



Neuadd y Sir / County Hall, Llandrindod, Powys, LD1 5LG

## **QUESTIONS AT ANY TIME TO CABINET PORTFOLIO HOLDERS**

Response by the Portfolio Holder:

1. E-sgoil was originally established in the Western Isles of Scotland in August 2016 to provide a broader and more equitable choice of subjects for pupils across secondary schools in the Western Isles and to support the expansion of Gaelic medium education.

Representatives from Welsh Government visited Scotland to view how the system worked, and the potential benefits for Wales' rural communities and learners. As a result of the positive impact for pupils of the Western Isles, Welsh Government agreed to fund an initial trial within Ceredigion in 2018 – 2019, funded from the Small and Rural Schools grant. A formal e-sgol Board of management was also formed as of September 2018.

The small-scale initial trial within Ceredigion was successful and thereafter, to broaden the option choices and Welsh medium provision of Powys Post 16 learners in 2019 – 2020, e-sgol was expanded into Powys to cover all 11 of our secondary schools. Indeed, in March 2020, e-sgol was formally launched by the WG Cabinet Minister for Education, Kirsty Williams at Llanfyllin High School due to the success in delivering Further Maths through e-sgol from the school.

For 2020 – 2021, e-sgol provision is expanding within Powys to cover a broader range of subject choices and is also expanding to other Local Authorities across Wales.

It was the intention to evaluate the outcomes of e-sgol AS results from the August 2020 results. However, due to Covid-19 and the use of Centre Assessed Grades, this will no longer be possible.

Scottish e-sgoil website for further information: [www.e-sgoil.com/](http://www.e-sgoil.com/)

2. The E-sgol system is available for Post-16 education and is located in high schools only. As high schools have been closed, with no access for staff or pupils, the E-sgol system has not been used to deliver the curriculum.

Most schools in Powys use HWB, the National Learning Platform, to deliver distance learning. HWB usage is monitored by the local authority on a monthly basis. Use of HWB by Powys users, pupils and staff, has increased from 49,000 logins in November 2019 to 169,000 logins in May 2020.

Some schools, mainly high schools, use their own learning platforms and networks. This data is not available to the local authority.

The use of platforms indicates that staff and pupils have increased their use of digital platforms to share resources and engage in learning. However, these systems do not record active learning activities, such as those that schools use with foundation phase pupils. As the lockdown period has progressed, schools have increasingly sought innovative ways to engage pupils in their own skill development without reliance on digital devices, such as through rich tasks. This means pupils do not have to use digital devices for all activities and therefore this information would not be recorded on these platforms.

3. The focus of the catch up period was outlined by the Minister for Education in her statement on 23<sup>rd</sup> June.

<https://gov.wales/written-statement-creating-flexibility-schools-settings-disapplication-basic-curriculum>

The health and well-being of learners will be the focus of the 'Catch Up, Check In and Prepare' sessions. The curriculum requirements and assessment arrangements for schools have been temporarily suspended.

The local authority have established working groups of headteachers and officers to support schools with wellbeing and prepare for blended learning. Guidance and resources have been produced. These include clear expectations of blended learning, thus ensuring a consistent understanding of blended learning across all Powys schools; strategies for teachers and school leaders to use to deliver blended learning; and strategies to use to develop learners skills in order to make the most of blended learning. By the end of the summer term additional guidance will be available to help schools support parents through the blended learning experience and to support school leaders through monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of blended learning.