

## 341 schools set to get superfast broadband thanks to £5m of funding

Currently all schools in Wales have minimum broadband connections of 10Mbps for primary schools and 100Mbps for secondary schools, but some are not able to upgrade the speed of their services to meet ever increasing demand as a result of technical limitations.

In November 2016, £5 million of investment was made available that will cover the installation of new broadband services. This will provide an immediate increase in speed and in line with provision at other schools ensure that connectivity will continue to grow well into the future.

Orders for the new services have started to be placed with the first delivery expected early in the academic year 2017/18.

Prioritising schools' access to superfast broadband was a key part of the progressive agreement between the First Minister and Kirsty Williams.

Changes to the curriculum mean digital skills will now be developed and taught through all parts of a pupil's schooling and not just isolated to specific ICT or computer science classes. The Digital Competence Framework means more than just using computers and aims to equip pupils with the digital skills they need and can apply in the real world in the years to come.

Kirsty Williams said:

"I am committed to making sure all our schools have the infrastructure needed to prepare pupils for the modern world. That is why I announced £5 million of extra investment to make sure all our schools have superfast broadband speeds as a minimum and I am delighted 341 schools will benefit from this.

"Making sure every school, no matter where they are based, has access to superfast broadband remains a priority for me. We know demand for broadband speed in schools will continue to increase. It is simply unacceptable for a school to be at a significant disadvantage due to poor internet speeds. I will continue to make sure our pupils have the right environment to develop their vital digital skills and continue to raise standards."

The Education Secretary has also revealed that the use of the Hwb digital learning platform, which is designed to provide all pupils and teachers in Wales with greater access to a centrally-funded range of online tools and resources, is increasing.

In March Hwb received over 3.2 million page views and averaged over 28

thousand logins each day which has significantly exceeded original expectations. Recent developments to Hwb have delivered an enhanced experience for teachers and learners, giving quicker access to the tools and resources that are most commonly used. The changes were developed following feedback from teachers.