Aston Village ETNS

Information & Communication
Technology plan.

Initial Draft.

School Name	Aston Village ETNS
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Summary of School's audit

Current Hardware Provision

Computers have been in use in the school for 4 years and are predominantly located in each classroom for use in conjunction with interactive whiteboards as teaching computers.

Samsung Laptops x 2

Dell Desktops x 10

Lenovo Desktops x 5

Flip video camera with usb

Digital camera and battery pack/cables.

Kyocera Black and White printer / photocopier / scanner

Kyocera colour printer/ photocopier / scanner

Visualiser x 1

Crayola junior keyboards x 3

Each classroom is connected at least fourfold to school network allowing internet and printer access.

Boards & Projectors

- Traceboards x 8

- BenQ projectors x 6

- Sanyo projectors x 2

- Epson Ultra Short Throw projectors x 3

ICT Development

The process of ICT development began in 2008 with the introduction of computers into the school upon its opening.   From this start, computers and interactive whiteboards/ projectors have been added with each additional classroom and computers have been provided to language and learning support as required. The school recognises the importance of ICT and its value in the daily learning and teaching in the classroom. It is also recognised that teachers have varying levels of ability and confidence in the area of ICT in the classroom and to that end, a program of continuing professional development in the form of in-house group sessions and online individual sessions will be devised. The process is expected to be ever changing and expanding into the future such is the nature of ICT generally. Teachers are encouraged to suggest courses and areas of learning need to the ICT coordinator so that these areas can be targeted.

Aims:

1. To continue to make full use of facilities now in place. To develop facilities further as the opportunities and needs arise.

2. To avail of further training opportunities for staff.

3. Keeping abreast of new developments by networking with colleagues using dedicated mailing lists and Internet.   We will co-ordinate with the local NCTE and CESI representatives to help keep up-to-date with educational ICT developments.

4. Keeping informed of suitable new software available for different classes. Again, teachers are encouraged to proactively suggest such materials to the ICT coordinator outlining their benefit and need.

5. Further integrate those areas of the curriculum lagging at the moment e.g. Irish.

6. To establish curriculum goals in ICT for each class bearing in mind the current equipment, knowledge and software provision in the school.

7. ICT plan to be reviewed informally on a continuing basis and formally once a term.

Rationale.

- The all-pervasive nature of ICTs in today's society, and the inevitable increase in their usage that will take place over the next several years makes the implementation of these technologies a major priority in our school's development, to ensure complete provision for our children into the future.
- ICTs are an invaluable motivational resource in today's ever-changing curriculum. The use of ICTs to integrate the existing subject areas with modern technology is a fundamental aspect of our ICT policy.
- ICTs provide a safe, non-threatening and ultimately patient, non-judgemental guide for innumerable tasks and programs.
- ICTs have the flexibility and power to meet the needs of each individual student on a one-to-one basis.
- ICTs can help teachers present learning in more motivating, interesting ways thus improving the quality of their teaching.
- ICTs promote the development of decision making and problem solving skills, providing opportunities for interpretation, observation and analysis.

Evaluation Strategy

The ICT Coordinator will be responsible for the day to day evaluation of the facilities and the uses to which they are being put. The school staff/ICT committee will have ongoing discussions with a view to fine-tuning this document and developing effective learning strategies and classroom aids for the integration of ICTs across the school and curriculum. A planning session will be held once a term to ensure a coherent and comprehensive approach to the development of ICT throughout the school.

Mission Statement

It is the hope of our school that the implementation and integration of ICT's across the curriculum will be grounded in effective and worthwhile learning theories and strategies, with a view to furthering the holistic development of the children in our care by means of the most progressive methods and technologies at our disposal.

We will serve our students in a safe, enriched environment that will:

- Focus on integrating technologies into the curriculum

- Support diversity of learning styles

- Maximise learning in the classroom

<u>Special Needs</u>

At present adaptive technology is required in catering for some children with special needs. Some children with hearing impairments are provided with assistive technology in the classroom. An application can be made to the Department of Education for funding to provide for assistive technology to help cater for any one child's individual learning needs.

Pupils currently have limited access to PCs throughout the school and in their own classrooms. It is the policy of the school to practice positive discrimination when a pupil has special needs. Suitable software has been purchased for children with literacy and numeracy problems and more will be provided where the need arises. Teachers have indicated their willingness to explore suitable software with a view to using it with the pupils.

Exceptional Students: Technology is a marvelous resource which improves the flexibility of the curriculum for talented and gifted students. The gifted student, in turn is an invaluable resource in bringing along fellow pupils in ICT.

ICT Co-Coordinator

In the diverse and developing area of technology, this is a challenging post. The inclusion of ICTs in the curriculum makes fresh demands on teachers. The role includes the following aspects.

- Co-ordinate the compilation and production of the ICT plan in conjunction with the staff and management and to arrange for its ongoing review.

- Facilitate training of staff by sharing knowledge of skills and encouraging development of same.

- Develop strategies for integration of ICTs across the curriculum by providing suitable software in a variety of subjects.

- Liaise with Board of Management and advise in ICT strategies.

- Evaluate the use of ICTs in the school on an ongoing basis.

- Develop a means by which the IT system can be maintained and upgraded.

- Fostering and developing links with other teachers through the Internet and mailing lists such as cesi-list@googlegroups.com

- To develop and maintain a school website.

- To liaise with local industry, other schools, NCTE, the Department of Education, and the Monaghan Education Centre in the area of ICT.

Goals / Aims

Technology Integration

The use of ICTs will be fully integrated in all subjects and office administration. That all current software and any further purchases be evaluated and integrated with the curriculum and respective class schemes. That technology serve us as well in the future with the presentation of school award winning projects, as it has served us in the past.

Infrastructure

Expand the current hardware and software provision in order to allow better access to the pupils and staff. Advice and recommendations are sought from local IT businesses, staff, schools with similar enrollment numbers and various other industry sources. Also, the school website is to be maintained and accessed by staff, parents and students and should develop as an information sharing resource for all parties.

Hardware Purchase

Hardware purchases are decided upon jointly by the ICT Coordinator and school Principal during the school year. Funding for all purchases currently comes entirely from Department of Education grant monies for ICT. The school is currently looking at the provision of

- a suitable network server computer

- wireless keyboards and mice for each mainstream class

- it is also envisaged that a limited or site WIFI infrastructure will be installed.

Software Purchase

The school currently holds a site license for the anti-virus program ESET Smart Security and renews this annually. The school is in the process of purchasing MS Office in form of a school site license. The school also now uses the E-Chipmunk Primary Administration package (began in September 2012).

Maintenance

Currently there are 5 machines still within warranty. Bulbs are replaced for each projector on an 'as required' basis. Only VGA splitters will be purchased in the future as previous cable signal splitters are now recognized as halving the output signal

between board and monitor. All projectors are serviced/cleaned at the end of/prior to each school year. There is no upgrading of current equipment foreseen in the immediate future. The ICT co-coordinator is responsible for first line maintenance and this is supported by outside contractors where necessary.

Sustainability

Assuming sufficient funds are made available by the Department of Education for teaching aids, the upgrading of facilities and the provision of software and hardware as necessary, the above goals are seen as sustainable.

Teacher Training

Provision of Teacher Training is seen of utmost importance in light of the successful integration of ICT into curriculum and classroom learning. Training is to be offered on a whole school, or group of schools basis with the support of the Monaghan Education Centre (local centre with responsibility for ICT course provision). It would suit the needs of a medium-sized school such as ours to plan in conjunction with other schools. Course requests are to be submitted in Spring 2013. The provision of WIFI in the school (limited or otherwise) is seen as a pre-requisite to the school hosting any official NCTE training courses during 2013.

Training is also to be offered in an informal setting in the school by the ICT coordinator or other staff willing to share their experience of software or course learning. This will be in the form of small group or individual training sessions where knowledge, tips, tools, resources etc are shared.

Budgetary Provision

To date an exact budgetary plan is not provided. In line with development plans for ICT a budget and schedule of yearly/termly spending is to be compiled by the ICT Coordinator and Principal and approved by the Board of Management in January 2013.

Fundraising Plans

In the past four years the BOM, Parents Assoc. and Staff provided funds for the school generally from a variety of fundraising events. Fundraising for ICT has not yet been seen as required. The ICT Coordinator will seek out suitable and appropriate fundraising opportunities in the area of ICT projects and competitions for the school to partake in as well as investigating the availability of grant funding from various organisations. The parents association will also be asked to consider the possibility of fundraising for ICT in the school into the future.

Health and Safety

- The school's current hardware infrastructure facilitates children accessing the internet in a controlled and supervised manner. Nonetheless, the greatest risk is that the child may be exposed to inappropriate material via the internet. Despite various security provisions being in place, the safest way to minimise such a risk is for the teacher to supervise access to the internet. It is strongly advised that the children will only access websites stored in teacher defined "favourites" on any teaching computer.

- All outgoing e-mails will be monitored by a member of staff, to prevent children inadvertently giving out sensitive information about themselves or their families.

- A member of staff will read incoming e-mails before being passed on, to ensure no unsuitable material reaches the children.

- Care will be taken to safeguard the privacy of the children where the school Website is concerned.

<u>The Next Step</u>

Further teacher training.

Training on use of Internet and Web.

Software to be taken home and operated by staff to ensure familiarity.

Software to be assessed to ensure what works well and what is most suitable for each age group.

The ICT plan by its nature is a process rather than a product. It shall need constant reviewing, both informally on a continuous basis and formally once a term.

February 2013