



Staff and students at a Smethwick Secondary School are celebrating after being included in a list that celebrates people, products and projects shaping education technology across the UK.

The Shireland Team, part of Shireland Collegiate Academy in Smethwick, have been included in the annual Edtech50 list which shines a spotlight on those pioneering a new future in education through technology.

Sir Mark Grundy who leads the Shireland Collegiate Academy Trust (Shireland CAT), is a pioneer of education technology supporting teaching and learning. Mark's role as Executive Principal of Shireland Collegiate Academy, Teaching School and Research School also provides e-learning support and will now be building four tech-rich Free Schools under the determined leadership of Kirsty Tonks, Principal Designate of Shireland Technology Primary.

Sir Mark Grundy has been at Shireland Collegiate Academy since 1997. He has worked for a broad spectrum of agencies as an advisor from DfE to Microsoft and BECTA to the Armed Forces. Sir Mark was one of Lord Dearing's advisors on the Curriculum Review in 2000 having previously helped in the construction of the technology orders for the National Curriculum.

Sir Mark said: "I have an incredible team and the trust of parents, students, Governors and staff. This award is for the entire Shireland family. Everybody comes together, embracing technology and using it to ensure that our young people have the best opportunities.

"For a number of years, we've been harnessing the power of technology in education and transforming lives. Moving into the primary phase is a natural step for us to ensure the skills are embedded younger and being used properly. I'm genuinely excited about the potential primary age children will have when they start secondary school with advanced technology skills."

From vlogging teachers to student wellbeing apps to an interactive book experience, schools, companies and technologists have pushed classrooms into the future and provided pupils with new tools for learning, interacting and living. And the Edtech 50 celebrates them.

The list, published by Edtech UK in partnership with Jisc, shines a spotlight those who have helped to shape the dynamic education technology sector in the past year.

Jisc CEO Paul Feldman said: "When done right, ed tech has the potential to transform lives for the better, helping people from disadvantaged backgrounds to achieve their full potential, and helping us to build the digital skills base that will be so critical to the UK's global competitiveness in the years to come.

"The Edtech 50 show us how education technology can be a catalytic force for digital innovation in teaching and learning in partnership and collaboration with teachers and learners."

Jisc provides digital technology and resources to the UK's higher education, further education and skills sectors. They are seeking to make the UK the most digitally advanced education and research nation in the world.

The EdTech 50 was compiled by public nomination and the insight of the judging panel.

Kirsty Tonks, Primary Lead for the Shireland Collegiate Academy Trust, said: "It is a real honour and privilege to be nominated as one of the Edtech50. Shireland, under Sir Mark's visionary leadership over the last 20 years, has always been innovative and forward thinking. We look at ways that technology can raise standards, help students to achieve more and prepare them for a successful life in the workplace in the 21st Century.

"The success that Shireland has had over the last decade is an absolute team effort and I have relished being part of that and leading it for ten years. We are so excited to be able to provide the

same high standard of education in our new technology primary schools being built in Smethwick and Coseley and a further two planned for the West Midlands in 2020."

Shireland Collegiate Academy Trust sponsors the Shireland Collegiate Academy in Smethwick, Holyhead Primary Academy in Wednesbury and Thorns Collegiate Academy in Dudley. Both Holyhead Primary and Thorns Collegiate Academy became part of the Trust and converted into academies in September 2017. The Trust plans to open their first technology primary schools in 2019 in Coseley and Smethwick. Shireland Collegiate Academy has been judged as Outstanding by Ofsted in 2006, 2010 and 2013.

Education secretary Damian Hinds said: "Technology offers educators a wealth of opportunities to support effective and proven teaching practices, as well as increased support for themselves, their institutions and their students. However, we know it can sometimes be difficult to implement new technology or gain access to the evidence and equipment educators need.

"The benefits of digital technology are often seen as innovation that only digital experts can achieve, but that shouldn't be the case. This is why the sector must come together to support this change. I welcome this new initiative to highlight and celebrate many of the people, products and projects that have most impacted education."

Ty Goddard, director of Edtech UK, said: "I'm delighted to be able to congratulate the Shireland team on their inclusion in the Edtech50 list this year, it is well deserved.

"The Edtech50 has been chosen from a mixture of public nominations and the insight of our judging panel. It has been a challenging and exciting process.

"The Edtech50 helps us all celebrate a wonderful sector, whilst recognising the benefits of education technology, and acknowledging the economic advantages of the growing edtech sector to the whole UK economy."

Edtech UK is a strategic body, established by the Education Foundation, to help accelerate the growth of the UK's education technology sector across the UK and globally.