

Steve Barclay meets the next generation of female UK Cyber experts

Lead Minister for Cyber and Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Steve Barclay, visited St Joseph's RC High School (SJHS) in Newport to learn more about how young people are being taught vital cyber skills.

St Joseph's RC High school was the first state secondary school in Wales to be awarded the Silver Award for the NCSC's CyberFirst school's program. Over the past 5 years they have developed a challenging, engaging and rewarding curriculum that is centred on computer science, applied digital skills and cyber security.

CyberFirst activities are intended to inspire and encourage students from all backgrounds to consider a career in cyber security and apply for a CyberFirst bursary.

The Government is ensuring that all students are taught basic cyber skills as early as possible so that they are more likely to take up further education in this field. Encouraging more young people into cyber careers, and creating a more diverse cyber-security profession is key to the Government's mission to make the UK a world leader in cyber skills and the global cyber industry in the coming years.

Significant steps have already been taken to make this possible – with £2.6 billion of investment in cyber and IT committed in the Autumn statement – which will both make the UK safer from cyber attacks but also to help boost innovation in the cyber security sector.

In addition to all of this, the UK has already seen over £10 billion of investment the last financial year, a 14 per cent increase on the year before that, leading to the creation of 6,000 new jobs to take the sector's employment levels above 50,000.

The visit follows Barclay's keynote address to the Cyber UK Conference in Newport, where he warned of the evolving threat of cyber attacks following Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine, and committed to boost cyber defence skills across the UK.

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Lead Cyber Minister, Steve Barclay said:

It was great to spend time talking to pupils at St Joseph's School in Newport and to hear about their aspirations of working in the cyber industry and the valuable skills they are learning to help them achieve that ambition.

These skills are crucial in helping to boost our individual and collective cyber defences from the threats that we face, so I was

delighted to see the enthusiasm and passion of both children and teaching staff at the school.

Rhys Driscoll, Digital Lead at St Joseph's RC High School said:

The NCSC's Cyber girl's competition has enabled us to provide further opportunities for our school community and to inspire us to achieve more in the cyber world.

The NCSC have been fantastic in giving us guidance, a link to real industry experts and professional learning opportunities. The NDEC team, led by Holly Lidbury, have been particularly supportive and encouraging with our journey as a CyberFirst school.

It was great to have Steve Barclay here today to show off what we've managed to achieve so far, and we look forward to some of our students helping shape the UK's cyber future.