Digital Competence Framework

Your questions answered

Update – June 2018

Digital Competence Framework – your questions answered

Audience

The entire education workforce, government and national partners, including local authorities and regional consortia, workforce unions, diocesan authorities, governing bodies and Estyn.

Overview

This document is to accompany the Digital Competence Framework (DCF) and help schools in Wales to implement it.

Action required

None – for information only.

Further information

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Additional copies

This document can be accessed from the Welsh Government's website at gov.wales/curriculumforwales

Related documents

Qualified for life (2014); *Successful Futures: Independent Review of Curriculum and Assessment Arrangements in Wales* (2015); *Teaching Tomorrow's Teachers* (2015); *A curriculum for Wales – a curriculum for life* (2015); *Education in Wales: Our national mission, Action plan 2017–21* (2017)

Contents

Key things you need to know

1. What does 'digital competence' mean?

Digital competence is the set of skills, knowledge and attitudes that enable the confident, creative and critical use of technologies and systems. It is the skill set that enables a person to be a confident digital citizen, to interact and collaborate digitally, to produce work digitally, and to be confident in handling data and computational thinking (problem solving).

2. What should my setting/school be doing to implement the Digital Competence Framework?

The Digital Competence Framework (DCF) was made available in September 2016. Settings and schools should now have had time to begin to consider it and begin to incorporate it into their provision. Settings/schools will be:

- developing a clear vision for digital learning
- developing relevant policies and procedures to support the delivery of digital competence
- identifying a senior lead responsible for digital competence
- incorporating digital competence into school improvement plans
- undertaking a mapping exercise for delivery of digital competence
- undertaking a staff audit and identifying professional learning requirements.

As you move forward, you will need to refine your approach to your provision. Further information on expectations leading up to the introduction of the new curriculum in 2022 is available online at learning.gov.wales/docs/learningwales/publications/180620-dcf-wallchart-cyen.pdf.

3. Are classroom task ideas available?

Yes. We initially developed and incorporated classroom task ideas within the interactive DCF. Following advice from our Digital Pioneer Schools, more ideas and tasks have been added to our Hwb website where they can be adapted to ensure they are suitable for your classroom or setting.

We encourage all schools to use the resources on Hwb and to develop and share resources with other schools across Wales. The resources are available at www.hwb.gov.wales.

4. Does the DCF replace information and communication technology (ICT) or computer science?

No. The DCF is a cross-curricular framework, which is different to the current programme of study for ICT, as set out in *Information and communication technology in the National Curriculum for Wales, Key Stages 2–3* (2008). Digital competency, alongside literacy and numeracy, will also be cross-curricular responsibilities within the new curriculum. The new curriculum, which will be made available for schools for feedback in April 2019, includes a Science and Technology Area of Learning and Experience (AoLE), within which there will be specific curriculum requirements for computing.

5. What is Estyn's approach to the DCF?

The DCF is not the same as ICT. However, where schools have tried to be creative and imaginative in taking forward initiatives for the benefit of learners, including drawing on the DCF to develop their practice in ICT, inspectors will approach innovation and flexibility of approach in a positive way.

There is guidance on the inspection of ICT on Estyn's website at www.estyn.gov.wales/document/supplementary-guidance-inspection-information-and-communication-technology-ict-schools.

6. What support is available to help settings/schools adopt the DCF?

Digital Pioneer Schools are now working with other schools to help with implementation of the DCF. Together with our regional consortia, they have fully embraced the partnership approach to supporting schools with expertise.

Contact the digital lead within your regional consortia* and they will provide support and guidance for your setting/school.

* Support for some settings may be provided by local authorities or through umbrella organisations who can give advice on how develop this area of provision.

7. Will a scheme of work become available to implement the DCF?

No. The DCF is the third cross-curricular theme; as such it will not involve linear delivery of skills. Your regional consortia has guidance on this.

A mapping tool developed by Digital Pioneer Schools lets you cross-reference elements of the DCF with your current teaching in subjects and years. As you add your information, the tool shows your levels of DCF coverage, helping you plan to cover the full range of skills within each element over the course of a year. It will also help you plan to spread your coverage more evenly across the school.

8. When will a professional learning needs tool be available?

A professional learning needs tool is available on Hwb at www.hwb.gov.wales. This online tool for individuals and settings/schools helps practitioners identify the areas where they feel confident and areas where they feel they need further development.

9. Will settings/schools need to buy new equipment to deliver the DCF?

Not necessarily. Settings/schools should work with their local authorities to ensure they have a suitable and sustainable ICT replacement programme in place.

A setting/school should always ensure that planning for provision of digital learning is consistent with their vision and values, and that any investment made in technology is aligned with them.

Development of the Digital Competence Framework

10. What is digital competence?

Digital competence is the set of skills, knowledge and attitudes to enable the confident, creative and critical use of technologies and systems in an increasingly digital world. It is a cross-curricular theme and will be the responsibility of all practitioners and teachers to include within their lessons.

Digital competence is distinct from ICT but they are highly interrelated (particularly in primary education). It's likely that there will be some overlap between the DCF and computer science. However, Digital Pioneers have developed the DCF working on the basis that coding will primarily feature in computer science.

11. Why do we need a DCF?

We have made it part of our national mission for education to provide all our learners with high-level digital skills to ensure our young people are digitally competent, and evolve into enterprising, creative and critical thinkers.

The need for a comprehensive DCF was a key recommendation of Professor Graham Donaldson's report, *Successful Futures: Independent Review of Curriculum and Assessment Arrangements in Wales* (2015), reflecting a proposal from an independent ICT Review Panel in 2013. The panel's report to Welsh Government noted that digital competence is as important in the twenty-first century as literacy and numeracy.

12. How was the DCF developed?

In June 2015, the then Minister for Education and Skills announced that the development of a DCF would be fast-tracked, so as to be available from September 2016. Digital Pioneer Schools from across Wales were announced in July 2015 and the DCF was developed by practitioners/teachers from those schools, supported by external experts and facilitated by Welsh Government officials.

Rigorous, independent quality assurance and international research have been used to formulate the DCF and build the framework on a foundation of best practice and educational research.

In finalising the DCF that has now been made available, the practitioners from Digital Pioneer Schools took into account views from stakeholders. This included their cluster schools and a range of stakeholders who responded to two questionnaires as part of wider engagement exercises on previous drafts of the DCF, as well as feedback from a Quality Assurance Group chaired by Professor Tom Crick and groups such as the National Digital Learning Council.

13. How is the DCF structured?

The DCF has been structured using year-on-year progression statements. This is similar to the structure of the National Literacy and Numeracy Framework (LNF).

As with the LNF, the DCF is designed to recognise that not all children progress in the same way. The statements provide clarity about learner progress for planning purposes but should be used within the context that learners will progress further or faster in some aspects than in others and that learning will often span several years.

As the new curriculum is developed and the concept of progression reference points is clarified, this format will be reviewed.

14. How does the DCF fit in with the Foundation Phase?

The DCF brings together the skills that will help children thrive in an increasingly digital world, for example how to stay safe online and also understanding the importance of balancing game and screen time with other parts of their lives.*

The DCF in its current form has been developed to complement the current curriculum, including the Foundation Phase, ensuring that learners develop the basic skills that will be built on as they progress through their education.

* There are skills within the DCF that can be delivered without technology and concepts that can be discussed without hardware.

15. The DCF was made available in September 2016 – will this be the final version?

When the DCF was made available in September 2016, we stated that it was subject to refinements, taking account of feedback from settings, schools, practitioners/teachers and wider stakeholders. In September 2017, working with Digital Pioneers, we made minor refinements following the feedback we received. The DCF will continue to evolve, not least to reflect changing technologies.

16. Some of the strands of the DCF appear to be quite technical; how will these be delivered across the curriculum?

The DCF has been designed in line with the principles of *Successful Futures*, which envisages digital competence being integrated as a cross-curriculum responsibility along with literacy and numeracy across the breadth of the new curriculum.

It includes examples of classroom task ideas for how the skills can be developed through natural opportunities within the current curriculum. Further resources are available on Hwb at www.hwb.gov.wales.

Classroom task ideas will also need to evolve and grow to reflect new technologies and the increasing experience and expertise within the digital learning field.

It is not intended for all skills to be artificially imposed into all areas of the curriculum.

17. Is the DCF suitable for learners with additional learning needs (ALN)?

The DCF is designed to be for all children of Wales. For learners with additional learning needs (ALN), this will incorporate Routes for Learning skills, which are the earliest skills that form the foundation for other higher skills to be developed.

Routes for Learning seek to view the learner holistically and provide several pathways of possible development, broken down into very small steps (as in A/B/C steps) and individualised for each learner.

Some of the early stages of digital competence involve the development of more general skills which are necessary developmental steps to using technology appropriately.

Application of the Digital Competence Framework

18. As a practitioner/teacher, what am I expected to do with the DCF until the new curriculum is introduced in 2022?

To fully embed the DCF within your provision, you steps need to consider:

- developing a clear vision for digital learning
- developing relevant policies and procedures to support the delivery of digital competence
- identifying a lead responsible for digital competence
- incorporating digital competence into school improvement plans
- undertaking a mapping exercise for delivery of digital competence
- undertaking a staff audit and identify professional learning requirements.

Individual practitioners in settings/schools will be responsible for familiarising themselves with the DCF, agreeing their strategic vision for cross-curricular digital competence with colleagues and translating this into practice.

An important element of the continued development of the DCF will be extending and refreshing the classroom task ideas that link to skills in the DCF. You can share classroom task ideas/materials via the Hwb community areas.

From September 2017, as individual practitioners and settings/schools develop their familiarity with and use of the DCF, they should continue to provide feedback and classroom task ideas.

19. I want to embed the DCF into all that I do right away. Can I do that?

Yes. Practitioners/teachers who feel able to deliver parts or the entirety of the DCF are encouraged to do so.

20. How will the DCF relate to the new curriculum?

The decision to fast track the development of the DCF allows for it to be fully integrated across the new curriculum as it is designed and developed.

21. How will the DCF relate to the ICT frameworks that regional consortia have in place?

The existing regional ICT frameworks support the implementation and delivery of ICT as a subject (which is statutory up to the age of 14) to ensure skills are appropriately progressed.

Initially there will be an overlap between the regional ICT frameworks and the DCF. Regional consortia may wish to amend/revise their existing frameworks in light of the DCF over time.

Support and resources

22. What support will settings/schools and practitioners/teachers get to use the DCF?

The Pioneer Network is working to identify materials that will be helpful in supporting settings/schools and practitioners/teachers to use the DCF. This will include new and pre-existing material. Support will need to be tailored/differentiated depending on where the individual setting/school is on its digital journey.

All maintained schools in Wales have access to Hwb which provides an extensive range of centrally-funded digital tools and resources to support the full application of the DCF.

Training and support for implementing the new curriculum is being led by the Pioneer Network, working with regional consortia. Contact your regional digital lead for details.

Support for some settings may be provided by local authorities or through umbrella organisations who can give advice on how develop this area of provision.

23. Will settings/schools be expected to invest in additional physical resources?

The DCF has been designed not to refer to specific technology in the skill specifications, and therefore to be deliverable largely within the existing and planned capability of settings/schools.

To prepare for using the DCF, the main focus will be in relation to developing practitioners'/teachers' digital confidence and competence, and ideas for integrating the DCF in their teaching, rather than in hardware or software.

Settings/schools, working with their local authority/regional consortia, should carefully assess whether resources would add significant value to the delivery of the DCF, including reviewing against existing centrally-funded services such as Hwb, before any investment is made.

24. How will my regional consortium and/or my challenge adviser help me understand the requirements of the DCF?

This document is part of guidance developed by Welsh Government working in partnership with the Digital Pioneers and regional consortia leads.

Regional consortia will run events to raise awareness and understanding of the DCF. Digital leads and challenge advisors will provide settings/schools and practitioners/teachers with consistent messages about the DCF.

25. Will there be a digital lead in my setting/school and what will their role be?

The role of the digital lead within a setting/school is key for developing a clear vision for digital learning and coordinating how the DCF is used to develop greater understanding and confidence. Developing a whole-school approach for the teaching of digital skills across the curriculum is essential. Responsibility for implementing the DCF does not fall solely with the digital lead. All practitioners/teachers have an important role in developing digital competence skills of their learners.

A lead practitioner will coordinate identifying and meeting staff development needs and preparing a plan for the implementation of the DCF to develop a positive digital culture within a setting/school.

Carrying out a school infrastructure audit (internet speed and Wi-Fi capability) along with a hardware audit, in partnership with regional consortia, in order to ensure that there is the capability to deliver the DCF for all learners, is also good practice.

26. I am considering carrying out a skills audit of my staff to help identify the support they might need. Is there one already available that I can use?

A professional learning needs tool is available on Hwb www.hwb.gov.wales. This is an online tool for individuals and settings/schools that helps practitioners identify the areas where they feel confident and areas where they feel they need further development.

Assessment and qualifications

27. How will the DCF be assessed?

Successful Futures recommends that literacy, numeracy and digital competence should be a cross-curricular responsibility for all practitioners/teachers and people who work with children and young people. This cross-curriculum responsibility will be integrated within the new curriculum Areas of Learning and Experience (AoLEs).

As with the LNF, the DCF can be used as a formative assessment tool to support teachers to understand a learner's progress, areas of strength and next steps for development. There is no requirement for settings/schools and individual teachers to use the DCF to make summative judgements of learner progress.

28. How does the DCF link with the Welsh Baccalaureate?

There are clear links between digital competence and the digital literacy listed as an 'Essential and Employability Skill' in the Welsh Baccalaureate.

Skills developed within the DCF are complementary to those required within the Welsh Baccalaureate.

Digital skills are assessed within the Welsh Baccalaureate's 'Individual Project' and the 'Enterprise and Employability Challenge'.

29. Will the ICT and Computing GCSEs change as a result of the DCF?

As the independent regulator of qualifications in Wales, it is for Qualifications Wales to determine future revisions to qualifications.

Qualifications Wales is taking a strategic, sector-by-sector approach to reviewing the provision of qualifications in Wales. In doing so, one of its main aims is to ensure that in key sectors of Wales' economy there are qualifications that are meeting the needs of learners and providing clear and effective pathways to further study and employment.

As part of this approach, Qualifications Wales have conducted a review of qualifications in the IT sector, and will be publishing their report on this review in the autumn of 2018 and making proposals for the future of ICT/digital technologies qualifications for learners aged 14 to 19.

In the meantime the current GCSE and A level ICT qualifications – as well as the Computer Science ones – remain in place.

Inspection

30. Will Estyn be inspecting with regard to the DCF, and if so how will this be reported?

It is important to emphasise that digital competence is a cross-curricular responsibility and all practitioners/teachers should consider how delivering elements of the DCF could support learning and teaching within their subjects in the future.

The DCF is different to programme of study for ICT, as set out in *Information and communication technology in the National Curriculum for Wales, Key Stages 2–3* (2008).

Estyn will continue to inspect ICT across the current curriculum until the new curriculum is introduced. Estyn will report on learner standards in using ICT across the current curriculum on every inspection and each inspection report will include a paragraph on learners' standards in applying ICT across the current curriculum in Inspection Area 1, Standards.

Estyn guidance on ICT inspection can be accessed at www.estyn.gov.wales/document/supplementary-guidance-inspection-information-and-communication-technology-ict-schools.

Where settings/schools are creative and imaginative in taking forward initiatives for the benefit of learners, including drawing on the DCF to develop their practice, Estyn inspectors will approach innovation and flexibility of approach in a positive way.

Further information

Please e-mail curriculumforwales@gov.wales if you have any questions.

Future updates will be communicated through a range of channels including Dysg, Learning Wales, Hwb, social media channels and regional consortia networks.