

# Digital Strategy for Schools 2015-2020

## Enhancing Teaching Learning and Assessment. Implementation.

A new “Digital Strategy for Schools 2015-2020, Enhancing Teaching, Learning and Assessment” was published in October 2015. The new Digital Strategy builds on previous work and supports the overall strategy of the Department in a number of key areas including curriculum implementation, skills development, teacher education and learner outcomes.

The Strategy is the result of extensive research and consultation and reflects the views of education stakeholders including management bodies, principals, teachers, students, parents. The Strategy sets out a clear vision that is focused on realising the potential of digital technologies to transform the learning experiences of students by helping them become engaged thinkers, active learners, knowledge constructors and global citizens who participate fully in society and the economy.

The Strategy is underpinned by five key principles which were identified during the consultation and research phase namely:

- A Constructivist Pedagogical Orientation underpins the embedding of ICT in schools. This involves the use of more active teaching methodologies in schools.
- The use of ICT in teaching, learning and assessment can enhance the learning experience of all students
- The use of ICT in teaching, learning and assessment is embedded in school curricula, Department policies and teacher education
- ICT is used in an ethical and responsible manner
- ICT Planning is required to ensure ICT integration in teaching, learning and assessment.

These principles are designed to ensure that the Department together with its relevant agencies and support services, schools, colleges of education and other key stakeholders play a proactive role in enhancing teaching, learning and assessment through the use of digital technologies.

The Strategy is organised around four themes, under each of which are a set of objectives, actions, timeline and clear lead responsibility for delivery. A brief outline of those is given at the end of this document.

Planning for the implementation of the Strategy is underway involving relevant sections of the Department, its agencies and support services and schools. Appropriate oversight and consultative structures are being established which will include a Consultative Advisory Group comprising representatives from School Management bodies, principals, teachers, students, parents and other relevant stakeholders. An Executive Summary of the Strategy and the list of goals and objectives can be found on the Department's website, at the ICT in Schools, Digital Strategy page. The information on that page will be updated and maintained to inform schools of progress in implementing the Strategy objectives. The full Strategy is contained on the Department's website at <http://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/Digital-Strategy-for-Schools-2015-2020.pdf>.

The Department and its agencies will work together to provide the necessary support to schools to facilitate the embedding of ICT into teaching, learning and assessment. School leaders and teachers have a responsibility for the implementation of the Strategy so that the learning experience of students is enhanced through the use of ICT.

### **Theme 1: Teaching, Learning and Assessment Using ICT**

Objectives under this theme include the **UNESCO ICT Competency Framework for Teachers** adapted for Irish context and piloted, the **E-Learning planning resource** for schools updated, provision of advice and guidance for teacher and schools including examples of good practice on the use of ICT for teaching, learning and assessment, inclusion of clear statements regarding digital skills and learning outcomes in new curriculum specification and high quality digital content available to support learning and teaching

### **Theme 2: Teacher Professional Learning**

Objectives under this theme include the use of ICT for teaching learning and assessment to be embedded at each stage of the continuum of teacher education; Department policies on teacher education to recognise the role and potential of ICT to enhance teaching and learning; Department-funded support services and related bodies to embed the use of ICT in Continuous Professional Development (CPD) design, development and delivery and guidance and examples of good practice on the effective, critical and ethical use of ICT for teaching, learning and assessment be provided to and shared by teachers.

### **Theme 3: Leadership, Research and Policy**

Key actions under this theme include the establishment of Structures to provide oversight of and guidance on the implementation of the Strategy; policies and programmes of the Department and its agencies to promote the role and potential of ICT to enhance teaching, learning and assessment, School Leadership and Planning and research as a driver of policy.

### **Theme 4: ICT Infrastructure**

This theme addresses internet connectivity, access to computing devices and other technologies, technical support and maintenance and purchasing and procurement.

All post primary schools have high speed broadband and the emphasis now will be a focus on its effective use for teaching and learning. A key priority for the Strategy will be to continue to improve broadband connectivity in primary schools under the existing Broadband Programme and to collaborate with the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources for further enhancement. The new Digital Strategy recognises that school equipment requires updating and investing. Accordingly, a fund of €210m has been committed beginning with an investment of €30m in the next school year (2016/2017) rising to €50m a year thereafter. The exact nature of the equipment and infrastructure to be funded will be confirmed and announced at a later date.