

Apps for Good 2012/2013 Partner – Case Study

Name of Partner School

Wick High School

Local Authority & Region of Partner School

Highland Region, Scotland

Why did you want to become an Apps for Good partner?

Looking at ways to include a “real life” experience into Computing Science, as opposed to the older model of completing stand-alone programming tasks with no real relevance to society or the workplace. I also wanted to be a subject that had pupils who were proud of their work in the same way that they are with the items they produce in subjects like Technical.

The Apps for Good course model seemed to come to me at the right time when we were making the transition into Curriculum for Excellence with a dedicated Computing Science course as part of the broad general education that pupils now experience from S1 to S3. Curriculum for Excellence emphasises the use of group work, enterprise skills and cross curricular activities and the Apps for Good seemed to be purpose built for that as the students experience business education, marketing, computing science and design.

How have you managed to fit this into the school context and curriculum (include delivery method and student numbers)?

We have included it as the main element of our S3 Curriculum for Excellence course for 3x 55 minute periods a week. Obviously the course doesn’t address all the Computing Science outcomes that students have to cover so we supplement the course throughout the year to cover all the experiences and outcomes, such as games design.

What are the best things that Apps for Good has added to your school, teaching staff and students?

Most importantly it has benefitted the students taking part in the course by making them more motivated to do their best, given the incentives such as going to London, meeting “real-life” experts and possibly having their app made and sold on the Android Play store. From the Computing Science department’s perspective it has helped to attract more girls into a subject which has historically had a much higher proportion of boys (much like in industry – but times are changing!). Also the course has given my department access to a lot of high profile industry contacts and because of this we actually have a female school leaver who has been invited to complete an industrial placement with Thomson Reuters before going to university to study Computing Science.

As a school the Apps for Good course has really shown that although we are geographically remote, we are really a high achieving school which is involved in cutting-edge practice in the field of Computing Science.

What has been the biggest challenge in delivering the Apps for Good course?

Getting the students to focus on a problem-based approach and coming up with high-quality ideas.

How helpful have you found the opportunity for your students to interact with industry experts?

The students have found this to be an amazing motivator. I can always tell in the weeks after we've had an expert visit as the students are totally engaged in improving their ideas and pivoting their solutions based on the feedback.



*****Apps for Good Expert Bob Schukai - Global Head of Mobile Technology at Thomson Reuters, visits students at Wick High School after being inspired by the students work on the Apps for Good programme.***

How is Apps for Good different from the way in which you were teaching ICT/Computing previously?

It has fundamentally changed the way that I think about teaching Computing Science. By having an overarching theme throughout the year, students are no longer working on discrete blocks of work but instead, every piece of work they create feeds into a solution as part of the "big picture".

What advice can you offer to any schools/colleges in your position who are thinking about applying to be a 2013/2014 Apps for Good partner?

Do everything in your power to make it happen!

Insert a supporting quote from an Apps for Good student.

'It has been an amazing opportunity to meet and learn from experts in design and marketing. It has been a different way of working by doing hands-on work in a topic that interests us and we enjoyed putting our ideas together to create something that could potentially be made. Overall, Apps for Good has been a great experience for us all.'