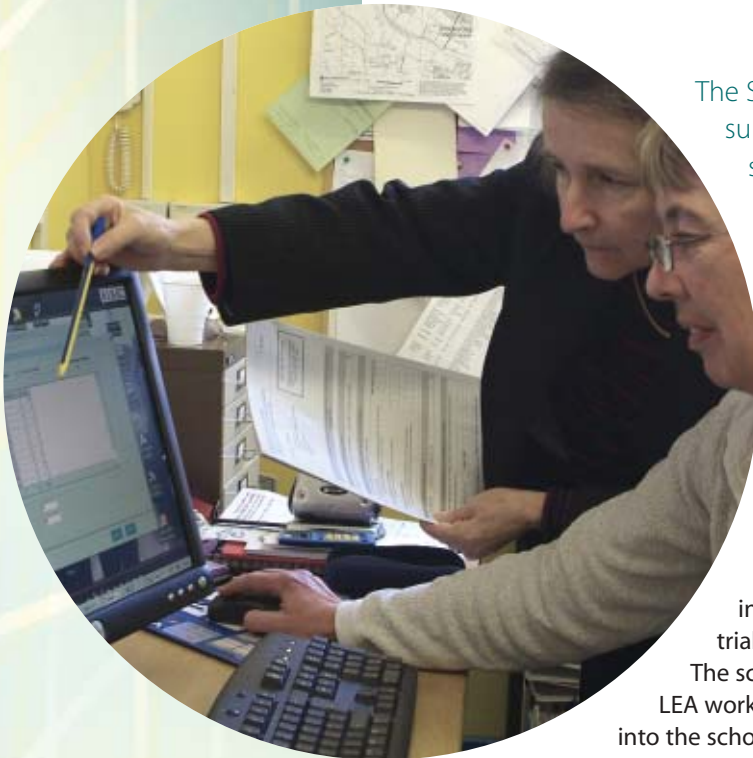


FITS case study

Improving delivery of ICT technical support

Professional ICT management in Bolton schools



The Schools ICT Unit at Bolton LEA provides support, advice and guidance to the secondary schools in the Bolton metropolitan area on a whole range of issues. As part of this support, every year each school gets three consultancy days – of which one focuses on managing ICT.

David Pott of the Schools ICT Unit discovered the Framework for ICT Technical Support (FITS) on the Becta website. Recognising that FITS provided a sensible framework for managing ICT support in schools, he asked the nine secondary schools in the Bolton district if they would be willing to trial the FITS processes as a working methodology. The schools were happy to do this and so the LEA worked with Becta to introduce these processes into the schools.

About FITS

Since the launch of the best-practice Framework for ICT Technical Support (FITS) on Becta's website, many schools have implemented the FITS processes to improve their ICT management and support.

Ofsted's report ICT in Schools 2004: the impact of government initiatives five years on describes the Framework for ICT Technical Support as an effective tool for those integrating technical support into the strategic planning and management of a school.

For those responsible for ICT implementation, FITS provides a practical manual and toolkit, which serve a growing number of schools well.



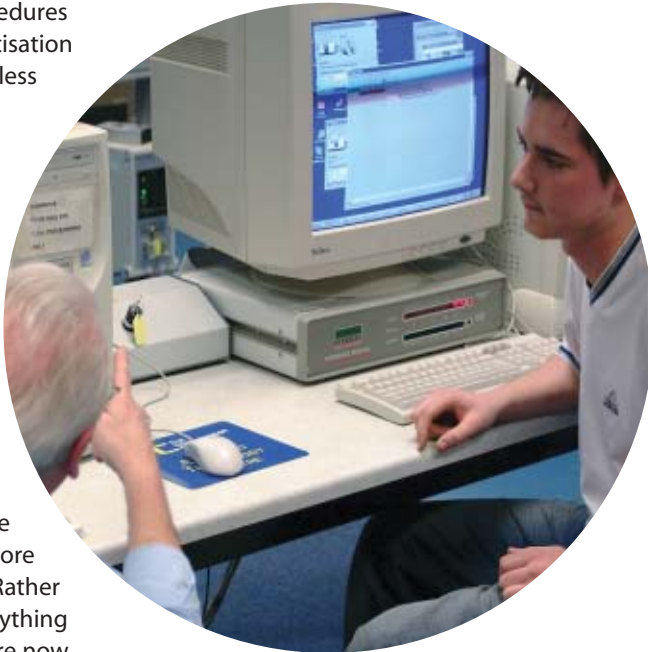
In the six months following the introduction of FITS into the Bolton schools, there has been a significant change in the schools' approach to managing ICT, and also an improvement in their communications with the LEA. Aftab Hussain, Assistant Manager of the Schools ICT Unit, says: "I'm delighted with the progress that the schools have made since they started using the FITS guidelines. The meetings that we now have are much more productive than they were in the past and we are all working to a common, consistent agenda – looking to the long term and not just fire fighting!"

Aftab believes that the FITS guidelines give schools sensible and pragmatic advice, which is logically grouped together in manageable chunks. The guidelines provide a comprehensive overview of the ICT support function and a useful prompt to ensure that schools are addressing all aspects of the service correctly.

He also comments that FITS has changed schools' attitude towards managing ICT by promoting a more professional culture of service management based around the needs of the user. As a result of this guidance, many schools have now implemented the Service Desk process based on proper procedures enabling better prioritisation of response. Less and less frequently, the LEA is seeing schools' senior ICT managers running round doing minor remedial work – they are spending their time more effectively looking at strategic issues.

As a result of using FITS, schools are increasingly seeing the benefits of working more closely with the LEA. Rather than trying to do everything themselves, schools are now considering the ongoing costs and making sure that their investments are sustainable in the longer term. Working in partnership with the LEA can pay dividends, particularly in the areas of framework procurement, managing enterprise-support solutions, maintenance and back-up.

Aftab concludes: "Implementing FITS certainly takes time and effort, but it is really worth doing. We have seen huge progress with the schools who have committed to implementing FITS properly, whilst those who have not are struggling."



FITS processes

FITS stands for Framework for ICT Technical Support and is based on the IT Infrastructure Library (ITIL) which has been tried and tested over 20 years.

Each of the 10 main process topics covers a different area of best-practice technical support...

- Service Desk
- Incident Management
- Problem Management
- Change Management
- Release Management
- Configuration Management
- Availability and Capacity Management
- Service Level Management
- Service Continuity Management
- Financial Management

The advice given is neither definitive nor prescriptive but should be adapted and adopted to fit each school individually, based on the school's resources and needs.

FITS support

Resources downloadable from Becta

- Advice and guidance
- Toolkits
- Assessment

FITS online community

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

FITS pocket guide

A handy reference book for anyone involved in ICT management or day-to-day technical support in schools

Available to order from Becta publications
[<http://www.becta.org.uk/publications>]

Training workshops

- FITS overview
- Implementing FITS

<http://becta.org.uk/schools/technicalsupport>

© Copyright Becta 2005

You may reproduce this material free of charge in any format or medium without specific permission, provided you are not reproducing it for profit, or for material or financial gain.

You must reproduce the material accurately and not use it in a misleading context. If you are republishing the material or issuing it to others, you must acknowledge its source, copyright status and date of publication.

While great care has been taken to ensure that the information in this publication is accurate at the time of publication, we accept no responsibility for any errors or omissions. Where a specific product is referred to in this publication, no recommendation or endorsement of that product by Becta is intended, nor should it be inferred.



Millburn Hill Road
Science Park
Coventry
CV4 7JJ

Tel: 024 7641 6994
Fax: 024 7641 1418

Email: becta@becta.org.uk

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