

developing a vision for ICT

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ICT: essential guides for school governors



The DfES has commissioned Becta to produce a series of documents for school governors. This guide focuses on informing and encouraging governors so they can contribute to developing the ICT vision for their school.



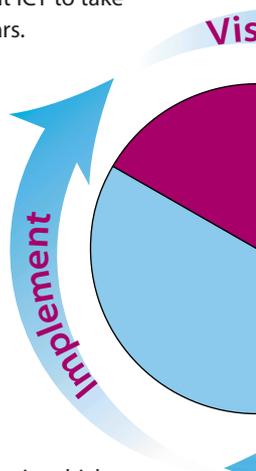
The rise of ICT in society

ICT is increasingly becoming part of our daily lives, in the way that radio and television did fifty years ago. This is amply illustrated by the use of mobile communications, games consoles, digital cameras and other technologies in the home, school and workplace. The 2002 Household Survey revealed that almost 90 per cent of young adults now use the internet from time to time. It also found that over 50 per cent of households now own a PC and that over a quarter of households have direct access to the internet.

However, unlike radio and television, which are powerful but essentially passive media, ICT is interactive and

dynamic, so the user is able to direct his or her activities. Because the use (and misuse) of ICT is based on the exercise of choice, and because technology does not 'stand still', it is essential that schools develop a comprehensive vision of where they want ICT to take the school community in the coming years.

The Government is strongly supporting developments in ICT in schools through the provision of resources and guidance. It is, however, up to schools to develop a vision for ICT that is right for them and that will meet their projected needs and aspirations.



Shaping the Vision

What kind of school do we want to be?
And how does ICT fit into our vision?

ICT plays a significant role in education. It can act as a major catalyst in transforming education, by supporting:

the engaged school – breaking down barriers within the school and between the school and the community it serves. ICT supports both 'formal' and 'informal' learning, so that all can share not only in the learning experience but also increasingly personalised learning.

the extended school – extending the services that are offered 'on site' to include health, leisure and recreation facilities...moving to an 'open all hours' philosophy

The National Primary Strategy ICT Leadership Team Toolkit

Every school faces different issues in moving forward within the context of Government priorities. The Government has laid out a National Primary Strategy and on the ICT front, every school is entitled to a Leadership Team Toolkit which is designed to help with setting and developing vision. Published jointly by the Primary National Strategy, the National College for School Leadership and Becta, the CD-ROM provides a range of practical tools to guide school leadership teams, including governors, on how to lead the effective use of ICT across the curriculum.

The Leadership Team Toolkit can be used in two ways as:

- a self-learning tool, through a series of presentations on developing a vision, and review and implementation process
- a central resource providing guidance and resources.

To order the Leadership toolkit, contact DfES publications (tel. 0845 602 2260) and quote DfES 0369-2004.

the expanded school – creating new ways in which learning is provided through cross-organisational, collaborative models. The 'virtual classroom' extends beyond its location and culture to create a multi-dimensional learning experience.

Secondary schools – increasing specialisation

The Government is encouraging secondary schools to specialise. The Specialist Schools Programme helps schools to build on their particular strengths, establish distinctive identities through their chosen specialisms, and achieve their targets to raise standards. Innovation involving ICT lies at the heart of many of the developments within each specialist school and also within a network of affiliated schools. ICT is a core component of the work of specialist schools, both explicitly as a subject for several of the specialisms, but also embedded within specialisms and across the curriculum. To find out more about specialist schools, see the Standards site [<http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/specialistschools/guidance/?version=1>].

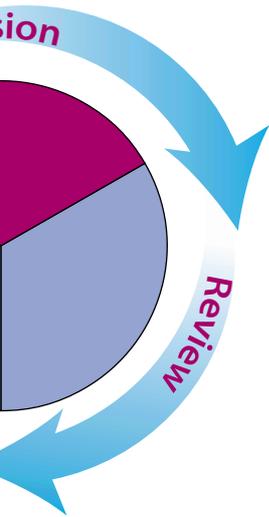
There are a number of alternatives to the specialist route for school, and particularly ICT, development which schools and governing bodies should explore. These include government-led programmes such as Building Schools for the Future (BSF), the Academy programme and Extended Communities together with commercially sponsored initiatives. The latter could include public-private finance initiatives (often called PFI) and/or initiatives involving commercial firms.

Realising the Vision

Whatever the overall vision for ICT is for each school, it is important to integrate the vision into the School Improvement/Development Plan and to consider how the necessary investment will be secured. ICT is a major investment for the school (usually second only to staffing costs) and requires long-term planning and regular monitoring and review. ICT now needs to be interconnected not only within the school but also with the community.

The planning process is often best carried out by a small team that represents all stakeholders – SMT, governors, teaching and non-teaching staff – and should incorporate a number of stages, including:

- initial research and exploration – where can you find relevant reports and case studies on ICT developments? Who could you visit or contact locally?
- the development of outline ICT proposals – it may help to link these to curriculum delivery, staff development, assessment, management and administration and to community networks
- the bringing together of the proposals at whole-school level – does the vision deliver what is desired and needed?



All young people should be able to apply a basic confidence and competence in the use of ICT to all aspects of their learning experience. Teachers in turn should be so confident and competent in the use of ICT that they are able to use it in all aspects of their daily work.

Lord Stephenson's Inquiry into ICT in UK Schools, 1997

For schools and for governing bodies, one of many challenges is to instil confidence and competence in the uses of ICT across the whole school community – including within the governing body.

- agreement on effective procurement, deployment, integration and management of ICT – how much of the vision is already in place and how will you translate the vision into action?
- the undertaking of careful costing exercises to produce a 5-year capital and revenue budget for ICT
- the finalisation of an integrated ICT plan within the School Development Plan, including arrangements for monitoring and review.

Measuring success

The overall success of the school's vision and plan will be assessed in a number of ways.

External professional judgements will come from Ofsted inspection, from LEA School Improvement Reports and from the DfES via re-designation procedures where the school is a Specialist School.

Internal judgements will be made as part of the school's own self-evaluation

Why is ICT so important? What the research says

Research evidence shows that ICT can stimulate, motivate and spark pupils' appetites for learning and helps to create a culture of success. Becta's 'What the Research Says' series reviews research evidence on aspects of using ICT in schools and colleges.

The series looks at ICT use in the curriculum, the value of different technologies, and issues of classroom organisation. One paper describes how ICT can contribute to whole-school improvement.

There is also an exploration of the use of ICT at the Millennium Primary School in Greenwich, a case study of the educational impact of significant investment in ICT.

For more information, visit the Becta research website [<http://www.becta.org.uk/research/>].



mechanisms taking into account the views of parents, pupils, staff and members of the local community, as well as by fellow education professionals across the authority.

A number of tools are available to help schools undertake this judgement. NCSL/Becta have developed an online evaluation tool which enables schools to evaluate themselves against a set of descriptors and create their own action plans for improvement. [<http://www.becta.org.uk/leaders/display?cfm?section=11>]

Finding information – and inspiration

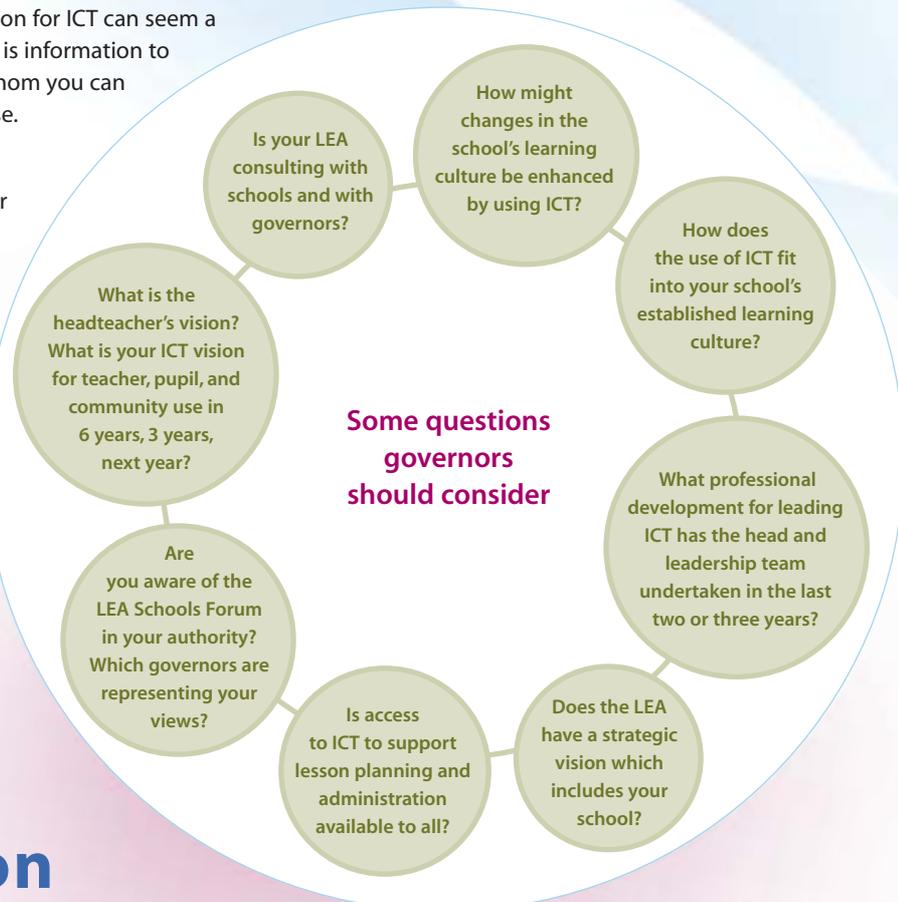
Being tasked with developing a vision for ICT can seem a daunting and lonely task, but there is information to help you, and other people from whom you can glean both motivation and expertise.

Learning from others

Consider running joint workshops for governors with staff in order to take on board suggestions from all. Look to see what neighbouring schools have done. Ask your LEA adviser to broker a visit. She/he may well suggest schools in other authorities that you might arrange to visit.

Investigate your school's ICT potential by, for example, using the NCSL/Becta Matrix series of ICT evaluation tools which can help you develop a vision into a plan.

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



Words of caution

ICT is a major investment for any institution and, unlike schools, other organisations will have paid professionals to plan and procure their ICT systems. Schools and governing bodies need to tap into as much information and expertise as they can, within the school, locally and nationally, so they make the wisest choice with the resources available.

Although government has promoted three-year financial planning and loosened the 'rules' regarding capital and revenue expenditure, ICT is likely to involve longer term commitments which must be adhered to, and a thorough planning process will help to ensure sound decision making.

A school's vision for ICT should be driven by the potential to improve teaching, learning and achievement rather than by the technology itself. The question to ask is not 'What resources do we have?' but 'How do we use our resources effectively to enhance the education of our pupils?'. At their best, governing bodies find a good balance between an inspirational vision for ICT and a plan that is practical and sustainable. There may well be practical considerations, for example,

regarding buildings and their location which will constrain the proposed ICT development. A regular review process is a vital ingredient, to ensure that the plan is being implemented and, where necessary, amended to meet changing circumstances.



Case study

Round Hill Primary School in Nottingham, which has 480 pupils from 4 to 11, has worked hard to develop an effective ICT strategy which has a direct impact on teaching and learning across the curriculum. A reliable broadband connection for staff and pupils has enabled internet-based resources to be used and developed across the whole school, in all subject areas, together with the phased introduction of interactive whiteboards, a wireless network and a set of curriculum laptops which are used on a rota basis by classes in KS2. The school is gaining acknowledgement and credibility for its ICT vision and subsequent development. Other schools have contacted and visited Round Hill for ideas and advice on how to develop their own ICT provision.

[http://www.dfes.gov.uk/ictinschools/ict_active/subject.cfm?articleid=248]



Inclusion

Schools with a developed vision for inclusive education recognise that technology has the capability to transform teaching and learning for all pupils. Recognition of pupil diversity and a commitment to meeting the needs of all the pupils informs that vision. A vision for ICT and inclusion encompasses all aspects of school life as well as links to the local community.

A vision for ICT that is inclusive:

- shares effective teaching approaches
- ensures that individual provision is integrated with all planning, not 'bolted on'
- provides reliable and accessible learning environments
- provides access to ICT where it is need, including in the home
- enables access for the wider community.

The Index for Inclusion from the Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education (CSIE) provides materials to guide schools through a process of inclusive school development [<http://inclusion.uwe.ac.uk/csie/csiehome.htm>].

Case study

Sandwell has undertaken a Borough-wide consultation exercise to further develop its vision for e-learning. This looks ahead to 2010 and asks four key questions:

How will learners learn?

In what sort of learning environments will learners be learning?

How will this new learning vision engage more learners and support their retention, progression and high achievement?

What will the roles and responsibilities of learning practitioners be?

Sandwell schools have created a short promotional online video on 'Transforming learning through the use of ICT' [<http://www.lea.sandwell.gov.uk/elearningstrategy/transforminglearningICT-Sandwell.htm>].

The NCSL/Becta SLICT programme

The NCSL/Becta SLICT programme for headteachers and a new secondary school leadership team programme from NCSL both centre on developing a vision for schools. As governors, you should be ensuring that your head and SMT have experienced the programme in order to extend their own horizons further than current school or LEA strategies.

Vision into action – the e-confident school

Government estimates indicate that between 10 and 15 per cent of schools are already at an e-confident stage.

Where are you?

How do you recognise where you are?

How do you move forward?

The next ICT Guide will discuss this in closer detail and will show you what the e-confident school looks like.

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 and e-learning. Your LEA's Governor Training section may be able to direct you to support.

LEA websites

Does your LEA provide advice? Birmingham and Norfolk are two examples:

- Birmingham – How to implement Anytime Anywhere Learning (AAL) Step 1: Are you clear about what you think AAL will achieve for your school? [<http://www.bgfl.org/services/editaal/started.htm>]
- Norfolk has developed its vision online with a feedback feature encouraging the community to contribute. [<http://www.norfolkesinet.org.uk/pages/viewpage.asp?uniqid=1620>]. It is also developing a 'Classrooms of the Future' project focusing on the rural dimension. [<http://www.norfolkesinet.org.uk/pages/viewpage.asp?uniqid=1291>]

Other schools

Netherhall is a Specialist PE College in Cambridge and one of many specialist schools where an informed ICT vision has played a large part in the school's development. At an E-Learning Foundation conference, the Head of ICT outlined the rationale behind the school's developments. His presentation 'Innovation in the Classroom' is available at: [<http://www.e-learningfoundation.com> – see Resources]

The Times Education Supplement website contains details of winners and runners up in last year's ICT in

Practice Awards including video clips of the winners. [<http://www.tes.co.uk/ictawards/>]

Other sources

The Cisco Systems Networking Academy offers a framework for preparing students for the demands and opportunities of the information economy. [<http://www.cisco.co.uk/education>]

It has also published a 48-page Vision document: *Network based Transformation in Education* which governors may like to read [http://www.cisco.com/application/pdf/en/us/guest/netsol/ns460/c654/cdcont_0900aecd800eb904.pdf]

Microsoft has a long-term partnership with the education sector, working closely with schools to develop tools and resources they need to work and learn effectively, and to promote best practice. [<http://www.microsoft.com/uk/education/>]

The Oracle Internet Academy is a programme that aims to help address the IT skills gap. It is designed to educate secondary students (ages 16 to 19) on the fundamentals of internet and database technology [<http://academy.oracle.com/>]

Specialist Schools Trust [<http://www.schoolsnetwork.org.uk/main.asp?page=108>]

Professional development for Leaders

NCSL – the Networked Learning Group focuses on the development of schools and school leaders within networked communities of practice. [<http://www.ncsl.org.uk/index.cfm?pageID=randd-nlg-index>]

SLICT is the professional leadership development programme developed by NCSL and Becta [<http://www.ncsl.org.uk/index.cfm?pageid=ldev-strategic-slict-index>]

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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