

Local Authorities

January 2008

Becta leading
next generation
learning

Supporting technology in schools

A guide for local authorities



Supporting local authorities

Leading next generation learning

Information and communication technology has the potential to transform education for the better.

It's our job in Becta, the government agency for technology in education, to inspire schools and colleges to realise that potential.

We'll do that by working to make sure the right technology is available, by setting standards to guide everyone in the sector, and through tools that help establish and promote best practice.

Local authorities are a key partner in this work, particularly in our shared objectives to promote whole-school improvement and best-value procurement. In this guide we'll highlight seven major themes shaping our current activities, and the ways local authorities can take advantage of those activities to help education in their areas.

These themes are:

- safeguarding children online
- getting best value from your investment
- using technology for school improvement
- personalising learning in a connected world
- planning technology into your building
- parental engagement
- universal access.

Under each theme we provide a link to further information online. For all of these themes there are also publications aimed at school leaders, which could be useful to you when talking to schools or colleges. You can order these publications from the Becta website

www.becta.org.uk/publications



Safeguarding children online

The range of things we can do online is expanding and changing. These capabilities open new opportunities for learning creatively, but they mean we have to be aware of new risks.

You can use technological tools to limit these risks - up to a point. Protecting young people (and all adult users) properly means thinking beyond technology, and changing behaviour. The emphasis in any work to promote safe practice should be on getting everyone to understand the risks and to act accordingly.

What should you be doing?

Safety is one of the key themes of Every Child Matters. All local authorities have an important leading role in raising awareness within schools of the need to take e-safety seriously and to put the appropriate measures in place. Becta and CEOP (the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre) can provide support to help you do this.

- Appoint an e-safety officer with responsibility for co-ordinating any activity across your authority. He or she should liaise with the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB).
- Liaise with counterparts in other children's services and with your LSCB to ensure that e-safety becomes part of the authority's overall safeguarding strategy.
- Ensure that you are using a Becta accredited Internet Service Provider (ISP) to make connectivity into schools as safe as possible.

- Provide and promote centralised reporting procedures so that any incidents can be dealt with as quickly as possible.
- Provide advice on developing Acceptable Use Policies (AUPS) for your schools and centralised e-safety awareness training.
- Track and monitor network activity and incidents to help predict potential issues before they arise.



For more about best practice look at www.becta.org.uk/localauthorities/safety

A publication 'Safeguarding children online: a guide for school leaders' is available from Becta for you to use with your schools.

www.becta.org.uk/publications



Using technology for school improvement

**Technology can never be an end in itself.
The real aim must be to use technology
to raise attainment levels.**

Becta's self-review framework is a tool which helps schools firstly to assess how they are doing with ICT and then to plan for improvement to raise attainment levels.

With many schools already using it, schools in your area can benchmark their performance against half of the country.

Because the self-review framework complements Ofsted's broader Self Evaluation Framework (SEF), it can provide compelling evidence in support of SEF submissions.

The self-review framework offers an early indication that the schools in your area have moved beyond ICT acquisition to consider how best to use technology to improve learning.

What should you be doing?

Encourage all schools to use the framework and you can:

- get a more accurate picture of the current use of ICT to support learning
- identify those schools that need guidance, and target your support to them
- share good practice between schools and develop their e-maturity
- develop a more coherent approach to ICT procurement, provision and effective use in schools
- help raise standards.



For more information look at www.becta.org.uk/localauthorities/selfreview

A publication 'Using technology for school improvement: a guide for school leaders' is available from Becta for you to use with your schools.

www.becta.org.uk/publications



Personalising learning in a connected world

Personalising learning is about creating the means to understand and support the learning needs of every student, monitoring his or her progress closely. It's a key government ambition for education.

“Learning platforms” have a central role to play in enabling personalising learning. A learning platform integrates learning and school management systems.

The technology is important but so is a refocusing of school administration processes and teaching practices around the vision of personalising learning.



What should you be doing?

The government wants every school to be making full use of learning platforms by 2010. An interim goal is for learners in every school to have access to a safe and secure personal online learning space by March 2008.

Local authorities are already playing an active role creating online learning spaces and learning platforms which schools and colleges in their area can adapt to their needs. Expect demand for support and advice to rise sharply as we approach the government target for availability in the early part of this year.

Many schools have already gained a lot of experience with learning platforms. Help them share their experience of what does and doesn't work with others, encouraging everyone to move as quickly as possible to best practice.



For more information look at www.becta.org.uk/localauthorities/personalisinglearning

A publication 'Personalising learning in a connected world: a guide for school leaders' is available from Becta for you to use with your schools.

www.becta.org.uk/publications



Getting best value from your investment

Becta recommends that purchasing should not be done by individual schools, but by larger organisations, such as a local authority. Purchases can then be aggregated to achieve economies of scale along with better terms and levels of service. Becta has a number of EU-compliant procurement frameworks that will save you time and effort in the procurement process. All of our suppliers will provide equipment and services to Becta's specifications.

Specifications

We have worked with industry and educators to develop a range of technology specifications for the UK education sector. These underpin our procurement frameworks and will provide more efficient and sustainable technologies for your authority and for your schools. These specifications are embedded in the Building Schools for the Future ICT Output Specification and form the basis for the model specification for ICT in academies.

The functional specifications will be useful when you are planning area-wide technology implementation. There are specifications for institutional infrastructure, learning platforms, information management (including MIS) and connectivity.

Managing or providing technical support

Local authorities providing technical support services to schools are encouraged to use Becta's framework for ICT Technical Support (FITS) processes. This offers improved reliability and user confidence in the provision of services and technical support.

Managing data

Developments in learning platforms and information management technologies open up exciting opportunities to change the way in which you collect, store, exchange and manage data. We're working with the Schools Interoperability Framework Association developing a common approach that will enable the easy movement of data between school and local authority systems. Find out more from <http://uk.sifinfo.org>

Online learning space

In many areas local authorities have key partners to schools deploying learning platforms, providing online learning spaces that schools can customise for their particular needs. They should be procured in line with our learning platform specifications. Find out more from the Personalising Learning section in this guide, or from our website.



For more information about good practice in procurement see

www.becta.org.uk/localauthorities/procurement

A publication 'Getting best value from your investment: a guide for school leaders' is available from Becta for you to use with your schools.

www.becta.org.uk/publications



Planning technology in your buildings

Many local authorities will be involved in one of the four major capital building programmes for schools in England: Building Schools for the Future, One School Pathfinders, Academies or the Primary Capital Programme.

The Building Schools for the Future programme, managed by Partnerships for Schools, is being rolled out in waves over 15 years, with around 15 local authorities taking part each year. For those not taking part in Building Schools for the Future until the later waves, the One School Pathfinder Programme allows you to test your approach to educational transformation in one secondary school.

Academies are all-ability schools established by sponsors from business, faith or voluntary groups working in partnership with central government and local education groups or bodies. About half of local authorities are now taking part in the Academies programme – many as part of Building Schools for the Future.

Twenty-three local authorities are already involved in the pathfinder phase of the Primary Capital Programme. All local authorities will be preparing a Primary Strategy for Change, due to be submitted in June 2008. Those with approved strategies in place will start to receive funding under the Primary Capital Programme from 2009-10. This programme is a 14-year project to rebuild, remodel or refurbish at least half of English primary schools.

What should you be doing?

Local authorities have a critical role in ensuring that ICT is an integral feature of all newly designed and refurbished schools. For schools that are either being newly built, or undergoing a major refurbishment, it is vital to have a clear vision for how ICT can be used to transform learning and teaching. This vision will then inform the eventual design of the learning spaces.

It is important to start the consultation process with stakeholders (including learners, teachers, parents, governors and the wider community) at the earliest opportunity – well before funding is confirmed or any building work starts. The early consultation should focus on setting the overall vision so it is ready to feed into the design process, ensuring that ICT is planned into the building from the outset. From there the functional or output specifications for the ICT can be developed. It is important not to think about particular technologies or types of equipment at this stage. Instead focus on what you want the technology to do and how it can be used to support personalising learning.



For more information look at www.becta.org.uk/localauthorities/capitalbuilding

A publication 'Planning technology in your building: a guide for school leaders' is available from Becta for you to use with your schools.

www.becta.org.uk/publications



Parental engagement

All schools must provide real-time reporting for parents by 2012 at the latest.

This is part of a bigger agenda to raise learner achievement through better parental engagement. We know that parental interest is critical in shaping young learner motivation.

Real-time reporting will rest on the implementation of some new technology, but also demands that schools adapt their teaching approaches and management processes.

What should you be doing?

- develop a view with your schools on how real-time reporting will move forward
- engage your schools in identifying their current position
- consider any adaptations of your current support arrangements to aid the development of real-time reporting in all of your schools
- encourage your schools to look at aggregation and if you have arrangements with suppliers include them in your discussions
- identify other areas within your local authority that need to be engaged with the real-time reporting agenda and make sure they are aware of the expectations of parents, schools and learners.



For more information look at www.becta.org.uk/localauthorities/extendingopportunities

A publication 'Parental engagement: a guide for school leaders' is available from Becta for you to use with your schools.

www.becta.org.uk/publications



Universal access

By 2009 most households in England will have broadband access. But some three million won't. Any children in those households will be at an increasing disadvantage in their education.



At BETT 2007 Jim Knight (Minister of State for Schools and Learners) announced the setting up of a Universal Home Access Taskforce. The taskforce has brought together a full range of stakeholders to advise on ways in which home access to learning via technology can be delivered for all school-aged children in England.

The taskforce has been working to establish how we can bridge the digital divide and ensure that as many children as possible in education between the ages of 5 and 19 have access to ICT and online resources from home.

Potential benefits

The digital divide makes it more difficult for local authorities and their schools to apply consistent policies on the use of ICT for home access.

The significant benefits of home access to ICT for young people and their families includes broader access to council services via online portals – not simply to pay bills but to give access to local authority services such as highways, environmental health, and planning, all outside normal working hours.

This has significant benefits for council tax payers and could reduce your costs too.

Community initiatives

Many local authorities are already working with community groups to facilitate easy access to the internet. They want to ensure that people who could benefit most are not excluded because they have not been able to afford computers or broadband links, or have a lifestyle that would make this difficult to achieve.

There are many ways to help, and it's not just about putting in equipment. People need the skills and confidence to use the technology, and they need to know there are others around them who can help if they get stuck. Local UK Online centres and libraries can often help here and as more and more schools are opening for extended hours to the community there are increasing opportunities for co-ordinated initiatives.

Joined-up thinking

It's likely that any community-based initiatives will mesh well with the needs of schools and colleges. So if you're not doing so already you should be talking to local school and college leaders to see how you can work together on your common aims.

In practical terms by working together it is possible to achieve big cost savings, collectively buying packages of equipment and connectivity.



For more information look at www.becta.org.uk/localauthorities/extendingopportunities

A publication 'Universal access: a guide for school leaders' is available from Becta for you to use with your schools.

www.becta.org.uk/publications



Additional support from Becta

We have set up a dedicated regional delivery team to advise, support, challenge and monitor organisations in delivering technology to schools.

The team will provide valuable two-way feedback for your expectations and concerns during the implementation process.

We have also allocated a regional support consultant to each of the nine regions (two in London) to provide support to local authorities and regional broadband consortia.

Our consultants can offer valuable support across all areas of Becta's activity. This includes helping you to improve the quality of institutional ICT capability by encouraging schools to use the self-review framework, and eventually achieve ICT Mark status.

The regional team can provide support for the personal learning space targets for 2008, and advise on safety issues and ICT procurement activity. The team will also be helping local authorities in relation to Computers for Pupils.

Becta already has a team to support the academies programme and this is being developed to support all the capital building programmes.

Contact the Regional Delivery and Capital Building Programmes teams

Mail to: engage@becta.org.uk

Telephone: **0800 040 7196** (9am to 5pm)

© Copyright Becta 2008

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

Additional photography reproduced by kind permission of the Department for Children, Schools and Families.

Millburn Hill Road
Science Park
Coventry CV4 7JJ

Tel: 024 7641 6994
Fax: 024 7641 1418
Email: becta@becta.org.uk

www.becta.org.uk