



## Holy Cross Primary Validation Report

Validation Report	
<b>School Name:</b> Holy Cross Primary	<b>Name of Validator:</b> Katharine Jewitt
Constarry Road Croy Kilysth North Lanarkshire G65 9JG United Kingdom	<b>Date of Validation:</b> 03/05/2023
<b>Head Teacher / Principal Name:</b> Marie Murphy	<b>Digital Technology Co-ordinator:</b> Martin McKenna
<b>School SEED Number:</b> 8355428	

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 78%**

In relation to leadership and vision, Holy Cross Primary School's digital journey is very much co-led with the pupils, which was very impressive to see and Unicef's Article 17 is embedded across the school □ "Every child has the right to reliable information from the media. This should be information that children can understand. Governments must help protect children from materials that could harm them". The school has a team of pupil digital leaders who play an active role in supporting the school in its development of using digital technology across the school. The use of digital technology is a fundamental part of the school's vision and enables pupils to have choice, flexibility, control and independence in their learning. The use of technology to support teaching and learning has led to strong links with the home and improved parental engagement. Digital learning is embedded throughout the school and at all levels, across all staff and pupils. Leadership is very much distributed with strong pupil voice and the senior leadership team leading by example in their use of digital technologies. The strong pupil voice is evident and Digital Leaders spoke confidently about how much they enjoy learning to use technology and sharing their skills with other pupils. One pupil discussed how he has led the coding club and creating a plan and shared his skills with the club attendees. Teachers facilitate and become guides on the side rather than sages on the stage. The school follows both North Lanarkshire Council and Scottish Government guidance. The school does not use technology for technology sake. The use of technology is used to support pedagogy.

The use of technology to support pupils with additional needs was strongly evident. Excellent examples were provided of how technology is used to support children with SEND, helping pupils to learn in variety of ways to suit their needs, building confidence and developing skills. Pupils are able to take ownership of their learning, for example, flexibility to choose various apps that suit them, eg immersive reader and using dictation and Clicker for literacy support. Pupils are listened to and supported in their choices. The school uses technology to give pupils a voice and choice in a format that suits them. Technology has been used to support pupils in building their confidence, for example, pupils who find reading or writing difficult are encouraged to use apps first and develop their skills. The school also regularly uses forms to collate data to support actions to be taken in the development of digital education and to support health and wellbeing. The use of technology goes beyond pedagogy and pupils are experiencing self-direct learning, exploring knowledge; also andragogy - interactive knowledge and there is strong evidence of heutagogy where learning is active, negotiated, experimented and pupils are learning how to learn, rather than simply receiving knowledge. Both staff and pupils emphasised and demonstrated the real potential of technology to be engaging and empowering learners to learn. The school shows how tablets are enablers for learning, but it is not the technology, it's how effectively teachers use technology. Teachers set goals, offer strategies for learning, motivate pupils, adjust to each pupil's context, give formative assessment, rapid feedback and communicate often. Their use of technology takes a considered approach.

## **Use of Digital Technology to Deliver the Curriculum 82%**

Teachers and pupils use digital technologies extensively when engaging in learning experiences. Staff training for digital technology is regularly built into the school year. Pupils and teachers can clearly identify how digital technologies make a difference to their learning and teaching. The school demonstrates in a variety of ways how the use of technology enhances the learning experience. Pupils across all year groups demonstrated knowledge and enthusiasm in the use of technology, for example, using SumDog for maths, using Excel to turn data that pupils have collected into graphs, Clicker for literacy and using the mark-up tool, creating digital art, making posters and presentations. There are several examples of pupils teaching teachers in the use of digital

technology. Pupils talked of using a wide range of apps for reading, writing, science and maths; utilising QR codes to access learning resources and developing a range of core skills including researching, creating stop motion animations and consolidating learning through the use of digital quizzes. Pupils learn coding using Scratch, Bee-Bots, Lego, MS MakeCode Arcade, Micro:bits and Marty the Robot. The school shares a list of useful, free apps that parents can use at home to support learning in the home. The use of technology has opened up inspirational and motivational opportunities for pupils, for example creating stop motion animations, doing a talent show to demonstrate digital skills and creating films. There was strong evidence of the use of technology enabling pupils to be independent learners. One parent worked at CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection) and came into school to speak about online safety. Parents have become more involved in their child's learning because they have access to view learning live, through the sharing of photographs and work digitally using the school Teams platform.

## **School Culture 79%**

In relation to school culture, all classrooms are mature digital learning and teaching environments, where digital technologies are deployed in ways that help learners improve their resilience, motivation and self-esteem and to be inclusive, diverse and equal. One pupil who has autism asked to share his experience and creating a powerpoint presentation called 'My Autism and Me' that was shared with other pupils. There were examples of pupils who struggled socially, but through the use of technology have gained confidence and become more involved. The Digital Leaders run assemblies and every month a digital award is presented to a star pupil. Pupils lead on running internet safety session and coding club sessions so that pupils are learning from their peers. Across the school there is a huge passion and enthusiasm to use technology for teaching and learning □ technology is utilised for pupils to work together. The culture is very much inclusive, allowing everyone to share ideas about using technology, make choices and trying things out. One parent recommended the use of an e-pen for pupils with dyslexia and this was adopted by the school. There is no top-down dictatorship on how technology should be utilised, but a collaborative and inclusive approach with both staff and pupils. Pupils who are Digital Leaders support the development of digital skills with both their peers and teachers. The school demonstrates how they have not forced new technology into old pedagogy. There has been a paradigm shift. It is about a new pedagogy, different skills for teachers and engaged and empowered learners supported by digital infrastructure accessible to all pupils. The school demonstrates a strong culture of trust and communication between parents / guardians / carers and their pupils. The school has an informative and visually engaging website (which can be found at <https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/nl/holycrossblog/>) and utilises Twitter to communicate to the wider community at <https://twitter.com/HolyCrossNLC>. The website and social media are up-to-date, showcasing many examples of learning and achievement. Teachers use a variety of digital technologies in their planning and administration. The school has led support sessions for parents and pupils on internet safety and cyber resilience. The school has also supported parents in understanding the benefits of using digital technology for learning and provided support in responding to their concerns and helped build their knowledge and confidence. This is not a one-off event, but is regularly incorporated into school life to instil digital safety. Language in relation to online safety and the use of technology is embedded across the school. Digital surveys are also used for gathering information from both parents and pupils. The school does so much more with the use of technology and do things they wouldn't be able to do without the use of technology, for example, the school has a higher level of engagement with parents, who would not normally be able to engage as much with the school, due to personal and work commitments, but through online are able to be involved. There is a culture of using technology to support stealth learning and using technology for paired work and paired

teaching. Pupils are enjoying creating programmes in Scratch, coding and gaming and are clearly learning more than they realise. They seem to be just 'having fun', but they are learning by stealth, and what they are learning is cross-curricular, covering several subject areas. There was significant pride when talking about their work and achievements, including how they have developed skills through the use of digital technology and help others in developing skills. This would be much more difficult, if not impossible to do, had they not had access to the digital tools and support from each other. Teachers are calling upon all three domains of knowledge - content, pedagogy and technological - to set up projects that exploit the technology to promote active, engaged and productive learning. The use of technology has had an impact on the environment, reducing the use of paper and printing. Without the use of technology, the efficiency and effectiveness of working in groups would not be possible. The use of technology helps to instil a sense of community and is part of the school culture. There is a strong culture in the school of continuous improvement and always looking at ways of enhancing learning and making it active and interesting. The school carries out regular self-evaluations to improve and feed into the school improvement plan and action plan and regularly survey pupils and parents.

## **Professional Development 87%**

All teachers have engaged in professional development in digital practice including Glow training, training with Dunfermline, North Lanarkshire and working with business partners to bring learning into the classroom for pupils. The school utilises support through the council, including the literacy team at the council to support upskilling all staff across the school year. Staff are highly supported through the Digital Lead of the School who holds regular professional development sessions, including Tech Tuesday, as well as, providing support as part of everyday practice. The school makes use of lots of training provided by North Lanarkshire Council and Education Scotland and SSERC. Teachers are supported and have the freedom to have a go with technology, test things out and have a go. The school works closely with the SAM team (Supported Assisted Media) in North Lanarkshire. Staff are proactive in keeping up-to-date with technology for learning and support each other in sharing knowledge. Support staff are also involved in digital professional learning. Staff work collaboratively and the work is collegiate with staff learning together. Teachers in the school are self-directed in their learning, are innovating where appropriate and take the lead with other teachers in disseminating and developing resources. The school keeps abreast of developments in technological, professional practice and the curriculum in relation to digital technologies.

## **Resources and Infrastructure 85%**

Digital technologies are prominent and the school has given particular consideration to how digital technologies can best enrich learning and teaching in their context and the school has procured digital devices. There is a school-wide structured approach to help maximise effective digital technology deployment around the school. A range of online environments, including Glow are used responsibly and support learning for all age groups, where staff take due account of GDPR requirements. A mix of network and cloud facilities are used to create, record, store and share resources and learners' work. Software/apps are deployed across the curriculum (QR codes to access digital resources, Sumdog, Scratch and more) to provide integrated and varied learning activities, teachers demonstrate differentiation and targeted teaching practices, and the school

is fully compliant with all software/app licencing requirements and GDPR. Technology is used to target specific learning needs and is personalised and individual to pupils. Digital technology supports the infrastructure of the school including an information hub that all staff access and a parent body. Digital resources enable pupils to access learning when they are at home or unable to attend school and within the classroom, technology is used for collaborative group work, as well as for individual learning. The school has invested in Playback Ice, a health and wellbeing curricular programme for nursery and primary schools to support children's social and emotional learning about themselves and others, which is being used from nursery, providing progression into the primary school.

### **General Recommendations:**

It is clear that digital learning is well embedded in classroom practice. The use of digital tools for learning and teaching is fully integrated in a whole school digital approach. Holy Cross Primary School exudes a strong sense of the value of the use of digital technologies in enhancing and supporting learning and teaching. The school is clearly committed to investing in digital technologies, in order to motivate and inspire its learners, with the aim of enabling them to make a significant contribution to our growing digital world, and successfully equipping them with essential skills for life and work. There is a confidence and enthusiasm within staff and pupils about the positive impact digital technologies are having on learning and teaching, and in assisting in planning and tracking of activities and learner progress. There is a clear recognition of the benefits being brought to enhancing learning and teaching by the use of digital technology to connect with organisations, cluster schools and individuals outside of the school. Digital Leaders and other pupils explained confidently, eloquently and with enthusiasm how they were making use of digital technology to support their own learning, and how they are sharing with others in the school. There are effective structures in place for the school to communicate with parents/carers about digital and other skills their children are developing, and opportunities are provided for parents/carers to engage digitally with the school and teachers. The school is clearly committed to embedding digital technologies and ensuring continuous improvement. I believe that the school has met the criteria for the Digital Schools Award. I recommend that the school should also be invited to become a mentor school as they have the skills and capacity to do so. I encourage the school to apply for the Digital Wellbeing Award for Cyber Resilience and Internet Safety, as well as, the <https://awards4selfie.eu/> . I'd recommend the school considers in the future applying for the Google Educator and/or MIEE programme <https://docs.microsoft.com/en-gb/learn/educator-center/programs/microsoft-educator/expert> and encouraging staff to become Microsoft Innovative Educator Experts and Apple and Google Teachers.

Signed

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K Jewitt', written in a cursive style.

**Katharine Jewitt**  
External validator

