

**The most important thing that schools can do is not to use technology in the curriculum more, but to use it more effectively.**



*John G. Palfrey and Urs Gasser*  
[www.geckoandfly.com](http://www.geckoandfly.com)



This quote resonates with teachers and parents alike. Many schools, including Ripponlea Primary, have spent a lot of time and money upgrading their hardware and software. Over the last nine months we have brought our ratio of computers (including laptops, iPads and desktops) from 3 students to 1 device, down to 1.5 students to 1 device, which is significantly closer to the state's average of 1.12 students to 1.

It is important to us to allow our students the opportunity to use a range of technology in the classroom and for it to be readily available to them – we are after all teaching a generation whose futures will be predominantly online. However, what we are using our technology for, and how we are integrating it into our curriculum effectively, is what is important. Students at Ripponlea spend, on average, 40 minutes a day at school using technology. They are given opportunities to use computers and iPads flexibly, and on a needs basis.

We teach our students, from Foundation, basic skills such as how to log in to sites like Mathletics and Reading Eggs, as well as opening documents, saving them to files, and finding and editing them for future use. By the time students reach Year 5 and 6 they have personal emails that are regulated by the school, as well as the opportunity to create blogs and websites for their units of work.

We have also introduced all of our students to coding, the language of computers. Coding has been identified as an integral part of curriculums around the world as it has been recognised as a key skill for our students' futures. It is more about teaching kids about how the computer works rather than just how to use it.

It is becoming apparent that teaching digital literacy is as important as teaching Mathematics and English to today's students. Marc Prensky is an American researcher who has written a lot about the importance of integrating technology into today's classrooms – it is worth reading some of his articles. I have also included an article from the Age, dated June 2015, about the significance of coding in the educational system - <http://www.theage.com.au/national/education/coding-education-in-schools-crucial-as-english-and-maths--or-is-it-20150529-ghct42.html>.

Another area that we spend a lot of time on is CyberSafety. We know our students are using social media, despite their age, and we know how important it is for today's students to be aware of their digital footprint. Everything we post can be seen by anyone. The Alannah and Madeline Foundation provides incredible resources for schools to teach their students about the importance of being safe online, and just last year, Ripponlea Primary School became an official eSmart school. We provide detailed, substantiated policies and agreements to our community about safety with technology and expect our students to use technology both at school and at home in an age appropriate and positive way.

Please do not hesitate to contact me about how Ripponlea students are using technology – it is an area I am very passionate about and I am happy to answer any questions or concerns.

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