School and college
Improvement through ICT

An essential guide

Becta

Driving the transformation of learning through ICT

The next five years will see the effective use of information and communications technology (ICT) systematically embedded across the education sector in policy and in practice – a move that is set to position the UK as world leader in the use of new technologies in schools and colleges.

Becta is leading this process. The Government's key partner in the development, co-ordination and delivery of its ICT and e-learning strategy, we not only influence the direction of policy and planning but also broker and manage partnerships and networks to ensure a coherent and co-ordinated approach to the development and exploitation of ICT.

We are actively promoting an integrated approach to the development of ICT infrastructure across the country. We are also encouraging and supporting the introduction and innovative use of ICT in schools and colleges, recognising the importance of ensuring local choice based on local need.

Our aim is to support the creation of a world-class education system by ensuring that the potential opportunities for ICT to benefit learners, teachers and institutions are capitalised upon.

To help schools and colleges create and implement effective ICT strategies and deploy their ICT resources to best effect, Becta is working with our partners to develop a new, more coherent and consistent approach to ICT improvement across the education sector.

A result of these efforts is the Becta self-review framework, a framework specifically designed to enable you to take a global view of how ICT is being used across your organisation, and providing a benchmark from which you can establish a clear path for its future development.

The self-review framework has been developed in conjunction with school and college leaders and our Government partners, and is based on clear research, together with evidence from a successful pilot project. Due for launch in March 2006, it offers you the ideal approach to help you maximise the return on your investment in ICT.

Building upon the self-review framework, Becta has also developed an optional accreditation scheme. Developed in partnership with Naace, the ICT Mark will enable your school or college to move forward in the knowledge that it is implementing recognised good practice.

Ensuring coherence – building resources

The self-review framework offers every school and college an opportunity to review and improve its performance in relation to its use of ICT, and is set to play a critical role in increasing the number of schools and colleges making strategic and effective use of ICT to improve educational outcomes.

Its development to date is the result of collaboration between Becta, Ofsted, the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA), the Training and Development Agency (TDA), the National College for School Leadership (NCSL), the National Strategies, the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust (SSAT) and Naace alongside advice and guidance from a wider range of partners and stakeholders. This collaboration has enabled the creation of a common language and definition of good practice, ensuring a coherent approach towards ICT improvement across the education sector.

Becta is also co-ordinating the advice and support available from the various agencies to enable schools and colleges to make best use of all that is on offer.

Local authorities and local Learning and Skills Councils play a key role in the provision of ICT support locally, and Becta is helping to boost their understanding of how

best to meet schools' and colleges' requirements, as well as helping them to increase their capability to deliver.

Becta is also promoting the self-review framework to ICT suppliers, so that they can align their provision to the common approach and standards required by schools and colleges.

A major priority for Becta is the provision of information and guidance to support institutions, as their deployment of ICT evolves.

An online tool is being developed for the Becta self-review framework that will offer schools, colleges and individuals the opportunity to undertake a self-review, and benchmark themselves alongside other schools and colleges. The choices made will help to determine a personalised action plan for improvement. The tool will also offer access to a host of useful and relevant online materials and resources.

> ## With growing confidence I have a willingness to experiment.
>
> Teacher, primary school

Defining a vision

As yet, few schools and colleges are totally 'e-confident' – that is with ICT embedded in their culture and across all aspects of their remit. Becta's research shows that an organisation's leaders play a critical role in ensuring that ICT resources are deployed to maximum benefit.

Becta's analysis shows that up to 80 per cent of education providers would benefit from adopting the self-review framework as a means of achieving ICT improvement. However, if ambitions for improving learning and teaching are to be matched with technological opportunity, Becta believes it is imperative that leaders are fully engaged with the process.

The self-review framework provides a means of encouraging leaders to crystallise their vision for learning and teaching within their organisation, supporting the adoption of a 'whole organisation' approach to ICT planning and investment.

Based on the concept of a maturity model, the framework offers the potential for improvement in learner outcomes not only in terms of curriculum delivery and assessment, but also in relation to the strategic issues that have an impact on the deployment of ICT across the organisation.

A key focus for Becta is to provide head teachers, college principals and senior managers with the opportunity to develop their strategic planning and leadership skills so that they harness the opportunities that ICT offers their organisation.

- A core component is SLICT (Strategic Leadership in ICT) a professional leadership development programme designed by head teachers, for head teachers. It builds on the strengths of Becta and NCSL, and works with head teachers to enhance their leadership styles, providing an insight into the possibilities that ICT can bring to extend and enhance learning.

- SLICT offers a further programme in partnership with SSAT, designed to enable senior leaders to act as change agents within their school or college, and to equip them with the knowledge to contribute to the process of ICT implementation at a strategic level.

ICT is perfect for motivating children; it makes them want to learn.

Teacher, primary school

Transforming learning and teaching

The imaginative use of ICT within an educational environment is transforming the learners' experiences as they move through the educational system – contributing to improved motivation, enhanced achievement and the development of new skills.

Research demonstrates that ICT contributes not only in making studying more enjoyable but also enhances learners' perceptions of achievement. Studies also report that learners take more responsibility for their learning, making more sustained efforts with difficult tasks, when using ICT.

Practitioners are benefiting too, as the spread of new technologies allows new ways of engaging with learners and enhances the effectiveness of their teaching.

The deployment of ICT can significantly enrich the curriculum, enabling speedy and ready access to a wealth of educational content and resources that can bring the world right into the classroom.

Supported by the appropriate systems, teachers can also access the tools they need to plan and monitor progress. Valuable time can be saved from tasks such as classroom management and administration and

used to create more opportunities for questioning, interpretation and discussion.

A key focus of the Becta self-review framework is to engage and support both teachers and learners as they develop their use of ICT, ensuring the provision of high quality e-learning content complemented by systems to improve communication and strengthen relationships.

Becta is also working with its partner organisations to improve the overall quality of learning and teaching activity, exploring new pedagogical approaches to help build a stronger learning culture across the UK.

ICT saves me 15 hours a week, and I now do more than I could ever have done without ICT.

Head teacher, secondary school

Developing staff

Teachers' understanding of the potential that ICT offers is critical to the successful development of e-learning in schools and colleges, and the continued professional development of staff is core to the Becta self-review framework.

Evidence suggests that both the confidence and the competence of teachers in the use of ICT in teaching have risen over the past five years, making it one of the most marked areas of ICT-related improvement over the period. However, there are still significant variations across schools and colleges and between teachers and tutors, and Becta is seeking to address this issue by embedding the safe and inclusive use of ICT, both in initial teacher training and in professional development programmes for practitioners.

Through the framework, teachers and tutors can undertake a review of their own personal development need, and a pool of information and guidance is available to help them access suitable development opportunities. Practitioners are being encouraged to become more active within professional practice communities, and thus enhance their expertise through peer-to-peer review and support.

One example of a new initiative to help support practitioners is *The Learning and Skills Web,* an integrated advisory service aimed at those working in the post-16 sector, due to be launched in Spring 2006.

To drive improvement across the sector, Becta is continuing to research how ICT can best support learning and teaching at all levels, building models and promoting standards for personalised learning, assessment and subject-specific pedagogies.

> ICT has given me another medium with which to teach, which ultimately makes me a better teacher... ICT has given me a way to have more impact in the classroom and make lessons more engaging for those who don't respond so well to 'traditional' methods.

Teacher, primary school

Extending the boundaries of learning

New technologies are facilitating the development of a personalised learning platform for each individual pupil, creating a highly interactive experience for learners that is adaptive to their preferences, pace and context.

Personal learning spaces place the learner at the heart of the education system, removing all the constraints of the classroom, and enabling anywhere, anytime learning combined with seamless continuity throughout their education.

Learners benefit from ready access to their own e-portfolio of work, whether they are in the library, in clubs or at home.

In addition, personal learning spaces enable online monitoring and assessment of an individual's development and achievements, as he or she moves through school to college and into the workplace.

E-learning significantly enhances access to learning for those with special social, cognitive or physical needs, as well as for groups that the education system often fails, such as travellers.

It also opens up new opportunities for schools and colleges to extend their reach by removing many of the traditional barriers between learners and teachers, institutions and the wider community.

Communication with parents can similarly be improved, with ICT facilitating more active engagement and helping to encourage support.

Connectivity is a key feature of ICT systems, and the technologies now readily available to schools can be harnessed to create shared learning opportunities for many, offering people of all ages and all interests a chance to become part of a wider learning community.

ICT has got me excited about teaching again because it has transformed the classroom.

Teacher, secondary school

Further information

Ensuring coherence – building resources

Curriculum Online – Supporting learning and teaching in primary schools
http://www.becta.org.uk/publications

Curriculum Online – Supporting learning and teaching in secondary schools
http://www.becta.org.uk/publications

Becta in the learning and skills sector
http://www.becta.org.uk/publications

Funding to support the provision of learning platforms in schools 2006–7
(DfES publication)
http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/learningplatforms

BETT Awards publication
http://www.becta.org.uk/publications

Becta's view: Emerging technologies
http://www.becta.org.uk/publications

Becta's Schools website
http://www.becta.org.uk/schools

Becta's Ferl website
http://www.ferl.becta.org.uk

Becta's AC Learn website
http://www.aclearn.net

Inclusion website
http://inclusion.ngfl.gov.uk

Defining a vision

Information on SLICT
http://www.ncsl.org.uk/slict

Transforming learning and teaching

Planning for personalised online learning
http://www.becta.org/publications

Becta's view: E-assessment and e-portfolios
http://www.becta.org.uk/publications

Becta's view: Improving learning and teaching with ICT
http://www.becta.org.uk/publications

Becta's view: Assistive technology
http://www.becta.org.uk/publications

Becta's view: ICT and Inclusion
http://www.becta.org.uk/publications

Celebrating ICT in Practice 2006
http://www.becta.org.uk/publications

Developing staff

CPD area of Becta schools website
http://schools.becta.org.uk/index.php?section=lp&catcode=_le_cp_02

CPD and staff development area of Ferl website
http://ferl.becta.org.uk/display.cfm?page=81

CPD and staff development area of AC Learn website
http://www.aclearn.net/display.cfm?page=933

Extending the boundaries of learning

Becta's view: ICT and Home – School partnerships
http://www.becta.org.uk/publications

Extending the boundaries of learning
http://www.becta.org.uk/publications

Home – community links
http://schools.becta.org.uk/index.php?section=lp&catcode=_le_pp_hl_03

www.becta.org.uk

Becta

British Educational Communications
and Technology Agency