Meánscoil na mBráithre Críostaí
Sráid Shéamais, Cill Chainnigh.

C.B.S. Secondary School
James's Street, Kilkenny.

May 2025

Digital Learning Plan Review

Introduction

This Digital Learning Plan has been developed to prepare and plan for the use of digital technologies to enhance teaching, learning, assessment and reporting, particularly in the context of the new school development. This plan was informed by the Department of Education's 'Digital Strategy for Schools to 2027' and the Digital Learning Framework.

The vision of CBS Secondary School Kilkenny for our Digital Learning Plan at its core to improve the digital literacy of all staff and students. We undertook a digital learning evaluation in our school during the period September 2023 to October 2023. We evaluated our progress using the following sources of evidence:

- Evaluation of the existing Digital Learning Plan (concluded its SSE-SIP cycle in May 2023).
- Discussion by the Digital Learning Team and SMT.
- Quantitative survey of teachers.

Rationale

This interim report evaluates progress made during the 2023-2024 academic year on the targets and actions outlined in the CBS Secondary School Kilkenny Digital Learning Plan (2024-2027). It integrates findings from surveys, collaborative sessions, and observations to reflect on successes, identify gaps, and provide recommendations for the upcoming academic year. The focus remains on refining implementation without significant redirection.

Areas of Focus for Digital Learning Plan

Dimension: Leadership & Management	**Domain 3:** Leading School Development
Standard: ● Manage, lead and mediate change to respond to the evolving needs of the school and to changes in education.	
Statement of Practice: ● The principal and other leaders in the school are informed by research, national policy, and technological developments and proactively adapt to changes in context or policy environment.	
Target: ● Research and critically evaluate alternative educational cloud-based platforms for their functionality and productivity in teaching, learning and assessment in the context of the new school development.	

Based on the targets and data gathered through school visits, discussions with SMT, networking with professional associations and networks and quantitative surveys of staff and students outlined in the **Digital Learning Plan (2024-2027)** for CBS Secondary School Kilkenny, the decision has been made **not** to migrate solely to Microsoft but instead to maintain a dual-cloud platform using both **Google and Microsoft**. The rationale behind this decision is driven by several key factors:

1. **Cost Efficiency** – The financial burden of a full migration to Microsoft is significant. The costs associated with licensing, training, infrastructure upgrades, and potential ongoing IT support outweigh the benefits of a single-platform approach.
2. **Historical Data Preservation** – A complete transition to Microsoft would risk **data loss** or require substantial efforts in migrating historical coursework, files, and resources that are currently well-integrated within Google's ecosystem.
3. **IT Challenges & Stability** – Persistent IT problems have been identified with Microsoft's systems in past implementations.
4. **Versatility & Flexibility** – Google's cloud-based tools (Docs, Drive, Classroom, and Meet) are widely used among staff and students for collaboration, while Microsoft Office applications (Word, Excel, OneNote) are beneficial for specific coursework, such as the **Microsoft Office Specialist certification**. Keeping both platforms allows for **adaptability in different learning and administrative tasks**.
5. **Ease of File Sharing** – The **complicated and cumbersome** nature of file sharing between Microsoft and Google platforms was a significant concern in the evaluation process. A hybrid model enables seamless cross-platform collaboration without requiring a complete restructuring of file management systems.
6. **Storage Considerations** – The storage costs associated with a full Microsoft migration were deemed **unjustifiable** compared to the current cloud-based system that leverages **Google Drive** for coursework, resource sharing, and digital portfolios.
7. **Support for LC Digital Coursework** – Leaving Google entirely would disrupt the existing workflow for **Leaving Certificate coursework booklets**, which currently operate efficiently across both platforms.
8. **Staff Training & Resistance** – The **training requirements** and anticipated **resistance** from staff to an exclusive Microsoft system were also considered. Many teachers and students are already well-versed in **Google's interface**, and a sudden shift would require extensive professional development, taking time away from effective teaching.

Dimension: Teaching & Learning	**Domain 4:** Teachers' Collective / Collaborative Practice
Standard: ● Teachers contribute to building on whole staff capacity by sharing their expertise. ● Teachers value and engage in professional development and professional collaboration.	
Statements of Practice: ● Teachers lead and support colleagues within the school to develop a shared vision of how digital technologies can enhance learning opportunities for all students. ● Teachers engage in professional development, lead and support colleagues in selecting and aligning digital technologies with effective teaching strategies to expand learning opportunities for all students. ● Teachers collaboratively effect change at a whole school level to innovate and improve educational practice, through the embedding of a range of digital technologies in teaching and learning.	
Target: ● Increase teacher competence and confidence in digital technologies with a view to enhancing their leadership capacity.	

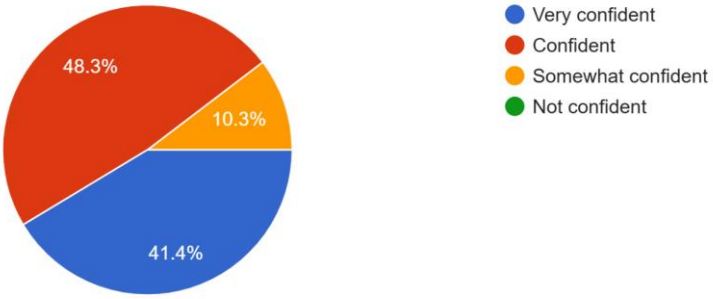
Key Achievements

1. Strengthening Digital Literacy & Adoption

- Just over 90% of teachers feel either confident or somewhat confident in using digital tools, technologies in their teaching with an improvement of nearly 7% of teachers using digital technologies in most lessons.
- Nearly 50% of teachers stated that digital technology tools have enhanced their teaching and learning. This is a 7% increase from last year.
- The percentage of teachers who stated that students are using digital technologies for their CBAs has increased by over 7% with a higher percentage using Google Suite as opposed to Microsoft Office.

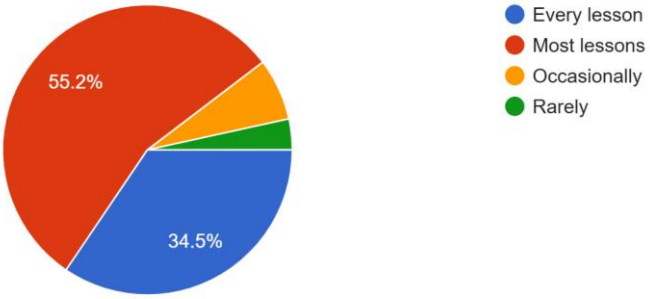
Q1. How confident do you feel using digital technologies in your teaching?

29 responses



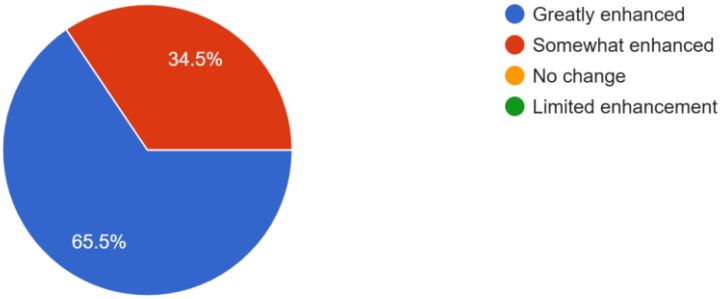
Q2. How frequently do you incorporate digital technologies into your lessons?

29 responses



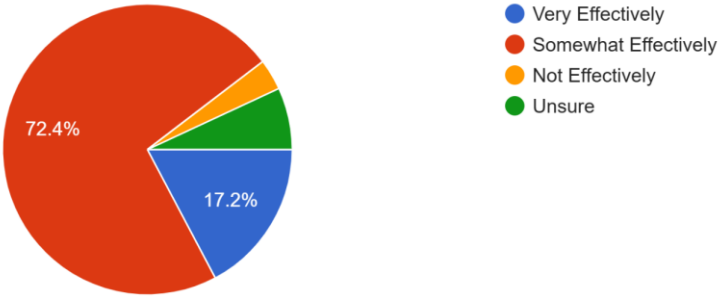
Q3. To what extent do you believe digital learning tools have enhanced your teaching and learning?

29 responses



Q10. How effectively do students engage with digital tools for their CBAs (Classroom-Based Assessments) in your subject?

29 responses

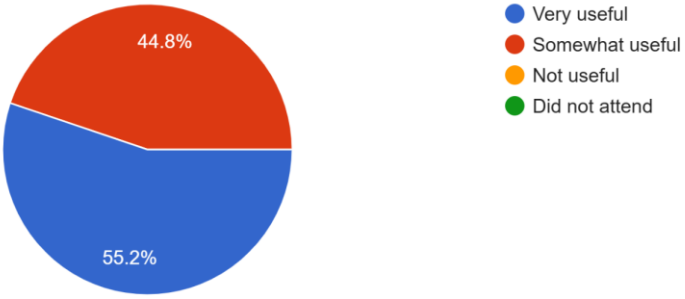


2. Enhancing Collaboration & Professional Development

- Over 55% of teachers found the learning opportunities offered (workshops, TeachMeets etc) were very useful, this is a 4% increase from last year.
- Teachers stated that they would like additional training AI in education, Google Suite, Coding and Computer Science tools and Microsoft 365.

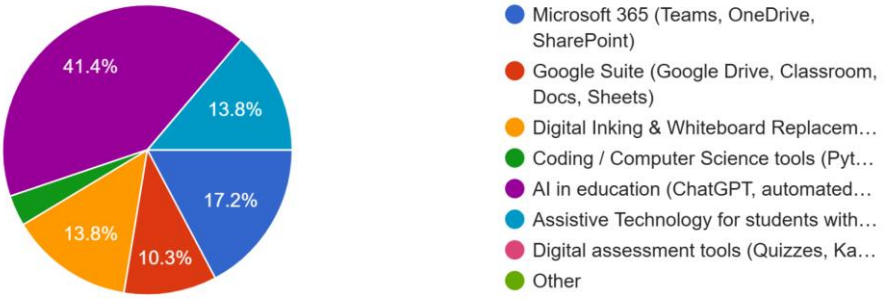
Q5. The professional learning opportunities (training, workshops, TeachMeets) provided for staff were:

29 responses



Q6. What areas of digital technology would you like additional training (TPL) on?

29 responses



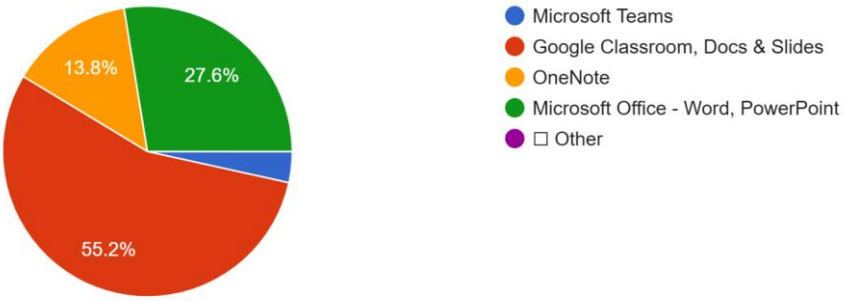
Challenges & Areas for Growth

1. Inconsistent Digital Tool Adoption and Usage

- While the percentage of teachers using Google Suite has increased, the percentage using Microsoft Office (particularly OneNote) has decreased slightly. We are predominantly a Google school and the fact that the percentage of teachers using Google Suite has increased is a positive outcome. However we feel there are some aspects of Microsoft Office that should see an increase in use such as Onenote. This is a powerful classroom tool and is widely used in and perhaps the percentage of staff using this resource should increase going forward.
- Technical issues, insufficient digital equipment and lack of time to explore have been stated as a factor preventing some teachers implementing digital technologies in the classroom. The digital learning committee are in the process of procurement of new devices for staff for the next academic year and researching the benefit of interactive screens for specific specialist rooms in the new school development.

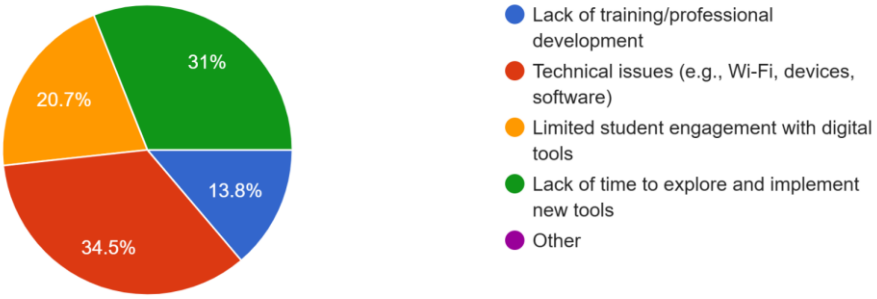
Q12. Which digital platform do you personally prefer for teaching and assessment?

29 responses



Q4. What barriers have you encountered when implementing digital learning?

29 responses

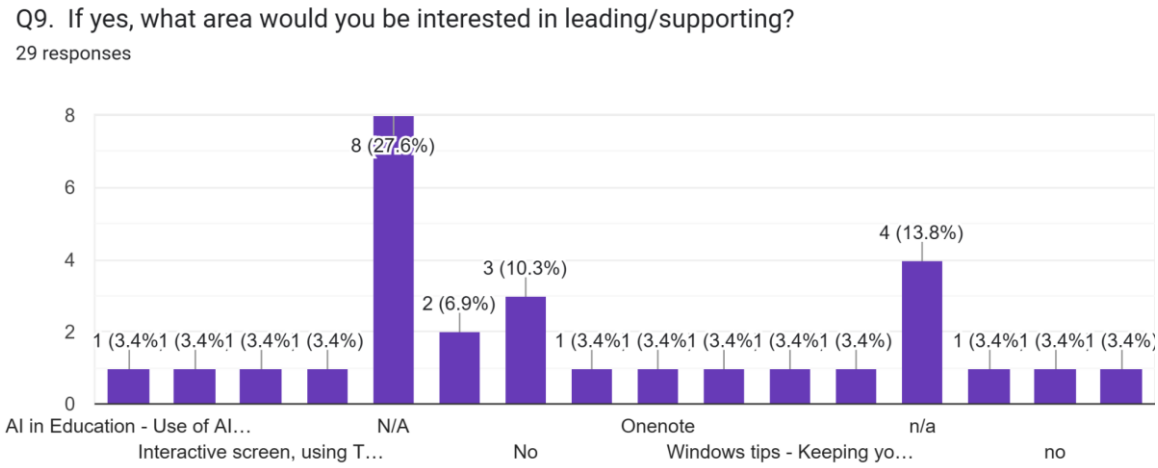


2. Limited Teacher Leadership in Professional Learning

Q8. Would you be interested in leading a session or mentoring others in digital learning?

29 responses

- The percentage of staff that would like to lead a TeachMeet session and/or mentor others in digital learning has stayed the same however the percentage who are not interested has increased nearly 7%. This indicates that some staff are still not fully confident in their ability to use digital technologies. This is an area to improve on going forward.



- The majority who said that they would be interested in leading a session did not state what area they would like to lead (typed N/A or No). Also only 1 teacher stated that they would be interested in leading a session on AI in education. This is an area that can be improved on going forward.

3. TeachMeet Refinement

- Increase targeted TeachMeet sessions with longer, hands-on workshops, allowing teachers to practice digital skills in real time. TeachMeet to be scheduled for the end of this year or start of the next academic year.

Conclusion

The 2024-2025 academic year demonstrated meaningful progress in digital learning practices, particularly in the percentage of staff who use digital technologies in the classroom and believe that it enhances their teaching and learning. Also the increase in the percentage of students using digital technologies in their JC CBA work is a success. This should have a positive impact on teaching and learning for students Senior Cycle with the imminent introduction of project work to all leaving cert subjects, student use of digital technologies will be vitally important. This proves we have seen an increase in teacher competence and confidence in digital technologies.

Technical issues were cited as a barrier to using digital technologies in the classroom. The digital learning committee and school management are in the process of procuring new devices for staff and students in a new school. It is the hope of the committee that these upgrades will alleviate those issues.

Teachers leading specific areas of digital technology use is an area for improvement. As the survey indicated, teachers are more confident in using digital technologies in the classroom and they do see the benefits to the students, there is still a gap to bridge in teacher confidence in sharing their knowledge/experience with staff and enhancing their leadership capacity in showcasing these resources to teachers via TeachMeets, staff meetings etc. Perhaps more CPD could be offered and TeachMeets could be set up on a more formal basis to upskill staff (particularly in the area of AI in schools). This is an area for the committee to improve on going forward.

All in all we feel we have increased teacher competence and confidence in digital technologies however there may be some more work to do in enhancing their leadership capacity through the use of digital technologies.