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Information Management Strategy framework

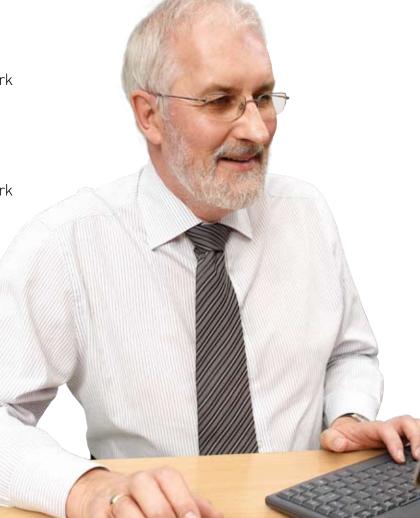A brief guide for local authorities

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Introduction

The Information Management Strategy framework – a brief guide for local authorities

All schools collect and process a great deal of data and, as both the range and the quantity of data increases, there is a growing need to manage information effectively.

The Information Management Strategy framework has been designed in collaboration with schools, local authorities and suppliers to help schools assess their position and develop their own strategy for information management.

The Information Management Strategy framework can be used alongside other self-improvement tools from Becta, including the self-review framework, the Framework for ICT Technical Support (FITS) and the parental engagement and online reporting toolkit.

Why schools should use the framework

More and more data now comes into school in electronic format, and increasingly schools are expected to produce data electronically for the local authorities, government and other agencies.

This means that schools now rely heavily on the quality of the data and on how effectively data is managed. A good information management strategy will help schools to deliver their aims for learning and teaching, management and administration.

Using the framework will help schools to improve the quality of the data they collect and manage it more effectively. It will also assist schools and local authorities in meeting the aims of Every Child Matters, and the requirements for safeguarding children, parental engagement and data security.

The benefits of an effective information management strategy

Benefits to schools include:

- better evidence to support discussions with local authorities, Ofsted, school improvement partners, governors and other stakeholders

- more efficient tracking of learner progress and achievement

- better monitoring and setting of targets

- faster response to attendance and behaviour problems

- more effective communication with parents on pupils' progress.

Benefits for local authorities include:

- improved quality of data in schools

- increased data security

- more effective information sharing between schools, and between schools and local authorities and other agencies

- improved efficiency and possible cost savings in schools and local authorities

- raising awareness of the importance of good information management practices in schools.

What the research says

The Becta Review 2006: Evidence on the progress of ICT in education (http://publications.becta.org.uk/display.cfm?resID=25948&page=1835) reported that: "... the effective use of data within institutions supported allocation of staff and resources, management of performance, monitoring initiatives and strategies, target setting and identification of pupils' achievements. Schools reported the value of access to pupil data in helping pupils make the transition from one school to another. Data also supported challenges to staff, pupils, parents and others and provided information for evidence-based discussions with Ofsted, local authorities and governors."

The Becta Review 2006 also highlights: "It is not the provision of data as such but the embedding of appropriate practices which will enhance learning and personalisation."

Using the framework

The framework has four key strands:

- **Leading an information management strategy**

- **Developing capacity and capability**

- **Gaining effectiveness and efficiency**

- **Improving data management**

Each strand is divided into five levels of 'maturity', with short statements enabling schools to assess their current practice and identify the steps they need to take to progress further.

In addition to highlighting how schools need to tackle issues such as data security, sharing information and professional development, the guidance also emphasises the importance of adopting a whole-school approach and involving partners and the wider community.

This framework can be used by local authorities to work with their schools on improving information management or by schools independently. It should be read in conjunction with the *Information Management Strategy framework – Guidance for schools.*

Frequently asked questions

Q **What benefits should we expect from schools using the framework?**

A By using the Information Management Strategy framework, schools will be able to make more effective use of their data on pupil performance. Ofsted and the Primary and National Strategies regard this as "an essential part of the school improvement process and one of the key levers for change". (Primary and National Strategies)

Q **Our schools use the self-review framework – why do we need another framework?**

A Many authorities and their schools are now benefiting from the use of the self-review framework which offers schools a route for assessing and improving use of ICT. The Information Management Strategy framework can be used as part of this process or can stand alone to look specifically at information management in schools in more detail. Where the self-review framework helps schools to extend their use of ICT in all areas of teaching, learning and management, the Information Management Strategy framework helps schools to integrate their use of information in an effective strategy.

Q **What are the cost implications for schools?**

A There is no charge for using the Information Management Strategy framework.

Q **If this is a tool for schools, why is there separate guidance for local authorities?**

A Local authorities with their own support teams can use the framework to establish a baseline position for their schools. This can help to focus resources and support on areas where it is most needed. For example, local authorities could use the framework to support information management improvement workshops for schools.

Q **How can I encourage my schools to make use of the framework?**

A Local authorities can use parental engagement, 14–19 requirements and universal home access as drivers for helping schools to improve data quality.

Q **Did any local authorities help to develop this framework?**

A Yes. Barking and Dagenham, Lancashire, Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire and Birmingham all helped.

Q **Data quality is the most important part of an effective strategy, so why doesn't it have its own section?**

A Becta has designed the framework to give a high-level overview of all the important parts of an effective information management strategy. Local authorities and schools will have their own priorities, so authorities are free to direct their focus on local priorities and link to any existing programmes already in progress with their schools at a local level.

Q **There are other commercial school improvement tools available – doesn't this just duplicate those?**

A The framework takes a high-level view of all the essential components of an effective information strategy. It does not recommend a particular way of implementing a technical solution. Local authorities and schools should be able to use this framework in conjunction with other school improvement tools already in use if they so wish.

Other sources of support

Data security and safety advice

www.becta.org.uk/schools/security

Becta self-review framework

http://schools.becta.org.uk/index.php?section=srf

Framework for ICT Technical Support (FITS)

http://becta.org.uk/fits/index.cfm

Learning platform functional requirements and technical specifications

http://schools.becta.org.uk/index.php?rid=12884

Systems Interoperability Framework (SIF)

http://industry.becta.org.uk/display.cfm?resID=28188

Secure your services and increase user satisfaction

http://industry.becta.org.uk/display.cfm?resID=33844

Federated Access Management

http://industry.becta.org.uk/display.cfm?resID=14598

Parental engagement

http://schools.becta.org.uk/index.php?section=oe&catcode=ss_es_fam_02

Home access

www.becta.org.uk/homeaccess

Purchasing

http://schools.becta.org.uk/index.php?section=re&catcode=ss_res_pro_02

Evaluating performance (Primary and Secondary National Strategies)

www.nationalstrategiescpd.org.uk/public_content/esp/getting_started/getting_started_1_1.html#

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