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ECIE6002

Moving away from the traditional classroom – The silent digital revolution in education



(De Pau, 2024).

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(Welsh Government, 2015).

#Blog1

From chalkboards to keyboards, Wales goes digital 📢 💻



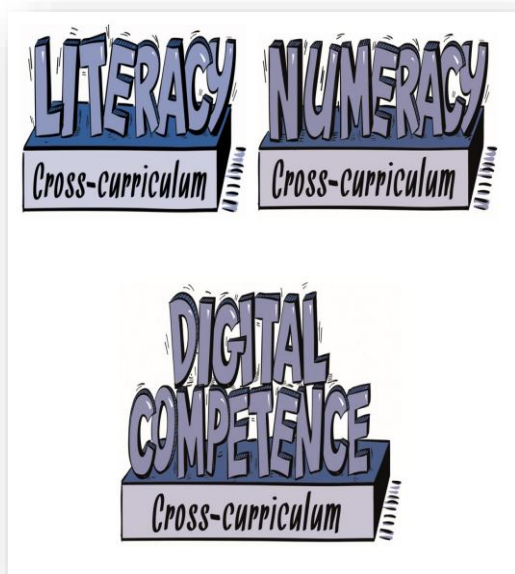
(UNICEF, 2017).

Are you a technophobe like my parents? Who do not own a mobile phone and still use the "house phone" daily. Or have you embraced the digital era like the children of Wales?

Are you aware of the 21st century buzzword "Digital competency?" When Professor Graham Donaldson published his 2015 report *Successful Futures*, it sparked a digital revolution in Welsh education (Welsh Government, 2015). The Welsh Government responded by creating a framework to help schools develop pupils' digital competence across all subjects

of the Welsh Curriculum — because in today's classrooms, being “tech savvy” isn’t just for the computer lab anymore! (Welsh Government, 2015).

“The ability to mix technical knowledge with solving real-world problems is the key...” (p. 21 Welsh Government, 2015)



(School B, n,d).

Donaldson (2015) highlighted the importance for digital competence to be treated as a cross -curricular responsibility, equal in importance to literacy and numeracy within Welsh schools. His recommendations laid the groundwork for the Curriculum for Wales and directly inspired the development of the Digital

Competence Framework (DCF) (2020), which has grown to be a **pivotal role** in education throughout education settings in Wales for **all learners** aged 3 to 16 (Welsh Government, 2015; 2020; 2022; 2022a; School A,

2025; 2025b; DfES, 2003; Crick, 2021 *as cited in* Meace-Williams, 2024).

Being digitally competent is a must for children these days - us adults too! Learners stay informed, confident, and capable in a world where technology is ubiquitous and changing fast - faster than a PDF! *ha!* (Welsh Parliament, 2016; Welsh Government, 2019; 2020; 2022; 2022a; School A, 2025; 2025b; UNICEF, 2025).



All sound very confusing I know, but in a nutshell the Digital Competence Framework (DCF) in Welsh Education strives to engage children safely and meaningfully in today's digital world (Department for Education, 2025; Welsh Government, 2015; 2022; 2022a; DfES, 2003; School A, 2025b, UNICEF, 2025).

Let's look at Information and Communication Technology (ICT). ICT is everywhere we look today, from mobile phones, laptops, computers, apps for this and passwords for that. I don't know how you feel about it all, but I feel it can get a bit overwhelming - *as I type this my smart watch has just pinged to tell me to move as my steps are low today haha!* I'm not ashamed to say in the classroom ICT can be a bit challenging as an adult! The children regularly have to show me how to navigate when it involves laptops, I pad or interactive whiteboards. Maybe I need to go back a progression step 🤔 or take relevant training. Although I am lucky and have the ICT Coordinator on speed dial – fair play he is always willing to help and support all staff as and when needed. Not all staff (particularly the older generation) are competent in

digital skills themselves, but they do attend courses when offered to improve their own digital competencies – although digital skills courses offered are few and far between here in Wales - *a bit like the WIFI signal!*



(Tomlin, 2019).

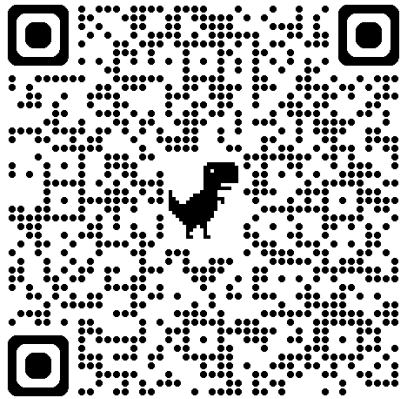
Digital Literacy

The Digital Competence Framework (DCF) (2020) promotes 4 essential pillars in Welsh educational settings:

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------------------------|
| ✓ Citizenship | ✓ Data and Computational thinking |
| ✓ Producing | ✓ Interacting and collaborating |

Children in Wales progress through the progression steps of the **Digital Competence Framework (2020)** rather than their chronological age group. Children then transition to next progression step when they have confidently mastered the previous step. Wish I could say the same for all education staff,

with all the austerity measures in education at the moment there is never time or money to train us staff, so like I said earlier my main teachers are the children!

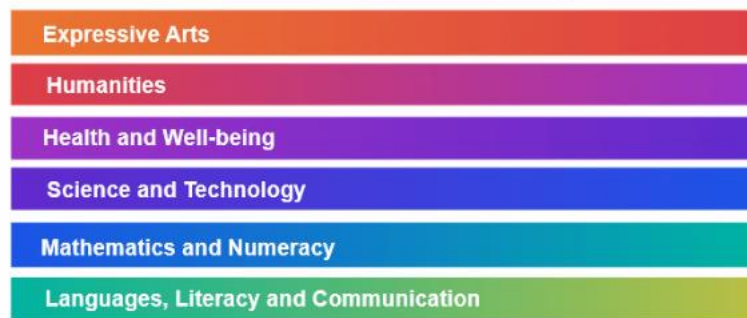


Please scan the qr code if you would like to delve deeper into the **Digital Competence Framework (2020)**.

The all-new Welsh curriculum (2022)

As you may already know, the new curriculum for Wales (2022) introduced 6 strands of learning including digital competency. The new curriculum for Wales (2022) allows educators more scope to implement the use of ICT throughout the school day. Anything from logging what they would like for lunch on the interactive whiteboard, completing a school survey via a qr code or by logging into their personal “HWB” account to send an email (School A, 2025; 2025a; 2025b; Welsh Government, 2015, 2016; 2020; 2022; 2022a; 2022b, Carroll *et al.*, 2023, UNICEF, 2025, Education Endowment Foundation, 2021). The 6 areas can be viewed below.

Areas of learning and experience



(Pembrokeshire Outdoor Schools, 2020).

From Posters to Power Point presentations

Teachers incorporate these 4 pillars into their pedagogical expertise daily. For instance, instead of drawing a poster for bonfire night they may make a poster on Adobe and print the poster out to put up around the school. Another example could be sending an email to their teacher requesting their homework. Children also make a Power Point Presentation on whatever they have been learning about that week and using their existing knowledge (Piaget, 1962 *as cited in* Cohen & Waite-Stupiansky, 2022, Mills, 2010b: 246 *as cited in* Mills, 2015). to demonstrate their understanding on the subject. It seems to work quite well in a typical Year 4/5 class at School A, however saying that it can depend on the Wi-Fi that particular day as to if it all runs smoothly and children can actually get online! This fits in appropriately with the new Welsh Curriculum (Welsh Government, 2022) shaped by the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Welsh Government, 2015) digital skills are part of fulfilling nearly every well-being goal. As educators, we understand each child is unique and has a different learning style and pace (Writer, 2022). **Digital skills can boost creativity and innovative ideas**

for all learners. This can increase career opportunities and workplace credibility later on in their lives which are essential for a more 'Prosperous Wales' (Estyn, 2019; Welsh Government, 2015; 2020; 2020a, 2025, School A, 2024a; 2025; 2025a; 2025b, UNICEF, 2025, Education Endowment Foundation, 2021).

 **Are you a digital native or novice? Or maybe a digital immigrant like myself! 😊**

 **Have you become accustomed to and embracing this forever changing digital world we now live in?**



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(Welsh Government, 2015).

#Blog 2

#Communicating Connections

The good the bad and the WI-FI signal

Let's be honest children of the 21st century can swipe on a screen before they can walk, they can shout "Hello Google" or "Alexa, play baby shark" before they know the alphabet! Welcome to the digital world where children now come with software updates ha!

Generation Alpha

Generation Alpha is the first generation to grow up with smartphones in hand and Wi-Fi in the air. Born into a world of tablets, social media, and instant everything, Tech-savvy and always online, they've mastered digital life before they've mastered writing! (Spasova, 2022, Siemens, 2005).

Most children these days have a smartphone - around **63%** overall. For Year 3, it's less than half (**43%**), but by **Year 6**, it's practically everyone—**5 out of 6** children have one! (Public Health Wales, 2023). Please see image below for more alarming statistics from Ofcom (2023).



(Ofcom, 2023).

So, let's dive in and view the good (and not so good) points of this digital world we speak of 🔍

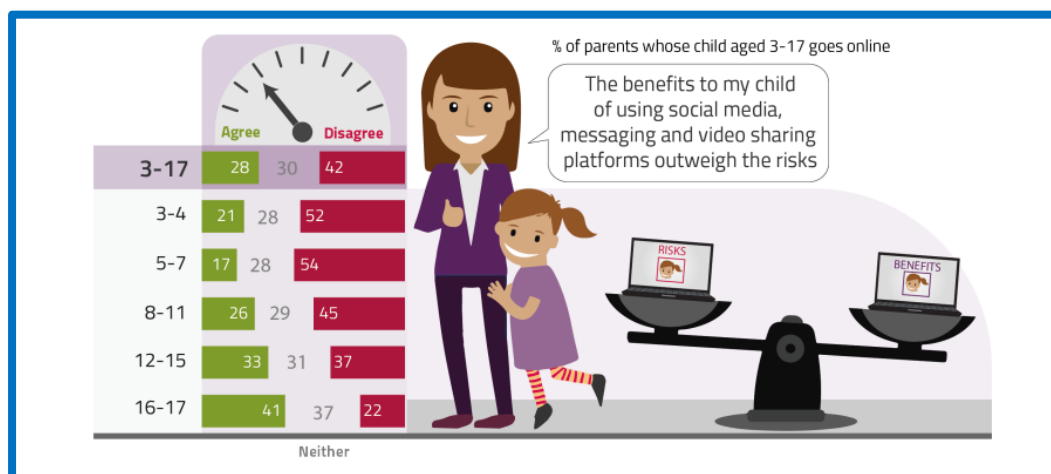
🔊 Remember when you had to carry a bag full of textbooks to school and lug them around all day? Yeah – me too! Fast forward to the digital world and homework is mostly completed “online” whether it's using Google Classroom, YouTube Tutorials and apps like 'Lexia Core - UK' which make learning sounds and phonics fun and engaging. The Department for Education even suggests, Digital competence can aid children to learn in ways that best suit their needs in education settings (DfE, 2022) and should be actively implemented through all 4 purposes of the new Welsh curriculum, both collaboratively and independently (Welsh Government, 2015; 2022; 2022a; 2022b; School A, 2024a; 2024b; 2025; 2025a, Siemens, 2005).



Rashkovan, 2019).

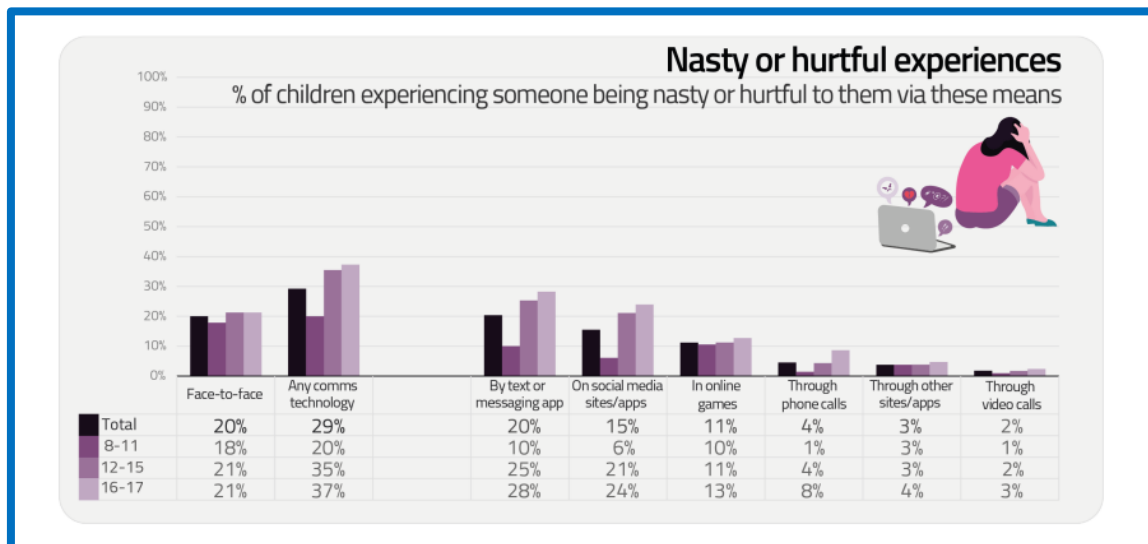
It is no doubt that *Digital Technology* can boost social connections for all children through messaging apps like as *WhatsApp* and *Kinzoo* to maintain positive relationships with peers and families near and far. Interestingly, Ofcom's Tracking Data report in 2023 suggested 23% of parents were unsure messaging apps is a good or bad thing for children. Check out the actual statistics in picture A (below).

Figures from Ofcom (2023) on the benefits of **children between 3 - 17** usage on social media.



(Ofcom, 2023).

Despite all of these positives **the internet can be a hurtful world** 😞 in a survey by Ofcom in 2023, 29% of children aged between 8-11 stating they have received hate and negative comments through online apps (Actual figures in picture B below).



(Ofcom, 2023).

📢 We know that children can use **Digital Technology** to help personalised learning unique to each child. Children need to develop digital literacy to go on to be **successful digital citizens** in the 21st century (Welsh Government, 2015; 2020; 2020a; 2022, School A, 2025a; 2025b, UNICEF, 2025, DfES, 2003, Education Endowment Foundation, 2021).

Collaborating and connecting with peers can boost **“citizenship and participatory culture”** basically children are not just watching and scrolling for hours on the internet, they are taking an active role by commenting, sharing and making their own videos (Jenkins *et al.*, 2006 *as cited in* Davies and Merchant, 2014, Welsh Government, 2015; 2020a; 2022; Education Endowment Foundation, 2021, Siemens, 2005).

McLuhan's Media Matrix 🗨️🔗

In 1964 (I know a long time ago, right?) Marshall McLuhan had an idea called “**Medium is the message**” he believed that the platform we use matters more than the content we watch. Yep, according to him it's not the message that changes us - it's the actual medium (platform) that it is delivered through. *That's right! Marshall (1964) predicted the entire digital world before a modem was even created! Like he had some psychic powers* ✨🧠💜 (McLuhan, 2017).

Polices and procedures to safeguard children of Wales whilst online;

Of course, a lot goes on behind the scenes of keeping children safe using technology within the digital world in education settings in Wales. Staff and Local Councils have many safeguarding procedures to adhere to including children using online activities; see below to a few examples that are implemented daily within Welsh classrooms:

School A policies:

- 📄 Positive Discipline Policy (2024)
- 📄 Strategic Equality Plan (2024a)
- 📄 Additional Learning Need policy (2024b)
- 📄 Safeguarding Policy (2025)
- 📄 Inclusion Policy (2025a)
- 📄 E-Safety Policy (2025b)

Welsh Government Policies:

- 📄 Successful Futures (2015)
- 📄 Digital Competence Framework (2020)
- 📄 Wales Safeguarding Procedures (2020)
- 📄 Empowering Learning through Technology (2020a)
- 📄 Digital Strategy for Wales (2021)
- 📄 Welsh Curriculum (2022)



School B (n,d).

Password Pandemonia

All children have a unique Hwb login (Welsh Government 2019), and this is monitored by local authorities to keep learners safe when online. This works well for older children but can be a challenge to get 22 children logged in at any one time - *as you can imagine!* If children search anything untoward it flags up with the local council, and the headmaster is informed via an email. This ensures all children are kept safe online whilst surfing the web in schools in Wales as we all know safeguarding our children is paramount!

The Hwb digital platform can be accessed both at home and school and offers children and staff a wide range of resources which is part of the Digital Strategy for Wales

(2021) which promotes Digital inclusion for all through 6 missions. The Hwb digital tool allows equal **access** to all teachers and children (School A, 2024a; 2024b; 2025; 2025a; 2025b; 2025c, Welsh Government, 2015; 2019; 2020; 2020a; 2021; 2022; 2022b, 2025 UNICEF, 2025, DfES, 2003, Education Endowment Foundation, 2021, Hayward, 2012, McLuhan, 2017).



To find out more about the Digital Strategy for Wales (2021) and the 6 missions, please scan the qr code! (Welsh Government, 2021).

Where do you think Welsh tech will be in 10years time?

Thank you for reading!

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(Welsh Government, 2015).

#Blog 3

A day in the life of a teaching assistant in Wales; powered by Tea, Technology & Tweens

Have you ever wondered what a Teaching Assistants job role is when it comes to digital learning in classrooms in Wales?

Grab a cuppa, sit back, relax and read on!

My job role as a Teaching Assistant sits somewhere between classroom superhero, IT support and professional chaos- coordinator 💪

Digital learning; AKA Teaching Tech Support

This is where the magic happens with a hint of glitter ✨

I assist children daily within their technology difficulties some call me the *digital wizard!* When in reality I just know powering off and performing a ‘mains reset’ can resolve a lot of problems. I can help children navigate online platforms such as Lexia® and Read,

Write Inc and Winning With Numbers, Google Classroom, Power Point, Microsoft Office - these programmes are infused into children's daily routines to boost **their digital confidence and academic success** (Education Endowment Foundation, 2021, School A, 2025; 2025a; 2025b, Welsh Government, 2015; 2020; 2020a; 2022; 2025, Vygotsky, 1986 *as cited in* Rahman, 2024). Gamification or Game Based Learning (GBL) **can enhance** children's retention of information and **boost self-esteem**, and **motivation** (Caponetto *et al.*, 2014) children can win badges in recognition of their work and compete in online challenges with other children from around the globe. This hybrid learning approach gives **instant feedback** (Smith, 2017 *as cited in* Lester *et al.*, 2023) to children so they can adapt their tactics to progress and **improve their learning outcomes** (Arnold, 2014) and **increase engagement** (Huang and Soman, 2013, School A, 2025; 2025a; 2025b, UNICEF, 2025, Welsh Government, 2015; 2020, 2025, Siemens, 2005).

Gamification has become popular over the last century (Deterding, Dixon, Khaled, & Nacke, 2011 *as cited in* Becker and Nicholson, 2016) with the children of Wales as they are learning through play, they earn rewards as they learn which enhances retention through interactive repetition (Skinner, 2012). Also, tailor's digital experiences to various abilities and learning styles (Welsh Government, 2015; 2020; 2020a; 2021; 2022; 2025, UNICEF, 2025; Education Endowment Foundation, 2021, DfES, 2003; School A, 2024; 2024a; 2024b; 2025; 2025a; 2025b, Siemens, 2005).

Some days this runs smoothly however there are days when I can't resolve technical issues or glitches (*not even with a mains reset!*). Luckily for me (*and the children*), I work alongside the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Coordinator so I can call on him If necessary – *phew!*

*Being a **millennial** myself, over the years I have completed all sorts of training through many different digital apps such as Microsoft Teams – this becoming my unexpected best friend! Microsoft Teams is **flexible** and **versatile** and saves lots of time and is **convenient** for staff members. But honestly? Noone ever really taught me how to use Teams, like everyone during the pandemic; we were just thrown in the deep end and told “you’ll figure it out” and somehow, we all did. 5 years later and countless times of saying: can you hear me? can you see me? I can safely say I have finally mastered Teams 😊 as long as the WI-FI signal plays ball 😊. With many classrooms joining the WI-FI signal and typical Welsh weather i.e. stormy winds and rain can all add to our delicate WI-FI signal in rural Wales. That’s right we still have regular intermittent WI-FI signal in 2025! (Ofcom, 2021 as cited in Cowell, R. and Mukherjee, A., 2023).*



(Fortune, 2015).

Has digital connectivity improved where you live in Wales?

*Google Classroom has been a big hit in Welsh Education settings since the pandemic really, from Docs to Drive and Slides to sheets. Teachers incorporate these popular platforms into their teaching pedagogies daily. For example, children in a year 5 classroom could complete a survey or experiment and record their results and input that information to produce a graph could be pie or line graph to show their results. Modelled by the teacher on the interactive whiteboard which aligns with Albert Banduras Social Learning Theory (1977) (Cherry, 2022 as cited in Firmansyah and Saepuloh, 2022). Children work in pairs to **boost abilities** and **progression steps** through the Digital Competence framework (2020) (Welsh Government, 2015; 2020; 2020a; 2025, Education Endowment Foundation, 2021, UNICEF, 2025, DfES, 2003, School A, 2025a; 2025b, Siemens, 2005). There are never enough devices for each child to work alone due to broken screens or sticky keys! Which can lead to arguments 😬!*

Digital Inclusion

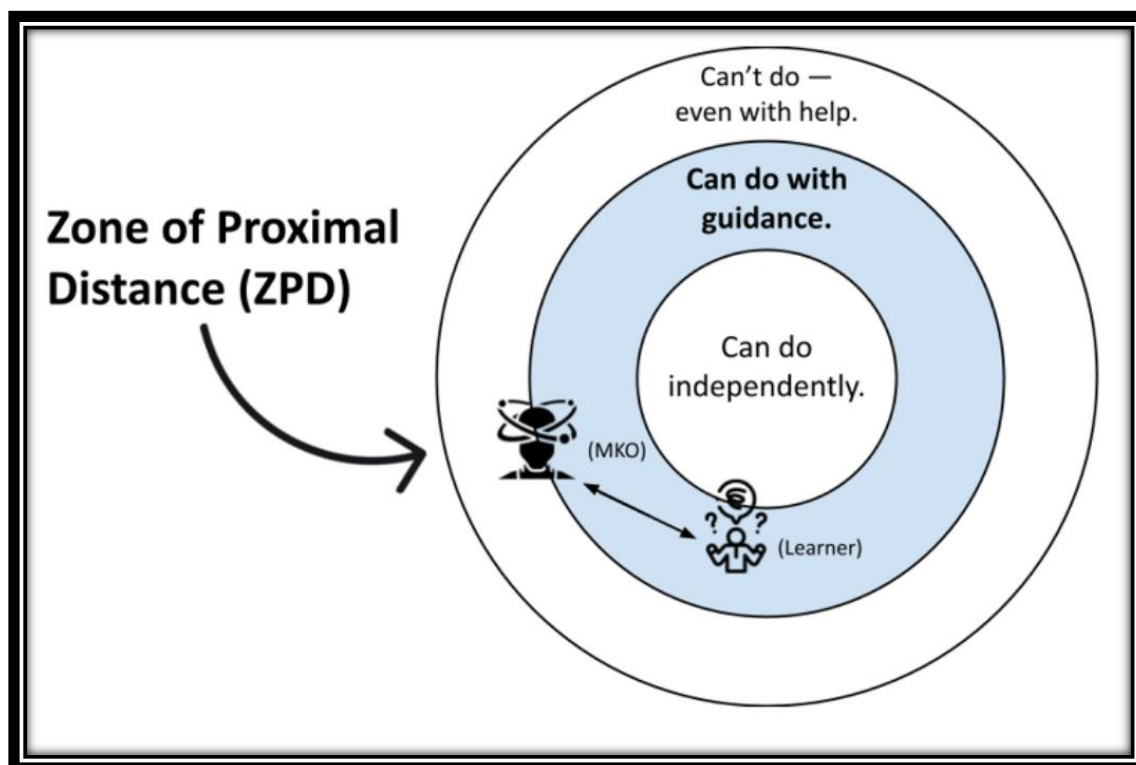


(The Luxembourg Government 2025).

*Children are often asked to make a Power point on knowledge they have learned in a recent topic including text formatting, inserting images and quotes. This can be particularly useful to children who may have complex needs such as Dyslexia and cannot physically write with a pen and paper. Children can also use ‘Text to Speech’ which is a great way of noting children's excellent ideas but struggle to write their wonderful ideas down. These online platforms can **engage learners to build confidence, self-esteem and independence** and ensure no child is left behind (School A, 2025; 2025a; 2025b, Welsh Government, 2015; 2020; 2020a; 2015 2020; 2020a; 2022; 2025, DfES, 2003, UNICEF, 2025). **All** children are encouraged to approach new technologies with **curiosity** and **critical thinking** with the help and support off their peers or teaching staff which aligns with Les Vygotsky's Constructivist approach (1978). A More Knowledgeable Other (MKO) plays a key role in aiding children through*

the Zones of Proximal Distance (ZPD) until they can complete the task independently (Russell, 2006 as cited in, Dorrell, 2022).

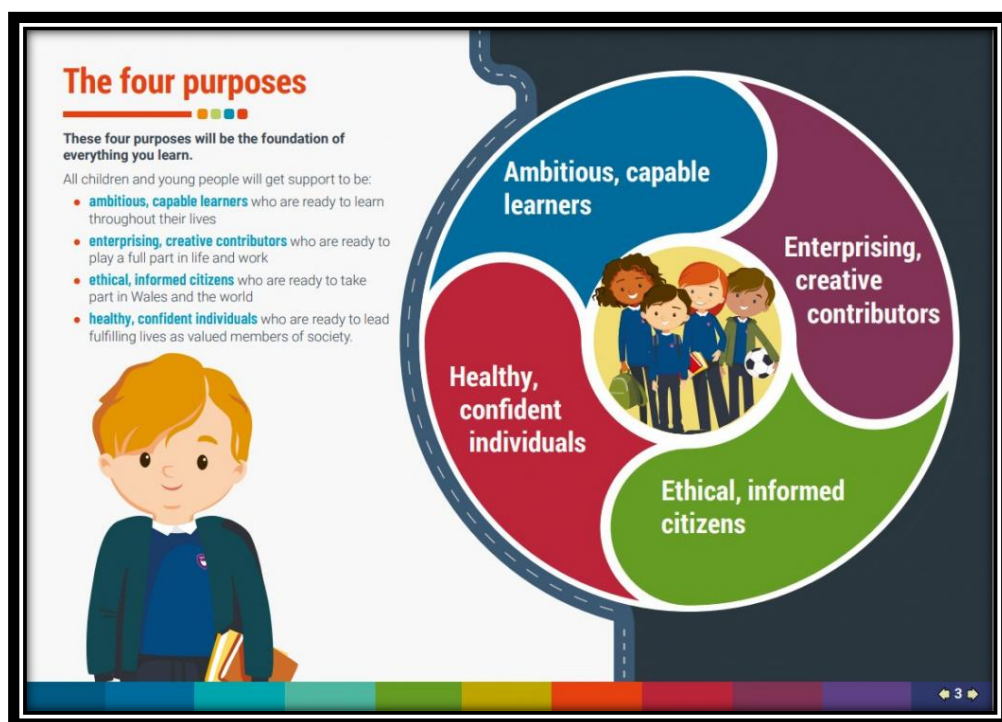
Please see image below 🧐



(Dorrell, 2022).

Digital skills will inevitably prepare our children for their future aspirations in this ever-evolving technology world and enable learners to develop as healthy, confident and ethically informed citizens of Wales and the wider world,

in line with the core four aims of the Curriculum for Wales and the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (2015) (*School A, 2024b; 2025a; 2025b, Education Endowment Foundation, 2021; Welsh Government, 2015; 2020; 2020a; 2022; 2025, DfES, 2003; UNICEF, 2025, Siemens, 2005*).



(McKeown, 2023).



(Welsh Government, 2015).

“Ensuring that everyone has the access,
skills, support and confidence to
participate in and benefit from our
modern society”

(Welsh Government, 2025).

**What is your level of experience with computers and
digital tools?**

*Can you navigate online platforms **confidently**? Or do you need
help assistance from the younger generation? As an adult*

learner myself Microsoft Teams has been a God send over the past 3years. I remember the days when I had to show major resilience and perseverance to overcome technical issues (including remembering the correct password!!)

Do you feel technology has strengthened or weakened Welsh community culture?

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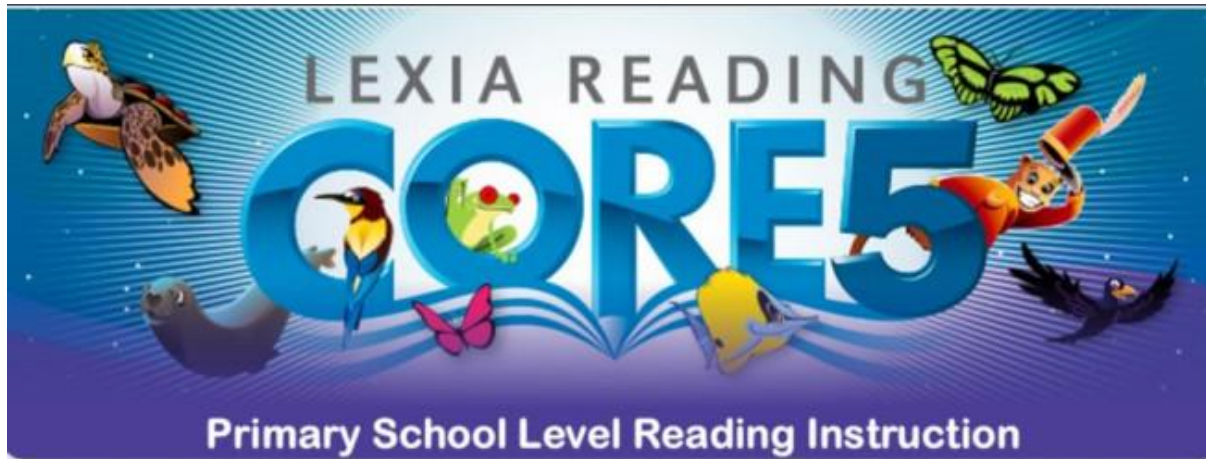
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#Blog4

Lexia Core5® and the Digital Classroom: Benefits and Limitations

Reading is rarely the most talked-about skill in a digital-first world, yet it remains fundamental to academic success and lifelong learning. While literacy interventions are not often associated with excitement, programmes such as Lexia Core5® play a quietly significant role in supporting learners to develop essential reading skills (LexiaUK, 2025).

As we know strong reading skills are essential for education, cultural involvement, civic life, and career success (Castles *et al.*, 2018, p.5 *as cited in* Strand, 2022, Welsh Government, 2015; 2022).

Laptops, Chromebooks, and tablets are used across classrooms to boost digital learning, helping to engage children and support their cognitive development (Oliver, 2022, *as cited in Haleem et al.*, 2022, Welsh Government, 2015; 2017; 2020; 2020a; 2022; 2025, School A, 2024b; 2025a; 2025b, UNICEF, 2025, Siemens, 2005).



(Corzo, 2024).

Technology has completely changed how students learn—these days, homework comes with Wi-Fi and a charging cable (Siemens, 2005a *cited by* Western Governors University, 2021).

Today's educational games cleverly combine learning with fun, turning lessons into interactive experiences that teach while they entertain. For younger children especially, this asynchronous blended learning approach can be highly motivating and make learning feel enjoyable for all pupils whilst doing so at their own pace (BBC, n,d, Welsh Government, 2015; 2017; 2020; 2020a; 2022, 2022a; 2025, UNICEF, 2025, Siemens, 2005 *as cited in* Western Governors University, 2021, School A, 2024; 2024a; 2024B; 2025; 2025a; 2025b).

So, what is Lexia Core 5® ?

Lexia Core5® is a popular online tool that helps children improve their reading and spelling skills by adapting to their individual needs and providing instant feedback. This encourages independence and boosts confidence (Vygotsky, 1980; LexiaUK, 2025). In Welsh schools, it's used alongside regular literacy lessons as an extra intervention to support and enhance children's literacy development.

The programme supports;

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☒ fluency in reading | ☒ phonics |
| ☒ vocabulary | ☒ Spelling |
| ☒ Grammer | ☒ Punctuation |

(LexiaUK, 2025).

Lexia Core[®] 5 is GDPR compliant to ensure children's safety when using the app (Welsh Government, 2020; 2020a; 2021, Education Endowment Foundation, 2021). Parents and caregivers must sign a form of consent (as with anything these days) and invited to an information evening to show how to navigate the online platform (which is self-explanatory and easy to use! - although very few parents attend these information sessions!!) (Wales Safeguarding Procedures, 2025, School A, 2025; 2025a; 2025b).

Lexia Core5[®] is an *Independent Learning System (ILS)* widely used in Welsh schools (Tracey *et al.*, 2021). Although designed for independent use, it is typically overseen by a teaching assistant who provides support when needed, promoting learner confidence and independence. Pupils use the programme for approximately **20 minutes per school day**. Paper-based resources aligned with individual progression can be used alongside the digital tool, reducing additional planning for teaching staff. Lexia Core5[®] is accessible on any smart device via individual logins (*another password to add to their password book!*) and requires the use of headphones (LexiaUK, 2025).

Effective technology use can encourage students to keep reading, grow in confidence, and stay curious—key elements of reading motivation highlighted by Morrow and Gambrell (2019) (as cited in Strand, 2022).

Lexia Core5[®] (2025) supports learners from Year 2 upwards, including those with SEN such as dyslexia, and English as an

Additional Language (EAL) pupils struggling with reading fluency (School A, 2024b; 2025a; Welsh Government, 2015, 2017; UNICEF, 2025; DfES, 2003; Education Endowment Foundation, 2021, 2025). The programme features fun, child-friendly characters to make literacy enjoyable—proving that learning to read doesn’t have to be a snooze (LexiaUK, 2025). It is also GDPR compliant, keeping children’s data safe while they conquer the world of letters and sounds. Children often ask “Miss, can I go on Lexia please?!” (Welsh Government, 2020, 2020a, 2021; Education Endowment Foundation, 2021).

Lexia Core5® is an independent literacy app that supports **metacognition**, helping children think about their own learning. Instant feedback and opportunities to retry tasks allow learners to reflect, recognise mistakes, and adjust strategies—building confidence, independence, and self-awareness. This encourages children to take ownership of their progress at their own pace, ensuring no child is left behind (Mayer, 2001; Carmigniani *et al.*, 2010; Yuen *et al.*, 2011; Chen *et al.*, 2011 as cited in Flavell, 1979; School A, 2025a,b; Education Endowment Foundation, 2025; DfES, 2003; UNICEF, 2025; Welsh Government, 2015, 2017, 2020, 2022a, 2025; Auditor General for Wales, 2023; Siemens, 2005a as *cited in* Western Governors University, 2021)—showing that metacognition can make learning to read surprisingly fun.

The Lexia app motivates children to complete levels through repetition to retain information and gain certificates for each completed level, with 18

levels in total (LexiaUK, 2025, Skinner, 2012, Siemens, 2005, School A, 2025b).

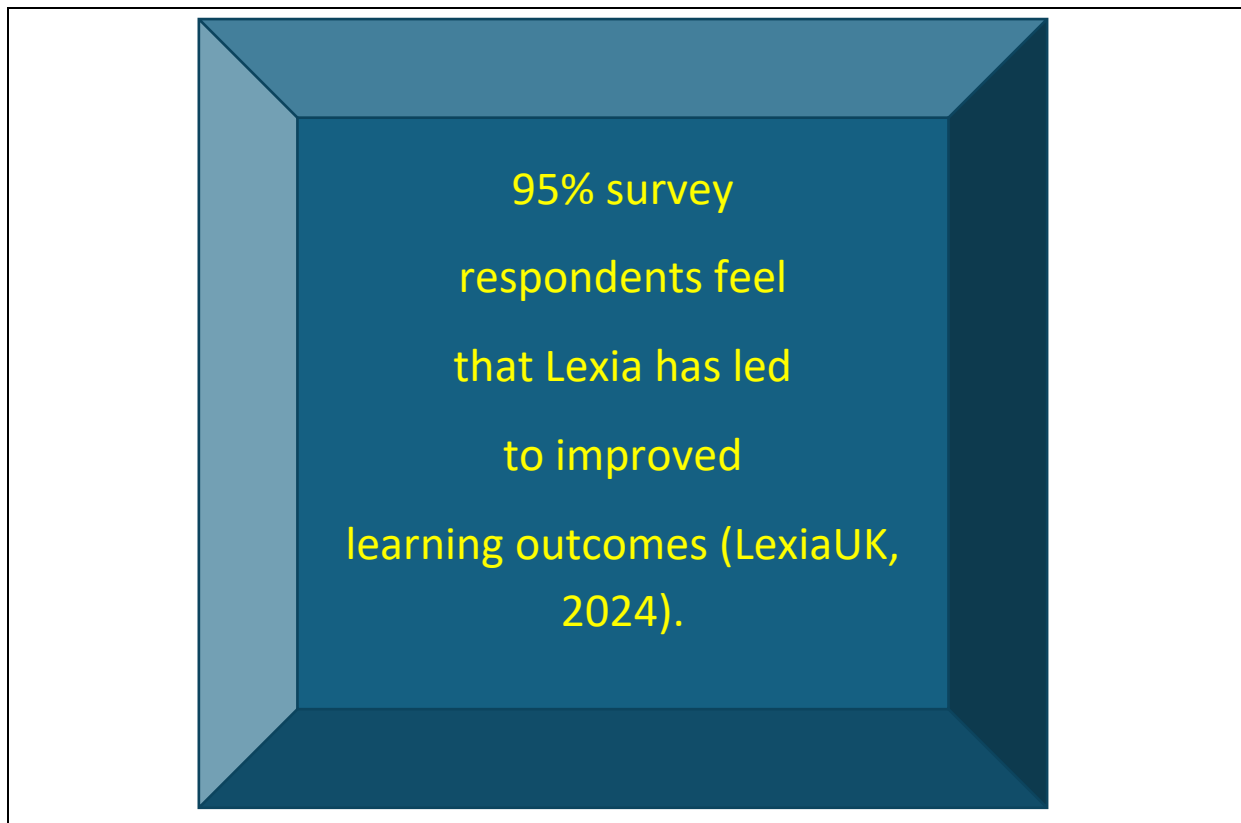


(Dailey, n,d).

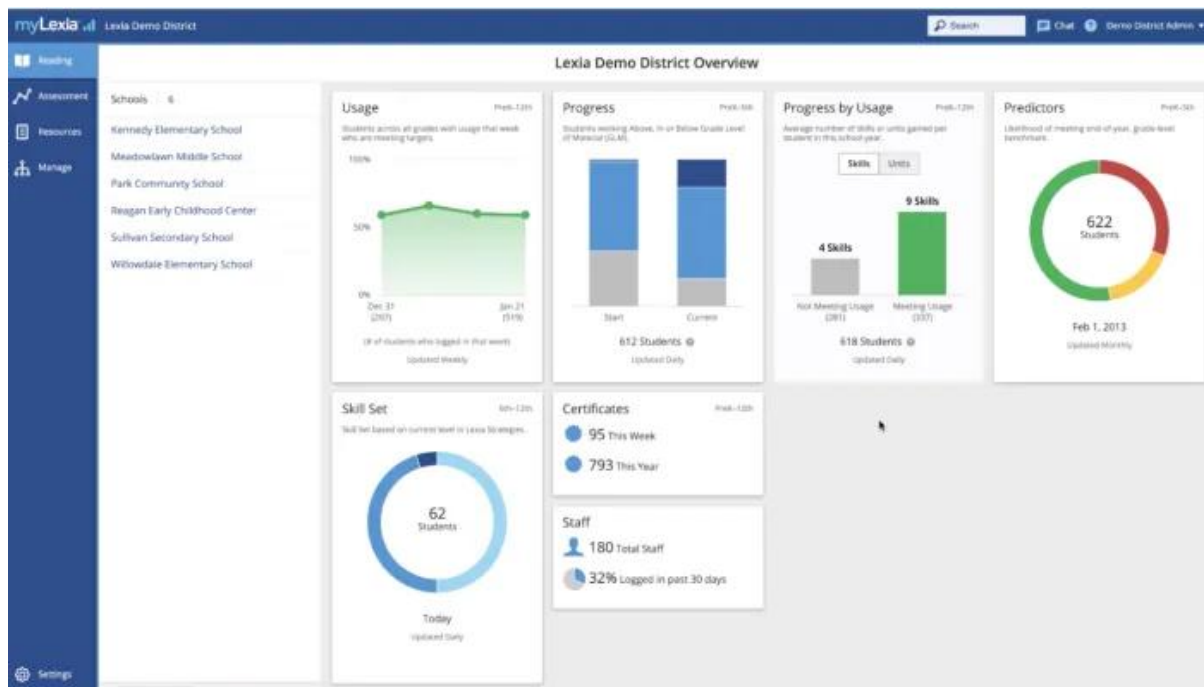


For a more detailed overview, please follow the link below;

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6NiPc59a958&t=51s>



Teachers can login too and view data of child's progress through visual graphs, which is beneficial for staff and of course saves them time. Children's results are saved online, allowing teachers to easily monitor progress, identify learning gaps, and tailor support to each child — all in one place (LexiaUK, 2025, UNICEF, 2025, Strand, 2022, Education Endowment Foundation, 2025; DfES, 2003).



(Common Sense Education, 2025).

Children were asked to describe Lexia in three words or less to a friend?

Results displayed below;



(LexiaUK, 2024).

So, what are the flaws?

- As you will know there are always disadvantages to any online tool, one being the resource does not display empathy for the child on that particular day. Learners with ADHD or sensory sensitivities can become easily overwhelmed by the speed, flashing visuals, sounds, and constant movement present on digital platform (Van, 2023)
- Sometimes internet hiccups can get in the way of Lexia app, since it needs a good Wi-Fi connection to run smoothly. Luckily, Lexia Core5® tailored sessions can be printed out for each child, so learning can keep going no matter what the Wi-Fi is up to (LexiaUK, 2025).
- The online resource does not display empathy for the child on that particular day and can reduce social interactions with peers and teaching staff. Decreased social support can have a detrimental impact on children's over all learning (Wang, 2020 *as cited in* Valantiejiene, and Girdauskieni, 2021).
- Children working independently can exclude the social communication of the traditional classroom environment, such as discussions, collaborative reading and writing that Albert Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory strongly promotes (Cherry, 2022 *as cited in* Firmansyah and Saepuloh, 2022).
- Finally, the cost of Lexia Core5® is quite affordable. For 30 pupils over 3years averages approximately £41 per student per year. However, with all the cost constraints Welsh schools are facing just now, many schools simply do not have funding to cover the cost of the popular platform (Reid, 2011; Sibieta, 2020, Education Endowment Foundation, 2025).

Will you include the Lexia® Literacy app into your classroom?

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