



Balmalloch Validation Report

Validation Report	
School Name: Balmalloch	Name of Validator: Karen Doherty
Kingsway Kilsyth Glasgow G65 9UJ United Kingdom	Date of Validation: 25/03/2022
Head Teacher / Principal Name: Ruth McCarthy	Digital Technology Co-ordinator: John Paterson
School SEED Number: 8358427	

This report includes validator's comments based on a review of the online submission and the validation visit.

- We are happy to share this report with Education Scotland: Yes
- Would you be willing to be contacted by the programme with the view of contributing an article/blog or other materials to help other schools on their digital journey?: Yes
- We are happy for Education Scotland to contact us to highlight our practice: Yes
- We are happy to share this report with the local authority: Yes

Leadership and Vision 75%

It was clear from the outset that the use of digital tools for learning and teaching was fully integrated into the SIP for Balmalloch Primary School. While the Digital Learning and Teaching Strategy has not yet been approved by the LA, local and national guidance has informed the content.

The DLC's role is mainly planning and management of digital technologies, however staff development is richly intertwined. The digital learning and teaching strategy is reviewed annually and includes new and emerging technologies. And, although the digital learning and teaching strategy makes only brief reference to pedagogical approaches using digital technologies across the curriculum, staff narratives indicated good progress was being made in developing and implementing such. Provision is made for those learners requiring additional support through appropriate application of digital technologies and approaches.

Professional development has played and continues to play a key role in driving forward school improvement in terms of staff confidence and competence in their digital skills.

An AUP is in place and well established.

Use of Digital Technology to Deliver the Curriculum 80%

In Balmalloch Primary School the use of digital technology to deliver the curriculum is effective and well considered. The school team has embedded digital models of assessment and moderation of literacy to ensure effective measurement of impact and consistency of provision. Photos of learner output are shared and reviewed by class teachers in collaborative dialogue. Planners are available digitally from Early through to Second Level and How To guides were created to support periods of remote and blended learning.

Digital technologies are utilised across the setting from nursery through to P7, with consideration given to the appropriate application of resources and approaches. The school team work hard to generate and support the development of independent, content creation and cross curricular skills. This was well evidenced by the learners, especially the P2 contributors who were highly articulate and confident in their descriptions of digital activities and achievements particularly in terms of literacy. I have upgraded the school's self evaluation to reflect this powerful learner narrative.

School Culture 75%

The digital culture within Balmalloch PS is very strong. With twelve young digital leaders in this year's cohort, the school community is fully embracing the opportunities afforded by digital technologies. The DLs were highly enthusiastic and spoke positively about their roles and responsibilities. They were keen to further develop their activities across the school and beyond. They understood and confidently expressed the value and risks to wellbeing associated with digital engagement. They offered mature opinions, ideas and guidance for safe and responsible participation online.

Transition is very well supported through digital technologies, with further development planned. The school community are ambitious and aspirational and regard effective implementation of planning for digital technologies as key to school improvement.

A number of mechanisms are used to engage with parents and carers but Twitter is the main platform for communication of successes etc. Virtual family learning days and Code Along sessions have proven popular.

The school team have developed strong STEM and DYW themes including significant digital technology links. STEM awards are presented by the PT and DHT, acknowledging and fostering learner engagement with such.

Professional Development 76%

The importance of effective and targeted CLPL is recognised and embraced in Balmalloch PS. The development of digital skills has been instrumental in meeting the needs of the learners and their families. Teaching staff gave clear accounts of the individual and collective drive to access meaningful and relevant CLPL which would enable them to deliver high quality lessons in school and in blended learning scenarios. All cited examples of improvements in planning, assessment and tracking but especially in delivery. They felt that lessons were enriched and broadened through the software and apps. They also felt that remote learning was greatly enhanced by key CLPL to ensure accessibility. Forms of digital CLPL varied - formal and informal, inhouse and external.

Without access to this digital provision and ongoing support from the DLC, staff felt that learning and teaching would have suffered greatly. Instead, they were thankful for opportunities available to them which they described as empowering and built confidence. Rapid upskilling has been replaced by steady and continuous digital skills development, led by the DLC who keeps abreast of new digital technologies and approaches for dissemination.

Resources and Infrastructure 79%

The school is well resourced, having taken advantage of the Digital Xtra funding to supplement existing provision. The HT and DLC are committed to maintaining a programme of continuous expansion of hardware and software. Moreover, they and the staff are committed to engagement with effective and progressive digital CLPL. The HT regards investment of time and money for the development of skilled application of digital technologies across the curriculum as pivotal to school improvement. Resources are appropriately and fairly timetabled. Equipment is well managed and housekeeping guidance and protocols are in place. Learners and staff are consulted on digital purchases and the DLC evaluates apps and software prior to procurement. The school team are keen to maintain high quality provision and indeed acquire additional emerging digital technologies to ensure opportunities for learners are maximised.

General Recommendations:

Learners and staff at Balmalloch Primary School were keen to share their journey in digital technologies to date. The young Digital Leaders spoke enthusiastically about their activities to date and were visibly excited by increasing opportunities for wider engagement as health measures were changing. Learners described, in detail, their lessons and achievements. They felt that digital technologies enhanced their experiences and brought a range of benefits and challenges. One learner said dig tech "made things fun" while another noted that in coding " it's hard to get right, small things matter" whilst a third learner stated " It definitely helps when

you have others to work with." This sentiment was echoed by teaching staff, regarding digital skills development. The collegiate approach in school was welcomed and appreciated by staff.

The HT described the importance of digital platforms for engaging parents and carers. She also felt that "Staff really needed to have a say in development. That they have ownership, they have a voice."

A padlet was created for the Parent Council as an accessible and inclusive communication tool. Prioritising digital technologies in the SIP indicated the value placed on this development by the HT and the staff team. The school have made very good progress on their digital skills journey to date and are well placed to continue in this positive direction.

For these reasons, it is my recommendation that Balmalloch PS has met the criteria for the DSA and should be invited to become a mentor school as they have the capacity and skills to share and develop with others.

Signed

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Karen Doherty". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long tail on the letter 'y'.

Karen Doherty
External validator

