Scrutiny Panel Digital Review Response
Beaulieu Convent School

Introduction

The vast majority of schools in the developed world are set up in a similar way, modelled on an old business sector. Expensive internal servers and miles of cabling are usually linked to a suite of fixed computer rooms and desktop machines. This is not necessarily a bad thing and has helped most schools reach a targeted 1:4 machine to student ratio, improving digital literacy. However the model is now unfit for purpose in a modern teaching world. Being locked down to specific software, unable to easily transfer your work in and out of school with archaic filtering systems is a throwback to the 20th not the 21st century. The internet and technology in general develops exponentially, in this "always on" world and the education system is being left behind. With the curriculum and 'boring' lessons being blamed. Beaulieu set out over 5 years ago to change this model and the curriculum that surrounds it. We are a recognised leading force of technological change on the island and supports ESC by delivering seminars so that other schools can learn from our journey. So the timing of both the Vision and the Digital Jersey Strategy is not just a step in the right direction, is vital.

The Terms of Reference for the Review:

1. To examine whether the approach to improving digital skills in the Island contained within the Digital Jersey Strategy and Business Plan, to enable delivery of its key objectives and related targets, is supported by stakeholders.

Beaulieu has for a long time sought to have a good dialogue with business to better inform the skills required for work when students leave school. We regularly have digital experts from industry visit the school to share their knowledge of what is current and necessary in today's market. These relationships have furthered our students skills and benefited some more directly by making introductions straight into the workplace through work experience.

The Digital Jersey Strategy has raised the profile of the industry and made it easier for even more direct connections with new local businesses.

2. To examine whether the approach to improving digital skills in schools contained within the Vision for IT in Education, is supported by stakeholders.

Beaulieu has always sought to improve the awareness of digital skills particularly as there was a preconception that girls did not do well in this area, a myth we strive hard to dispel. Being independent has meant that Beaulieu has always been able to be more nimble in IT and allowed us to adapt to changing technologies more quickly. For many years we have had our own Vision for IT in Education which while subtly different is broadly similar to the DfESC one. We support the decision to allow schools to make their own decisions as it is something we have done for many

years with much success.

3. To examine whether the Vision for IT in Education and the Digital Jersey Strategy and Business Plan are complementary.

Broadly speaking the Vision for IT in Education and the Digital Jersey Strategy are trying to achieve the same goals. They will inevitably clash over some issues but improving the digital skills of students is at the heart of both plans. Education will and should be focused on developing a more rounded digital student while business may want to focus on more specific skills like coding but this is a small debatable issue. We think that the two visions will complement each other.

4. To compare the Vision for IT in Education to related strategies developed in other relevant jurisdictions.

Jersey is broadly speaking following a similar strategy to that of the UK by placing a reinvigourated emphasis on coding and computing. While we do agree that too much focus has been directed at software applications like spreadsheets and desktop publishing we do think we are still behind other developed world attitudes to technology. Beaulieu is an Apple Regional Training Centre and as part of that our own Apple Distinguished Educator regularly collaborates with digital leaders across the world. Countries like the US, China and Australia are leading the digital integration. More research and case studies from around the world needs to be disseminated to our teachers rather than focusing on the changes in the UK.

5. To identify the framework for the implementation of the Vision for IT in Education in schools, with particular attention on the process and criteria for the development of individual school strategies.

Beaulieu has had an IT strategy for many years. We currently have a scheme of work from Early Years primary through to A-Level. Our current model is similar to the IT Vision presented recently to schools. We have over the last few years established many firsts in Jersey schools:

- First and still only user of cloud based collaborative services
- First whole school BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) scheme
- First Whole School High speed WiFi Network open to students
- First Gigabit connection in a school in Europe

Before you can implement a digital strategy the infrastructure, policies and training must be planned. It is vital that schools understand their data needs and protection requirements. For example, understanding that data transferred outside of the EEA may be illegal unless companies are part of the EU Safe Harbour Agreement. Knowing that your students personal data is vital to protect and establishing that culture of data knowledge. Once data is understood policies and risk assessments need to be produced then training and dissemination can occur. This will not occur by accident and the integration of digital methods of learning must be integrated into the curriculum at the core of each and every subject.

As we did, each school needs to identify what skills students already have and what they need in order to succeed. In our own school we know that our students are very good at articulating themselves and we have provided them with the skills to promote their own thoughts and insights to the world as authentic online authors. We still teach coding and digital literacy skills but have developed a culture of confident self expression by understanding our own individual strengths and weaknesses.

While we have a strong understanding of our direction I know that schools earlier in their journey will need guidance from DfESC on what the island believes is the direction of technological change. In order to market the island as a place of digital excellence a strong direction needs to be taken. Schools will progress with their own interpretation of an IT Vision only as long as the DfESC IT Vision itself has a clear and published set of goals and success criteria.

As an independant school Beaulieu has already adopted its own successful IT Vision and we are in the continual process of evaluation and improvement. We offer our experience to other schools through and ongoing program of events with specific digital topics. This program is in its second year.

A subtle difference in our own strategy is that we believe that web based services and cloud technologies will be at the very heart of digital development and have structured our own vision around this fundamental belief which we can see already benefiting our students.

6. With particular regard to Digital Jersey's e-government objectives and targets, to examine the existing and proposed provision for adult training and education to improve digital skills in Jersey.

Beaulieu's IT dept uses a 'Flipped Learning" model which is common place in America and the Southern Hemisphere. We record our lesson content so that students can learn anytime anywhere. This model could easily be adopted though MOOC's (Massive Open Online Courses) to allow digital skills training to be open to all.

Regards
Rory Steel
Assistant Head
Technology & Curriculum