

Computing/ICT Subject Leader Report 2024-2025

Merstone School Computing/ICT – Intent and Implementation	
Intent	<p>At Merstone School, we provide an ambitious computing curriculum which is designed to motivate, engage and enthuse pupils, whatever their path through school. We believe that ICT plays a big part in developing important skills which enable pupils to recognise and develop their own creative capabilities, discuss the importance of online safety and the impact of misusing information and safe use of the internet whilst also promoting communication skills.</p> <p>We intend to provide the pupils with a wide range of exciting and stimulating opportunities as they progress through the school where pupils will be able to utilise technology in a positive way to benefit their everyday lives. Pupils will learn to recognise technology around them and the significant role it plays. Pupils will learn how to access devices, which may be connected to the internet, safely and responsibly. They will learn to utilise and experience assistive technology effectively, with appropriate help where required to support their diverse needs. This knowledge will provide pupils the opportunity to interact with their world, communicate effectively using a variety of media and be as independent as possible throughout their school life and beyond. They will learn how to access the internet and utilise the information it contains whilst keeping safe and protecting themselves.</p> <p>In our school we understand and appreciate that ICT is an essential aspect of learning as it provides the pupils with many important skills they will require whilst they attend this school and also in their later life. Staff are consistently mindful of how important life skills are and how we can lay the foundations which the pupils will take with them through their life. Our intent, when planning for effective learning in ICT for all pupils is to ensure they have an opportunity to develop communication skills, collaborative skills, self-improvement skills, problem solving skills whilst developing their IT skills all of which are very individual skills based to suit each pupil in our school.</p> <p>Finally, pupils will be exposed to a variety of technologies that are fun, engaging and that broaden their understanding of what is possible through the use of technology.</p>
Implementation	<p>ICT is used to enhance the learning experience and needs specific to the child in communication, academic and social development. For communication, pre verbal pupils may use AAC devices such as switches with predefined words to express themselves, or a range of communication aids that allow structured sentences to be developed. Some children may use eye gaze, which uses eye tracking or switches to form sentences or develop cause and effect skills through playing interactive games. Our immersive and dark room also provide high sensory environments that suit ICT learning opportunities. Relevant to individual pupils' cognitive abilities and social development, class staff may introduce key concepts of keeping safe online.</p> <p>Each department at Merstone school uses a combination of the EYFS, Sheffield SEND computing scheme of work, EQUALS curriculum and ASDAN Modules to support pupils learn and develop their understanding of computing depending on their pathway. These schemes of work are</p>

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heavily adapted to suit the learner's needs and abilities and work is then further differentiated to support individual pupil's ability.

EYFS Department

Pupils access ICT in our Pebbles and Moonstones department throughout the school day. ICT is not taught as a stand-alone subject but integrated as part of everyday play and focused learning. Pupils are exposed to alternative interactive communication aids such as switches to make choices, computer programmes using interactive white boards and ipads, developing cause and effect awareness through early development toys and specialist SEN switch activated toys and when accessing our sensory rooms. Pupils are encouraged to use ICT as an explorative method to express themselves and stimulate their senses. ICT is used to support other subjects such as reading, PSHE and Maths. Through play and structured activities with adults, pupils will experience how we can use ICT to communicate and how computing and ICT devices are part of our everyday lives.

Rubies Department

The Rubies department at Merstone School consists of pupils from the academic year groups of reception to Year 10. Pupils in the Rubies department have a range of profound and complex learning needs, often alongside complex medical needs. Pupils in the Rubies department are predominately identified as having a diagnosis of PMLD and are usually working within the earliest developmental stages. Pupils access ICT in our Rubies department throughout the school day. ICT is not taught as a stand-alone subject. Instead pupils are exposed to individualised switches to make choices, the interactive white boards which are situated in all classes, cause and effect toys and when accessing our sensory rooms. Pupils are encouraged to use ICT as an explorative method to express themselves and stimulate their senses. Pupils working within our Rubies department also have access to Eyegaze. Older pupils in our Ruby department will also access ICT activities to support their ASDAN Transition challenge sensory modules.

Topaz

ICT enters every area of the Topaz department and the development of computing concepts is happening all the time. ICT is not taught as a stand-alone lesson.

Through play, life skills activities and by means of adult-supported practical experiences children become familiar with using individual communication aids to support their individual communication needs. Pupils in Topaz will also have opportunities to explore the sensory rooms where they can operate equipment using the switches and immersive room equipment.

During the early stages of development, cognitive and perceptual skills are very much a part of play, and we encourage the children to explore toys and materials where they can develop knowledge of his/her world. This includes concepts such as "what happens when we press, push, dial, shake, turn... how can we make the same action occur again?" Children

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learn that objects exist even when out of sight. These skills are called “cognitive skills” and are the beginnings of the growth in understanding and early thinking.

ICT within topaz focuses on using technology that pupils will access in their day-to-day lives, such as kettles, microwaves, toasters. We want to empower pupils to become digitally literate so pupils also have access to iPads, computers and screens as part of exposure to ICT through other sessions. Having ICT accessible through a variety of means provides opportunities for our pupils to be active participants in a digital world. Lessons will focus on using technology safely and respectfully and recognising common uses of information technology beyond school.

Sapphires and Emeralds classes 1 and 2

ICT is not taught as a stand-alone subject in these departments; it is taught across all subjects throughout the school day. Pupils are encouraged to use ICT as an explorative method to express themselves and stimulate their senses. ICT is used to support other subjects such as reading, PSHE and Maths. Through play and structured activities with adults, pupils will experience how we can use ICT to communicate. Other devices include iPads, the interactive whiteboard, switchboards, BIG mack buttons, switch toys, remote control toys, switch equipment, and use of the dark room and the immersive room. The dark room allows pupils to experience different lights and sounds through pressing different switches. The immersive room allows things to be projected onto the floors and walls, making it an interactive experience for pupils.

Emerald & Sapphire 3

Each class has one computing lesson per week, where pupils develop their ICT skills through a variety of explorative and formal styles of learning based on their abilities and needs. Pupils are provided with opportunities to develop their ICT skills by using various ICT equipment such as iPads, computers and laptops. Pupils practice making choices using touchscreen devices and navigate through computer software. Pupils also look at online safety rules and make choices in simulated online scenarios. Computing is also used in other subjects, pupils access various devices to do their work i.e. laptops, interactive whiteboard. Computing lessons in these class are directly from the Sheffield SEN ICT scheme of work and build upon progressive skills that enable pupils to engage in activities such as early coding, using computing and ICT in real world situations and to plan for and prepare activities.

Diamonds Department

The diamonds department teaches ICT as a stand-alone subject as well as cross circularly, the pupils have one computing lesson per week. The EQUALS curriculum is used to teach lessons which cover various things including using ICT in enterprise, designing and creating items. Students have access to various ICT equipment i.e. iPads, laptops, computer suite. Students learn how technology can be used for pleasure, leisure and information. They also look at online safety and cyberbullying, and what steps to take when certain scenarios occur. As our Diamonds department

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caters for our older pupils aged 14-19 we focus heavily on preparing our young people for adulthood. We therefore focus many of our ICT lessons on what we can teach pupils now that will support them when they reach adulthood and move on to their next setting.
All lessons and activities will be individualised to support each pupil's academic level and interest.

If you walk into an ICT lesson at Merstone School, you will see:

- ✓ Pupils engaged, participating and offered to join in with a variety of ICT activities.
- ✓ Pupils developing ICT skills.
- ✓ Pupils expressing choices and their personal opinions.
- ✓ A respectful environment of opinion, choices and preferences.
- ✓ Tailored and differentiated ICT activities to pupil's needs and levels of understanding.
- ✓ Pupils working towards becoming and leading safe, independent lives.

If you walk into a lesson which uses ICT devices at Merstone School, you will see:

- ✓ Students being encouraged to use AAC communication systems and aids that allow them to express their wants and needs effectively.

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Pupil voice	
Do you know what you are learning in ICT?	<p>In the Diamonds department, the main answers given were ‘using switches, games on the computer, printing, learning English and maths, researching information.</p> <p>In Emerald 3, the majority of pupils answered “online safety”, “keeping safe”</p>
What has helped you learn in ICT lessons this year?	<p>In the Diamonds department, the majority of pupils ticked ‘staff’ and ‘equipment’ as their answer. Some pupils identified that staff help and guide them with their work and printing.</p> <p>In Emerald 3, the majority of pupils ticked ‘staff’, a couple of pupils put the keyboard and computer</p>
What helps you learn in ICT?	<p>In the Diamonds department, the majority of pupils ticked ‘staff’ and ‘equipment’ as their answer. Some pupils identified that staff help and guide them with their work and printing.</p> <p>In Emerald 3, the majority of pupils ticked ‘staff’, a couple of pupils put the keyboard and computer.</p>
Do you think ICT will help you when you are older	<p>In Diamonds, the majority of pupils chose ‘yes’ as their answer, they identified that most jobs need ICT skills. Some pupils were unsure if it would help them.</p> <p>In Emerald 3, the main answers were “research”, “leisure” and “for my job”.</p>
What would you like to make ICT more fun?	<p>In Diamonds, pupils identified that they would like more games to play on the computer and more free time. One pupil said they would like to do more printing of things that they enjoy.</p> <p>In Emerald 3, the majority of pupils put “more computer games”.</p>

Outstanding examples of learning outcomes in ICT at Merstone School

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ICT successes in 2023-2024

- ✓ Increased use of communication aids to support children.
- ✓ Staff training on how to use the immersive room.
- ✓ Implementation of pupil questionnaires for classes who have ICT as a discrete subject.

Priorities for 2024-2025

- ✓ ICT being used more diversely across the school day.
- ✓ Updated e-safety rules shared with pupils, parents and staff.
- ✓ Increased use of ICT for communication.
- ✓ Audit of ICT equipment throughout the school, including the location of shared resources.
- ✓ Staff training on how to use ICT equipment and programmes.
- ✓ Implementation of questionnaire for pupils' views on ICT use at school.
- ✓ Staff questionnaire implemented.
- ✓ Review of the curriculum and necessary changes made.
- ✓ ICT Folder on shared drive for sharing resources, good practice across school.
- ✓ Safer

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