

In Response to Michael Gove - 19 January 2012

I was interested to hear Michael Gove's comments regarding ICT provision in schools last week. I am always interested to hear what he has to say; I rarely agree with it! I asked Miss Snaith (Head of ICT) for her reaction and how she felt St Mary's measured up to his criticisms of current provision. This is what she had to say:

On 11 January, the Secretary of State for Education (Michael Gove) made a speech at the BETT conference and also issued a Written Ministerial Statement regarding teaching ICT in maintained schools. Although Mr Gove has outlined changes from September 2012, at present there is no information or directive on what this actually means. What we can hope is that there will be significant overlap between what is currently taught in ICT lessons and the new curriculum. There are still many important aspects of the current curriculum that need to be included, for example e-safety, computer networks, the Internet, graphics editing, video and sound editing and web design, along with many of the other skills.

Mr Gove claimed "the ICT curriculum in its current form is viewed as dull and demotivating for pupils," I do not believe this is the case at St. Mary's; ICT is exciting and enjoyable and does equip the girls for Higher Education and their future careers. Over the last few years St. Mary's has adapted the ICT curriculum from Year 6 to include animation, games programming, graphics editing and video and sound editing. The introduction of the IGCSE over the updated ICT GCSE course in Year 10 has several benefits:

- it encourages students to develop further as autonomous users of ICT
- has a wider curriculum base than the GCSE (including coverage of more practical skills),
- it develops learners' skills in creative thinking, enquiry and problem solving
- gives learners excellent preparation for the next stage in their education.

I attended the BETT show at Olympia this year, to continue research into how ICT can be effectively used as a tool in teaching and learning at St. Mary's. Today Apple are due to announce technology developments to enable easy publication of highly interactive e-books specifically for the education environment; the president of the Girls' Schools Association says "It won't be long until classrooms experience the same BYOD – bring your own device – phenomenon that is already prevalent in the workplace, if the rumours about today's Apple announcement are true".

This announcement coincides with many ideas that St. Mary's is actively considering to enhance the classroom environment, whereby girls use e-books with a high level of interactivity, for example, direct links to footnotes and video clips, instead of using standard textbooks.

We have actively sought over the past few years to ensure that not only ICT, but also the other curriculum subjects embrace the use of technology in its many guises. We welcome and embrace the changes and initiatives that the government are proposing to adapt teaching to make it even more appropriate for the ever-changing world of technology and the modern workplace.



Miss Snaith, Head of ICT