

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
MUNICIPAL YEAR 2014 - 2015

**EDUCATION & LIFELONG
LEARNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

12th NOVEMBER 2014.

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF
LEGAL & DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**

Agenda Item No. 4

MICROSOFT ACADEMY UPDATE

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of this report is to update Members on the work of the Microsoft Academy project and to advise that feedback from the 'Sharing Good Practice' Event taking place on the 11th November, 2014 will be presented to the Committee at the meeting.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:-

- 2.1 Note the content of this report.
- 2.2 Scrutinise and comment on the information provided.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 As reported to Committee on the 9th April, 2014, the Council has begun a three-year project with Microsoft to roll out its IT Academy programme across schools within Rhondda Cynon Taf. .
- 3.2 The project is funded through the Cwm Taf Regional Collaboration Fund and seeks to support both teachers and learners in developing excellence through the use of digital technology.
- 3.3 The attached newsletter provides Members with details on the project to date(Appendix 1)
- 3.4 On the 11th November, 2014 a 'Sharing Good Practice' Event is taking place in relation to the project and information and feedback from this event will be presented to the Committee at the meeting on the 12th November, 2014.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

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12th NOVEMBER 2014

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Item: MICROSOFT ACADEMY UPDATE

Background Papers

Minute 74 – ‘ICT Enabled Schools Transformation Programme - Education & Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee 9th April 2014.

Minute 21 – ‘Work Programme’ – Education & Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee 3rd September, 2014.

Officer to contact: Mrs E Wilkins – Tel. No: 01443 424098



Microsoft IT Academy Newsletter Update

Autumn 2014

HOW IT STARTED AND WHERE WE ARE GOING...

In 2013 RCT became the first local authority in the UK to launch the Microsoft IT Academy program. Its aim, in line with the National agenda^{1 2} is to equip teachers and students with real-world technology skills needed to prosper in the 21st century economy. RCT schools join more than 15,000 Microsoft IT Academies around the world. This 3 year collaboration with Microsoft aims to ensure that schools in RCT engage in cutting edge delivery and personal development to further enhance the quality of provision for all our students.

Microsoft are already engaged with Hwb+ nationally so the work with RCT fully embraces this agenda. During the next academic year links with the LNF will be developed and brought into program.

The Microsoft IT Academy (MITA) provides a comprehensive and flexible program to support teachers and students alike. Teachers are supported in aspects of their continued professional development (CPD) with IT skills, knowledge of computer science and pedagogical learning. The development of IT skills focuses on a range of productivity tools e.g. Word, Excel, PowerPoint, while the pedagogy based development raises awareness and develops capability in utilising IT and technology within teaching practice.

Additionally resources are available to support students develop their IT skills as well as their computer science knowledge from initial Digital Literacy through to GCSEs in both ICT and Computer Science

THE JOURNEY SO FAR...

The initial focus of the collaboration with Microsoft was in the area of teachers CPD. This was defined in three distinct pathways:

Microsoft Certified Educator (MCE)

Since the launch last year over **300** teachers have engaged in the pedagogy element of the Academy leading to a qualification as a Microsoft Certified Educator (MCE). The Microsoft Certified Educator certification validates that educators have the global educator technology literacy competencies (mapped to the UNESCO ICT Competency Framework for Teachers,) needed to provide a rich, customised learning experience for students.

The project initially targeted a small number of teachers in each school, with 97 primary, special schools and PRUs, also 6 secondary schools engaging during the last academic year.

Congratulations go to 14 teachers who undertook the MCE as part of a wider digital learning project. Their work was recognised with a Highly Commended Award for Original Digital Content at the National Digital Learning Awards in July impressing the judges with the way they had shared inspiring ideas and skills through their collaborative work.

Many thanks go to Gareth Dacey (Headteacher, Cwmclydach) whose work in developing innovative pedagogy through digital learning was the driver for this project. Cwmclydach won the inaugural award for Best Digital Content, for the second year running.





...THE JOURNEY SO FAR

Microsoft Technology Associate (MTA)

A CPD program to support teachers about to embark on delivering GCSE Computer Science was lunched with **13** secondary schools during the last academic year.

The CPD program included face-2-face workshops, webinars and 'surgery sessions'. The program focused on developing teachers understanding of the GCSE Computer Science specification for WJEC, OCR and AQA in association with The Microsoft Technology Associate (MTA) certifications. Making the very best use of the comprehensive MTA resources available through the Microsoft ITA for delivery in the classroom.

Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS)

A small pilot, but over 80 staff have engaged in developing their own IT skills in using Microsoft Office 2013 programs (Word, PowerPoint, Excel etc.) This has led to the certification of Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS) for many during the last academic year.

Full RCT launch for MOS for teacher this autumn term – see 'Call to Action' and 'What's Next' section for more details.

MOS for Students, a unique opportunity for students to enhance their own Office 2013 skills – see 'Competition for Secondary School Students', 'Call to Action' and 'What's Next' section for more details.

COMMENTS FROM PARTICIPANTS ON THE MCE COURSE

"...but through practice, reading and understanding I have gained knowledge on how to improve my lessons and make them more interactive, to ensure that ICT is linked to my learning objectives and not just using it for the sake of it..."

"I have had the opportunity to work alongside some fantastic and enthusiastic educators which I learnt a lot from."

"...participants ... reflect on practice, regardless of confidence, experience and ability..."

"...made learning real and has enabled the children to learn in a problem solving and challenging environment..."

"...My eyes have been opened to the skills needed to enhance my teaching and the children's learning to better equip them for the 21st century..."

"...the students are more engaged in activities and enthusiastic about their tasks..."

"...New programmes that I was previously unaware of have now become a vital part of my daily classroom routine. Children have benefitted greatly from this and are now aware of a much wider variety of programmes which they can make use of to help them in achieving learning objectives across numerous subject areas..."

"...Are we (as teachers) equipped with the skills we will need for the future? Yes, as I will continue to use these rubrics in all of my planning. And, are the next generation ready? Yes, as pupils will be developing these skills on a daily basis..."

"...It filled the gap that was missing in teaching which was teaching the children how to cope out in the real world. This means going beyond teaching emotional literacy to actually nurturing the skills that they will require to be successful in their future careers..."





COMPETITION FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

The RCT Microsoft Office 2013 Championship is an exclusive RCT competition that tests your students' skills in a range of Microsoft applications and offers some great prizes. To have a chance to win, they must pass a Microsoft Office 2013 Specialist exam before the 31st October 2014.



CALL TO ACTION!



A healthy interest was generated in last terms 'kick off' round for the competition...Congratulations to Llewellyn Lloyd from Ysgol Llanhari who won this round! He has enjoyed the summer in the company of his Microsoft Xbox One and FIFA 14 package.

The main competition is still open until the end of October 2014 and offers students the chance to win a range of fantastic prizes including the latest Nokia mobile phones as well as competing in Championship Finals Day at Microsoft's UK headquarters in Reading.



Please encourage as many of your students to enter – awards are available for schools providing the most number of certifications, including a seat on the coach to Microsoft for the teachers too!

Posters have been sent to schools to promote the competition – they can also be downloaded from the RCT Moodle page for the Microsoft Academy / Competition. Martyn Silezin and Derek James will be supporting schools and students during the next half-term in this exciting project. Full details and supporting resources can also be found on RCT Moodle page for the Microsoft Academy / Competition.

Steve Beswick, Director of Education, Microsoft said, "Microsoft is pleased to be involved in the RCT Microsoft Office 2013 Championship, which aims to raise the IT skills level for secondary school pupils across the RCT county. It is initiatives like these that help equip students with the vital skills needed for future employment as well as providing teachers with the IT skills to develop new teaching methods which will motivate and inspire young people. Microsoft is encouraging students to sign up and take part for the chance to become the RCT Microsoft Office Champion 2013 and win some great prizes."



Get your hands on a copy of Microsoft Office 2013 today!

- Microsoft Office 2013 is now available to all schools – for more information contact Richard Price (Richard.Price@rctcbc.gov.uk)
- Teachers can purchase a personal copy of Microsoft Office 2013 for their own use for just £8.99! – for instructions and access codes contact Josie Read (Josie.Read@RCTCBC.gov.uk)
- Students can have a free copy of Microsoft Office 2013 for home use – for further details contact Josie Read (Josie.Read@RCTCBC.gov.uk)



WHAT'S NEXT

Autumn term:

- IT Skills CPD for All teachers – Self-Study packages available for the full range of Microsoft productivity programs: MS Word, PowerPoint, Excel, OneNote etc. including FREE certification in all programs. Now is every teacher and staff members chance to enhance their personal IT skills and evidence this appropriately too. For your personal 'Learning Plan Package' contact – Josie Read (Josie.Read@RCTCBC.gov.uk)
- A group of RCT teachers are set to become 'Teacher Trainers' to facilitate the further roll-out of MCE, planned for all schools
- All NQTs are to be involved in the Microsoft IT Academy CPD program, participating in MCE and various MOS pathways
- Secondary schools to start MOS courses with students in Key Stage three
- Secondary students begin the ITQ GCSE – incorporating a range of MOS resources and certifications
- Secondary students begin Computer Science GCSE - incorporating Microsoft Technology Associate (MTA) resources and certifications

Summer term:

- A specific MOS pilot to be rolled out to primary schools, leading to more able pupils accessing MOS in the Summer Term
- A pilot KS2 / KS3 transition programme, with the Youth Engagement and Participation Service, is planned for three clusters - Summer Term

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY



Primary Showcase event		
Date:	Venue:	Information:
24 th October: Am and Pm half-day sessions	Cardinal Newman	Further info will be sent shortly
Microsoft Office Specialist - MOS exams		
Date:	Venue:	Information:
Week of 20 th Oct	Venues across RCT	Further details and bookings contact Josie Read (Josie.Read@RCTCBC.gov.uk)
Week of 9 th Feb		
Week of 23 rd March		
Week of 18 th May		
Week of 22 nd June		
Microsoft Certified Educator - MCE exams		
Date:	Venue:	Information:
Week of 15 th Sept	Venues across RCT	Further details and bookings contact Josie Read (Josie.Read@RCTCBC.gov.uk)
Week of 13 th Oct		
Week of 17 th Nov		



VISION

'RCT: dedicated to developing 21st Century Skills to embrace the digital future'

