



# HM Government of Gibraltar

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Ministry of Education, Heritage,  
Environment, Energy and  
Climate Change

## PRESS RELEASE

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### NEW EDUCATIONAL INITIATIVE

The Department of Education has been rolling out a key teaching and learning initiative in both upper and lower primary schools. This initiative started as a pilot programme at St Bernards Middle School three years ago. Since then it has been introduced at Governors Meadow, St Mary's First, St Joseph's First, Notre Dame, St Paul's, St Bernard's First, Hebrew Primary, St Bernard's Middle, St Joseph's Middle and St Martin's. The initiative will be introduced at St Anne's and Bishop Fitzgerald during this academic year, and at Bayside, Westside and the Gibraltar College during the 2019/2020 academic year.

The initiative supports our teachers as they continue to work to develop essential skills and attitudes in all our learners. To succeed now and in the future, our learners need to be knowledgeable, caring, balanced, reflective, resilient and creative. In an ever changing world where digital technologies surround our learners, the Department of Education feels that it is crucial for technology to be one of the many tools used by both teachers and students to develop these essential skills. It is also important that students understand what it means to be a responsible digital citizen.

The Department of Education has engaged a leading Professional Learning Specialist to support the introduction and implementation of the initiative, through an ongoing programme of continuous professional development. Sessions have been tailor-made for our teachers, senior leaders in schools and the Department of Education. These sessions explore the use of digital technologies as a key teaching and learning tool.

We are already seeing how thoughtful use of the mobile technology is enabling teachers to offer additional meaningful learning experiences. The devices have frequently been used during school visits to our local beaches, the museum, our places of worships and other outdoor areas in and around Gibraltar. This 'anytime, anywhere' learning extends the classroom beyond the school building, allowing students and teachers to explore, and learn from, their local environment. Students can use the digital resources collected on their field trip to continue their learning back in the classroom.

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As a part of this initiative, the Department of Education is embarking on a review of the curriculum delivered in its primary schools. The initial stages of this work will focus on Early Years and Key Stage One with other Key Stages following suit at a later stage. The Department of Education hopes to integrate some of the ideas and philosophies experienced in their visit to Finland into the primary sector.

The aim of this review is to provide schools with a curriculum framework that will empower our teachers in developing our young learners in a local context. It is envisaged that the new curriculum framework developed as part of this review will better support the learning opportunities that digital technologies can offer, whilst allowing our teachers to build on the excellent project based learning experiences offered in our schools.

The review will also allow the Department of Education to formalise the Gibraltar Studies curriculum, continue to promote bilingualism from an early age and develop its computational thinking and coding curriculum.

To ensure that the academic learning is built on a solid foundation of emotional and mental well-being, the curriculum review will specifically look at supporting our young learners in the development of tools and strategies. The aim is to ensure that they develop into confident and happy individuals, with the resilience and problem-solving skills to work through the complexities of life.

This review will also see outdoor learning opportunities around Gibraltar integrated into the curriculum, opportunities which are now more accessible due to the innovative use of digital technologies as a learning tool. The aim of this particular area of the review is to equip our learners with love and respect for the outdoors, nurture self esteem, develop teamwork skills, provide real life opportunities to create independent learning and develop healthier bodies. To support this area of the curriculum, the Department of Education is already in the advanced stages of planning for the introduction of outdoor learning forest zones in those primary schools with the adequate space. Additionally, the Department will be reaching out to agencies who already support our schools to see how our learners can continue to tap into the rich and diverse learning environment that Gibraltar provides.

Minister for Education John Cortes commented. "When I said some time ago that we were undergoing an Education Revolution in Gibraltar, I wasn't referring just to buildings. It's a change in the way we do things. We are responding to changing times and widening of resources available to teachers and learners, and maximising the richly active and environmentally diverse community to which we belong. Being in school in Gibraltar – whether teaching or learning – is going to become even more productive – and much more fun!"