

The excitement of coding across your school

One of the areas we're focussing on in the current round of Digital Leaders conferences and at the Computing conference last week has been the coding part of the Computing curriculum. The general perception is that, two and a half years into the new Computing curriculum, there is still some way to go before we can honestly say we are properly covering all the requirements of the programme of study.

A couple of years in then, I wonder if now that we have got our heads around the new Maths and English PoS, we might focus a little on what is after all perceived as a "new" area for most teachers.

This Newsletter "special" focusses mainly on a number of ways we can support each other and particularly on how I can support you, to help strengthen this area of the curriculum. It is, after all, a little bit of excitement that Michael Gove gave us in the 2014 curriculum!

Pupil Power: Use your digital leaders



digital leaders are actually planning "lessons" for these sessions.

It's been a delight to hear of the excellent and exciting work that [teams of digital leaders](#), now up and running in 25 Herefordshire primary schools, are doing. Several teams spoke of Computing clubs they're running, especially with younger children, how there is a waiting list of children wanting to come to them, and teachers in several schools have talked to me about how impressed they are that their

This time round, in the pupil conferences, we're focussing a bit on [Scratch Junior](#) and on extending skills to create animations, particularly conversations between characters. There are excellent planning resources to support Scratch Junior on the official [Scratch Junior Site](#) and on Phil Bagge's tremendous [Code-it website](#) (see KS1 section). KS1 teachers could certainly make use of these children to help with the odd coding lesson.

Staff training – get me in to lead a staff meeting

One of the issues identified by coordinators at our conference last week is the lack of confidence of teachers and no quality time to do anything about it. I'm putting together a series of staff meetings to try to address this, and I'll get some focussed offerings out to heads and coordinators very soon, but importantly I'd like to make sure that anything we do in these valuable time slots is properly tailored to each school's needs and resources. I'm happy to come and lead a whole staff session and look at how coding can be taught across the school with the resources you have available. A better approach might be to be more phase specific (the needs of KS2 staff are somewhat different from KS1). And it's of course important that we address the kit and software that you have available to use. [Drop me an email](#) if you think that would be useful and I'll arrange sessions for you.

Support for teachers in the classroom

Another possibility is for me to come and work with teachers in their classrooms (and don't forget that digital leaders can do this too). This can be a cost and time efficient means of getting some CPD into schools and helping to deliver the pupils' entitlement at the same time. It will be good to have a focus, and as well as on-screen coding (all very valuable) here are some added value projects using kit that I can bring in, start you off and then where appropriate leave with you:

Coding Drones

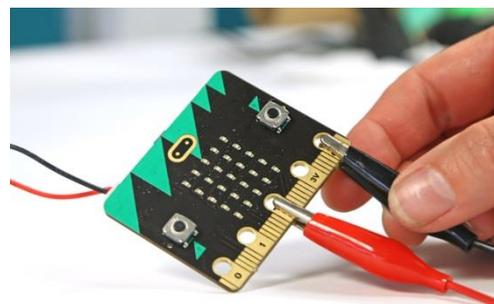


These are one of my latest toys and the highlight of recent pupil and teacher conferences. There are a number of iPad apps that will allow children to code Parrott Minidrones and the excitement levels run high, I can tell you! Once the temperature in the room has cooled a little there are many educational activities that children can undertake, linking to maths and science, in groups. We'd need the school hall. I'd be delighted to come and work with

classes from Y2 upwards, or perhaps even a day with several classes.

micro:bit

[This is the little device](#) that the DfE gave to all Y7 pupils last year. It's being supported by a team from the BBC with 30 partner organisations. Spurred on by Andy Pullen at Bridstow Primary I've looked a lot it over the half term break and there is considerable potential for coding / D&T projects certainly for upper KS2. I now have a class set of them (30) + various components to use with them and would be please to bring them along to work with classes.



LEGO WeDo and WeDo 2.0



A hugely popular resource, but very expensive. The [original WeDo](#) is best hooked up to a computer and coded with Scratch; [WeDo 2.0](#) works well with iPads (Bluetooth) with a dedicated free app and links heavily to Science. Either way, it's a great solution to extend and enhance the coding experience. I can bring you a class set, of either, work with you for half a day and then leave the kit with you for a while.

Linking coding to the curriculum

My advice in the early days of the new curriculum was not to get too hung up on establishing links across the curriculum to coding. In some classrooms this is starting to change and particularly in KS1 and lower KS2 I've worked on some lovely projects with schools that have enhanced the learning experience across subjects. It's worth looking at how this might work in your classroom.



And a few other things to get involved with!

Digital Leaders Conferences

There's still time to [get involved with these](#). The two remaining planned sessions are now full but please let me know if you want to be involved and I'll arrange more – at your school if you're willing to host. The feedback really is most encouraging and the projects that children are doing around schools after coming along to the termly conferences are really helping to move things on in schools. The Digital Leader team at Peterchurch even got a mention in their recent Ofsted report!



Herefordshire Life through a Lens – Film project 2017

15 schools expressed an interest in being involved with this many months ago. I'll be contacting people with details and dates shortly, this will be focussed on the summer term. Rick and Julia at Catcher Media have heard today that they have been successful in a major bid for funding for this project. If you want to get involved [there's more information and booking here](#).



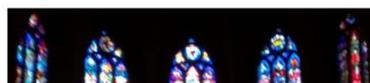
Ledbury Poetry Festival Project



I was privileged to play a role in a project with Ledbury Primary last year as part of the Ledbury Poetry Festival. It involved the children writing poetry linked to values and benches around the town. These poems were then dramatized and filmed and turned into a QR code trail around the town. The films the children made are all hosted on a dedicated website: www.ledburybenches.wordpress.com This year the project is being extended as a fringe event and Chloe Garner from the Poetry Festival will be writing to village schools around Ledbury very soon in the hope that we can create a rural poetry trail. I look forward to being involved with that with those schools.

Windows on our Communities

This is a media project that I hope to run county-wide from September 2017. It will be particularly attractive to Church schools and is based on the idea of linking images in stained glass in your local church to real life projects that happen in your local community and celebrating them. I've created a [website](#) with a fair degree of background and a number of resources to get you going; you might like to take a look. A handful of schools have agreed to pilot the idea over the next couple of terms and I will be working closely with them to see how things go. The results of their work will be found on the website as soon as they are finished and then the whole thing will grow over the next year or so.



And your own ideas

And then there's so much good stuff going on locally with individual schools and groups of schools that I'm delighted to be involved with. Please ask if there's any great idea you have that I might be able to help with.



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