IT and Computer Studies Department Overview

The IT and CS department here at Risca Community Comprehensive School is an ambitious and innovative department currently with one lead teacher but with a need for an additional member of staff next year. We are responsible for the delivery of IT at key stage 3 and have both IT and Computer Science classes at Key Stage 4, where we follow the WJEC specification. As from September 2019, all students in year 7 will receive 3 hours of IT per fortnight, and 2 hours per fortnight in year 8 and 9. There is also the potential for additional computer science hours in year 7 from next year. Additionally the department takes the lead on the Digital Competency Framework across the school and supports staff to achieve this.

The department is undergoing a location change but will have two IT suites, one with a set of 30 desktop computers and a second with a mutli-platform, flexible classroom using laptops, ipads and chromebooks as appropriate. The school makes full use of Google Classroom and all IT lessons are supported, resourced and for the most part also assessed online in a bid to become a digital department. We have an increasing range of computing devices including a class set of BBC Micro:Bits along with several Raspberry Pis, this is an area we are keen to develop in the next academic year.

We are developing project based learning approaches at key stage three alongside specific technical units of work and have begun to see pupils as more independent creators of work, and are using the iDea platform to earn digital badges. We collaborate with the Science faculty across our projects and are looking to develop this partnership further across other faculty areas as we promote and support the DCF. We are forward thinking and support our pedagogy with research, engaging with a range networks, including those online, to share good practice across the local authority, consortium and wider organisations such as Cardiff University.

The department is very keen to further develop the range of learning opportunities available outside the classroom. We run a successful pupil digital leadership programme and have attended a range of events with these students. We have also organised education visits to Bletchley Park and are developing a code club.

Miss Becki Bawler, Lead Teacher of IT/CS, March 2019