

## Information Notice, September 2017

### **Trial of the Digital Learning Framework (“The Framework”)**

#### **1. Introduction:**

The new Digital Learning Framework for primary and post primary schools is now available for all schools and the Department is inviting schools to express an interest (“Expressions of Interest”) in trialling the Framework in their schools during the 2017/2018 school year.

This presents an opportunity for schools including principals and teachers to participate in a unique and transformative whole school learning experience on the use of digital technologies for teaching and learning in a supported way.

While the Framework will be available to all schools for 2017/18 school year, only those schools selected to participate in the trial will receive intensive support and mentoring from fellow professionals.

It is expected that the Framework will in due course be implemented across all schools and teacher education programmes.

#### **Background to framework**

The development of the Digital Learning Framework for schools is a key objective of the ***Digital Strategy for Schools 2015-2020, Enhancing, Teaching, and Learning*** which envisages that digital technologies will open up new forms of teaching and learning. It is not enough for technologies to be merely available in the classroom – they should be deeply embedded in all classroom activities by supporting a constructivist approach to teaching and learning. The Digital Learning framework promotes this approach to teaching and learning.

The Framework links with and complements other key Department policies and strategies including the following:

- Curriculum change. The planned introduction of a new mathematics curriculum at primary level will incorporate aspects of computational thinking. At post primary, Junior Cycle already has coding as a short course and Computer Science will be introduced as a senior cycle subject from September 2018.
- Encouragement of more active teaching methodologies across the curriculum
- Teacher professional development
- Student learning and engagement
- *Looking at our School 2016 – A Quality Framework for Primary/Post Primary Schools* which articulates effective and highly effective practice for the use of

digital technologies in the two key dimensions **Teaching and Learning** and **Leadership and Management**.

### **Looking at our School**

Schools are already familiar with [\*Looking at our School 2016 – A Quality Framework for Primary/Post Primary Schools\*](#). The Digital Learning Framework is closely aligned with it.

The two key dimensions of **Teaching and Learning** and **Leadership and Management** are divided into the same four domains which represent the distinct, although interrelated, aspects of each dimension. Standards are then provided for each of the domains.

The Standards are stated as the behaviours and attributes characteristic of practices in an effective, well-functioning school and are again aligned to the 32 Standards contained in *the Looking at Our School 2016 – A Quality Framework for Primary/Post Primary Schools*.

The Digital Learning Framework provides Statements of Practice which describe “effective” and “highly effective” school practices for each of the 32 standards.

### **2. The Statements of Practice:**

The purpose of the Standards is to assist schools in identifying the areas of their practice that are effective or highly effective, to identify and prioritise the areas where improvement is needed, and to help them chart an improvement journey.

These Statements enable teachers and school leaders to plan how the school makes provision to support the embedding of digital technologies in teaching and learning practices and teachers’ individual practice.

In reflecting on the how the use of digital technologies can enhance the teaching and learning process, school management and teachers will identify those aspects of teaching and learning that are already effective or highly effective and also where improvements are needed.

The Statements will be supported by case studies and exemplars of good practice. Some are already available and more will be developed during the course of the trial period and as digital technologies become embedded in teaching and learning across all schools.

### **3. Implementation**

Both the Digital Learning Framework and *Looking at Our Schools 2016 – A Quality Framework for Primary/Post Primary Schools* are designed to provide the widest possible scope to teachers, school leaders and others to identify and achieve excellence in teaching and learning and leadership and management. The Digital Learning Framework recognises that schools are at different stages of the school improvement journey with regards to embedding of the use of digital technologies into teaching and learning.

It is not expected that all aspects of the new Framework will be included in any one self-reflective or evaluative activity. Rather, the Digital Learning Framework should be viewed as an enabler of self-reflection and improvement and not as an inflexible check-list. It is crucial from the outset that the leadership team in each school has a shared understanding of why and how the school seeks to embed digital technologies in teaching and learning and is committed to doing so.

One option for schools is to adopt the methodology of the six step SSE process to implement the Digital Learning Framework. Schools may also choose to adopt the Digital Learning Framework as the area of focus for the development of teaching and learning as part of its SSE process.

The Framework will be accompanied by digital learning planning guidelines – a resource designed to support schools in the embedding of digital technologies in teaching and learning and in the development of a Digital Learning Plan.

#### **4. Why should schools implement the Digital Learning Framework?**

- Using the Framework will promote a school readiness for new curriculum, better teaching and learning and student engagement.
- The Framework will help schools to develop a clear rationale for the embedding of digital technologies in teaching and learning and to inform planning on the type of infrastructure required to meet the school's needs.
- Use of the Framework will facilitate a whole school approach to understanding what it means to embed digital technologies using constructivist principles for teaching and learning.
- The Framework will help generate internal discussion of how embedding digital technologies can lead to improvements in teaching and learning.
- The Framework can be used as a planning tool by individual teachers, or groups of teachers, to plan, and reflect on, their daily teaching and learning practices, at all levels and across all areas of the curriculum.
- The Framework will also help schools and individual teachers to identify, and plan to address, their continuing professional development (CPD) needs in the area of digital technologies and enable them to take ownership of their own development and improvement in this area.
- Implementation of the Framework by schools will help the Department and the support services to better respond to identified school and teacher professional development needs.
- The Framework will support collaborative planning across class levels/subject departments and in those areas, like literacy, numeracy and STEM, requiring a cross-curricular focus.
- The statements of practice provide a basis for the internal and external evaluation of how digital technologies are being embedded across all aspects of school activity.
- The Framework is directly aligned with the domains and standards of *Looking at Our School 2016 – A Quality Framework for Primary/Post Primary Schools* and can support the SSE process.

On a national level, the Digital learning Framework will also be used as a benchmark to measure progress on the embedding of digital technologies in teaching and learning and will help inform policy in this area.

#### **5. The trialing of the Digital Learning Framework (DLF):**

The Digital Learning Framework will be made available to all schools in the 2017/2018 school year. To determine its effectiveness, implementation will initially be trialled during the period October 2017 – June 2018.

The trial will involve a representative sample of approximately 30 primary and 20 post primary schools. The participating schools will be provided with additional, targeted supports, commensurate with their identified needs. Support for schools involved in the trial will include some or all of the following:

- A Seminar for the school principal and one other teacher from all participating schools will be held on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2017 (substitution costs will be paid). At this seminar participants will receive an overview of the Framework and the digital learning planning guidelines and will be advised of the suite of supports available. Each school will be assigned an Advisor from the professional development service for teachers (PDST) and will get the opportunity to meet with them.
- Each school will be offered between 2-5 visits over the school year with their Advisor, who will assist them through the process of using the DLF.
- Supports for each school will be different and individualised depending on the school's needs. An Example of a typical series of visits could look as follows:
  - Visit 1: Working with school leader on the Digital Learning Framework, selecting an area and setting targets. Also, establish a plan for the year
  - Visit 2: Revisit targets. Whole staff session on the Digital Learning Framework. CPD session with staff depending on selected area. Setting targets for next visit.
  - Visit 3 & 4: Reviewing progress. Further CPD as required
  - Visit 5: Reviewing Digital Learning Framework progress. Evaluating process and setting targets for next year.
  - A cross-sectoral Forum to share experiences and consolidate learning will take place in March/April 2018

Schools are asked to consult internally to identify the Domains of the Digital Learning Framework that will form the focus of their work in the trial. In applying to participate in the trial schools will be required to indicate those Domains, in order of preference.

All schools involved in the trial will receive a support visit from a DES inspector similar to the SSE supports that are already in place.

An external evaluation of the draft Framework will coincide with, and run parallel to, the trial period. Selected schools will be required to participate in the evaluation process. Participating schools will also be required to contribute to the development of case studies/exemplars of good practice during the trial period.

The outcome of the evaluation will inform the national roll out of the Framework in September 2018.

The key activities in the trialling process will include:

Table1:

Action	Description	Timeline
<b>Expressions of Interest</b>	All schools will be invited to participate in the trialling process and to consider adopting the trialling as the focus of their SSE for the school year 2017-2018. A FAQ document will accompany the invitation letter	14th September
	A presentation outlining the purpose and structure of the DLF and how it might be used in schools will be made available on the Technology in Education website <a href="http://www.pdsttechnologyineducation.ie/en/Planning/Digital-Learning-Framework/">http://www.pdsttechnologyineducation.ie/en/Planning/Digital-Learning-Framework/</a> .	14th September 2017 onward
	Schools will advise of their interest in participating in the trial through the completion of a short application at <a href="https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/Information-Communications-Technology-ICT-in-Schools/ict-expression-of-interest-form.html">https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/Information-Communications-Technology-ICT-in-Schools/ict-expression-of-interest-form.html</a> .	14 <sup>th</sup> September to 2 <sup>nd</sup> October 2017
<b>School Selection</b>	A steering group will select representative sample of schools to participate in the trial.	3 <sup>rd</sup> - 5 <sup>th</sup> October 2017
	Publication of list of selected schools on Department's website	6 <sup>th</sup> October approx.
<b>School Supports</b>	A Seminar for participating schools to deliver key messages and establish timelines for school-based implementation.	16 <sup>th</sup> October 2017 (Venue: Convention Centre, Croke Park, Dublin)
	Each participating school will receive between two and five support visits from the Professional Support Service for Teachers (PDST). The 1 <sup>st</sup> visit to each school will involve selecting an area of the Digital Learning Framework for trialling, developing a plan for the year and setting targets. Subsequent visits will centre on reviewing progress and provision of targeted CPD.	November/December 17 and ongoing
	Support visit from DES Inspector	November/December 2017 onward (dates to be agreed individually with participating schools)
	A Cross-Sectoral Forum to share experiences and consolidate learning	March/April 2018
<b>External Evaluation</b>	An evaluation of the process will be undertaken.	To coincide with, and run in parallel to, the implementation of the trial.

<b>Review of Digital Learning Framework</b>	Digital Learning Framework reviewed in light of trial and evaluation report prior to full roll-out in schools.	July – August 2018.
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## **6. Application:**

The application confirming “Expressions of Interest” is available on the Department’s website together with an FAQ document.

If your school is interested in partaking in the trial process please complete the application form at the following.

The closing date for receipt of Expressions of Interest is the 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2017. Responsibility for applying within the specified timeline rests with the school authority.

A list of selected schools will be published on the Department’s website in early October.

## **7. Freedom of information Act:**

Persons signing applications are reminded that the Department may be obliged to release any information supplied under the Freedom of Information Act 2014.

## **8. Further information**

To assist schools in making a decision to participate in the supported trial, an information resource and video is available at <http://www.pdsttechnologyineducation.ie/en/Planning/Digital-Learning-Framework/>.

Email queries can be submitted to [ictpolicy@education.gov.ie](mailto:ictpolicy@education.gov.ie) and/or [dlfplanning@pdst.ie](mailto:dlfplanning@pdst.ie).

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