**Digital Schools of Distinction Award Evaluation Report**

**School: St. Mary’s NS. Crosserlough. Co. Cavan.**

**Roll No: 19596R**

**Date of validation: 08/03/2016**

**Leadership & Vision**

St. Mary’s NS, Crosserlough, a rural co-ed, multi-class, primary school, with a passionate team of teachers, support staff and SEN unit, displays in both written word and in everyday action, that technology- enhanced learning plays an important role in the students’ , community’s and teachers’ lives. Moreover the leadership and vison displayed during the DSoD validation indorse the fact that 21 Century ICTs play a strategic role in the everyday lives of the school and wider rural community. Pupils and teachers are afforded the openings to become acquainted with a range of ICTs and to engage with the skills to successfully employ them. They are also encouraged to pursue  ICT interactions and possibilities by a most dedicated and excellent ICT co-ordinator, Mrs Teresa Galligan, a very supportive Principal teacher, Mr Jarlath Mc Dermott and a very welcoming teaching staff. The CPD and peer-to-peer provision and ICT collaboration offered by the ICT coordinator and the shared, learning support teacher, Mr. Tony Riley, during the school-year, is noteworthy. The use of ICTs is amalgamated into the various policies and posters on display and there is no doubt that technology plays a very purposeful and practical role in teaching and learning. The school building has been re-furbished and the running of wired and wireless technologies is well structured throughout, with the provision for future expansion being presently explored in the area of WiFi provision.

The secretary and teachers use a variety of software and cloud storage to share files and documents.  The students use laptops mainly and a selection of iPads and desktop computers to access lessons and share their work with the teachers and on-line. The school uses the text-a-parent and the school weebly, website systems for communicating amongst staff and with parents.  Blogging and student participation is highly encouraged and training is provided to the students to undertake the task of designing and uploading the Blogs.

**ICT in the Curriculum**

St. Mary’s NS, Crosserlough , a vertical, co-education school, endeavours to ensure  that each student, regardless of his or her age, ability or intellectual challenge, leaves the school feeling self-assured using computers, having gained a consolidation of their general classroom work in many curricular areas and in particular, Aistear ( at the junior level), Gaeilge Bua Na Cainte, Ceol, Literacy (Adobe Voice with rang 6, litteractive.com and Jolly Phonics) Literacy Activity worksheets, Oral skills, Maths ( Khan Academy, Learnstorm, Studyladder) and English. Other curricular subject areas are also accessed and explored utilizing a variety of Education websites / YouTube/ Maximo Mindfulness Animation, GoNoodle and ICT tools to enhance learning/ Primary Science with SESE. The effective use of laptops at ‘stations’, during classes and in various ‘stations’ during classes, is to be commended,  where the students and their teachers, enjoyed a variety of ICT activities at a differentiated pace whist exploring Maths, Gaeilge and phonics. This, along with aspects of Internet and Cyber Safety and ICT usage, was absolutely wonderful to observe and discuss with the students. The use of IWB systems is very effective also at all levels of assessment and classroom revision and testing throughout the school.

In catering for pupils’ needs especially in Learning Support and in the classrooms: They use adaptive technologies as per ability and exceptional needs of individual students as they present themselves and the SNA support is to be commended. Special mention must be given to Mr. Riley’s work with SEN on the iPads with Touchtyping. His work with Adobe voice was also exceptional with differentiated students. This was observed by the validator during the visit with children of various, psycho-educational challenges and exceptional abilities.

**School ICT Culture**

There is rich and graphic evidence that ICT is ever present into the cultural fabric of St. Mary’s NS, Crosserlough. Posters on Cyberbullying and safe internet practices are also clearly visible throughout the school. The effective use of various hardware is also evident throughout the school. This is also effectively used for SSE (School Self Evaluation) with teachers/students/Parents/Community. The school’s website is very informative <http://crosserloughns.weebly.com/> bringing together a variety of Blogs, classroom and community based Projects, events, projects, school policies, new and current Information, links to education Apps and classroom activities. Scratch, Minecraft and Coding is also encouraged throughout the school and a variety of students are presently engaging or in the process of furthering their knowledge and experiences in these areas.

The daily use of internal software to communicate and organize school, internal e-mail, testing and attendance related activities was evident. It clearly shows a commitment to promoting every aspect of the school’s professional life and work. The use of students to update the website Blogs also allows the school to publish Quick and Immediate updates to families.  Recent updates demonstrate the emphasis on Blogging, Extra-curricular activities/Policies/Parents activities/ Photos and other competitions and various students were only too happy to discuss how they engage with the school website. This is all moderated by the ICT coordinator and various teachers with specific ICT expertise. The Principal is fully supportive and encourages all teachers to participate and be active. All children are comfortable utilising technology such as a suite of laptops and iPads to upload their work to the websites with excellent learning to learn tools. Discussions with the students and various classes on specific aspects of ICTs in society and their daily lives was most informative. Iontach ar fad.

**Professional Development**

At present training requirements are adequately catered for by in-school, peer-to-peer and Summer CPD attendance at various courses and ICT Support evenings at various Education Centres, especially in Cavan. The ICT coordinator also provides opportunities of one-to-one CPD, with interested teachers, in identified areas of ICTs. There is also noticeable Peer to Peer collaboration going on when teachers find new ideas and practices and the viewing of the school ‘cloud’ server clearly indicates a regular uploading and sharing of information with colleagues. The ICT coordination is shared, according to the level of expertise in the school and each and every teacher spoken with and classroom visited deserves praise and recognition for the whole-school’s commitment to ensuring that  ICT and  CPD needs are being met and catered for at all levels. A selection of students informed me that they will again undertake Scratch and Coding classes very soon with the full support of the school.

**Resources & Infrastructure**

Resources are evident throughout the school. Every classroom visited had an IWB  facility or similar hardware, laptops, desktop computers, cameras, a dedicated laptop for each teacher with effective and most times, adequate internet access and the necessary equipment to offer an appealing, technology-enhanced environment for the students.  A suite of Mobile I Pads, with a desire to acquire more in the future, are available to all classes. There is no doubt that the evidence of ICT incorporation and practice both seen and witnessed during the validation in this school is praise-worthy.  A school ‘cloud’, server-network is available for educational and organizational purposes. Teachers are expected to maintain their server presence and ensure that they also utilise it effectively by sharing work and other folders. A wireless connection is available for use with laptops/iPads and at present the ICT coordinator is exploring a more effective WiFi distribution system for the school. The Broadband is provided by the Ripple/NCTE.

There is a wealth of licensed software and other related educational tools available throughout the school. The present, re-designed school building was refurbished to ensure that modern 21 Century ICTs would be accessible to all students, and every effort is being made to ensure that they are. The SEN and Resource rooms are well resourced and are utilizing the appropriate hardware and software to enhance the students’ lives and learning journeys.

**General comments and recommendations**

St. Mary’s NS, Crosserlough is providing confirmation of real-time, everyday incorporation of ICT in school life. The validator was given a detailed time-tabled, guided tour of the school facilities, classrooms and associated ICT / SEN provisions. The proficiency and consideration displayed and validated by all involved in their use of ICTs is to be highly commended.

The standard of utilising and integrating ICTs was most fervent in the various classroom settings.

St. Mary’s NS, Crosserlough meets all the criteria for Digital School of Distinction Status and I have no reservations whatsoever in recommending them for this prestigious DSoD award. I believe St. Mary’s NS, Crosserlough, its teachers, students and community will continue to lead the way for other small, rural schools to follow. I would especially like to thank Mrs Teresa Galligan, a most dedicated ICT coordinator, and Mr Jarlath Mc Dermott, a most supportive principal and all the teaching staff and students of the school for giving the validator a glimpse of what a steadfast and committed school is achieving in the area of ICT, when a clear vision is well-defined and executed. It was my pleasure to feel very inspired after my visit to St. Mary’s NS, Crosserlough and I thank all involved for their time and consideration in spite of their busy schedule and so many other responsibilities. Níl dabht ar bith ach go bhfuil obair iontach theicneolaíochta faoi lán-seol sa scoil. Go leana an sár-obair. Molaim go mór iad.

**Please outline any good or noteworthy examples of ICT integration in this school:**

Adobe Voice

Student School Blog

GoNoodle

Khan Academy

Digital Creativity – Floor Pixels

Gaeilge/Maths /Literacy in the classroom

Aistear

**Scoring**

The visit more than validated the statements on their Self Evaluation Review.