

County signs up to online revolution

COMPUTERISED school report cards and setting homework at the click of a mouse are all part of an education revolution taking place in Wales.

All 11 secondary schools in Neath Port Talbot have signed up to a ground-breaking system designed to save teachers' time and give parents greater access to school information.

Lisol Pathways allows teachers to write, amend and send out electronic report cards and to mark work anywhere they have access to the internet.

Cefn Saeson Comprehensive in Neath is one of a block of 10 schools launching Lisol Pathways during the new term.

Sean Foley, Cefn Saeson's ICT and data manager, described the system as a streamlining of school bureaucracy.

"Ultimately, this is a first move towards a paperless administration, which has lots of ecological and environmental benefits too," he said.

"Pathways will allow staff to input and access data, and write reports, from anywhere.

"It is going to cut down on teachers' workloads. They will have easier access to documents because they will be online and can be done from their own classroom, another classroom or even in their own time at home.

"The reports will be easier to edit, to store without filling cupboards full of paper and to keep so that teachers can track a pupil's progress."

Dyffryn Comprehensive School in Margam, Port Talbot, was the first county school to use Lisol Pathways, adopting the system a year ago.

Deputy head teacher Cedric Burden said, "A significant education agenda at the moment is extended hours learning and e-learning.

"The great thing about Pathways is that it is one environment where teachers can track pupils' achievement online.

"With one piece of software it brings e-learning, reports, tracking and attendance together in one area."

The software, developed by Cardiff-based education IT specialists Lisol, is now in use in one in 10 schools across Wales but this is the first time an entire county has signed up to the software en masse.