

NAACE EVALUATION ST. BEDE'S CATHOLIC JUNIOR SCHOOL

Vision, Leadership and Organisational Management

St Bede's Catholic Junior School has a written vision statement for computing which clearly sets out their aspirations for the role of technology in the school. It talks about enrichment, enablement, and collaboration, and their desire for pupils to become producers rather than consumers of content. These fundamental values are also reflected in the school's wider ethos and mission and it was clear from my conversations with the whole school community that they are embedded at all levels. The computing leader has recently been appointed and has worked hard to ensure that the approach to both learning *about* technology, and learning *with* technology, are consistent throughout. The use of technology is not confined to computing lessons but is integrated across various subjects. Subject leaders aim to develop 21st-century skills in students and are making a conscious effort to widen the remit of computing, focusing on real-world application of skills.

The school places a strong emphasis on the professional development of its staff. The school utilises a team teaching model for CPD, which includes collaboration with external experts, for example: from MGL and Daresbury Laboratory. This approach ensures that staff gain confidence in teaching subjects like coding by observing lessons led by specialists. The school is proactive in adapting its CPD offerings to keep pace with technological advancements, ensuring that staff are equipped to teach using the latest technology.

St Bede's focuses on ensuring that all students, including those with special educational needs, have equitable access to technology. This is evident in their commitment to integrating technology in a way that supports diverse learning needs. The school's response during the COVID-19 pandemic, which included providing laptops to the community, demonstrates an awareness of the need for equitable access to technology at home.

Pupils and staff alike spoke about the importance of online safeguarding and this is an area that the school feels is a significant strength. Pupils were clear about the risks of unwanted contact through social media, and spoke knowledgeably about misinformation, disinformation, hacking and phishing. The school enforces separate Acceptable Use Policies for staff and pupils, which outline expectations, processes and sanctions for improper use. Staff remind pupils of this policy at the beginning of each academic year.

Provision of EdTech: Quality and Range

The school has recently moved to a new computing scheme of work, and this is proving to be very successful. As one staff member told me, "Everyone is really enjoying the new curriculum. Previously we had lost sight of ICT, we were mainly doing coding". They are working hard to ensure that they are delivering cross-curricular skills and developing 21st Century skills. Pupils are also reacting well to the new curriculum and told me that they like it because it feels like they are using real-world applications.

As the school transitions to the new scheme of work, capabilities are assessed in line with the objectives set out in it, and the computing leader is actively investigating ways of improving the assessment of both computing and cross-curricular technology use. Technology is well utilised to meet the needs of gifted pupils. A variety of enrichment activities are available, including a Photography and Journalism Club, a Coding club, and a STEM enrichment week

which brings together aspects of science, technology, engineering and maths that wouldn't usually be experienced within the curriculum.

The school is using various approaches to support those pupils with special educational needs, including in maths and English where learning systems are used to reinforce and support areas such as phonics. Additionally, pupils who have writing difficulties are encouraged to learn skills of touch typing to allow them to communicate more effectively and to prepare them for the next stage of their education.

The school's vision states a desire to move pupils from being consumers to being creators, and this is evidenced across many areas of their work. Pupils are engaged in activities such as creation of movie trailers, podcasting and music creation. During my visit I observed pupils creating electronic circuits to use in conjunction with Crumble controllers, using spreadsheets both to model financial planning and to manipulate and retrieve information, and programming Spheros. During the pupil interviews they spoke enthusiastically about work they had done including making games

Parents are engaged through online means and the school utilises various digital platforms, such as a dedicated school website which contains copies of the latest newsletters, and social media channels like Facebook and Twitter. These platforms are regularly updated with school news, events, and important announcements.

Technical support is provided through a leading, independent provider of technical support services to schools across the Northwest. They deliver this support through a mixture of on-site and remote support, software solutions for internet filtering and monitoring, and curriculum support provided by qualified teaching staff.

Demonstrating Impact on Learning and Teaching

The school is working hard to ensure that effective practice is evaluated and shared within the staff team. The use of external experts to team teach specialist areas of the coding curriculum alongside school teaching staff means that staff are constantly developing their own skills.

All members of the school community are convinced of the impact that technology has had on the learning that takes place. Particular areas that were celebrated included the new computing scheme of work from MGL and the use of digital activities to improve cross-curricular learning such as DoodleMaths, Book Creator and Dance Mat Typing

In addition to recognising their excellent practice, the school is aware of areas that need further development and routinely discusses these. They have already identified a number of these including investigating the potential of AI both in the curriculum and for aiding administrative tasks. They are currently implementing a new learning platform which will aid parental communication and also speed up the provision of feedback to pupils about their work. A Digital Leaders programme is at the planning stages and this will give older pupils the responsibility of working with other younger pupils on topics such as computing and online safety.

Areas of Strength / Outstanding Practice

Leadership. The team responsible for driving education technology forward in the school is very effective in planning, implementing, and supporting the curriculum. The subject leader is very much valued by his colleagues and has made positive changes during their time in the post. He is well supported by the school leadership.

Use of external expertise to provide real-world experiences. Many examples were given of innovative and engaging experiences provided by external agencies such as Daresbury Laboratories and MGL. These help children to understand the real-world applications of technology and the need for skills in these areas.

Teaching and Curriculum. The computing curriculum is well-planned and passionately delivered. Staff are constantly striving to improve and extend the use of technology, and are working as a coherent team to deliver this.

Future

Implement Digital Leaders programme: The school has already identified a desire to do this, and it would help greatly in their drive to improve the use of educational technology across the school. The Knowlsley Digital Leaders Starters Toolkit gives some useful information about how to develop this, alternatively, commercial schemes such as the Childnet Digital Leaders Programme can provide a structure for this.

Develop coherent cloud policy: Currently, there is a mix of server-based and cloud-based storage in use, with most administration and planning documents stored on-site. Moving these to the cloud would bring significant benefits including flexibility, collaboration, increased efficiency, and cost reductions. The DfE document 'Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges' gives practical guidance on how to approach this.

Continue to develop innovation: The school is already informally investigating the use of Artificial Intelligence and has considered technologies such as VR and AR, in addition to the extremely good work being delivered through the curriculum by staff and external experts. These cutting-edge activities should be further investigated and used where they deliver tangible benefits.

Report taken from NAACE website: [Audits | NAACE](#)