



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Response to the Estyn thematic report on preparing for the Digital Competency Framework (DCF)

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.
This document is also available in Welsh.



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Report title:

Preparing to implement the Digital Competence Framework

Report details:

The report is written in response to a Welsh Government request for advice in the Estyn remit letter for 2017-2018. The report focuses on how schools are beginning to ensure that pupils develop their digital competence as set out in Successful Futures.

The report identifies examples of innovative and interesting practice in how schools are preparing for the DCF and shares these for other schools to consider. The report will help schools to understand their current strengths, areas for improvement and the changes which need to be made to embed the DCF in their provision. It provides with an overview of the preparation that these schools have made about a year after the DCF was made available to schools.

The findings are broadly positive recognising that where schools have a clear digital vision which, when the whole school is involved and engaged, allows the DCF to be effectively embedded. Engaging with the whole school and raising staff confidence are all contributory factors to successful embedding of the framework. It is particularly encouraging that most teachers in special, primary, secondary and all-age schools have started to discuss how to adapt their plans to incorporate the DCF into the curriculum.

Summary of main findings:**Leadership**

- Leaders manage change well and have a clear vision for the DCF, they involve staff and governors to support its realisation in the school.
- Many translate their vision into a plan with a clear rationale for auditing, training, resourcing, monitoring and evaluating developments. In a minority their digital plans are not fully developed.
- Nearly all offer effective professional learning opportunities and ensure staff develop the competence and confidence. A few do not have a good enough understanding of the technical issues that could impact on the school's capacity to realise the DCF fully.
- Leaders say that they are unsure about when the DCF should be implemented and give this as a reason for some not realising the DCF.

Role of the digital lead

- Most have a thorough knowledge of the DCF. A minority, however, have a tendency to create a culture of dependency. They are most effective when they are able to impact on whole-school decision making.
- In the majority of secondary schools, they have working groups involving various departments to engage with the DCF and understand its impact on whole-school developments.
- Most have carried out a hardware and infrastructure audit. Most audit teachers' skills carefully using this to plan training. In a minority, where no audit has taken place they cannot plan fully to support staff.
- In schools that have mapped the DCF across the curriculum, many have yet to address the issue of gaps in provision. Unless these are addressed there is a danger of replicating current inadequate provision in ICT across the curriculum.
- Too few digital leads in secondary schools have mapped the provision of the DCF across key stage 4. As a result, most secondary schools are not preparing well enough to realise the DCF in its entirety.

Professional learning

- In around half the schools visited, nearly all staff have been involved in discussing the digital plan for the school, its content, what is involved and what is expected. This has resulted in positive attitudes towards the DCF.
- There is greater confidence with some of the DCF strands than others. However, digital leads in schools and in consortia believe that teachers do not fully appreciate the breadth of the citizenship strand.
- FP Practitioners feel competent enough in most aspects of the DCF while at KS2 and above are less secure in delivering the full range of digital skills. Most teachers have started to discuss how to adapt their curriculum plans to incorporate the DCF.
- Where leaders have not communicated their vision successfully, a few teachers have negative attitudes towards the preparation for the DCF.
- ITET centres are beginning to equip trainee teachers with the skills that they need to deliver the DCF. However, this is too variable due to their

limited involvement in DCF developments, and to their lack of awareness of the weaknesses in ICT provision in schools.

Recommendations:

A total of eleven recommendations are presented in the report, of which six are for schools and two are for local authorities and regional education consortia and three are for Welsh Government.

Recommendations for Schools:

- R1 Involve all stakeholders in developing a clear vision for the DCF
- R2 Appoint a digital lead, secure the full support of senior leaders, and monitor developments regularly
- R3 Audit teachers' professional learning needs and use this information to plan training, support and guidance over a realistic timeframe
- R4 Map the DCF across the curriculum and ensure that there are no gaps in provision and sufficient progression and continuity
- R5 Carry out hardware and infrastructure audits
- R6 Ensure that staff collaborate with others to share good practice

Welsh Government Response to recommendations 1 - 5:

These recommendations are for schools and we accept their content. We welcome these recommendations to schools as they mirror our own expectations to effectively embed digital competence into schools' provision.

We encourage schools to use the tools available to them on Learning Wales to enhance their provision, guidance materials and a mapping tool all provide the mechanisms in order to do this.

We also welcome the recommendation that schools are to carry out hardware and infrastructure audits as part of their preparation to deliver the DCF. Embedding regular hardware and infrastructure audits, together with efficient strategic digital planning and a technology refresh strategy, will assist schools to future proof their digital environment to support more digital teaching and learning needs.

The support of local authorities to carry out regular hardware and infrastructure audits will be essential to support those schools who lack the sufficient expertise or resource in order to carry out this function. School and local authorities should ensure that any hardware and infrastructure audit taking place should be considerate of the whole digital environment, and not just on the number and capabilities of end user devices.

It is important to note that carrying out an audit will not resolve the problem of inadequate ICT hardware and infrastructure. This is part of a continuum, which requires governing bodies and local authorities committing to relevant spend and longer-term budget planning that includes ICT infrastructure replacement and improvement over a period of years.

We recognise that schools will continue to require advice and support in this area. We note from the report that schools are using the Education Digital Guidance to support their infrastructure audit. Therefore, we will continue to develop and revise this to ensure it continues to meet the needs of schools moving forward. In parallel, we will develop Education Digital Standards that will outline to schools some defined principles that they may wish to adopt to ensure their digital environment is effectively managed and deployed.

Recommendations for Local Authorities and Regional Consortia:

- R7 Support all schools to address the above recommendations
- R8 Monitor how well individual schools are progressing with the realisation of the DCF and challenge limited progress.

Welsh Government response to recommendations 6 - 8:

The Education Directorate regularly engage with the Regional Education Consortia Digital Leads and we will draw their attention to the recommendations placed on them and on schools by this report.

We have also discussed how best to engage with all schools (particularly secondary schools). Each consortium has a different delivery approach according to the needs of their regions. We will continue to work with them to ensure all schools understand what is expected ahead of the new curriculum.

Welsh Government should:

R9 Communicate clearly to schools the expectations for implementing the DCF, including timescales

All communications on the Digital Competence Framework (DCF) have been clear that it is the first element of the new curriculum for Wales to be made available. We have emphasised that schools should begin using the DCF immediately in order to begin transition to the new curriculum.

We have also set out that Digital Competence will be one of three cross curricular responsibilities within the new curriculum (and have similar status within the curriculum to that of literacy and numeracy). The DCF is the mechanism to support schools in embedding Digital Competence across the curriculum.

To ensure schools clearly understand our expectations, we have:

2016 - Launched the DCF with a suite of resources including year on year timetable for embedding digital competence ahead of the new curriculum.

2017 - As part of *National Mission* we reiterated our commitment to ensure our young people are more digitally competent.

2018 - Provided all schools with a hard copy DCF timeline clearly outlining our year on year expectations for embedding digital competence.

On-going communications to schools

In order to maintain momentum we have recently updated our guidance materials on Learning Wales and will be 're-launching' this material this term together with animated explainers for schools to access. As part of this we have a series of Digital posts, including from secondary and FE, which will be posted on our Curriculum for Wales blog. We will also be using our social media and DYSG newsletter to advertise these revised materials.

The curriculum blog posts published since 2017 continue to be popular, with 3,300 viewing the DCF mapping tool, 2,400 viewing the FAQs and 2,400 viewing the Professional Learning Tool.

We continue to work with Consortia and Digital Pioneers to ensure that schools are supported and clearly understand what is expected. We also provide regular communications, via the Curriculum blog and DYSG, which provide examples of how different schools have approached the DCF.

Our Digital Pioneers have also added materials from on HWB for all schools to access. The National Digital Learning Event events in 2017 and 2018 also looked at creative approaches to implementing the DCF in schools.

The implementation of the DCF will form a key element of the National Professional Learning Model, which will be launched in November 2018 in line with the timescales in our National Mission.

Welsh Government is working closely with the regions to ensure that their business plans align with our professional learning expectations for the DCF.

Welsh Government should:

R10 Ensure that initial teacher education courses provide new teachers with the necessary skills to implement the DCF successfully

The ITE reforms require accredited ITE partnerships to design and deliver courses that support the four purposes of the new curriculum for Wales and address the six areas of learning and experience (AoLE) in order to develop future teachers to meet the needs of all learners. This includes the Digital Competence Framework.

EWC has announced the outcomes of the process to re-accredit all ITE in Wales. The specifications for the new provision take account of the need to ensure those undertaking programmes are properly equipped. This will form a key component of our new approaches to part time and work based routes through teacher education.

Welsh Government should:

R11 Improve the audit tool so that it better meets the needs of schools in assessing teachers' confidence to deliver the DCF

We developed a Professional Learning Needs Tool together with our Digital Pioneers and Consortia following the launch of the DCF. It is designed to help practitioners identify the areas where they already feel confident and areas where they feel they need further development. On-going feedback from digital pioneers and other stakeholders has been crucial in developing the tool. We took their feedback on-board and made further amend the tool and re-launched in July 2017. We will discuss with our digital pioneers how best to approach any further changes to the tool to address this recommendation.

We want to provide teachers with the confidence to effectively deliver these crucial skills. The Digital Professional Learning Framework (DPLF) has been created by Digital and Professional Learning Pioneers and Regional Consortia. The DPLF is designed to provide help, support and guidance for teachers and leaders to develop effective digital learning experiences for pupils.

The DPLF will shortly be available and is underpinned by the Professional Standards and reflects the principles of the Professional Learning Model and Schools as Learning Organisations.

The DPLF has been significantly enhanced and developed following testing with a wide range of stakeholders. The framework is now going through a final iteration in readiness for full publication in an online interactive form. The fully interactive version will be available in line with the launch of the National Professional Learning Model in the autumn.

Publication details:

The report was published on Estyn's website on 12 July 2018:

<https://www.estyn.gov.wales/thematic-reports/preparing-digital-competence-framework-dcf>