professional development needs in relation to digital technology.	The digital technology co-ordinator keeps abreast of professional practice by attending external training, reading relevant documents and she shares this with others within the school.

Resources and Infrastructure

93%

Summary Comments

The school is well resourced and the infrastructure of the school is able to support the full range of activities happening in classes. There is a range of software including content-rich and content-free software.

#	Descriptor	Validator's comment
1	There is widespread access to computers, laptops and/or tablet devices, where appropriate.	Teachers recognise the educational value of technologies and exploit these effectively. The school is well resourced with hardware and software, all chosen with care to ensure they are cost effective and add to the skills identified within the planned experiences and outcomes. The school have a wide range of peripherals, particularly programmable devices such as BeeBots, Dot and Dash, Micro:Bits. Children use a variety of technology, on a daily basis to support and enhance learning. Pupils were able to tell me what was available and by knew which device was most effective for particular tasks. e.g iPads for movies/animation, chrome books for a quick piece of research. By being aware of this their maximised learning time.
2	The school deploys digital technology resources in the most appropriate manner to maximise opportunities for effective learning.	The school had storage trolleys for their iPad, laptops and chrome books and had an effective system of timetabling with an element of flexibility built in. Teachers ensured devices were properly charged with Digital leaders helping to check correct storage within the trolleys. This maximised usage time.
3	Online environments, including Glow are used to support a wide range of learning activities within and beyond the school.	The full suite of Office 365 Productivity tools within the Glow platform was used. Children and teachers reported extensive use of Team was used for homework tasks. This minimised paper use and streamlined the distribution of homework tasks. Children were familiar with presentation tools along with Word online and were able to store files in their One Drive to be accessed at any time from any device. Children were also very familiar with Book Creator and used this app to record their best pieces of work, some of which were selected to go in their personal school report for parents. Children were very proud of their contribution to the reports. Children were equally confident when describing how they used Adobe Spark to make fact files and presentations of topic work. They also gave me many examples of making movies to deliver a message to others e.g. road safety.
4	The local authority network is used effectively to create, record, store and share resources and learners' work. Learners and staff can create and comment on e-portfolios.	The school make good use of the LA servers for storing resource and learners' work. They have shared drives and Teams for all staff members. Older children using Glow, are beginning to store files in their One Drive and shared files in Teams and this is to be encouraged as they can be accessed from home and enable seamless learning.
5	The school has sufficient Internet access throughout.	Internet access is available throughout the school and is accessible at all times.
6	The school's content-rich and content-free software covers a wide range of curricular areas and learning needs.	I have upgraded the school's evaluation from partially met to fully met. There is a good range of software in use across the school, including some to support learners with ASN. The school has enhanced provision and has built up great expertise in the use of assistive technologies. Staff were very familiar with the needs of all learners and could tailor the range of adaptive settings within the devices to each individual e.g. background colours, speech-to-text, text reader and the immersive reader tools within Glow Office 365.

#	Descriptor	Validator's comment
7	Teachers frequently use age and ability-appropriate software applications to support differentiated and targeted learning.	From talking with staff and pupils and hearing about their learning and teaching, it was apparent that the school employed a good mix of whole-class teaching and differentiated and targeted learning. The school appeared to have managed the balance of teaching discrete skills through whole-class teaching and the application of these skills across the curriculum well.
8	The school is fully compliant with all software licencing requirements	The school is fully compliant.

General Recommendations:

Portlethen Primary have travelled far in their digital journey. Their route has been well led and meticulously planned by the HT and the digital technology co-ordinator, with others following enthusiastically. There is a sense of a strong staff team who work collaboratively together.

Portlethen is a school who wants the best for their pupils and recognises the impact digital learning can have on their current and future learning.

It is my recommendation that the school has met the criteria and should receive the Digital Schools Award (Scotland).

I also recommend they are asked to become a mentor school as they have the capacity to share and develop their skills with others.

Signed

Catherine Cunningham

Catherine Cunningham

External validator

