

A 'whole school' approach to tech at Devonport

What it means to be an Edtech Demonstrator school

Claire Buckler has taught both ICT and Computer Science for over 16 years, and is Director of Learning Commons at Devonport High School for Boys. She's a member of the CAS Board and is a Google Level 2 Educator and Coach, Raspberry Pi Educator and NCCE Facilitator. She told us more about how Devonport High School for Boys has recently become an Edtech Demonstrator school, and about its 'whole school' approach to tech, including its student Digital Leader scheme and its tech-approach to its library facilities. Claire explained more:

"Devonport High School for Boys is a happy and vibrant grammar school for boys aged 11-18 (and girls in the Sixth Form). Our vision, whatever anyone's role in the school or personal ambition, is that 'Everyone Succeeds'. We have been a worldwide Google reference school since 2015 and more recently have been awarded Edtech Demonstrator status and offer peer-to-peer support for digital strategy.

In order for us to ensure that all of our community have access to the digital tools that they need to succeed, we have invested in a full fibre-based network refresh, inclusive of new switches and access points across the site, this ensures that we have a solid technology foundation and as a result we now have a 1:1 chromebook scheme for all years and provide every teacher and support staff member with a chromebook, all of this has enabled us to provide a collaborative, effective and dynamic learning environment for the 1,250 students in the school.

For our students, their journey with digital skills starts as soon as we enrol them into the school in Year 6 and they are invited to complete an online quest during the summer to familiarise themselves with the essential tools they need for their time as students. We provide students with a clear pathway which rewards them with digital badges and they can progress from a Tech Level 1 to 3 throughout their time with us and although we are a google school, the skills are transferable digital skills that they can take with them and include spreadsheets, forms, word processing, presentation software and file structure. Not only is this a great start to becoming digitally literate, it means that our students can feel part of our community long before coming into school in September, helping to ease any transition worries.

As a school our journey started in 2013 with the introduction of a Digital Leader scheme, which is still one of our flagship student leadership initiatives. These are students who interview formally for the position and if successful they take on the role of an IT help desk technician, who are responsible for many of the day-to-day issues that we experience here, which are mainly user support tickets. This means that our actual IT support staff are free to work on bigger infrastructure issues and also teachers will often have IT support in their own classroom as we have a large cohort across all the year groups. Digital Leaders also take on projects for us, including converting old desktop PCs to cloud ready machines, producing whole-school assemblies, completing the admin for student Chromebook repairs, and online safety sessions for peers.

A few years later and the library was converted into a Learning Commons, a space where students could still read, but one where technology was at the heart. The space was modelled on tech giants in silicon valley and boasts two floors with 60 chromebooks, flexible working space, private booth and even walls that can be written like whiteboards. The Learning Commons is often booked out by teachers who enjoy the freedom that the space offers and the creativity that it inspires, over that of a traditional classroom. Since the introduction of Google for Education we have built time for teachers to upskill and gain their Certified Educator status and are now confident to use technology in

creative and innovative ways, across the whole of our curriculum. As a school we can be confident that students are having ample opportunity to put these skills into practice even if they do not continue with a GCSE in Computer Science. No one has been left out, we have ensured that our back office staff have had a day's training with a google certified trainer, so that our whole community can work together collaboratively. A great example of this is the Sports Day management, where students sign up for events in google forms, the sheets are then used to populate the program and also used to record and populate the results sheets which will automatically work out the winner. This is a collaboration between our PE admin staff and a number of digital leaders.



We have progressively moved all our services to the cloud and removed all PC suites from the school. We now have flexible working spaces in all classrooms, with the exception of two suites with larger screens and chromeboxes which are used for Design Technology. All subjects including Computer Science are now taught with software in the cloud. This has not only saved huge amounts of money and time, but also allows students to practice skills at home, or whenever and wherever they choose.

We feel that we have a great relationship with technology at DHSB, as it is all around us, our community is confident in its use and it allows us to inspire an innovative and entrepreneurial spirit in all our students and as such, it is a privilege to be part of the Edtech demonstrator programme. This programme, developed by the DfE is working to ensure schools and colleges across England can access free advice from education technology specialists - it is our pleasure to provide advice and solutions around everything from reducing teacher workload to helping implement a whole school digital strategy. "

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