

EASY PC: OUR EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT IAN WISHART VISITS THE PRIMARY

A TECHNOLOGICAL

In a quiet part of the countryside, a technology revolution is taking place. Four years ago, as Newbold Verdon Primary School was starting to pick up after a worrying Ofsted report, deputy head teacher Mike Staunton was given the task of improving the school's IT provision.

About £100,000 later, pupils are reaping the rewards.

They have scores of laptops and interactive whiteboards at their disposal and a curriculum that uses computers at every turn.

Alex Grubisic - "Most people just call me Mr G" - started as head teacher in September.

He said: "Our priority is to use ICT as a learning tool in every part of the curriculum.

"It means our children make Powerpoint presentations as a matter of course, use internet hyperlinks in their work and include digital photographs.

"I'm committed to funding ICT and even though we're on a tight budget, we've scraped together the money for another set of 16 laptops.

"This is not the most affluent of areas and we have to understand school might be the only place children have access to computers."

Newbold Verdon, four miles from Market Bosworth, is on a national register, meaning teachers from around the country get in touch to find out about its ICT policy.

Computers are not the whole story at Newbold Verdon Primary, of course.

Of the school's 183 pupils, 10 are taught in the highly regarded unit for severely autistic children.

Parents get involved, too. On the day the Mercury visited, mums and dads were helping make Christmas decorations.

Walking around the school, however, it is never long before you are met with technology.

County SCHOOLS

Some classrooms have visualisers - overhead projectors with a camera that can zoom in on individual pieces of work or mm

drama performances.

In one room, surround sound music plays as the children work in an art lesson.

"It's amazing to have all this equipment," said 10-year-old Andrea Bailiss.

"We've been doing spreadsheets in Excel. We need to know these things when we get a job."

Lucy Dillely, 10, was working on a Powerpoint presentation about the habitat of cats, complete with film clips and "miaow" sound effects.

She said: "It's all stuff you need



HIGH-TECH LESSONS: Lucy Dillely, left, and Elena De Fraja, both 10, use schoollaptops for their work at Newbold Verdon Primary

PICTURES: MAX EWEN /174179.01

in later life. At my old school, they didn't have many computers.

"This is a fun way of learning. If you had to do it all on paper, it wouldn't be as fun."

Mr Staunton, who has been at the school for 17 years, said he

needed wheeling and dealing skills to get the school so switched on.

"We still teach handwriting and sums still need to be worked out in the head, but if I had the money, every child would have a laptop," he said.

The only downside, it seems, is the mounting electricity bill.

Solar panels and a wind turbine are next on the shopping list.

The Leicester Mercury wants to hear about your school.

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SCHOOL WHERE COMPUTERS ARE A WAY OF LIFE FOR PUPILS

REVOLUTION



PICTURE: 174179.08L



PICTURE: 174179.03L

TAKE NOTE: laura Palmer, seven, and Alex Westaby, nine

BREAK: Courtney Gell, nine, and Amy Finn, eight, in the playground



PICTURE: 174179.02L



PRIORITY: Head teacher Alex Grubisic outside the primary school I ' I

KEYS: lauren Southwell, Stephan Storino, Andrea Bailiss and Josh Page