

administrative roles and responsibilities

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# ICT: essential guides for school governors





This is one of a series of documents for school governors produced by Becta. This guide focuses on administrative roles and responsibilities and aims to help governors to:

- be aware of the vital role that ICT plays in supporting effective leadership and efficient management and administration
- gain a better understanding of the administrative processes within schools
- appreciate how the use of ICT in administration can help the school release teacher time
- implement the National Agreement on school reform.

## The importance of administration in schools

Within a school, administration needs to provide a firm foundation to support informed decision making by teachers, managers, governors, parents, carers and pupils:

- Up-to-date contact details for pupils and parents are essential for emergencies and general home contact
- Assessment data needs to be systematically recorded and analysed. It can then provide the basis upon which teachers make judgements and plan teaching and learning to address the individual needs of pupils
- Accurate records and forecasts of income and expenditure are needed to ensure that school finances are correctly accounted for and information is available upon which to base a budget
- Externally, information needs to be made available to LEAs, central government and other agencies so that it can be used as a basis for funding and other local and national decisions such as pupil transfer.

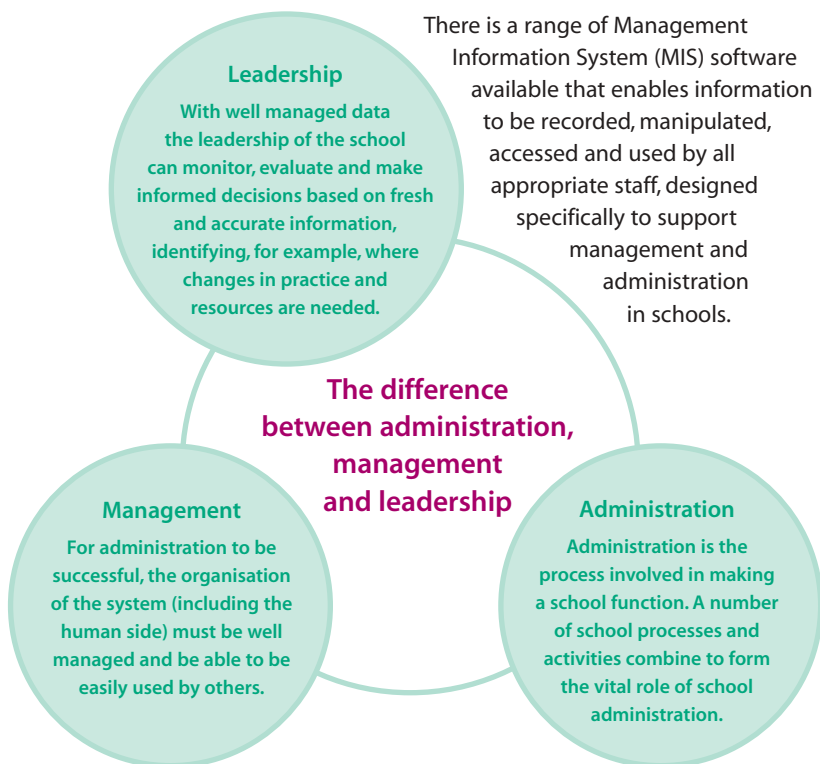
## ICT in school administration

As in modern businesses, ICT can help schools to handle the vast amounts of information required to run and plan efficiently.

### Some uses

ICT is particularly useful in managing data that is regular, repeatable and mundane, where it can perform more quickly and accurately than paper-based systems. Typical tasks include the following:

- Class lists
- Attendance reports for target setting and monitoring
- Reports for parents/carers
- Contacting external agencies such as the LEA or social services
- Information for teachers and school leaders
- Assessment and target setting
- Central government/LEA returns (pupil level annual school census – PLASC)
- Examination entries
- Keeping up-to-date SEN records and plans
- School transfer (common transfer file)
- Organising school trips (letters home, recording payments etc.)
- Personnel records
- Keeping track of library/home reading books
- Budgeting/financial control.





# Roles and responsibilities – who does what?

To achieve efficient data collection, entry and flow, it is necessary to establish clear roles and well defined processes. As with all systems, the human element and relationships are also important. It needs to be clear who does what at each stage. All staff need to be aware of the systems and the individuals involved must have a clear understanding of where and how they fit into the processes below:

## Collection

Data is gathered, from pupils, teachers or other sources; this is usually on paper, but increasingly it is being supplied electronically, such as LEA finance data and examination results. A growing number of schools are using electronic registration. Information about pupils transferring between schools can now be moved electronically using the secure S2S website (see TeacherNet at <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/tools/ims/s2s/forleas/>).

## Entry

If the data is not already in electronic format it will need to be entered into the MIS, either manually or by scanning special sheets with an optical reader. If the data is electronic it should be possible to import this directly. The advice from the DfES is 'enter once, use many times', meaning that the data should not have to be typed into the system more than once.

## Checking

Some form of checking should take place to ensure the accuracy of the data by comparing it to the original source.

## Modifying

Data needs to be kept up to date. Who has access to the data for modifying should be decided by the school's leadership team. A clear system, identifying who is responsible for maintaining the data, should be shared with relevant staff.

## Refreshing

Pupil and other data must be checked regularly to ensure that names, addresses and other details are correct. Some systems allow the data to be printed and sent home for checking, which is appreciated by parents.

## Analysis

Assessment and attendance data needs to be analysed by staff to enable teachers to monitor and evaluate their classes. This will contribute to school improvement and inform learning and teaching. Financial data needs to be analysed and used by leadership teams to ensure effective budgetary control and produce reports to governors.

## Reporting

To be of value, information must be circulated to those who need it. Reports, produced from the analysis, enable information to be shared so it informs planning and decision making. Assessment information is used in school performance tables to give an indication of how well the school is doing. Reports to parents, carers, the LEA and the wider community raise awareness of the school's activities.

## Case study

Bickleigh Primary School, Devon is a Voluntary Controlled, rural split site school with about 143 pupils on roll.

It currently has two curriculum networks totalling 35 computers, and another nine administration PCs accessing a common server from various points around the school.

The school administrator and headteacher input most of the pupil data which is then available to the teachers via the school's network.

Teachers use ICT to plan the curriculum, for writing records and policies and for monitoring pupils' performance. Most teachers have PCs at home with internet access. The headteacher can also access the server from home.

Governors are increasingly using email to communicate with the school and to access information required by them.

The school's integration of the curriculum and administration networks is the single most important factor in the use of MIS although the requirement for a 'technician' on site is seen to be a potential problem as the ICT systems expand throughout the school and its community.

[[http://www.becta.org.uk/leaders/leaders.cfm?section=3\\_3\\_3&id=635](http://www.becta.org.uk/leaders/leaders.cfm?section=3_3_3&id=635)]

# Time saving

Using ICT may not save time, at first. It takes time to learn how to use the system, and then more time to incorporate the new way of working into existing working practices – or to change the practice. However, there are major time savings when, for example, pupils' individual education plans can be stored electronically and updated as required, or when a communication for all teaching staff can be sent simultaneously by email rather than word of mouth or notes in a pigeon hole. Many teachers report that once they have learned to use electronic registration or report writing systems, they save significant amounts of time.

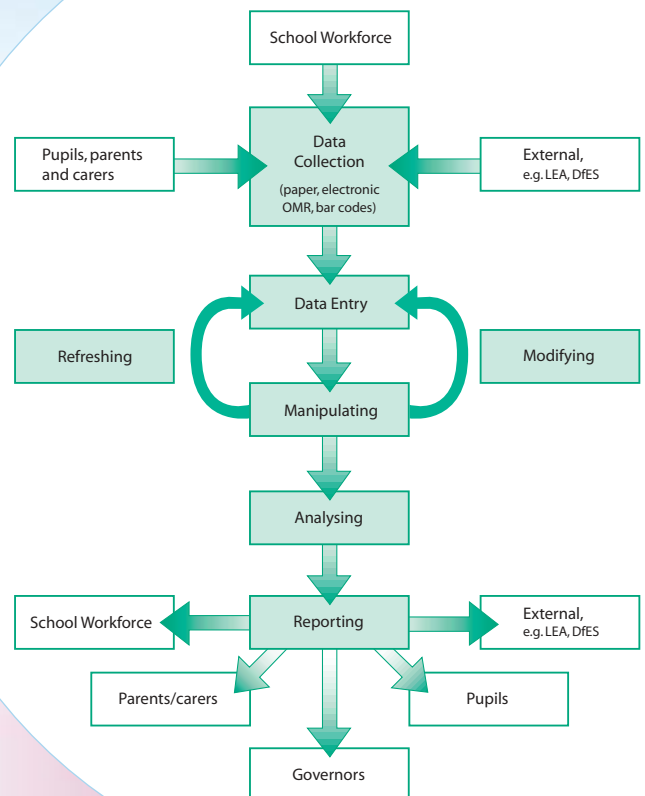


# The role of school governors

Where schools use ICT effectively for administration, governors should expect their schools to be able to easily supply statistical information, for example, about attendance, behaviour, attainment, pupil numbers. To discharge their legal responsibilities, the governing body must have accurate accounts and regular reports on expenditure. This will enable them to produce an annual budget and plan a three-year forecast. Intelligent use of information should enable the governing body to make sound decisions based on the evidence presented.

Similarly, governors should support the headteacher and senior management in meeting the challenge of systematic school improvement, by making evidence-based decisions using facts about the school's current performance.

## Data Flows in schools



# The role of teachers

The National Agreement states that teachers should not routinely be required to undertake administrative and clerical tasks. They should have support to enable them to focus on learning and teaching and to expect administrative and clerical processing to be done by support staff. The DfES identified a list of non-teaching tasks that should be transferred from teachers to support staff by September 2003. These include:

- managing pupil data: teachers will need to make use of the analysis of pupil data

- producing standard letters: teachers may be required to contribute as appropriate in formulating their content.

The National Remodelling Team have collected a number of case studies together on the use of ICT to remodel the workforce [[http://www.remodelling.org/case\\_studies.php](http://www.remodelling.org/case_studies.php)].



# Data access and security

Access to appropriate data is an essential step to ensure that staff derive the benefit of collecting and maintaining this data. This means that they should be able to access data from where they wish throughout the school, or from outside.

Wider access means that, once staff see the benefit of having access to data, they are more likely to keep their own data up to date.

Schools' administrative and curriculum networks have traditionally been separate. Segregation of curriculum from administration networks restricts options for data access and makes management of data difficult. Increasingly, the networks are being combined, allowing appropriate staff access to relevant data from any machine.

Staff also want to access data off site. There are a number of ways of achieving this.

MIS systems are generally secure and access levels should be decided by the leadership team and implemented by the system manager. In some systems, remote access is provided to restricted parts of the MIS.

# Data protection

Schools hold information on staff and pupils and in doing so must follow the requirements of the Data Protection Act and the Freedom of Information Act. There are serious implications for storing, processing, passing on and destroying data on pupils and staff. This means that data held about staff and pupils must only be used for specific purposes that are allowed by the Act and that data must be:

- fairly and lawfully processed
- processed for limited purposes
- adequate, relevant and not excessive
- accurate
- kept no longer than necessary
- processed in accordance with data subject's rights
- secure.

Further advice on the Data Protection and Freedom of Information acts can be found on the Becta website [<http://www.becta.org.uk/corporate/publications/documents/DP%20&%20security.pdf>].

## What the Research Says

Becta's 'What the Research Says' series aims to give an initial idea of the available research evidence on aspects of using ICT in schools and colleges.

### What the research says about using ICT to reduce teacher workloads

- Using ICT allows teachers to perform administrative tasks more quickly and more thoroughly.

### What the research says about strategic leadership and management of ICT in schools

- Using an MIS increases the availability and accuracy of management information, and leads to improved monitoring, evaluation and feedback for staff and pupils.

[<http://www.becta.org.uk/research/research.cfm?section=1&id=546>]

# Technical Support

If the school is going to make use of the advantages of ICT, the system has to be reliable. This requires access to technical support, which can come from technicians within the school, the LEA, or another provider, or a combination. Schools need to progress their technical support to a more pro-active system where this support is involved in any planned developments.



## Inclusion

Inclusive schools exploit ICT-based management and administration systems so that information on a pupil's special or individual needs are effectively communicated across all relevant departments in the school. This ensures that specific information on pupils who have additional or different needs – educational, medical or social – is both available to teachers to inform lesson planning and also to curriculum managers to monitor pupil progress.

At Chalfonts Community College in Buckinghamshire [<http://www.chalfonts.org/>] where ICT is used in this way, the learning department ensures that information on individual pupils' learning needs is integrated with the college's pupil tracking and reporting system. This allows teachers to easily access Individual Education Plans of groups of pupils when planning and developing materials for lessons. Curriculum managers use the data to promote high expectations from subject teachers and set appropriate challenges for all pupils.

# Training

This area is often overlooked by schools. It is essential that the workforce is trained if they are going to use the system. The school workforce will need planned continuous professional development (CPD) to suit their role: for example, year heads, timetabling staff and administrators will need expertise in specific areas of the MIS. Training on all new products is essential if maximum benefit to the school is going to be achieved. Governors need to ensure a review of staff competencies and training needs is in place.

Governors may be interested in the new Vocational Qualification for support staff which has a general element of training on MIS

[[http://www.dfes.gov.uk/pns/DisplayPN.cgi?pn\\_id=2004\\_0115](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/pns/DisplayPN.cgi?pn_id=2004_0115)].

# Useful information

## Where can you go for further help regarding ICT ?

Your own LEA team, particularly the ICT Adviser, should be your first contact for advice on LEA policy decisions and directions regarding ICT. Your LEA's Governor Training section may be able to direct you to support.

### Becta

Information and advice for school leaders on all aspects of leading and managing ICT in schools.

[http://www.becta.org.uk/leaders/school\\_leaders.cfm](http://www.becta.org.uk/leaders/school_leaders.cfm)

Details of management information systems available for schools.

<http://www.becta.org.uk/mis>

Becta matrices – including one tool to help schools evaluate their MIS.

<http://www.becta.org.uk/leaders/display.cfm?section=11>

Remodelling CD-ROM – this CD shows how ICT has supported workforce reform in six schools.

[http://www.becta.org.uk/corporate/publications/publications\\_detail.cfm?currentbrand=all&pubid=162&cart=](http://www.becta.org.uk/corporate/publications/publications_detail.cfm?currentbrand=all&pubid=162&cart=)

### Knowledge network

Risk management of Data – general government advice on managing data and the risks surrounding data management.

[http://www.knowledgenetwork.gov.uk/CO/KIMSCSIA.nsf/0/1ED888FF8B9C96DA80256EB60059F3E2/\\$FILE/CSIA%20booklet.pdf?openelement](http://www.knowledgenetwork.gov.uk/CO/KIMSCSIA.nsf/0/1ED888FF8B9C96DA80256EB60059F3E2/$FILE/CSIA%20booklet.pdf?openelement)

### NCSL Bursar Development programme (BDP)

Aims to support the development of an effective market for bursars, developing both the supply and demand by providing suitable bursarial training.

<http://www.ncsl.org.uk/index.cfm?pageid=managing-bursar-development>

### Teachernet

IMS – information and advice from the DfES Information Management Strategy.

<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/atoz/i/ims/>

The School Workforce National Agreement.

<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/docbank/index.cfm?id=3479>

Details of cutting administration burdens and other tasks that should no longer be carried out by teachers.

<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/remodelling/cuttingburdens/keysteps/?section=2679&CFID=5139589&CFTOKEN=a49514-c8716747-dfd9-453b-bec9-888a5dfeb40c>

Information on using and developing the role of bursars in schools.

<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/remodelling/bursars/>

This document is one of a series, published during Autumn 2004, by Becta to support school governors. Each guide, together with supporting material, will be made available for downloading in the Governor Support area of Becta's website [<http://www.becta.org.uk/leaders/display.cfm?section=13>].

department for  
**education and skills**



Becta is the Government's key partner in the strategic development and delivery of its information and communications technology (ICT) and e-learning strategy for the schools and the learning and skills sectors.

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