Lehinch Primary and Lehinch Little Learners

Lissatava, Hollymount, Co. Mayo.

Roll No.: 05120L

Date of Validation: 24th March 2017.

Time of Arrival: 10.30 a.m.

Departure: 12.30 p.m.

Leadership and Vision

Lehinch National School, Hollymount, Co. Mayo is a one teacher school. There are 11 pupil in the main classroom. From the moment I entered this school I knew that I had never before been in a school like this. All the children were working on different ICT devices and it was obvious that they were absorbed in and enjoying their work. Notwithstanding that this is a one teacher school with only eleven pupils I felt I was observing the classroom of the 21st Century. I observed active and collaborative learning, peer teaching, problem solving research and project work. Pupils were engaged with i-Pads- researching and creating projects using Google Slides. I observed floor robots controlled by sensors. I observed the Raspberry Pi which is a mini computer. Pupils used it to power and control a simple external device using Scratch 1.4. There was so much going on in this classroom and that is as a result of the leadership and vision of Class Teacher

and Principal Ms Sheila Jennings. The school is now engaged and linked with Trinity College in a 21st Century Teaching and Learning Programme. This involves exploring modern teaching and learning methodologies to make learning fun, active and team based - allowing student to present their work to an audience and use reflection to assess their progress.

There is no doubt that Lehinch National School recognises that access to ICT gives the pupils enhanced opportunities to learn, engage, communicate and develop skills that will prepare them for many aspects of life.

ICT in the Curriculum

In Lehinch National School ICT is integrated across a wide range of curricular subjects and supports the Key Principals of the Primary School Curriculum. As this is a one teacher school, teaching and learning is very much integrated across all the age groups.

Briathra and Bua na Cainte is used for Irish Language and verb development. Cúla Caint 2 and Pog mo Fón is used to improve oral Irish. Spelling City is used to improve English Spellings and vocabulary. Sight Words, Story Cubes and Kindle Literacy are some of the other apps used to develop literacy across all ages. During Maths lessons pupils use Maths Bingo, Khan Academy and Think 3D. Pupils demonstrated how Minecraft on the Raspberry Pi is used to enhance SESE projects like building the Temple of Inscriptions from the Mayan Civilisation and the Taj Mahal after completing a study of India. I was very

impressed by the students who built a circuit to get LED bulbs flashing using Scratch 1.4 and the Raspberry Pi; also their ability in building and manipulating a robot which demonstrated higher order thinking and problem solving. The MakeBlock app is used to gain credits towards various levels of manipulation with the robot. MakeBlock is also for general control of the MakeBlock Robot. Students explained how they use Google Drive to share and send their files at home and in school. They also showed their record of work within their personal folders. Pupils also demonstrated how Kahoot is used for 21st Century Assessment and Learning in the classroom. Finally some junior pupils demonstrated the Chatterpix app for the development and improvement of Oral Language in English and Irish. The children use Animoto to create simple video presentations using i-movie, Garage Band and I photo. Duck Duck Go, Duckster, Britannica and The World Book are some of the websites used for research. Finally Learning Support is in class and all ICT devices and appropriate apps and software are available for pupils in need of extra help.

School ICT Culture

It is very obvious that there is a culture of ICT in Lehinch National School. Technology is deeply embedded in the fabric of this school and every day they are pushing the boundaries of ICT.

The school has a very colourful up to date Website that shows off the newly refurbished school. The school suffered a fire in 2015. The beautifully restored school has a pre-school incorporated into the building. The website is located at www.lehinchprimary.org. The website has links to the school's Facebook and Twitter pages. The schools social networking sites are updated daily. This gives increased traffic to their website. Facebook connects to the school community e.g. an upcoming event, student school awards, a visitor of note to the school or a trip which supports the curriculum. The Twitter page is used to engage with other schools and educators in Ireland and across the globe. They have developed communication with a school in Japan and share ideas on Scratch and Minecraft. The school takes part in the Daily Mile initiative and share walks with their followers promoting the importance of mindfulness and well being in a learning environment. The school has its own YouTube channel where it displays recently made films – Sa Siopa, Sa Bialann and Scrudú Béal. Ms Jennings also demonstrates various lessons on this YouTube channel. The school used Skype to communicate with Blackrock Education Centre to promote the Daily Mile Initiative. The school publishes an online school calendar and digital newsletter. Parents are notified by text with a link to the newsletter allowing them immediate access from a Smartphone. Notices are also posted on Facebook and Twitter. Group e-mail contacts have been set up with all the parents. End of year reports are done electronically as well as school policies, plans and progress reports.
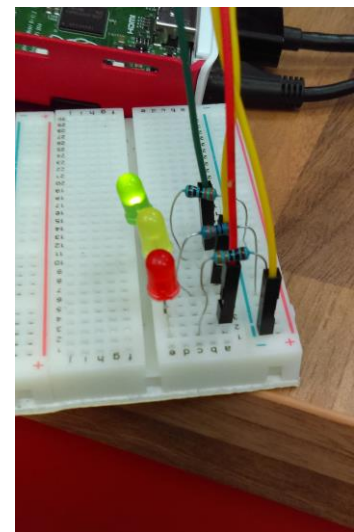
The ICT Culture in this school is exceptional. The school has an extensive AUP available to view on their website www.lehinchprimary.org. The school

recognises the importance of online collaboration with other schools and the use of online educational websites but it also is aware of the dangers that are ever present in cyberspace. The school is very much aware of the dangers of cyber-bullying and has repeatedly communicated these dangers to parents and pupils and the steps and procedures to follow if cyber-bullying becomes an issue. Clear sanctions are set out for any misbehaviour and improper use of the school ICT network. General consent forms are circulated at the beginning of each school year. In this way parents and pupils are aware of their duties and obligations.

Personal Development

It is patently obvious that the Principal cum ICT co-ordinator Ms Jennings enjoys a high skill level and a dedication to furthering ICT in her school. Not only has she attended courses in her local Education Centre in Castlebar but she has attended ICT courses outside this country. She attended a course in Liverpool on the Raspberry Pi. She is a recognised Raspberry Pi Certified Educator. The Raspberry Pi is a small computer with GP 10 pins which allow the user to communicate between the computer and the physical world. A video on the school You Tube channel demonstrates the many uses of the Raspberry Pi in the classroom.

Resources and Infrastructure

Notwithstanding that the school has been involved in an expensive restoration and has some debts still outstanding; the resources and infrastructure are second to none. The pupils enjoy the use of 2 mini ipads, 1 ipad pro, 1 surface pro, 1 HP laptop, 4 Acer notebooks, 6 Raspberry Pi, 3 Edukits (these include basic electronic components to carry out GP 10 functions with the Raspberry Pi e.g. LED lights, jumper wires, resistors, buzzers and breadboards), 1 Interactive Projector, 1 HP wireless printer, 1 Xerox printer and photocopier on contract, 1 iphone 6. BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) – 2 Lenova tablets, 1 HP stream laptop, 1 iphone 4, 5 MBots (robots to build and manipulate through an app and Scratch), 1 Lego Mindstorms Kit. The school has an extensive software inventory available. The ICT Whole School Policy is available to view on their website www.lehinchprimary.org under the School Policies tab.

Conclusion

Lehinch Primary is testament to what can be achieved in a small one teacher school. I could have spent a day enjoying the many effective uses of ICT in their classroom. The competence and skill displayed and demonstrated by all the pupils was a joy to behold. The manner in which all ages collaborated and communicated was inspiring. Lehinch Primary meets all the criteria for the Digital Schools of Distinction Status and I have no reservation in recommending them for the DsOD Award. Finally I would like to thank Principal/class teacher/ICT co-ordinator Ms Shelia Jennings for welcoming me

to the school and demonstrating how a small one teacher school can excel at ICT beyond expectations.