

Introducing Students to Coding – Google CS First

What is this?

A 6-week programme, led by volunteers from Google, to give 4th class students (ages 9-10) at an all-girls primary school (with DEIS status) their first taste of learning how to code. Staff from the Google office volunteered 1 hour per week to go to the school and support the students through structured lessons on CS First - Google's free curriculum to teach coding with Scratch, a block-based programming language.

Who was involved?

This was a partnership between Google and Ringsend Girls National School, facilitated by the local Home-School-Community Liaison Officer. The class teacher was closely involved in the design and format of the sessions, and the support of the school principal was sought from the outset. A small team of 12 volunteers and members of the Computer Science Education team from Google worked together to provide the weekly 1-hour coding activity in the school.

How was the relationship established?

The relationship between Google and the school was facilitated by the local Home-School-Community Liaison (HSCL) Officer. Following initial meetings and discussions to explore ideas and opportunities, coding was identified as an area of interest to the school and CS First was a ready-to-go resource, suitable for the age-group.

How can this exemplar be used to inform practice?

- A learner-centred approach from the outset, ensuring that the benefits for learners was central to the programme of learning and resource being suggested.
- Consideration was given to the scale and sustainability of the students learning beyond the 6-week project, by choosing a free, ready-to-use resource that the classroom teacher would have access to in the weeks and months afterwards.
- There were clear, tangible links to the curriculum, including the STEM Education Policy Statement (which has a particular focus on diversity in STEM, hence the partnership with an all-girls school), and the Digital Strategy for Schools.

What was done?

Staff from the Google office volunteered 1 hour per week to go to the school and support the students through structured lessons on CS First. Google volunteers worked alongside the class teacher to support the students in their learning through

the CS First platform, to provide technical support when required, and to encourage them when they encountered challenges or problems. The volunteers also talked to students about their careers in the tech sector and what it's like to work at a company such as Google. Additionally, Google provided printed materials, including student passports to record learning, and a teacher resource pack.

Why was it done?

Students were introduced to coding for the first time, as this was the area of mutual interest and opportunity for collaboration identified by Google, the HSCL officer and the class teacher during initial meetings.

What was the impact?

23 students from 4th Class participated in a total of 6 hours of coding, over the course of a 6-week programme. They learned the basics of how to code, and build projects in Scratch, via the CS First platform. Following this initial engagement, the teacher made plans to continue to use CS First with this group of students, and extend it to others in the school, in line with the school's plans under the Digital Strategy for Schools.

Related links/Additional Information

- csfirst.withgoogle.com
- #GrowWithGoogle
- #CSEd