

Prep students learn computer coding

St Margaret's Prep students are learning the basics of computer coding in a weekly in-class program.

The students are using basic animation software that provides them with a choice of different instructions such as move left, right, turnaround and jump, that can be arranged in sequence to bring the cat character on their computer screen to

By using their mouse, they are able to click the button on an instruction which in turn makes the cat move.

Five-year-old prep student Thamanna exclaims "it's fun, it's like playing a game."

St Margaret's Assistant Head of Primary Trudi Edwards says the introduction of coding in Prep and Year 1 forms part of St Margaret's heightened focus on STEM education.

"By beginning with our youngest learners, we're preparing our students with the digital literacy and deep thinking skills required to succeed now and in the years to come.

"Through programs offered by experts in the field, ScopeIT Education, the students are learning to code through play based games that are engaging and relevant to them and appropriate to their age and stage," said Ms Edwards.

Prep teacher Tahlia Butler says the students' digital learning is enhanced by the need to draw on a range of other skills to achieve the task at hand.

"The girls are not simply learning the art of computer coding; they are needing to draw on what they've learnt in other subject areas. They're developing their numeracy skills, including counting and simple mathematics, and their communication and teamwork skills as they collaborate with others.

"We're seeing the girls improve their hand-eye coordination and fine motor skills. In their initial lesson, they had to master clicking the mouse button and moving the mouse whilst looking at the screen, an action they found quite challenging.

"What we're also witnessing is the students deeply involved in the learning process. They're developing their problem solving and critical thinking skills and showing great persistence as they work through the challenge," says Ms Butler.