

## The Park Federation

### We're in the Digital Driving Seat

#### Background and Vision Statement

Technology and digitalisation are central to life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Such technological innovations have the potential to make the world better, fairer and more inclusive but, in the wrong hands, they can be destructive to the individual, the family and society as a whole. The Park Federation vision is to equip our children with the knowledge, understanding, analytical skills and emotional intelligence to utilise the positives and to protect themselves and others from the negatives. We want our children to be discerning creators and consumers of digitalisation.

The Park Federation wants its children in the *Digital Driving Seat* so that they can navigate their own journeys through safe, truthful and ethical virtual worlds where fake news, hateful extremism and dangerous disinformation can be assessed and avoided. We want them to judiciously mix the technological and non-technological. We want them to experience and cherish traditional endeavours like in-person conversation, debate, dance, drama, and sport while enjoying and benefitting from digitalised environments too.

We also want to close the *Digital Divide* which often exists between children from less economically advantaged families, and their more affluent peers. Our ambition is for all children in The Park Federation to become confident and critical users of all things digital and hence acquire the knowledge, skills and future-orientated outlook necessary for school, university, employment, active citizenship, and personal development and happiness.

The Park Federation has already begun its digital transformation with investment in infrastructure and connectivity in all its schools and the rollout of a Chromebook for every pupil in Year 5. Staff training and development has run in parallel to support this exploratory phase of a strategy to position the Trust and its pupils for the future.

Initial findings, after a year in, affirm our direction of travel and momentum:

- Infrastructure has not proved a significant hurdle.
- Those staff directly involved in the project, whilst carefully chosen in most schools, have adapted well and are leading the way for colleagues who are less digitally confident.
- Technology has not been a distraction in the classroom, it has enhanced lessons and, in some cases, improved inclusivity.

In fact, our academies have brought about considerable innovation and experimentation since launching the project last summer. The digital technology team is a particular asset and at the heart of knowledge sharing across our eight academies. Nor must we overlook the early endeavour by central support that has enabled such a seamless insertion of additional technology.

## **Mission Statement**

Our mission is for the use of digital devices to be an everyday event for the children in federation schools. Connected devices will be at hand in all contexts and for all subjects. They will be as common as pencils, pens and books in our classrooms. Learning will be more interactive, inclusive, stimulating and creative; digitalisation will open doors into resources unobtainable in a traditional classroom. Its key role is that of an enabler, an amplifier, an enhancer of the diverse range of subjects already in our broad curriculum. It can also revolutionise access to learning for children with special education needs and disabilities through the use of adaptive technologies.

In addition, teachers will harness technology to further develop planning, teaching resources, and assessment tools to improve learning. Our colleagues in the central support services such as HR and Finance will further increase the quality of their work through its use. Moreover, technology will be used to increase efficiency and accuracy by integrating systems and databases, so information is easier to record, find, link and report. These innovations have the potential to reduce workload, improve work-life balance, increase staff well-being, and make education a more attractive and fulfilling profession.

## **Strategy Statement 2021 - 2024**

We will provide a Chromebook to each child in Year 4, 5 and 6. These digital devices will be used daily to access most required learning materials and will be the main platform for children to respond to their learning and develop their own independent lines of enquiry and interest.

Whilst the overarching vision/mission is set by the federation, the practical implementation will be primarily driven by the teachers and the children in the classrooms. Through collaboration, dialogue, and professional learning networks, teachers and children will set the pace and direction of change. It will be a user-led strategy.

What will teachers, support staff members and children need from the federation if they are to lead on the transformation?

1. High-quality training, development and on-going support from experts in the field.
2. The time and space to assimilate the training and familiarise themselves with both the ideas and the equipment being provided.
3. Reliable and easy-to-use equipment and systems which are available in the right quantities and at the right times of the school day, including secure and stable wi-fi connections across the school.
4. Senior leaders in the school and the federation providing the focus, attention and funding necessary for success.
5. Parents and carers who are on board with the initiative because they understand the purpose of the initiative and the benefits it will bring to their children.

In practical terms by the end of the academic year 2021/22, we will have:

- Purchased and deployed Chromebooks to all children in Year 5.
- Ensured wi-fi-connectivity is effective in all relevant classrooms and workspaces.
- Ensured Chromebook charging facilities are reliable.
- In-school support from middle and senior leaders, and from colleagues with technical knowledge and understanding.
- Training and development from the school and the federation which meets present needs and begins to prepare colleagues for future needs.
- Federation Vision and Mission Statements published, and school-based statements in line with the federation's overarching ambitions for Digital Learning available too.
- Integrated Digital Learning used in several subjects in Year 5.
- Appointed Digital Leads in all eight schools, and a Federation Director for Digital Learning.
- Partnership working with Leo Academy (Multi-Academy Trust identified by the Department for Education as a front runner in Digital Learning).
- Organised impact analysis which will include pupil voice and teacher/support staff voice information.
- Budgeted funding for the purchase and deployment of Chromebooks in another full year group at the start of the next academic year (2022/23) and a further year group in 2023/24. By September 2023 all children in Year 4, 5 and 6 will have their own Chromebook.