



**A Google For Education School**

**St. Mary's Secondary  
School**

**Charleville**

**Co. Cork**



***"Our Community, Working Together"***

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## Introduction

St. Mary's is an all girls secondary school, located in Charleville, Co. Cork. There are currently 300 students enrolled with a teaching staff of 30. The aim of St. Mary's Secondary School is to provide holistic education, in the Catholic tradition, for all our students. We are committed to the academic, creative, emotional, spiritual and physical development of each student, in a caring and safe environment



## Aims of the School

- To enable the students to become fully developed and integrated persons. To prepare the students by academic and practical training for adult living and to promote in them a co-operative spirit so that they can make a constructive contribution to society.
- To enable the students to live in reverent relationship with all of creation and to nurture in them a respect for life and a care for the earth.
- To enable the students to develop a healthy self-image with the ability to adapt to a rapidly changing world and to live at peace within.
- To nurture in the students' a sense of their cultural identity and an appreciation of the diversity of cultures.
- To assist in the moral, social, cultural and political growth of the students



Our Mission Statement points towards the growth of our students. We value the importance of collaboration and a shared culture of improvement to empower staff to take on new challenges. Our school culture is progressive. We enjoy continuous professional learning as teachers which enables us to facilitate growth and improvement in our students. We model what we aspire to in our students.

We have a deep commitment to improving learner outcomes. Developments in technology supported our interest in the continuous improvement of learning and teaching environments.

We value equitable access to learning and unwavering support for students with diverse educational needs, including giftedness, talent, and literacy/numeracy difficulties and attendance issues, within mainstream classrooms. Our digital journey has supported this.

## Timeline of Google Workspace and Digital Integration at St. Mary's

This timeline outlines the key events related to the introduction and expansion of Google Workspace and digital technologies at St. Mary's Charleville

### **2014:**

- Perduko introduces Transition Year (TY) students and staff to Google Workspace.
- Gmail becomes the primary communication tool.
- Initial use of shared Google Docs for collaborative work on mini-companies begins.
- The Google search engine is utilized for research on patents and business ideas.

### **2015:**

- The school has two computer rooms, each equipped with desktop computers running Windows. Approximately 120 devices are available.

### **2016:**

- Gmail access is extended to incoming students.

### **2018:**

- The school acquired a trolley of Microsoft Surface Go devices.
- The first Google Classrooms are established.

### **2019:**

- M Tuohy is appointed as the Digital Coordinator and establishes a digital strategy team.
- Initial training and implementation of Google Classroom functionalities, such as uploading resources, take place.

### **2020:**

- 23 Chromebooks and charging trolley are introduced for student use.
- Google Classroom is used for submitting homework, conducting Google Meets, and for marking and returning assignments.
- Various Google Apps, including Docs, Slides, Jamboard, Drawing, and Sites, are actively used.
- Development of an Acceptable Usage Policy for digital technologies.
- Introduction of Digital Media Literacy into the Junior Cycle curriculum.

### **2021:**

- All staff members are equipped with Lenovo 500e Chromebooks (following consideration of iPads).
- More chromebooks were purchased for student use.
- Continued use of Google Classroom for marking and returning work, and for utilizing Jamboard.
- The trolley of Windows devices is decommissioned.
- Chromecasts are installed in classrooms to facilitate screen sharing from Chromebooks.
- The use of Google Sites as a Digital Portfolio is introduced in Transition Year.

### **2022:**

- A Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) policy is implemented for TY students and incoming First Year students
- Potential introduction of SMART Boards considered.
- A Google Site for Digital Learning is created.
- Digital Portfolios are rolled out to all Junior Cycle students.

#### **2023:**

- Google Sites are used for staff resources, communication, professional development (CPD), and sharing learning and teaching materials.
- Introduction to Ebooks is considered and trialled.
- Purchase of SMART boards begins.
- BYOD is expanded to include TY, incoming First Year, and now Second and Fifth Year students.

#### **2024:**

- BYOD continues for Incoming First Years.
- Ebooks become mandatory for all Junior Cycle students.
- Introduction of Education Plus for all staff and students.
- Chromebooks are used in state examinations for the first time.

#### **2025:**

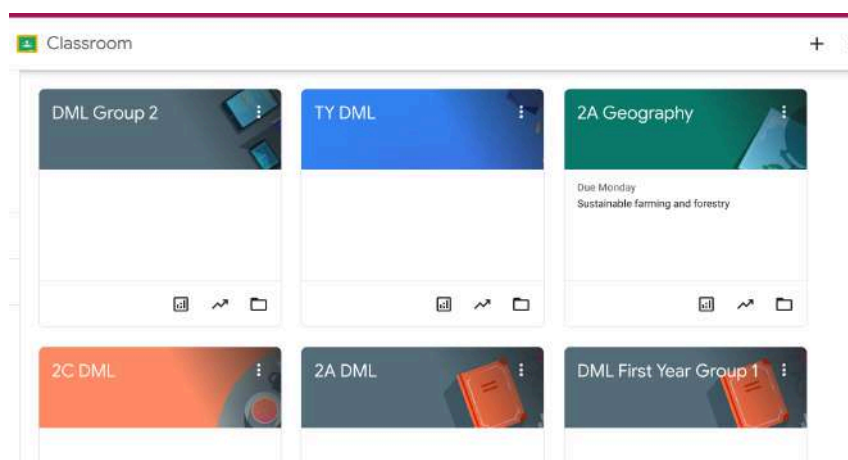
- Teachers undertake Bootcamp training and 36% become Google Certified Educators Level 1
- The BYOD policy is fully implemented across the entire school.
- Conversion of remaining Surface Go devices to Chromebooks using Chrome OS Flex
- Purchase of Gemini Plus for some staff members to trial its use.
- Teachers join and participate in training by GEG Ireland.
- Chrome Education Upgrade Licences to be added to all new student and staff Chromebooks.

## **Using Google for Education tools in our organisation.**

### **Google Classroom:**

All of our teachers use Google Classroom on a daily basis. All students are enrolled in Google Classroom for all subjects. Teachers use Google classroom to assign homework and communicate with students. Homework is often submitted through Google Classroom and teachers use the originality reports to check that the work is the students own. This is particularly useful for the submission of Classroom Based Assessments(CBAs) which are part of the Junior Cycle Curriculum. Teachers use Practice sets for revision and for formative assessment of students. Some teachers add questions to YouTube videos to check understanding. Student progress is monitored by teachers in the grade section. Teachers can give feedback to students easily in Google Classroom. Language teachers use add ons to give oral feedback. Parents and guardians are invited to classrooms to monitor

assignments and progress. Students can communicate with their teachers and their peers by asking questions on the stream. Team teaching is facilitated by the ability of a number of teachers to be added to a Google Classroom. Differentiation is made easier by the ability to create groups in Classroom and to share different material to different groups, for example translated material can easily be distributed to the different language speakers e.g. Ukrainian or Portuguese. The creation of groups allows teachers to facilitate group project work. Teachers often use Google Classroom to collaborate with each other, for example our SPHE department has its own Google Classroom which they use to communicate with each other and to share resources. Practice sets allow teachers to create interactive assignments for their students keeping students engaged.



## Google Sites:

This is one of the most widely used tools in our school. Currently, our school operates 4 sites for curriculum, planning and innovation.

### Policy and documentation:

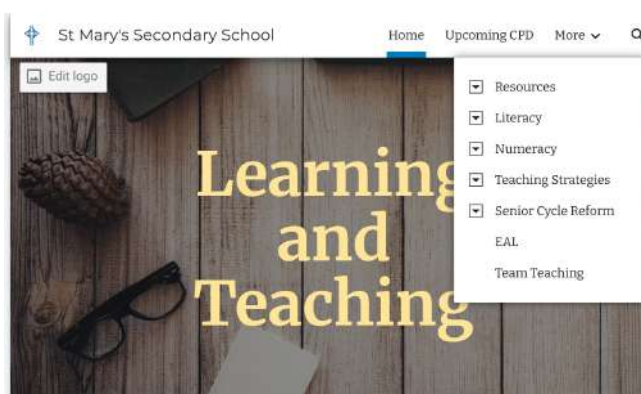
This site contains all of our school policies and important documentation which is referred to by staff on a daily basis.

### Digital Strategy and Learning:

This site contains information on how we can embed digital technologies into our learning, teaching and assessment. It gives advice and tips on using the different Google Tools. It also contains information on upcoming CPD courses for teachers. There is also a section with resources on Digital Citizenship which teachers can use in Digital Media classes and SPHE.

### Learning and Teaching:

This site contains information about teaching and learning strategies, formative and summative assessment and initiatives around Literacy and Numeracy. It also contains information about EAL strategies and updates on curricular reform such as the new Senior Cycle.



### Whole School Guidance:

This site contains information about our schools approach to the continuum of support model, with relevant documentation and advice for easy access by staff.

We are currently developing a new Google Site for our schools Additional Educational Needs Department.

Google Sites are also used by all students in our school from First Year to Transition Year. We introduced Google Sites as a digital portfolio for Transition Year students 2021. Students use this site to upload, record and reflect on the

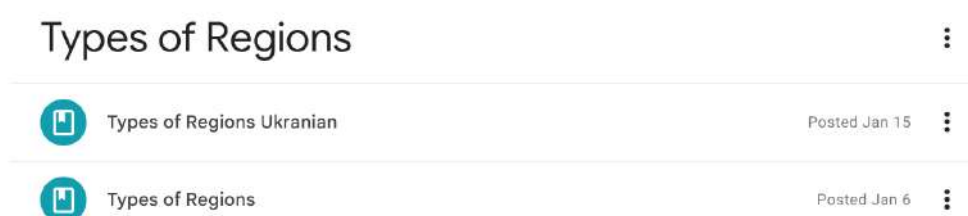


in

work they complete during TY. It is the main component for student assessment in TY. We have now rolled out the use of Digital Portfolios to all students in our junior school. Each student creates a Google Site in DML class and it is used throughout the year to record their work and monitor progress. Digital awards are presented at our annual Prizes and Awards Ceremony each year and the students' Google Site is one of the criteria for this award. Our plan is to continue with the rollout of Google Sites as a Digital Portfolio with Senior Cycle students over the coming years.

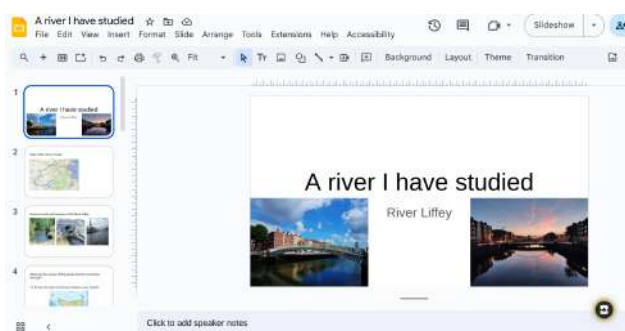
## Google Docs:

This tool is used on a daily basis by every staff member and student in St. Mary's. Teachers use it to prepare notes, to collaborate with each other and students. Its ability to translate documents to different languages makes it invaluable for teachers with EAL students. Subject departments use it for planning and it allows teachers to collaborate with each other when preparing schemes of work. Students use Google Docs for project work, for homework and for collaboration with each other. It is used by students when completing CBA's as part of their Junior Cycle assessments and it is used by some senior cycle students to complete coursework in subjects such as Geography and History. The use of voice typing by students to revise is encouraged and voice typing is regularly used in the AEN classrooms for students with literacy difficulties.



## Google Slides:

This is another widely used tool. Teachers use Google Slides to create presentations for classes. Teachers use animations, insert video clips and embed links to make their presentations more engaging. Students prepare Google Slides presentations as part of their homework or revision. The ability for students to collaborate with each other on projects even when at home is particularly useful.





## Google Drive:

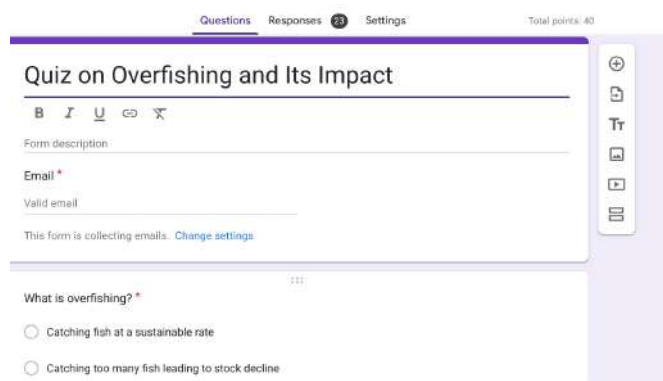
Students use Google Drive to store all their work. They are taught in DML class how to create folders for each subject to manage their files effectively. Teachers do the same. Each subject department has a shared folder where documents can be stored such as schemes of work. This has aided collaboration and has cut down on the need for printing which is not only better for the environment but also cuts costs for the school.

## Google Calendar:

This is used by school administration and management to organise and plan all events in the school. It is the only calendar that operates in the school as we find it much more user friendly and clear in comparison to the calendar we previously used.

## Google Forms:

This is used by students and teachers. Students use it to create quizzes when revising a topic. It is used by teachers to assess students and to get feedback from them. School management use forms to get feedback from staff, students and parents .

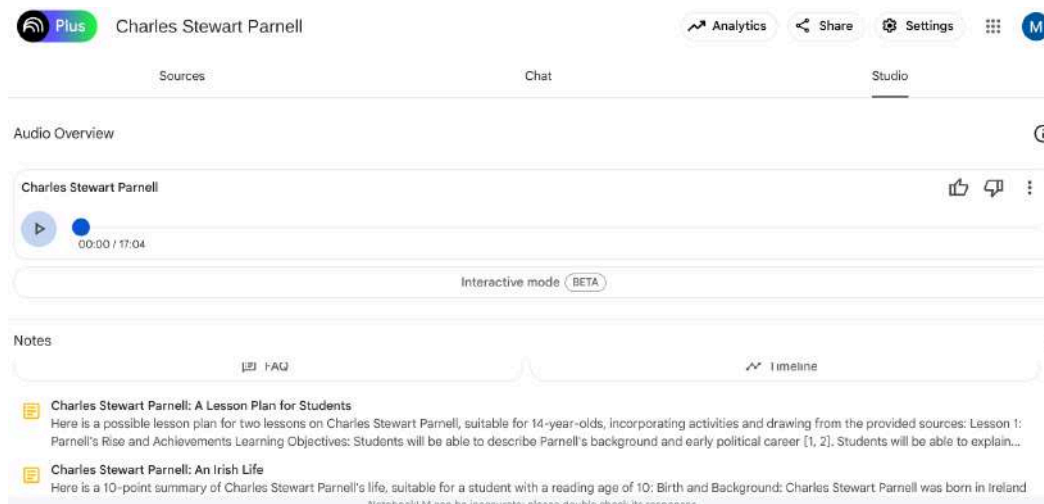
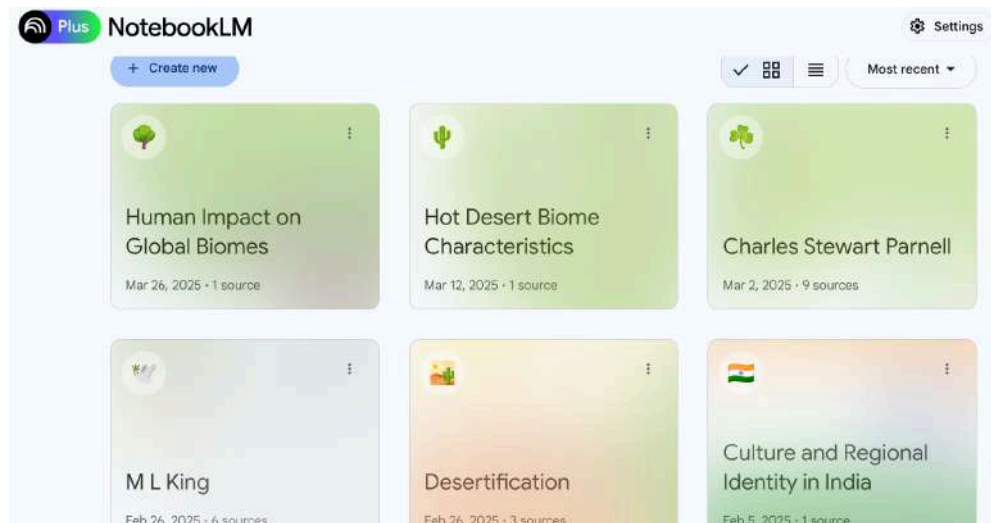
A screenshot of a Google Form titled "Quiz on Overfishing and Its Impact". The form is in edit mode, showing the "Questions" tab. At the top, there are tabs for "Questions", "Responses", and "Settings", along with a "Total points: 40" indicator. The form has a title bar with a text editor (B, I, U, link, unlink, text color, background color). Below the title bar is a "Form description" field. The first question is a text input field labeled "Email \*" with a "Valid email" error message and a "This form is collecting emails. Change settings" link. The second question is a multiple-choice question labeled "What is overfishing? \*". It has two options: "Catching fish at a sustainable rate" and "Catching too many fish leading to stock decline". A right-hand sidebar contains icons for adding questions, sections, themes, and a preview button.

## Google Meet:

This was used exclusively by all teachers during the Covid lockdowns to host online classes. It is still widely used to host online meetings for parents in particular, giving parents who have difficulty attending information meetings such as subject option talks, internet safety talks the option of attending through Google Meet. We have recently begun trialling the use of translated captions for our EAL students. Ukrainian students join the teachers Google Meet at the start of the class and this has enabled them to gain a greater understanding of the material being taught.

## Notebook LM:

In the past few months, teachers have begun using Notebook LM. The ability to upload your own resources and generate content is making this tool invaluable. In particular, the ability to create a podcast style conversation which can be shared with students on Google Classroom is transforming the way students learn.



## Gemini:

All teachers have access to Gemini and we recently purchased Gemini Plus for a number of staff to trial. The integration with Google Classroom has allowed teachers to easily plan a lesson, create quizzes and vocabulary lists. A feature that is proving very useful for AEN students is the ability to re-level text to suit students of all reading levels. Gemini is also used by staff to help prepare resources, write letters to parents and to prepare schemes of work and subject planning. The “polish” tool is very useful to formalise and finalise materials before they are distributed.

The screenshot shows the 'Outline a lesson plan' interface in the Gemini Education tool. It features a sidebar with navigation icons and a main content area. The 'Target grade' is set to '8th' and the 'Template' is 'General'. A text box contains 'Climate Change'. Below this is a 'Regenerate learning objectives' button. The 'Suggested learning objectives' section lists two points: 'Students will be able to explain two key causes and two key effects of climate change, using specific examples.' and 'Students will be able to analyze a graph or data table showing changes in global temperature or CO2 levels and describe the trend.' A footer note states 'Always review and edit learning objectives to be specific and relevant to your class'.

Classroom > Gemini Education

### Outline a lesson plan

Target grade\*  
8th

Template  
General

Describe the topic and standard you want to teach, and the knowledge or skill you want students to demonstrate\*

Climate Change

Regenerate learning objectives

Suggested learning objectives\*

- Students will be able to explain two key causes and two key effects of climate change, using specific examples.
- Students will be able to analyze a graph or data table showing changes in global temperature or CO2 levels and describe the trend.

Always review and edit learning objectives to be specific and relevant to your class

The screenshot shows the 'Create a vocabulary list' interface in the Gemini Education tool. It features a sidebar with navigation icons and a main content area. A warning message states 'Generative AI may display inaccurate information so use your professional expertise to review generated content before sharing it with your class. Learn more about Gemini Education'. An 'Export to Docs' button is visible. The table below lists terms related to climate change.

Classroom > Gemini Education

Generative AI may display inaccurate information so use your professional expertise to review generated content before sharing it with your class. [Learn more about Gemini Education](#)

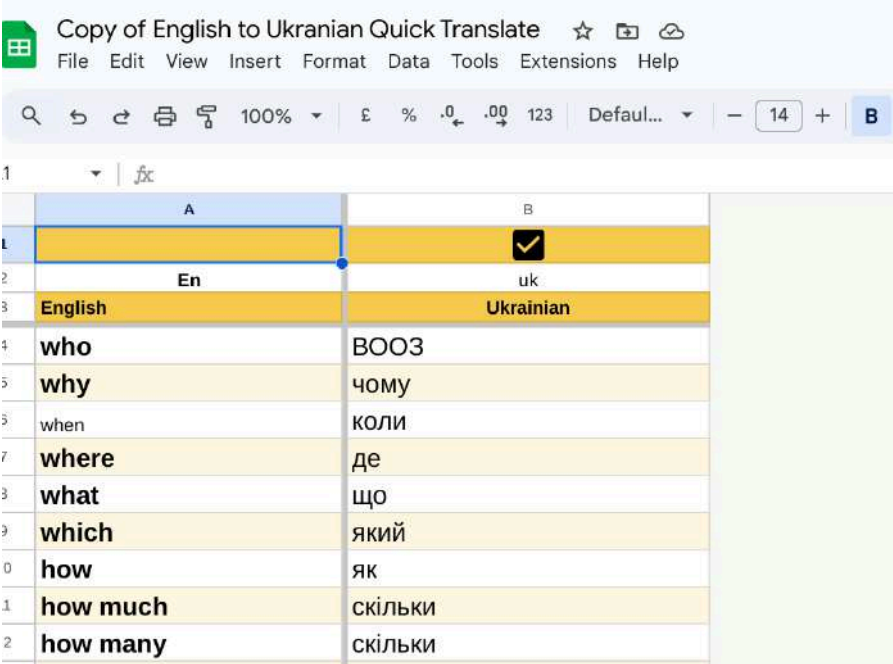
Export to Docs

### Create a vocabulary list

Term	Grammatical Category	Definition	Example
Atmosphere	Noun	Gases surrounding Earth.	Pollutants in the atmosphere trap heat.
Climate	Noun	Long-term weather patterns.	Climate change alters average rainfall.
Greenhouse Gas	Noun	Gas trapping heat.	Methane is a potent greenhouse gas.
Carbon Footprint	Noun	Total carbon emissions.	Reducing travel lowers one's carbon footprint.

## Google Sheets:

Teachers use Google Sheets to track student grades and attendance. Teachers create interactive quizzes or surveys using Google Sheets' form integration, automatically compiling and analysing student responses. Students collaborate on group projects, sharing and editing data in real-time for science experiments or data analysis assignments. Students can use the graphing tools in Google Sheets to generate graphs for project work and presentations. One of the most innovative ways we have used Google Sheets is for translation for EAL students. Students can enter keywords into our easy translator and get instant translations. The use of this translation tool has been rolled out to all EAL students in our school as part of our Literacy Plan 24/25



The screenshot shows a Google Sheet titled "Copy of English to Ukranian Quick Translate". The sheet has two columns, A and B. Column A is labeled "En" (English) and Column B is labeled "uk" (Ukrainian). The table contains the following data:

En	uk
who	ВООЗ
why	чому
when	коли
where	де
what	що
which	який
how	як
how much	скільки
how many	скільки

## **Benefits and impact our organisation sees from using Google for Education tools?**

Google for Education tools have transformed learning and teaching in our school.

### **Enhanced communication and collaboration**

Google Workspace, with its suite of applications like Docs, Sheets, and Slides, allows students and teachers to work together in real-time, regardless of physical location. This fosters a sense of shared ownership and promotes active participation, as students can contribute ideas, provide feedback, and build upon each other's work seamlessly. Google Classroom further streamlines communication by providing a centralised platform for announcements, assignments, and discussions. This instant connectivity empowers students to learn from each other, develop teamwork skills, and engage in meaningful dialogues, ultimately leading to a more interactive and collaborative learning experience. Google Workspace also allows teachers to collaborate and share resources, to engage in subject planning in a more meaningful and efficient manner. Communication with parents is also easier through the use of Google Meets and inviting parents to Google Classrooms so they can check on their daughters progress.

### **Increased Accessibility and Flexibility for learners**

Google Drive enables student access to materials regardless of location. Google Classroom facilitates the continuation of coursework during absences due to illness. Google Workspace offers a comprehensive suite of tools that support differentiated learning. Translation functionalities within Google Docs and Google Sheets enhance accessibility for English as an Additional Language (EAL) students. Translated captions in Google Meet empower students who might otherwise face comprehension and participation challenges to engage actively. Text re-leveling features ensure all students can access materials in an appropriate format. The voice typing functionality assists students with literacy difficulties. Collectively, these tools contribute to a more inclusive and equitable learning environment within the school.

### **Personalised Learning**

Google tools facilitate personalised learning by enabling teachers to tailor instruction and resources to individual student needs. Platforms like Google Classroom allow for differentiated assignments and targeted feedback through the groups feature. Features within Google Docs, such as comment threads and suggestion modes, encourage direct and personalised communication between teachers and students, fostering a more supportive and responsive learning environment. Teachers can give personalised feedback on

assignments submitted through Google Classroom. Students get instant feedback when they complete Google Form quizzes and can immediately see areas they need to improve on. Students can use Google Sites to gather a portfolio of their work and can reflect on their learning and growth over the course of their studies.

## Streamlined Organisation

Google Classroom acts as a central hub for assignments, announcements, and resources, minimising disorganised emails and papers. Google Drive provides a unified storage solution, allowing students and teachers to easily access, share, and manage files. This has completely changed the way subject planning is undertaken in our school. Google Calendar helps students stay on top of deadlines and schedules, while teachers can use it to coordinate meetings and events. This systematic approach reduces administrative burdens, allowing both teachers and students to focus more effectively on teaching and learning. The automation of tasks, such as grading quizzes through Google Forms, further contributes to a more efficient and organized educational environment.

## Engaging with other schools to share our experience of using our tools?

Our school has a dedicated Digital Strategy Team which takes every opportunity to share our experiences with other schools.

- We have participated in a number of initiatives with Oide (formerly the PDST). On one occasion, we were selected to showcase the use of Google Forms and Kahoot as an assessment tool to teachers at a national conference.
- More recently, in 2023 we participated in the Formative Assessment for Digital Portfolios initiative where we spent a year working on using Google Sites as a Digital Portfolio and showcasing its use at a national conference organised by Oide
- We attended the Back to School with Google Education Event in Dublin in October 2024.
- We are in regular contact with primary schools in our catchment area and showcase our use of Education Plus at our annual Taster Lesson Days where demonstrations on using Google classroom and other Google apps take place.
- Each year we hold an Easter camp for primary school students during which the school's supply of chromebooks is used for art, quizzes and other activities.
- We have also advised other schools in our area on the use of chromebooks and Education Plus.
- We have worked closely with Perduko over the past number of years and are often used by them as a reference school for other schools thinking of adapting Chromebooks and Education Plus.
- Recently, we were selected by SMART Technologies to make a video promoting the use of SMART boards to other schools.