

ICT

We live in an exciting world where technological advances never cease to amaze and we are ever having to adjust and learn something new. Young people today are raised in this culture and bring with them an ability to adjust readily. They do not fear technology but take it for granted. They learn quickly and are eager to absorb more.

At St. Andrew's we aim to provide these young people with the time and the resources to continue to progress in the technology and to develop the flexibility to adapt to new technology when it arrives.

St. Andrew's is rapidly expanding its already wide network to include the whole school during 2007. Every department, both academic and administrative, will come under this net. There are networked computers in all classrooms and there is a suite of 19 computers in the main Computer Room. In addition there are another 10 computers available in the Music Centre. Interactive whiteboards and data projectors are being installed into more and more classrooms. Digital and video cameras, scanners and printers are among some of the related equipment in regular use.

Pupils are introduced to computers from the earliest age. National Curriculum guidelines are followed to make sure that pupils are keeping up with expected targets. From Year 3 onwards pupils are taught by an ICT specialist in the Computer Suite. High standards are expected in word processing and drawing skills, knowledge of spreadsheets and databases, control technology and programming skills and various presentation packages. Internet access is filtered and monitored and pupils make regular use of the technology in all subjects, as well as having dedicated ICT lessons.

Pupils are expected to develop the ability to question why technology is being used and how it has changed the way in which things are done in today's world. They must begin to appreciate both the positive and the negative aspects of the technology and to develop strategies for remaining safe on the Internet.

Pupils carry out assessed activities during their lessons and some of their work in other subjects is also assessed to count towards an ICT credit. Although the subject is not examined at Common Entrance it is becoming the expectation that they will be able to use ICT to help them publish lengthy projects in other subjects. During 2007 St. Andrew's will be piloting an alternative form of certification in ICT for Year 8 leavers.

ICT has many facets and variations and those achieving most success in the field are those who have most ability to train themselves independently. Whilst offering any assistance required we encourage pupils to try to discover for themselves. This gives them greater freedom and confidence.

Training others in order to better understand for yourself is also a very relevant practice. Pupils cooperate willingly and often help each other over difficult tasks. No person is ever left feeling insecure because they can't do something. There is always a willing teacher and our pupils display magnitudes of tolerance and generosity in these situations.

Finally we encourage pupils to practise and learn at home. Touch typing is taught formally in Years 6 and 7 and some pupils become very proficient. Our network will be upgraded in the very near future to include the ability for pupils to log on from home. This will give them access to school resources such as revision notes and exercises. They will be able to submit their completed work online, cutting down the need for paper. All pupils already have an email box at school and they are taught how to use it sensibly for school-home communication. The ability to access resources at any time is going to pave the way for more exciting developments in our pupils' education.