Blogging through your School Website

Blogging basics, best practice and beyond
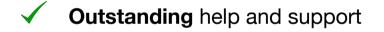
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Achieving Perfection with your School Website
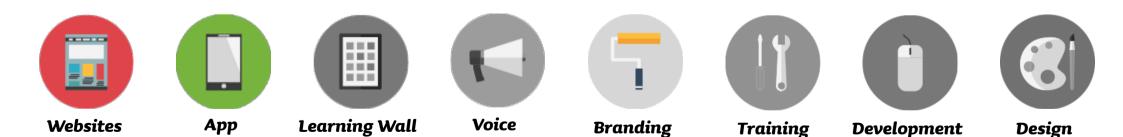
Transform your **school website** into an effective, powerful communication tool.

GET IN TOUCH

✓ **Easy to use** School Website CMS

✓ **Powerful** market leading feature set

✓ **Outstanding** help and support

Websites   **App**   **Learning Wall**   **Voice**   **Branding**   **Training**   **Development**   **Design**

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Getting Started with School Blogs

A blog is a great opportunity, whoever you are, to regularly engage with the community you serve by offering valuable and unique content.

Before you start on your blogging adventure, or look to go deeper into what you're already doing have a look at some example education blogs to give you an idea of what's possible.

Tabula Rasa
An entertaining, sometimes irreverent but inspirational blog.

This Is My Classroom
A detailed record of everything that happens in this primary school classroom.

Hunting English
A brilliant, inspirational blog written by an English teacher based in York.

Walmsley Primary School Year 5
The Year 5 teacher and students all have their own blogs and regularly post short but valuable content.

Park Community Academy (Teachers & Students)
Park regularly use blogs to share student work, and other useful and interesting information for parents.

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Getting Started with School Blogs

Where to blog?

Blogging can be done through a huge variety of websites. There are blog specific platforms and systems designed to host blogs and they will provide a web address for that blog to appear at - usually customblogname.blogprovider.com.
Most of these websites will also provide the facility for that blog to be found at a purchased URL too, for example the school website, maybe schoolwebsite.com/blog or blog.schoolwebsite.com.

All good school website providers provide a blog as a part of their system - this is the easiest way to get started with a blog as there's no additional website to setup and manage, the blog matches the branding of the main website and is surrounded by other content relevant to the school.

What's the aim?

➡ It can be difficult to get started, but setting up the aim of your blog first will be a big help.

➡ Do you want to increase engagement with parents?

➡ Are you looking to use blogging as an assessed piece of work for the student?

➡ Do you just want a way to communicate with your school community in an informal and accessible way?

These are just a few example aims - what's the aim of your blog?

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Posting Good Blogs

#4 top tips to follow when blogging.

✓ **Break up your content with headings.**
Headings will split your content into more readable chunks, they might with the overall structure too.

✓ **Include at least 1 outbound link**
Some sort of action within your content is a good thing, it can give the content an additional purpose.

✓ **Include media - Images & Videos hugely enhance the content**
Including media hugely improves content engagement. It has been said **'a picture is worth 1000 words'**.

✓ **300 word minimum**
Aim to write at least 300 words in your post, short posts can look out of place or unfinished.
(It's really not that many - there's 118 just on this page!)

Moving Forward with Blogs - Part 1

Who should Blog?

Staff

Staff can make a valuable contributions to your blog. Teachers can post content showing what's going on in the classroom, what the students are doing, a really valuable insight for parents who may only get a grunt when asking, 'What did you do at school today?'.

Students

Student blogging doesn't have to be reserved to a primary school blogging in class - although this is an excellent use of blogging. Other schools can encourage their students to blog, potentially through interest groups like digital leaders, or other clubs/societies.

Others

Consider external people to school, governors, outside service providers, PTFA etc. Make sure you setup their content to require approval before going live.

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Moving Forward with Blogs - Part 2

Blog Categories

Think about your blog categories as mini blogs within the main blog which contains everything.
Choose how you want to divide your blog, and then create the categories you need.

Class Blogs

Primary schools often split blogs into year groups, but they can be split into classes too and want an easy way to split blog content. Each class or group can then blog in their own category, as posts begin to build up in the categories they become a much richer picture of what's going on at school in each class or year.

Subject Blogs

Blogs can be split by subject categories. It could be that all science blogs are shown in the science category, depending on the size of your school and wether you work more as year groups or departments will determine which solution is most effective.

Individual Blogs

A blog category belonging to an individual can complement other blog categories. For example a headteacher or principal's blog.

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The 'Class of ...' Method

The best way to manage your blog categories.

This method lets you organise your blogs for easier management and a richer content experience. The end product is a blog that gives a relevant historical record of the blog content.

Decide on a unique category name that won't change in the future.
This could be the name a group, or the name of the class if it has a unique identifier. If not, add an identifier like a graduation year (it's a bit of an Americanism, but it works!).

Link to that category from the relevant page or menu.
Link to your new blog category from within the content of a page or direct from a menu item.

In the future…update the category link.
There's no need to manage the blogs in the category, you just need to update the link to the unique category link. If it's a class link E.g. year-2015 then if the categories have been setup consistently just change the link to year-2016.

Next level Blogging Tips and Tools

Regular

- Keep on going and keep it regular, the more frequent the better.

- Your blogs can vary in length, they don't all have to be essays if the length is putting you off posting a new blog, post a shorter one.

- Consistency is helpful too, if you blog once a day consider doing (or scheduling) this for the same time each day, or if it's less frequently, on the same day(s) each week.

Rich Media & Content

- Look to improve the quality of your blogs with other media. Remember the #4 top tips from Posting Good Blogs.

- Using your own photographs and video content is another massive plus point to your blogs and will draw visitors in.

- The content you're sharing is unique, it's the only way to get that insight into the classroom.

Link with other engagement tools

- Use your website effectively. Having other good, up to date, well displayed content on your website - especially when it's around your blog, is a massive plus and will hopefully lead to blog visitors viewing other content on your website.

- Use social media to drive people to your blog. The quick tweet can contain a link to a blog post to be read in more detail.

- Share your blog around, make sure your school community know about it. Explain what your blog is for and set the expectation.

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What Next?

If you're not already blogging - get started!

There are loads of different solutions to get you blogging and by following the recommendations and best practice in this report you're on to a winner.

If you're already blogging, keep up the good work and think about introducing some of the ideas from this report to your school blog.

Check out our blog for ideas, updates and tips on managing your blog and school website.

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