



DIGITAL LEARNING IN OLDHAM AND TAMESIDE

(Primary, Secondary and Post-16 phases)

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Introduction

As a result of Covid-19, schools and colleges nationwide had to pivot quickly to a greater use of digital approaches to delivery. In Oldham and Tameside, as in other areas of the United Kingdom, schools and colleges devised solutions to the unique demands of remote learning, experimenting with different technologies to develop a range of delivery models for teaching, learning and assessment at a distance, that most suited their learners¹. It was their 'Apollo-13 moment'. In addition to a digital response to teaching, Senior Leaders quickly established that many of their learners would not have adequate access to an electronic device or the connectivity for learning at home and had to consider the potential of low bandwidth, lower-immediacy alternatives to online learning to mitigate the effects of the digital divide on their students' learning².

The Digital Education Audit was designed to find out how school leaders are responding to the challenge of remote learning and what schools are doing to address key issues. The report will support Oldham Learning and Tameside Local Authority in identifying ways of working with schools and other partners.

Purpose of the review

Oldham Learning commissioned Advantage TSA to audit the current remote offer that schools are delivering in Oldham and Tameside. The review will be used to inform the priority actions for Oldham Learning and the schools' network groups; Oldham Alliance of Primary Headteachers and Principals (OAPHP) and Oldham Association of Secondary Headteachers and Principals (OASHP) and Tameside LA. In commissioning this report, Oldham Learning has expressed a commitment to support schools to improve outcomes. In surveying and interviewing schools, we can build a picture of good practice and development opportunities reflecting the potential for digital learning. The survey and interviews will be used to inform the priority actions. A flow chart showing the research process can be found in [Appendix 1](#).

1. Context of the review

National context regarding technology in education

April 2019 the DfE announced the publication of the 'Realising the potential of technology in education: a strategy for education providers and the technology industry' with the aim to help 'develop and embed technology in a way that cuts workload, fosters efficiencies, removes barriers to education and ultimately drives improvements in educational outcomes.' where digital learning is taken seriously as a force for school improvement. It is interesting to note that there is no reference to digital pedagogy in the [Teachers' Standards \(2011\)](#), the new [2019 ITT Core Content Framework](#) or the new [2019 Early Career Framework](#).

¹ Evidenced in 'Covid-19 Learning: Oldham Analysis – Schools Questionnaire' April/May 2020 pp9-10.

² 'Covid 19 Learning' pp 11-14.

March 2020 lockdown

The closure of schools was announced on the 18th March leaving effectively two days to plan an emergency curriculum and provide limited training for staff on working in an online context. In reality, much of what teachers learnt about teaching online occurred through trial and error, self-directed training and some school CPD over the duration of the lockdown. Anecdotal comments from schools in North West illustrate that many (but not all) schools focused on consolidation of prior learning rather than 'new' learning.

A full lockdown brought with it the challenges of committing to a school timetable and the ensuing flexibility in approach, balancing educational and well-being needs, ensuring families had food and giving due consideration to the home circumstances of teachers, not least that some were also home-schooling their own children.

In this context, emergency remote learning has served to highlight very real wider issues of digital exclusion which may impact on children and young people's lives, especially in the current climate.

In April, the DfE announced the allocation 250,000 devices nationally to support disadvantaged children who were "otherwise unable to access remote education". In order to support schools with learning management platforms and use the DfE announced that schools could receive funding for the technical set up of Microsoft and Google's education platforms and between April and June 2020 it had appointed 37 schools as EdTech Demonstrator Schools and Colleges to support schools in developing remote learning.

September return to full opening

At this point there was a significant job of ensuring schools were 'Covid-safe', adjusting to new timetables and new ways of working and role of Senior Leadership Teams in 'track and trace' as cases began to emerge. Schools were instructed to have Tiered Remote Learning Plans in place by the end of September and then the continuity directive was issued by the Secretary of State on 30th September.

National data/Local context

Desktop research was undertaken prior to constructing the audit to gain a deeper understanding of national contexts in relation to devices ownership, connectivity and delivery of online learning.

2. Conducting the review

Scope of the review

- Survey to be completed by Head Teachers and SLT with responsibility for CPD and/or Digital Learning sent to all Oldham and Tameside schools/colleges in a range of educational phases and settings across:
 - Primary schools
 - Secondary schools
 - SEND and Alternative Provision
 - 16-19 Provision;
- Survey sent to all schools for distribution to parents/carers;

- Interviews with Head Teacher and SLT with responsibility for CPD and/or digital learning from a sample of Oldham schools.

Lines of enquiry

The three lines of enquiry suggested by Oldham Learning were:

1. What role can digital technology and investment play in improving outcomes for children and young people in Oldham, in the light of ongoing disruption due to COVID-19 but also in a changed landscape post-COVID?
2. How might the Opportunity Area via Oldham Learning most effectively invest to improve outcomes in the academic year 2020-21?
3. How can schools be supported to develop effective practice in remote and blended learning?

In addressing these lines of enquiry, the review will consider:

- a) Devices and connectivity
 - What is current practice and context in Oldham?
 - What are the technological barriers?
- b) Quality of remote delivery mechanisms and support
 - What is the current picture across Oldham schools regarding delivery and assessment methods and tools?
 - How equipped or skilled do teaching staff feel to teach and/or assess using online platforms and other tools?

3. Methodology

Literature review

A literature review was undertaken prior to constructing the survey and interview questions to gain a deeper understanding of the national contexts in relation to connectivity and learning. This research informed the survey approach and provided a deeper understanding of the key barriers to learning in an online context as well as the benefits of blended learning. The two key themes of the literature review were 'devices and connectivity: the digital divide' and 'digital pedagogy'.

Some of the key findings from the Literature Review can be found in [Appendix 2](#).

Surveys

Schools: A Google Form survey was sent to Head Teachers & Senior Leaders responsible for CPD and Digital Learning across all educational phases & types. The questions were 'branched' for these specific roles in order to keep the survey manageable for school leaders. In addition to this, schools were provided with a Google Form survey to send to parents/carers. Following completion of the survey a selection of school Head Teachers and CPD/Digital Learning Senior Leaders were contacted to take part in a short interview.

The survey was designed to gauge:

- Schools' progress with contingency planning, digital strategy and alignment with existing policies.
- Core priorities relating to digital learning
- Pupils access to remote learning and challenges faced by schools
- Teaching, learning and parental engagement during lockdown

Oldham Survey: schools

The survey achieved:

- 83 total responses from 47 schools.
- 55 total responses from Primary (including nursery & junior schools) representing 35 schools.
- 26 total responses from Secondary (including PRU) representing 12 schools.
- 2 responses from 6th Form/FE representing 1 college.

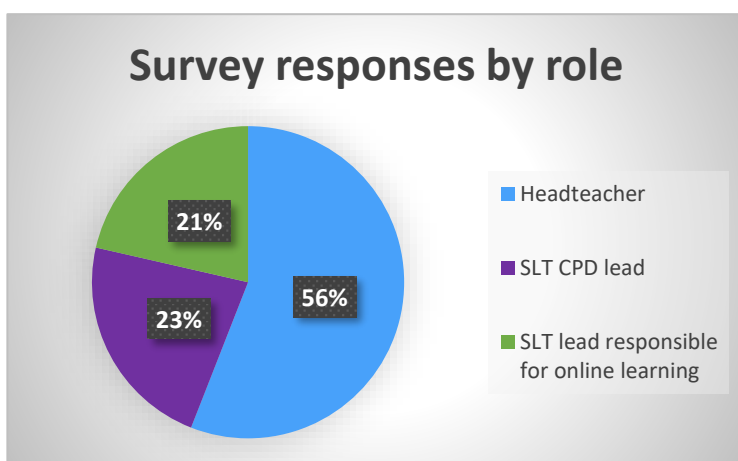


Fig.1 Oldham survey responses by role

Oldham Survey of Parents/carers: The Google Form distributed to parents via schools achieved 2450 responses representing 83 Primaries, 14 secondaries and all 16-19 provision.

The survey was designed to gauge:

- Internet access
- Sharing of devices
- Ownership of devices

Tameside Survey

The survey achieved:

- 67 total responses from 50 schools.
- 49 total responses from Primary (including nursery, junior schools & a cross phase SEMH) representing 38 schools.
- 18 total responses from Secondary (including PRU) representing 11 schools.

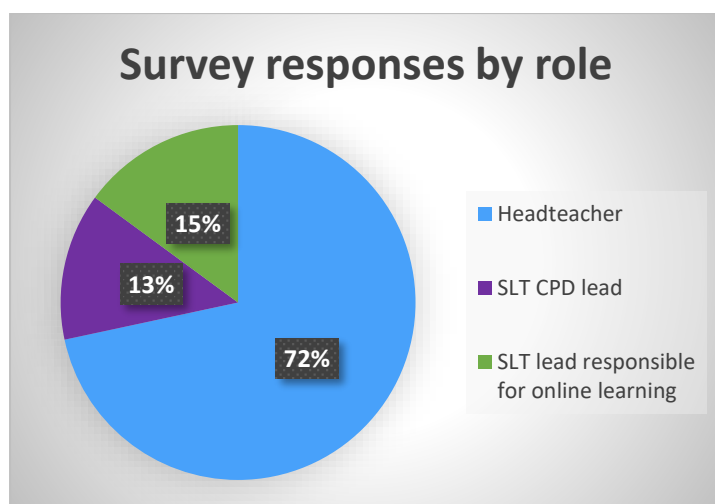


Fig.2 Tameside survey responses by role

Oldham Survey of Parents/carers: The Google Form distributed to parents via schools achieved 1960 responses representing 58 Primaries and 18 secondaries.

The survey was designed to gauge:

- Internet access
- Sharing of devices
- Ownership of devices

Interviews

Interviews were conducted in Oldham with 11 secondary and 3 primary schools and included interviews with Head Teachers and CPD/Digital Learning Leads. Given the context of the current pressures on schools the request for interviews saw a very positive response.

Sample questions

Does the school have the statutory plans in place and the core technical infrastructure and IT support services aligned to support the delivery of remote learning? Does the school have a digital learning strategy? Is there a well-sequenced learning plan to support and sustain high quality teaching? Do staff have the right IT equipment, tools, software and access to digital platforms to deliver the remote learning plan? Do all learners have access? What are the main challenges facing the school in meeting the needs of different digital learners?

The structure of this report

- Quantitative data - the findings from literature research and the survey
- Qualitative data - taken from the free responses in the survey and interview days
- Summary of findings – both quantitative and qualitative data
- Conclusions
- Recommendations – next steps

4. Quantitative data

a) School survey: Oldham

At the point that most schools completed the survey (end of September) 39% said they had a digital strategy. 56% said this was under review and only 2 schools had no policy in place. 89% of schools had a tiered plan in place for Remote Education (as stipulated by the DfE). Those 'under review' were mostly primary schools, with 2 out of 7 secondaries 'under review' in Oldham. Obviously, this is a rapidly changing picture which was also affected by the continuity direction in the [Coronavirus Act 2020](#) announced on 30th September 2020 which came into force on 22nd October. It is expected that schools will now have these plans in place. 64% of all schools recorded that other organisational policies relevant to remote learning were being updated. Those policies relating to Safeguarding are a priority but schools are mindful that policies relating to feedback and teaching and learning will also need attention.

In Oldham, 32 out of 47 schools felt they had the technical infrastructure in place to deliver remote learning effectively. 7 out of 9 responses from secondary schools said 'yes'.

82% of schools felt that staff had the right equipment for digital learning which is something that can be built on in future digital planning.

Pupils access to learning and engagement with learning were difficult for schools to quantify. Secondary schools suggested access was between 80-100%, with engagement at 18-85% (6 out of 15 schools put engagement at 70%). 6 out of 11 Primaries responded 'don't know' to the question on access with the other 5 suggesting between 48-90% of pupils having access to remote learning.

In response to the question “What factors, other than funding, would accelerate the digital learning process in your school?” the top two priorities identified by the majority of schools were ‘improving staff digital skills’ and ‘having the technology to improve collaboration’.

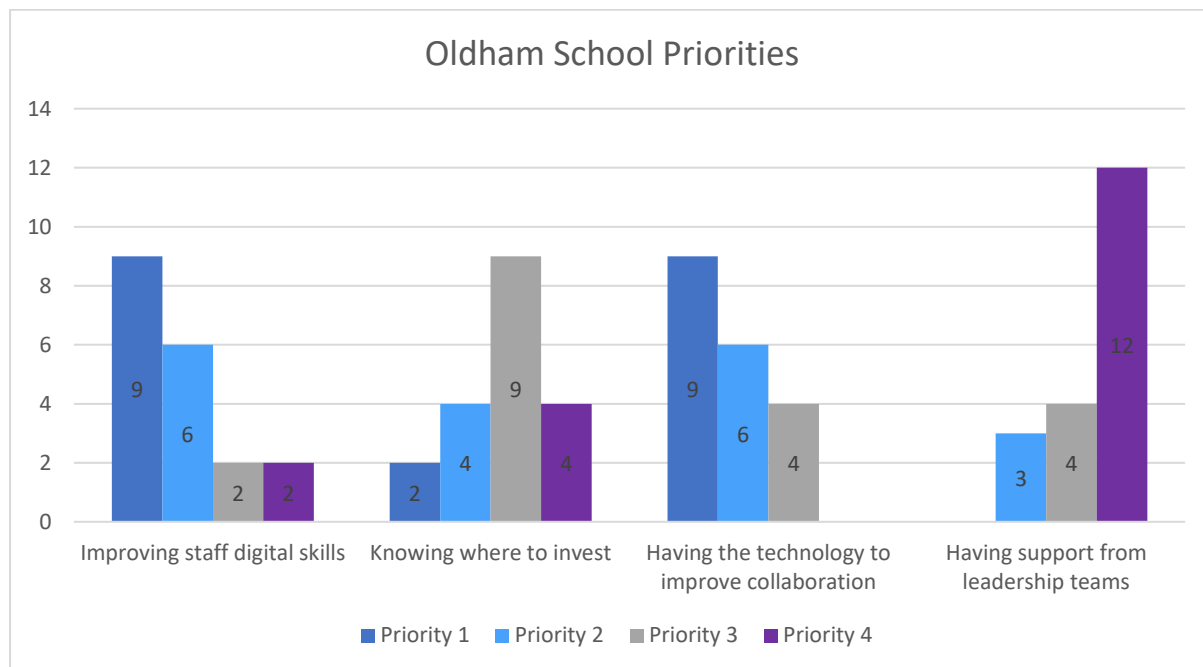


Fig. 3 Oldham School Priorities

Only 12 schools responded to the question “‘Teachers and staff learn best from one another.’ Do you have digital champions or EdTech leaders in place to implement your remote learning plan?’ and out of those, only 5 had digital champions.

In terms of delivering content during lockdown the majority of schools used their website, VLE or a learning platform such as Google Classroom or Microsoft Teams and delivery included both asynchronous and synchronous learning. In primary schools, platforms such as Purple Mash, Class Dojo, Tapestry and SeeSaw were used in various ways to try to engage pupils and parents.

b) School survey: Tameside

In Tameside, the figure for schools having a digital strategy was 50%, reflecting that this survey was re-issued in November. 33% said this was under review with 8 schools having no digital strategy, 7 of which were Primary. 60% of schools had a tiered plan in place for Remote Education (as stipulated by the DfE). Those ‘under review’ were mostly primary schools, with 2 out of 5 secondaries who responded had plans which were ‘under review’. Obviously, this is a rapidly changing picture which was also affected by the continuity direction in the [Coronavirus Act 2020](#) announced on 30th September 2020 which came into force on

22nd October. It is expected that schools will now have these plans in place. 53% of all schools in Tameside recorded that other organisational policies relevant to remote learning were being updated, 42% responded that policies had been updated, again reflecting the reissuing of the survey in November. Those policies relating to Safeguarding are a priority but schools are mindful that policies relating to feedback and teaching and learning will also need attention.

34 out of 50 Tameside schools felt they had the technical infrastructure in place to deliver remote learning effectively. 4 out of 5 responses from secondary schools said ‘yes’ with one commenting ‘yes, after considerable work since schools closed in March 2020’ and one school commenting ‘No, massive changes needed, including staff training and time to do so’ representing some considerable issues still faced by schools.

82% of schools in Oldham felt that staff had the right equipment for digital learning which is something that can be built on in future digital planning. Response to this question in Tameside was low (9 responses) but suggested a similar pattern to Oldham.

Pupils access to learning and engagement with learning were difficult for schools to quantify. Secondary schools suggested access was between 70-95%, with engagement at 10-90% (3 out of 7 schools put engagement at above 70%). 3 out of 5 Primaries responded ‘don’t know’ to the question on access with the other 2 suggesting between above 80% of pupils having access to remote learning with engagement ranging from 20-95%.

In response to the question “What factors, other than funding, would accelerate the digital learning process in your school?” the top two priorities identified by the majority of schools were ‘improving staff digital skills’ and ‘having the technology to improve collaboration’.

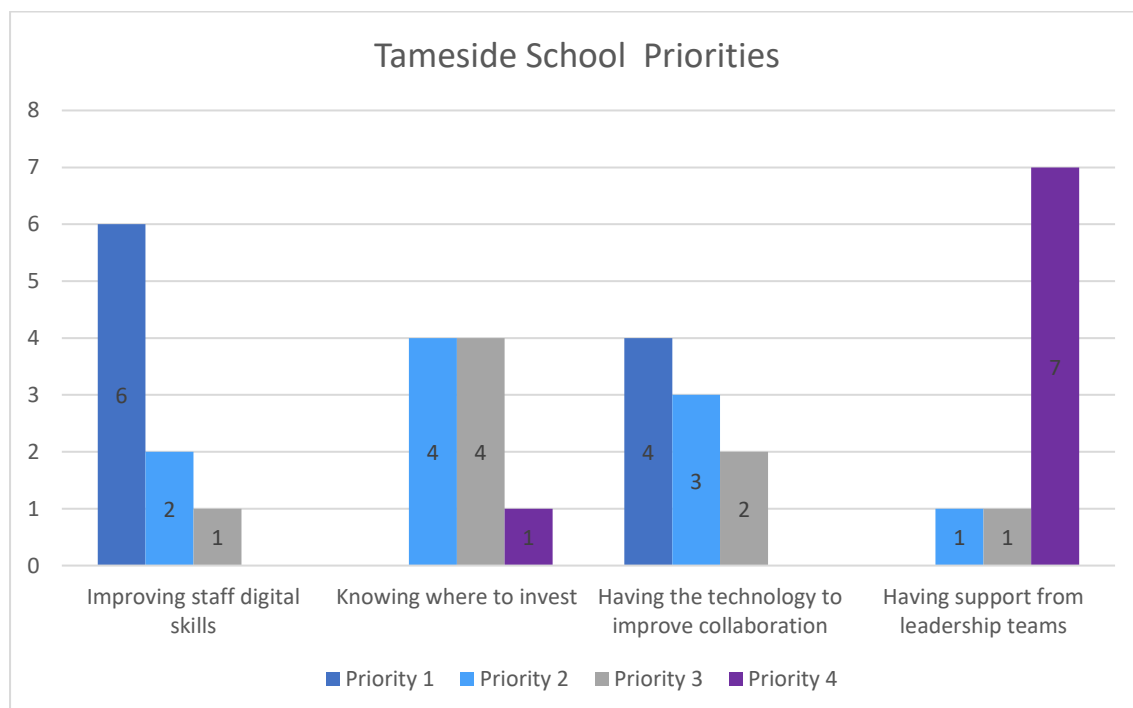


Fig. 4 Tameside School Priorities

Only 9 schools responded to the question "Teachers and staff learn best from one another." Do you have digital champions or EdTech leaders in place to implement your remote learning plan?' and out of those, only 2 had digital champions.

In terms of delivering content during lockdown the majority of schools used their website, VLE or a learning platform such as Google Classroom or Microsoft Teams and delivery included both asynchronous and synchronous learning. In primary schools, platforms such as Purple Mash, Class Dojo, Tapestry and SeeSaw were used in various ways to try to engage pupils and parents.

c) Parent/carer survey: Oldham

The responses from the parent/carer survey indicate that 49% of pupils have to share a device with siblings or other family members which is broadly in line with national figures³. This data does not consider areas of deprivation versus affluence. Some families took the opportunity to explain that they had old or low spec devices which weren't compatible with many new apps and programmes. In terms of device ownership, 90% of families owned at least one PC, laptop or tablet device, only 3.7% of those who responded lived in a 'mobile phone only' household. The Understanding Society Covid-19 Survey (2020)⁴ suggests nationally 4% of students had no access to a computer, tablet or laptop whereas in Oldham this figure is 10%.

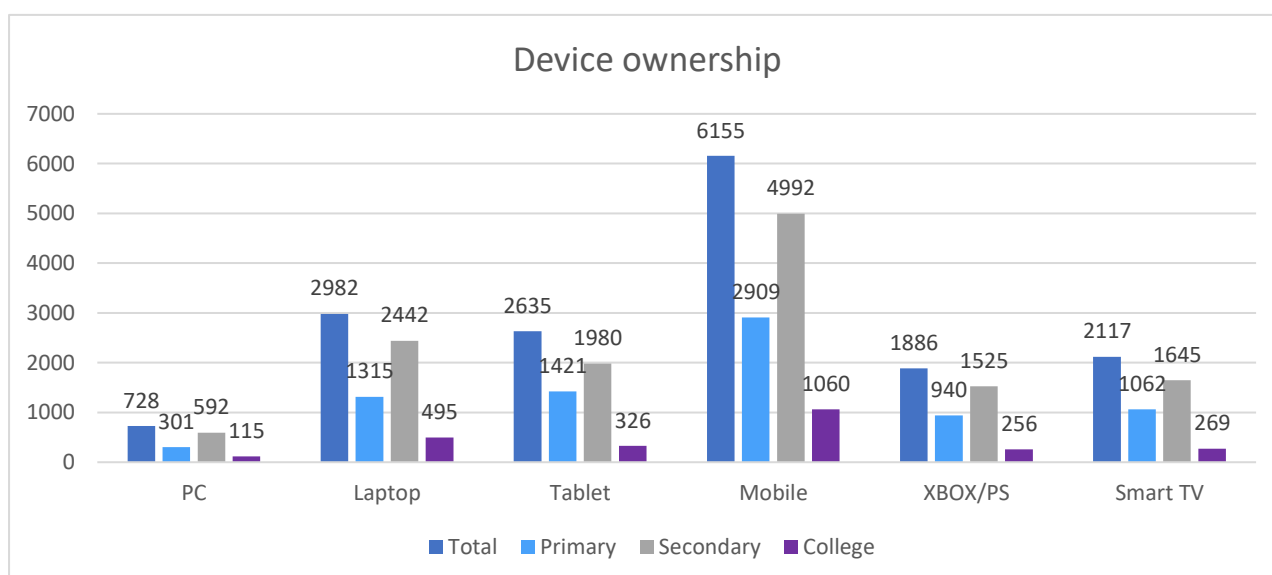


Fig.5 Device ownership: Oldham survey

³https://www.understandingsociety.ac.uk/sites/default/files/downloads/general/ukhls_briefingnote_covid_homeschool_final.pdf

⁴https://www.understandingsociety.ac.uk/sites/default/files/downloads/general/ukhls_briefingnote_covid_homeschool_final.pdf

d) Parent/carer survey: Tameside

The responses from the parent/carer survey indicate that 47% of pupils have to share a device with siblings or other family members which is broadly in line with national figures⁵. This data does not consider areas of deprivation versus affluence. As with the Oldham survey, some families took the opportunity to explain that they had old or low spec devices which weren't compatible with many new apps and programmes. In terms of device ownership, 92% of families owned at least one PC, laptop or tablet device, only 3.2% of those who responded lived in a 'mobile phone only' household. The Understanding Society Covid-19 Survey (2020)⁶ suggests nationally 4% of students had no access to a computer, tablet or laptop whereas in Tameside this figure is 7.8%.

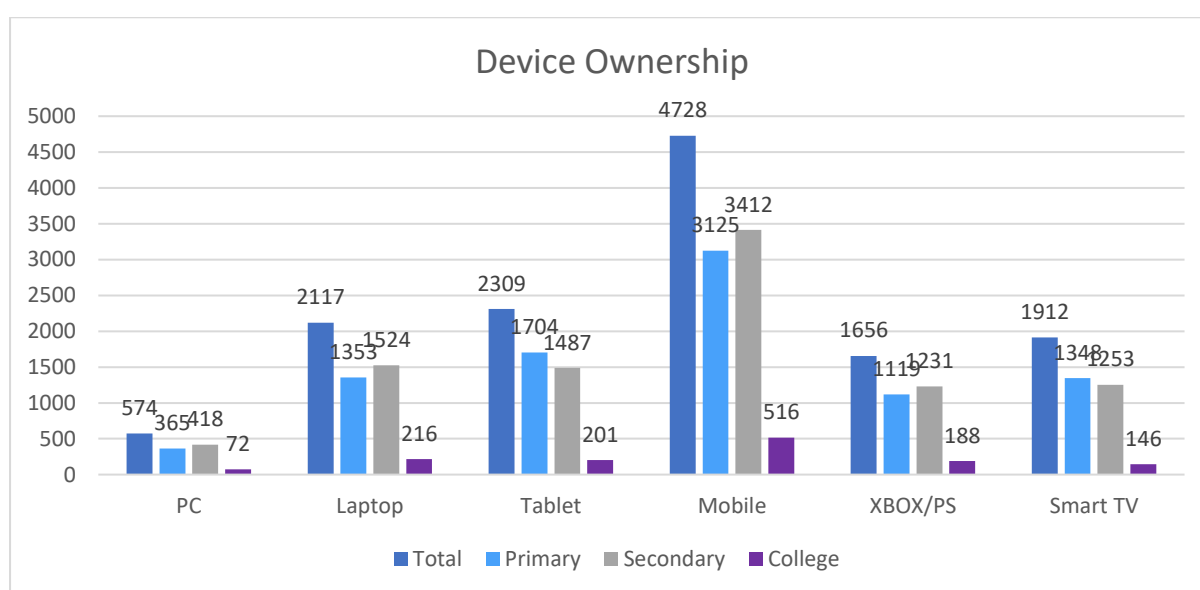


Fig.6 Device ownership: Tameside survey

5. Qualitative data: Oldham

Devices and learning platforms

Whilst most schools had developed a remote learning plan, it was apparent during some of the school interviews that 'Digital Strategy' was synonymous with 'Remote Learning Plan' when in fact a strategy will encompass more than the delivery of learning in the current context. In some cases, this is not a published plan but an inward facing guide/policy on how staff are to manage distance learning. Parents are presented with a loose guide on what to

⁵https://www.understandingsociety.ac.uk/sites/default/files/downloads/general/ukhls_briefingnote_covid_homeschool_final.pdf

⁶https://www.understandingsociety.ac.uk/sites/default/files/downloads/general/ukhls_briefingnote_covid_homeschool_final.pdf

expect. Schools that had digital strategy and learning platform in place seemed better able to pivot to remote learning.

In response to the questions about technical infrastructure and equipment there were some issues raised by schools in response to this question relating to training issues because of new learning platforms and the challenges of parent/carer digital literacy and the age of school IT systems.

- To provide the quality of home learning required further capacity is required in terms of equipment, expertise and CPD.
- Poor school internet connection now and for future if more devices are being used on site.
- Devices for staff and associated funding issues
- Devices for pupils and associated funding issues
- Challenge of parents' digital skills

Whilst schools have identified the urgent need to establish a distance learning strategy, schools are still facing challenging circumstances around access. All schools which took part in the survey have conducted an audit of student access and most have identified access of around 80%. However, some schools have identified that although 80% have access to technology, they face other challenges such as being a shared device within the family home, not having a quiet place to work, or that their access is via a smart phone. This poses additional challenges for schools who may be preparing content which may not be easy to access for all. Some schools have been creative in how they are getting over this barrier, for example - one school have refurbished old PC's to gift to students who may have no access at home.

Some of the barriers with devices and connectivity raised by schools were:

- Access to appropriate IT at home (i.e. not just a phone)
- Ensuring children have the skills to access Google Classroom/Teams
- Pupils access to the internet.
- Access to suitable ICT provision, support and structure at home, confidence with learning independently. There is also the challenge of meeting the meetings of a cohort with some students learning in school and some at home without doubling staff workload.
- We did not have access to an online learning platform and a high proportion of our learners either have no access or limited access to digital equipment and broadband.
- Managing blended learning and apathy of some pupils to home learning
- Access to enough IT in the house, a small but significant group with no access at all, parental support of learning.

The DfE has helped and schools have been repurposing school laptops. For example, one primary loaned out 88 laptops and purchased an additional 40 iPads and a secondary provided some useful data as an example of how the DfE laptops were being distributed:

Year Group	Own Device	No Device	Shared Device
7 (218) 2 missing	122	73	21
8 (211) 3 missing	112	40	56
9 (215) 5 missing	127	18	65
10 (209) 12 missing	98	35	64
11 (215) 0 missing	127	0	62

- 88 have been loaned to Year 11 from the 159 batch 2
- 41 on loan to Y7-10 from the 159 batch
- 28 to Year 11 from the DFE batch 1
- 20 to disadvantaged students and students with a social worker.

And in another secondary example a Headteacher explained:

“Most students have access via smart phones but a large proportion do not have access to technology of substance such as tablet or laptop. To tackle access issues, the school reconfigured their in-school devices & distributed these to the vast majority of students who didn’t have access. This meant they were not waiting around for DFE laptops. The school are also purchasing an additional 200 devices to allow all students to have access. Despite this drive there is still around a quarter of the school cohort who do not have sufficient access.”

It is worth noting that having low numbers of deprived students does not necessarily mean that those students have access to devices.

In adapting to the needs of learners and their families there was a range of practice across the schools illustrated during the interview process. Schools specifically reported sending out their own surveys to parents to establish whether devices were needed and they are continuing to do this in order to gather granular data about device types, sharing of devices and age of devices. 6 schools commented on having already begun to develop long-term plans for EdTech and learning platforms before Covid-19 lockdown. For those without access to technology, schools supported them in the following ways:

- Regular contact by phone from teacher
- Paper work packs.
- Laptops made available for students who don't have access at home
- Students use phones and tablets when laptops are not available at home
- Facility for those students to attend college

- Collect homework from school in paper form. For those really struggling school invited their children to join the key worker children throughout lock down.
- Paper learning packs are centrally planned following evidence-based guidance and sent out

Some more detailed comments included:

“Home Learning will be communicated through digital means but for those parents unable to access the learning platform, this information will be communicated via our Pastoral Support Team and class teachers. Weekly phone calls from the Pastoral leads and twice weekly phone contact from class teachers will aim to engage parents in supporting their child's learning at home. Learning tasks for the most part tend to be practical tasks which are not dependant on technology in themselves.”

“In the EYFS we dropped off learning packs regularly. The children each received mark making tools, play dough and a good quality text. We sent home and dropped off ideas sheets for parents to do with their children. The Nursery and Reception teams rang parents to discuss how the packs could be used. We regularly spoke and sang with children on the telephone.”

Digital pedagogy

A lack of strategic vision relating to Digital Learning/EdTech prior to Covid-19 is reflected in the capacity schools had to pivot quickly to delivering remote learning during lockdown. Those that had done some form of planning and training in using learning platforms were better placed to upskill staff in effective practice and source equipment for students who did not have access.

During lockdown synchronous 'live' lessons was felt to be a safeguarding issue for most schools, particularly in primary, although one secondary school did 4 hours of live teaching each day from April. In other schools there were some examples of live 'check ins' with pupils but most schools did this by phone to individual families. Secondary schools in particular are now trialling live teaching. The debate about synchronous v asynchronous (live v pre-recorded) should not concern schools and the EEF Rapid Evidence Assessment on Remote Learning Recommendation 1 states "Teaching quality is more important than how lessons are delivered"⁷.

Some schools have provided a clear guidance and structure on how distance learning content should be structured, this is good practice to ensure consistency across different subject areas as it can be very confusing for students if they are exposed to different ways of working across subjects. A simple, consistent approach is a good way forward. Some schools have identified visual icons which are placed on slides, these are used across all subjects to ensure consistency. Students are familiar with what these visual icons mean and what they are expected to do.

The top two priorities identified by the majority of schools in the survey were 'improving staff digital skills' and 'having the technology to improve collaboration'. The interviews show that schools see these two priorities are seen as connected as both deal with the ability of staff to translate and adjust classroom practice into a remote learning context.

- Improving skills - that needs to be in place to get everything else done
- Improving staff skills is important. Staff have had little training & have learnt for themselves -so we need to provide support
- Both priorities are related. Lots of ways to collaborate [but staff need to know how to use platforms to conduct collaborative activity]

The EEF Rapid Evidence Assessment on Remote Learning, Recommendation 3 suggests that 'Peer interactions can provide motivation and improve learning outcomes' and their Remote Professional Development Rapid Evidence Assessment Recommendation 4 suggests 'Interactive content and opportunities for collaboration hold promise for remote professional development'.

⁷ https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Publications/Covid-19_Resources/Remote_learning_evidence_review/Rapid_Evidence_Assessment_summary.pdf

In terms of delivering content during lockdown the majority of schools used their website, VLE or a learning platform such as Google Classroom or Microsoft Teams and delivery included both asynchronous and synchronous learning. In primary schools, platforms such as Purple Mash, Class Dojo, Tapestry and SeeSaw were used in various ways with differing degrees of effectiveness to try to engage pupils and parents.

Many schools recognised that paper-based resources for families were limited in effectiveness and did not allow for 'teaching' and for 'feedback' to occur in any meaningful way. One Senior Leader at a secondary school commented that at this point 'Paper packs are not an option. Every child needs access to technology in order that the curriculum can be delivered effectively.' Schools are working hard to audit all pupils and those without access to tech are provided with equipment where possible.

Currently, leaders are measuring levels of engagement by checking who is logging on, who is completing work and how often. This is not easily managed on various platforms, however the key here is measuring the impact. How can leaders be secure in knowing that the impact of the digital program in place is positive? Is it in line with in class teaching? What level of engagement? Most schools have measured this by surface level engagement (who has logged in and handed work in?) but the biggest measure will be during assessment. As we get further into the school year, schools should consider measuring the progress and attainment of students who have had various levels of isolation. This also links to feedback, how are students being provided feedback when at home? Schools have mentioned tools such as the Microsoft Teams Rubric for assessment purposes. Managing digital work will present as a challenge and schools need to consider a streamlined approach on how this is to be managed by teachers to ensure quality feedback.

Schools have also emphasised staff well-being and workload in transitioning to new methods of delivery particularly with the complications of 'hybrid' models of learning when some students are online at home whilst others are in the classroom.

There were differences in approaches to quality assurance during lockdown. Some schools didn't conduct any quality checks and commented that they have experienced some variability in quality, others had set out clear expectations and followed this up with checks either formally or informally. Some schools have heavily invested in a digital strategy where every lesson and accompanying resources are available online for every subject. This has been established as the "norm" and is a standard expectation for staff. This is part of the culture of the school. Whilst there was a huge initial investment in time, to develop the curriculum at this level, this has now eased pressure on the school. All planning takes place via a digital medium and all schools should be moving in this direction. This will also allow a window into every classroom from a quality assurance perspective and leaders can remain confident about what is being taught across every subject area. Students who are absent will not be disadvantaged as they will have access to exactly the same resources and learning journey as their peers. This paves the way for a truly "anytime, anywhere" curriculum. This is not just a Covid measure, but this is a measure to improve teaching & learning as a whole for the future.

Having now spent time training staff on using technology schools are now planning on building in some form of quality assurance as part of the usual curriculum monitoring and observation of teaching and learning. Schools are using their CPD time effectively to continue developing staff's use of learning platforms and continuing with priorities such as metacognition in line with EEF Recommendation 4 "Supporting pupils to work independently can improve learning outcomes". It is also evident that many teachers are self-directing their learning to understand more about current models and one school commented that they are encouraging staff to record this to aggregate the training to replace an inset day.

It is now imperative to seriously consider pedagogy in a digital world. For example, it may be even more important to sharpen questioning techniques to ensure engagement at home especially during live learning. There are also various other models of tech Integration (especially for the schools who have within learning such as the [SAMR](#) and [TPACK](#) models which identifies how technology can be effectively utilised to enhance teaching and learning. How can tech be used to enhance feedback (e.g. voice feedback, video feedback, Crib Sheets etc)?

Many schools stayed in a 'coping phase' during lockdown characterised by little 'new' learning, high levels of inequality, and slow progress. A LLAKES (2020)⁸ study in the May of lockdown suggests "The extent of online lessons provision in state schools was minimal: 71% of state school children received no or less than one daily online lesson". Schools are planning for a 'recovery and continuity phase' in Autumn Term 2020 characterised by assessment of pupils' knowledge, intervention, beginning or improving training for staff on learning platforms. Some schools are able to focus on long-term improvements in areas relating to pedagogy, assessment, effective use of learning platforms and parental involvement.

There were many comments relating to the pride Senior Leaders had of the way their staff had responded to pivoting to a new way of delivering:

"We are proud of quality our online teaching. We have recorded all lessons so now have a bank of lessons. The structure of lessons is consistent with school practice in general."

⁸ Green, Francis 'Schoolwork in lockdown: new evidence on the epidemic of educational poverty', published by the Centre for Learning and Life Chances in Knowledge Economies and Societies at: <http://www.llakes.ac.uk>

6. Conclusions

Whilst any device that connects to the internet (PC, laptop, netbook, tablet, smartphone, some games consoles, Smart TVs) allows students to access some of the digital learning content provided by schools, not all devices are created equal and not all materials are designed for all devices. In order that learners can fully engage with online applications and create and edit documents easily, students need access to devices which are suitable for completing schoolwork – mobile phones are not conducive to completing formal school assignments. It is important to consider that one size does not fit all in this context and consideration needs to be given to any devices preferred by the school they attend.

Provision of computers does not impact positively or negatively on educational achievement – students need **both** computers and internet access (Fairlie & Robinson, 2011). Data is sometimes perceived as being cheaper than Wi-Fi or broadband and support to understand different packages and how to switch may be needed.

In addition to devices and connectivity, it may be important to consider the needs of young people and their parents from lower socioeconomic groups and provide support and training in digital literacy to give students the tools and skills to survive and succeed in an increasingly digital world.

The use of digital technology is not an end in itself. The impact of technology is also determined by how it is used to enhance the learning experience and certainly its potential in teaching, learning and assessment will only be realised through innovative teaching practice.

The different approaches and for some the speed of the adoption, have highlighted the variety and disparate use of digital learning experiences across the schools. This is not unique to Oldham. The [Sutton Trust](#) reported that 60% of private schools already had an online portal which could be easily adapted for online learning, compared to 37% of state schools in affluent areas and 23% of schools in the most deprived areas of the country.

Schools will have aspirations for their digital capabilities but to accelerate teachers' skills and abilities to use digital tools appropriately, teachers need to feel supported to use technology through high quality CPD and to have access to evidence-informed 'best bets'. These are vital components in enabling them to use technologies in new ways and to prioritise digital literacy for both teachers and students.

The [EEF Toolkit](#) reports that studies consistently find that the use of digital technologies are associated with moderate learning gains – on average an additional four months progress but with considerable variation in impact. Similarly, [Social Research, ICF Consulting Services Ltd Nov 2015](#) reports that 'Teachers' skills and competences in recognising how to use digital tools and resources and apply them effectively are critical to achieving positive results for learners with additional support needs or who are disadvantaged in other ways.'

We now need to look beyond the immediate crisis to support schools in planning for 2020-21 and beyond. Whilst we anticipated that most learners would return to onsite teaching and

learning it is of the utmost importance to put contingency plans in place should a local lockdown become necessary so that quality teaching, learning and assessment can continue as far as possible without interruption.

Staff will need to review programmes they deliver to ensure that they have a blended learning approach in place should they ever need to use it. Building on the 'Covid 19 Learning: Good Practice Guide' based on the analysis of 'Oldham Schools Questionnaire April/May 2020', schools should be supported to share and further develop the innovative practice already established with remote learning. Beyond the immediate concerns relating to the possible ongoing disruptions to onsite learning we should look to exploit these new skills and technologies to develop into blended learning as a key pedagogical tool for future teaching, learning and assessment.

7. Recommendations

Schools

1. **Strategy:** Schools should begin to plan a 3year Digital Learning Strategy which considers a range of foci including teaching and learning, digital literacy, resourcing and technical infrastructure to develop future-looking, digitally-rich, flexible learning. Documents such as [A Guide to Creating a Digital Strategy in Education](#) and [Developing Digital: A Guide and Toolkit for School Leaders](#) are helpful in considering interlocking elements of digital learning and the EEF's [Putting Evidence to Work: A School's Guide to Implementation](#) to support effective planning and implementation. One there is clarity of expectations, the learning journey can be quality assured from a teaching and learning perspective.
2. **Platforms:** Any schools without Microsoft Office365 or Google for Education should sign up using [The Key for School Leaders](#).
3. **External support:** Schools needing support on using platforms should register their interest for bespoke support with the [EdTech Demonstrator Programme](#).
4. **Access:** Many schools are reliant on pupils having access to mobile phones to access digital learning. Whilst this serves a purpose, as the research suggests, pupils will find content creation and task completion difficult. Schools considering a 1-1 approach need to plan carefully and seek advice from schools which have done this successfully. Schools must be creative in ensuring adequate access for all. Microsoft and Google learning platforms can be accessed through games consoles and Smart TVs. Schools should consider this as another avenue for pupils to access learning.
5. **Digital curriculum:** Schools should consider the importance of threshold concepts in structuring the leaning content and curriculum sequence. Linked to this each schools' teaching and learning priorities need to be embedded within the context of online learning.
6. **CPD:** Schools should consider a 'Digital Champions' model to accelerate the progress of training and implantation of learning platforms and remote learning pedagogy. Free events can be found here <https://edtech-demonstrator.lgfl.net/support-and-resources> for Champions to access and disseminate in schools.
7. **Models of learning:** models of learning need to be considered alongside the school's demographic and remote learning plan tiers. The model provided in [Appendix 5](#) provides a useful starting point for planning.

Oldham Learning/Tameside LA

1. Identify and support any schools who do not have or are not actively using Microsoft/Google learning platforms.
2. Gather up to date, live data on device access to support schools financially so they can provide devices and WiFi dongles to students without access. A starting point should be year groups 6 and 10-13 as a key priority. Schools need to have granular data to ensure that pupils have the right kind of device for learning.
3. Establish a decision-making process for funding devices and establishing criteria so that the right schools and pupils are targeted. Schools should provide granular data, an outline rationale which reflects the infrastructure and best solution for their school.
4. Support an Oldham approach to Digital Learning to enable schools to network and share good practice. This links to a proposal made by OASHP regarding a Digital Champions course to support this as a key area of development in 2020-21. This could be expanded to primaries. I suggest 4 Champions per secondary and 2 Champions per primary and beginning this course in December 2020 should the Board agree to funding. This is in line with EEF Remote Professional Development Recommendation 4 “Interactive content and opportunities for collaboration hold promise for remote professional development.” This could potentially be rolled out to include Tameside schools.

Oldham Learning/Local Authority

1. Wraparound support for families. An underlying cause of pupil engagement at primary level may be parents’ digital literacy skills. Whilst many schools have supported parents with logging in and using learning platforms some of this responsibility for adult learning may be able to be taken up on a local/community level based around the DfE [Essential Digital Skills Framework \(2019\)](#).
2. Support families with understanding broadband packages.

8. Costings

Devices: Our experience is that currently we can only source refurbished units. A good quality refurbished laptop costs around £350/unit. A normal price for a new laptop is around £250-£550/unit, but the lead times for delivery are a few months. Other devices can be considered such as Chromebooks or tablets but need to fit in with the schools infrastructure.

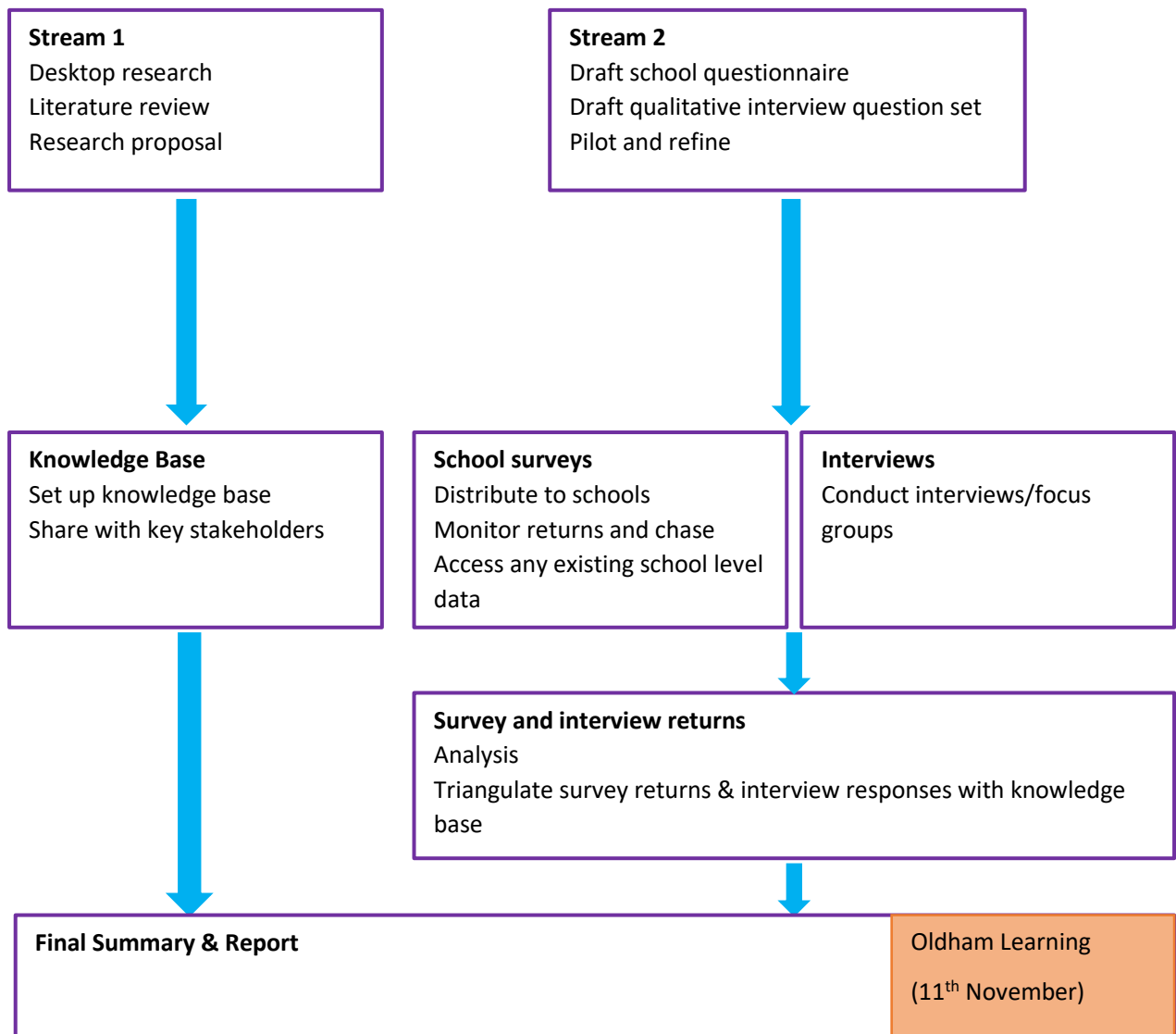
For the games console/TV solution a PC keyboard can be bought for as little as £5 each. For the tablets, a micro to regular USB adapter is required to physically connect the keyboard - this is around £2 each. This enable students to produce content more effectively.

WiFi dongles: approximately £50 each for the dongle plus 20GB of data

Staff Development: The secondary Digital Champions course has been costed a £9160. We suggest a maximum of 4 places per secondary school. To run a separate course for Primaries with 2 places per school I suggest running 2 cohorts at £9160 per cohort. [See Appendix 3.](#)

Bespoke support: To provide additional bespoke support for schools we suggest a budget of £5040 in order to add capacity. This will provide 12 days of SLE support to be used towards supporting Senior Leaders or providing additional CPD.

Appendix 1: Process



Appendix 2: Literature Review

[Chen & Wellman \(2004\)](#) suggest that the digital divide can be defined as ‘differences between those who have all the necessary resources to participate in current society and those who do not’ but the debate is much more complex than the “haves” and “have nots”. The Carnegie UK Trust report [Switched On](#) (2019) suggests that ‘adequate digital access’ is a complex picture with considerations that go far beyond simply access to a digital device, citing four key components:

1. **Availability** of technology – both the device and the connectivity
2. **Affordability** of the device and connectivity
3. **Ability** to use the technology including skills, confidence and motivation
4. **Equality and fairness** relating to how service providers treat their users and offer the same opportunities for all.

An Education Development Trust recent report on [Best practice in pedagogy for remote learning](#) suggests that involving technology in teaching and learning will only be effective for teachers, students and families with adequate electricity, internet connectivity and devices, and these are therefore unrealistic in many low-income contexts. [Good Things Foundation](#) summarise the key disadvantages of digital exclusion as; ‘poorer health outcomes and lower life expectancy, increased loneliness, social isolation, less access to jobs and education’ all resulting in ‘an increased risk of falling into poverty’.

In surveying research into digital access and deprivation, Teacher Tapp⁹ reported that 15% of teachers in the most deprived schools reported that more than a third of their students would not have adequate access to an electronic device for learning at home. When exploring this further the following studies have been useful in gathering national statistics:

[Lloyds Bank \(2019\)](#)

- 76% of those with access to the internet at home, use the internet for school related purposes. For 12% of young people surveyed it is not possible to use devices (laptop/netbook/tablet) at home, creating challenges for completing school work.
- Young people with home access to a computer or tablet are 22% more likely to be engaging with school related content online and are 25% more likely to look up information.
- Young people aged 11-15 without home internet access spend 260 hours fewer per year doing schoolwork online, for 11-18 year olds this rises to 355 hours. 11-18 year olds with access to appropriate devices at home also reported greater confidence and ambition for their future.
- 42% of young people with large families (5 or more) share at least one device with someone in their household. Of these, 58% say they are very often/sometimes unable to go online for this reason.

⁹ Teacher Tapp is an app that asks three daily questions as part of an experiment to learn more about the way schools really work.

Becta (2009)

- After controlling for KS3 results, the availability of a computer at home is significantly positively associated with Key Stage 4 test scores. This association amounts to around 14 GCSE points (equivalent to 2 GCSE grades).
- Young people with a computer at home are less likely to play truant at ages 14 and 16 than those without computer access. For example, having access to a computer at home is associated with a 5.8% reduction in the likelihood of playing truant at age 16.

Ofcom (2012)

- Children in DE households were identified to be less likely than all students to use a desktop PC (27% vs 33%) and more likely to use a mobile phone to access the internet (6% vs 3%)
- Children aged 8-15 in DE households are less likely than all children aged 8-15 to use the internet at least weekly for homework/schoolwork.

Ofcom (2018)

- 36% of 16-24 year olds live in mobile only households (limiting their ability to create and edit documents and increasing the difficulty of collating or comparing information, limiting both social and employability opportunities)
- Ownership of connected devices such as PC, laptops/netbooks and tablets has also declined, suggesting that more adults in this age group are now relying on their smartphone for internet access.
- Eighty per cent of households claim to have fixed broadband, but ownership remains lower than average among DE households, at 64%.
- 29% of the most financially vulnerable do not have household access to the internet.

Understanding Society Covid-19 Survey (2020)

- 4% of students had no access to a computer, laptop or tablet. 51% of students need to share their devices with others.
- Almost 72% of post-16 students, 54% of Secondary pupils and 33% of Primary pupils have their own computer.
- Students whose parents are not in employment are least likely to have access to a computer (9% compared with employed – not on furlough 3%, employed – on furlough 3% and all/some self-employment 2%.

Appendix 3: Digital Champions proposal (via OASHP)

‘Teachers’ skills and competences in recognising how to use digital tools and resources and apply them effectively are critical to achieving positive results for learners with additional support needs or who are disadvantaged in other ways.’

[Social Research, ICF Consulting Services Ltd Nov 2015](#)

Schools will have aspirations for their digital capabilities but to accelerate teachers’ skills and abilities to use digital tools appropriately, teachers need to feel supported to use technology through high quality CPD and to have access to evidence-informed ‘best bets’. These are vital components in enabling them to use technologies in new ways and to prioritise digital literacy for both teachers and students. Beyond the immediate concerns relating to the possible ongoing disruptions to onsite learning we should look to exploit these new skills and technologies to develop into blended learning as a key pedagogical tool for future teaching, learning and assessment.

Objectives of the course

- To support Senior Leadership Teams in planning for the effective implementation of digital learning strategies
- To develop an Oldham shared vision for an approach to digital learning encouraging collaboration, sharing of good practice and accessing support
- To apply evidence-informed practice to digital learning pedagogy
- To develop Digital Champions in each school to disseminate training and good practice
- To support schools in continual improvement of the learner experience

Course outline:

Pre-course session for Senior Leaders with responsibility for Digital Learning development:

Implementation planning session using EEF models focusing on identifying individual school priorities and shared priorities across the borough.

- Reflecting on current practice
- Understanding modes of learning in different contexts
- Designing resilient teaching
- CPD for remote learning

Following this the sessions will be aimed at Digital Champions identified by each school.

Session 1: Train the Trainer

- Making the most of your learning platform
- Planning and developing in-school training

Session 2: Adapting to digital learning

- Integration of in class and online activities
- Teaching principles that support digital learning
- Modelling effectively using visualisers

Session 3: What does good look like?

- Identifying good practice in asynchronous & synchronous teaching
- How to produce effective content
- Planning for resilience: metacognition & generative learning

Session 4: Effective assessment & feedback

- Reducing workload
- Types of assessment
- Assessing knowledge and providing meaningful feedback

Session 5: Improving engagement through collaboration

- Methods of collaboration and examples
- Apps
- Peer to peer support

Session 6: Maximising understanding of new content

- Translating classroom best practices to digital learning

Session 7: Working with Teaching Assistants

- Tools to support students
- How to provide effective support

Session 8: Supporting parents and carers

- Supporting parents with digital literacy
- Communicating with parents

Session 9: The future of blended learning

- Next steps

Post-course wraparound support

- KIT events
- Final session with SLT from pre-course session to review implementation plans and next steps

Appendix 4: Summary of themes raised in interviews

<p>Home <i>Families</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family climate • Support from parents & siblings • Technical equipment • Space for learning • Socioeconomic background • Parents' skills • Worries of parents • Challenges of daily routines • Attitude of parents • Financial concerns <p><i>Teachers</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stress/worries of home working • Well-being • Challenges of daily work/home routine • Sharing devices & own home-schooling needs • Sufficient wifi • Isolation • Space for working 	<p>Students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase/age • Learning motivation • Self-regulation/ self-discipline • Well-being • Routine/ daily schedule • Learning strategies • Prior knowledge • Cognitive abilities • Spending time with family • Boredom • Leisure activities 	<p>Teaching</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantity • Quality • Class management • Learning support • Instruction • Interactive learning • Social learning • Cognitive learning • Metacognitive learning • Generative learning <p>Learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantity • Quality • Processing time • Response to new methods • Actively learning • Social learning & collaboration <p>Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CFU • Low stakes • Quality of feedback • Formative 	<p>Professional Development <i>Digital Skills</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience in use of digital media • Motivation • Competence • Self-efficacy • Technical knowledge/digital literacy • Technical pedagogical knowledge • Variation from minimal to innovative <p><i>Pedagogy</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjusting/translating classroom practice • Knowledge of best practice • Quality of instruction • Asynchronous/synchronous delivery • Hybrid teaching 	<p>School <i>Leadership teams</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination of action • Digital strategy • School & staff development • Shared beliefs • Staff efficacy • Working and learning climate • Clarity of expectations • Parental cooperation • Staff & student well-being • Experiences with digital media • Presence • Response from staff <p><i>Governance</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support/monitoring • Understanding of current practice • Information/coordination
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Appendix 5: Learning models

Pedagogical focus	Method	Onsite	Hybrid	Distanced
Primary, AP & SEN Tiers Secondary & FE Tiers		Tier 1-3: Open but with bubbles isolating		Tier 4
		Tier 1 Tier 2 Rota: onsite learning	Tier 1 & 2 with bubbles isolating &/or rota system	Tier 2 Rota: home learning Tier 3 & 4
Direct Instruction	Synchronous	Teaching pedagogy is similar to pre-Covid but with social distancing in mind. Support teachers with setting expectations, behaviour and classroom management. Live delivery to match students' timetables.	At home students join F2F lesson using Google Meet*	Google Meet* short focused sessions. Focus on clear instruction, questioning and discussion to address misconceptions.
	Asynchronous	Learning materials posted online to extend learning beyond the classroom. Use this time as an opportunity to develop students' skills in accessing work & develop metacognitive strategies in preparation for any home learning. Designed so students can focus on K&U allowing F2F to focus on challenging learning with support.	Google Meet* recordings of onsite lessons posted to Google Classroom*	Short pre-recorded delivery of instructions and delivery of new content. Use EEF Activate/ Explain/ Practise/ Reflect/ Review when planning. Use other resources to supplement videos. Supplement with live presence where possible to check in & address issues.
Practice & collaboration	Synchronous	Activities in subject booklets as normal. Collaboration on online documents such as Docs/Slides/Jamboard/Padlet which may also include home-learning students. Retrieval practice activities using online tools (e.g. Kahoot/Socrative etc) or f2f communication. Social distanced checking of work, students can place work under visualiser for checking.		Use collaborative tools e.g. Docs/Slides/Jamboard/Padlet 'Live' monitoring by teacher to ensure misconceptions are addressed early.
	Asynchronous	Homework set via Google Classroom. Use this time as an opportunity to develop students' skills in accessing work & develop metacognitive strategies in preparation for any home learning.	Student can show work via camera or share photo via Drive/Classroom.	Students practice in own time following direct instruction & upload work to Google Classroom.
Assessment & Feedback	Synchronous	Questioning (with verbal responses from students in classroom or 'chat' function responses from those at home.) Whole class feedback Retrieval practice activities/knowledge activation tasks.		Live response systems - polling, kahoot etc. Live feedback. Live feedback using collaborative tools. Peer marking.
	Asynchronous	Feedback using 'comments' & comment banks on Docs/Question function on Classroom Google Forms/Kahoot/Quizzez/Quizlet/Socrative and other online auto-marking tools. Audio/video feedback tools/apps/extensions.		

*substitute your school's conferencing system e.g. Teams/Zoom ** substitute your schools' Learning Management System e.g. Teams/Class Dojo etc.



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