



DIGITAL SCHOOLHOUSE

Digital Schoolhouse and Arts Council England partner to transform libraries into digital learning hubs

Five public library services in locations across England with different characteristics will become Community Schoolhouses as part of the Digital Schoolhouse programme

Wednesday 12th January 2022, 10am: The Digital Schoolhouse programme has received funding of £75,000 from Arts Council England to run a pilot programme that will bring the initiative into public libraries for the first time ever.

Digital Schoolhouse, together with Nintendo and supported by the UK games industry, uses play-based learning to bring the Computing curriculum to life. A total of 52 Digital Schoolhouses across the country have helped reach over 100,000 primary school pupils with lesson plans and activities that teach computational thinking in creative, engaging ways.

The programme has received funding to expand and plan to open five schoolhouses in five locations based in Birmingham, Leeds, Stoke-on-Trent and London. This will enable local communities to benefit from its wide range of play-based learning activities that also address the four Universal Library Offers: promoting culture and creativity, supporting health and wellbeing, providing access to information, and digital and fostering reading.

As well as receiving access to the initiative's range of resources – such as its One Minute Mentor video library, playful computing lesson plans and workshops - libraries that become schoolhouses will also benefit from the support of the Digital Schoolhouse team, access to the initiative's network of lead teachers across the country and close ties to the video games industry.

The supported libraries will be located in areas with different characteristics to enable robust evaluation of impact and benefits across a range of library services, communities and settings. This includes a special emphasis on reaching children from disadvantaged backgrounds to help close the digital divide in parts of the country.

It has also already established its worth as an important means for helping children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Digital Schoolhouse's recent Diversity and Inclusion report found that 95% of lead teachers reported that pupils on Free School Meals were able to engage with resources and lessons, with 52% of SEND pupils engaging 'a lot' with lessons and events.

Digital Schoolhouse also offers a range of 'unplugged' activities which use everyday household objects to teach computational thinking skills and computing concepts without the use of any digital technology. Such activities allow those without access to a computer to engage in, and benefit from, the programme's play-based learning lesson plans and resources.

"We're excited to bring the Digital Schoolhouse initiative into libraries for the first time," said Shahneela Saeed, Head of Education for Ukie and Programme Director of Digital Schoolhouse. "The

funding from Arts Council England will allow us to deliver the benefits of an accessible play-based learning approach to computing in communities across the country, helping to unlock opportunity and close the digital divide across England.”

Sue Williamson, Director Libraries, Arts Council England said “I’m delighted to announce that Arts Council England will be funding a project to align Digital Schoolhouses with public libraries to develop digital creativity, a skill identified through our work with the Durham Commission as crucial for young people to be learning.

Through the Universal Offer of Information and Digital, public libraries support so many people to expand their digital skills and awareness. This project will enable young people to develop their skills outside the classroom and public libraries to work closely with schools to reinforce formal learning through fun activity.”

For more information about the pilot, head to

<http://www.digitalschoolhouse.org.uk/news/2022/01/digital-schoolhouse-and-arts-council-england-partner>.

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Notes to Editor

The Digital Schoolhouse Diversity and Inclusion Report, 2021, can be found here -

<https://www.digitalschoolhouse.org.uk/media/Documents-and-reports/dsh-diversity-and-inclusion-report-2021.pdf>

Boiler plate

About Arts Council England

Arts Council England is the national development agency for creativity and culture. We have set out our strategic vision in [Let's Create](#) that by 2030 we want England to be a country in which the creativity of each of us is valued and given the chance to flourish and where everyone of us has access to a remarkable range of high quality cultural experiences. We invest public money from Government and The National Lottery to help support the sector and to deliver this vision. www.artscouncil.org.uk

Following the Covid-19 crisis, the Arts Council developed a £160 million **Emergency Response Package**, with nearly 90% coming from the National Lottery, for organisations and individuals needing support. We are also one of the bodies administering the Government’s unprecedented £1.96 billion **Culture Recovery Funds**. Find out more at www.artscouncil.org.uk/covid19.

About Digital Schoolhouse

The not-for-profit Digital Schoolhouse programme, together with Nintendo UK, uses play-based learning to engage the next generation of pupils and teachers with the Computing curriculum. Digital Schoolhouse is delivered by the UK games industry trade body Ukie and is backed by the video games industry and government. Sponsors include PlayStation®, SEGA, Ubisoft and Outright Games.

Website: <https://www.digitalschoolhouse.org.uk/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/DigSchoolhouse>

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YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/DigitalSchoolhouse>

About Ukie (The Association of UK Interactive Entertainment)

Ukie is a not for profit trade body that represents the UK games and interactive entertainment industry. Its mission is to make the UK into the best place to make, sell and play games in the world.

It represents over 500 businesses working across the UK, including game developers, publishers, platforms and service providers. It supports companies through business support programmes, political engagement, speaking with the media on behalf of the sector and running education initiatives to boost the industry talent pipeline.

The organisation also supports and manages key industry responsibility campaigns such as www.askaboutgames.com and the Get Smart About P.L.A.Y. parental outreach campaign.

Website: www.ukie.org.uk.

Contact: press@ukie.org.uk