

## IMPORTANT NOTE

This Document will be revised once the second DfES consultation on Governance has been resolved

Information Sheet on

# School Governors and ICT

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**British Educational  
Communications  
and Technology agency**

## What do school governors need to know about ICT?

There is an increasing use of information communications and technology (ICT) in schools both as a management tool and as a classroom resource. Used appropriately, ICT in schools can transform teaching and learning. The National Grid for Learning (NGfL) is a Government initiative to help learners and educators in the UK to benefit from ICT. The NGfL is intended to increase and widen access to learning opportunities for everyone in both formal and informal learning environments. It is part of the Government's commitment to create a connected learning society in which learning is accessible and adapted to individual needs.

Governors should be aware of the many ways in which ICT can help to raise standards in schools. Key benefits that have been identified include:

- improved subject learning
- increased differentiation
- the development of network literacy – the ability to use electronic networks to access and create resources and to communicate with others
- improved motivation and self-esteem
- the development of independent learning and research skills, creative thinking and problem-solving
- social development.

In addition, ICT has benefits for the whole school in terms of:

- improved efficiency in terms of transferring data such as exam entries, statistical and financial data
- improved teacher effectiveness, if they can access school data at home via the network
- improved communication between teachers, pupils, governors and parents.

The governing body should be providing the school management team with advice concerning the procurement and implementation of ICT. This knowledge usually has a commercial background, and it is important that at least one governor fully understands the educational issues that permeate ICT development within schools. The 'critical friend' aspect of the governing body is, as ever, extremely important. There are a number of questions which a school needs to address including:

- Is there sufficient knowledge of the ICT requirements for NGfL funding?
- Where are the main sources of advice and guidance?
- Is the governing body aware of all the grants available?
- Has the school sufficiently taken account of 'best value' principles whilst making best use of all the available funding?

The Joint Advisory Panel on Information Technology in Education (JAPONITE) gives in-depth background information and advice on ICT for governors: <http://www.japonite.org.uk>. In particular, the Bulletin from March 2001 provides a fuller set of questions that require addressing by a governing body: <http://www.japonite.org.uk/bulletin/govmeet.html>. The National Curriculum 2000 has reinforced the place of ICT in many curriculum subjects as well as developing the subject of ICT. It still remains the decision of schools as to whether ICT is taught as a separate subject or using a cross-curricular approach. The National Curriculum requirements for this and other subjects are given on the National Curriculum Online site: <http://www.nc.uk.net/>. In September 2002, ICT will be introduced across the country at Key

Stage 3 as part of a roll-out strategy that already involves literacy and numeracy. It is currently being trialled in five local education authorities (LEAs). Governing bodies in secondary schools will need to prompt the senior management team to start to consider NOW any changes to the school timetable, together with a reallocation or purchasing of resources.

The DfES's Information Management Strategy (IMS) is an initiative to provide coherence in information exchange between schools and the DfES and its agencies. The initiative has established standards for exchanging pupil and school information and will have an increasing impact on the management of the school and the reporting of a range of information. Governors need to be aware of the implications, and full details can be found on the DfES IMS web site: <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/ims/>. The 'Building the Grid' web site – <http://buildingthegrid.becta.org.uk/index.html> – has been developed to support the implementation of the NGfL initiative and will be useful to governors. The site links to a range of materials to help LEAs and schools in England to achieve the objectives of the National Grid for Learning (NGfL). There is advice, guidance and information to support all aspects of ICT planning, procurement and practice, plus links to sources of further relevant resources. There is a range of documents, case studies and other resources to complement guidance available on the DfES Standards Fund site: <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/standardsfund/>.

### What is the role of a school governor in ICT?

It is recommended that schools look to appoint a specific governor who is responsible for ICT, in the same way that they may have previously appointed literacy and numeracy governors. The role of an ICT governor is to specifically take interest in all matters pertaining to ICT, including:

- consider funding and training requirements to meet ICT targets
- contribute to the formulation of ICT policy and plans
- co-ordinate the ICT plan across the curriculum
- co-ordinate the ICT plan for administration with the curriculum plan
- monitor legal requirements for ICT
- monitor the development of ICT as a curriculum subject
- the development and implementation of internet safety and an acceptable use policy
- realise the potential of ICT as a resource for governors.

<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/governor/index.htm> – this is the 'One Stop Shop' on the DfES School Governors' Centre web site, which explains the general role of governors as laid down in the new School Government Regulations 1999, as does 'Govern Your School', developed by school governors: <http://www.governyourschool.co.uk>. This site provides a regular subscription e-mail newsletter, with trial copies available free of charge.

### Targets

It is a condition of grant for NGfL funding that local education authorities (LEAs) have committed themselves to achieving the baseline of access to information and communications technology (ICT) by August 2002, defined as:

- a computer:pupil ratio of at least 1:11 in each primary school and 1:7 in each secondary school
- a connection to the Internet in each school, with at least 20% of schools connected at broadband level
- at least one networked computer with internet access in each school for management and administrative purposes.

There are extended targets already published for 2004, with computer:pupil ratios reduced to 1:8 in the primary sector and 1:5 in the secondary sector. Governors should note that these are intended as a minimum target ratio for every school and should not be interpreted as any kind of maximum. Any school offering an ICT-rich curriculum in a variety of subjects will already be beyond the first targets, and possibly the second. A full description of the key ICT targets for LEAs and schools is available as a pdf file at: <http://buildingthegrid.becta.org.uk/docs/icttargets.pdf>. This includes targets for raising standards at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4, administrative targets regarding IMS, and targets for school leavers.

## What funding is there for ICT?

The funding of ICT is an issue that concerns governors. NGfL funding is provided through the Standards Fund to support networking infrastructure, hardware, software and training. Taken with other national funding provided – for example, for Information Management Strategy development together with NOF training funds and funds raised by the school themselves – the ICT budgetary requirement is approaching the stage of being second only to staff costs for many schools.

Further funding has been allocated to LEAs until 2004 to extend the NGfL programme, with additional targets as previously detailed. LEAs bid for grants from the Standards Fund in consultation with, and on behalf of, schools. Bids are formula-based, and ICT development plans for schools and LEAs are considered. Details of government funding for ICT can be found on the Standards Fund web site at <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/standardsfund/index.cfm>, and in the Government's challenge document 'Open for Learning, Open for Business': <http://www.dfee.gov.uk/grid/challenge/>.

Becta's Information sheet 'Sources of ICT Funding' covers European Community funding. Full details of all government funding grants can be found on the Teachernet site:

[http://www.dfes.gov.uk/a-z/BIDDING\\_FOR\\_FUNDS.html](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/a-z/BIDDING_FOR_FUNDS.html)

Becta information sheets: <http://www.becta.org.uk/technology/infosheets/index.html>

Each year a proportion of the NGfL Standards Fund grant is retained by LEAs to promote faster 'broadband' connectivity (target of 20% of all schools, particularly secondary, by August 2002) generally across a Regional Broadband Consortia (RBC) comprising a variable number of local authorities. There are current and future cost implications for schools regarding the initial set-up of such an infrastructure and the ongoing costs to maintain, even improve, the speed of connection to the Internet.

Governors need to be aware of NGfL Managed Services. NGfL Managed Services offer a simple route for schools, colleges and other educational establishments to procure their ICT requirements. They are designed to offer a 'one stop shop' for ICT. Further information is available from the Managed Services web site at <http://managedservices.ngfl.gov.uk/>, and in Becta's Managed Services information sheet, available from <http://www.becta.org.uk/-technology/infosheets/index.html>.

Indirect funding is available in the shape of a number of commercial schemes that support ICT in schools. One examples is Tesco's Computers for Schools scheme: <http://www.tesco.com/computersForSchools/>. A number of schemes exist which look to provide subsidised laptop computers for schools: for example, Microsoft's *Anytime Anywhere Learning* (AAL) – <http://www.microsoft.com/uk/education/aal/> – or Education Rewards scheme: <http://www.educationrewards.org/>.

Governors should be aware that there are schemes offering free and/or recycled computers. Advice is available from the National Association of Advisers in Computer Education (NAACE) – <http://www.naace.org/Pub/refurb/> – which explains the main issues for schools when considering the offer of used computers. Further information regarding recycled computers is available at 'PCs – Recycled': <http://www.itforcharities.co.uk/pcs.htm>. Advice on acquiring free computers is available from 'Free Computers for Education' – <http://www.free-computers.org/> – or Tools for Schools: <http://www.tfs.org.uk/>. The 'Schools Participating in Recycling Initiative and New Technology Scheme' (SPRINTS) – <http://www.sprints.org.uk/index.htm> – explains where schools can recycle unwanted inkjet, laser and fax cartridges and old mobile phones, exchanging them for credits from a number of educational suppliers. Participation in the totally free scheme includes registration, cartridge-collection kits and courier uplifts.

## What ICT training opportunities are there?

Many teachers require training in the use of ICT in the classroom. Managers, governors, administration and support staff may also require training. Newly qualified teachers are required to be ICT literate prior to leaving their training establishment, and all full-time teaching staff should have the opportunity to

access training funded by the New Opportunities Fund (NOF). NOF administers £230 million from the National Lottery, allocated to train teachers and school librarians, in the effective use of ICT in subject teaching. Materials have been sent to all schools, which include details of approved training providers and identification of training needs: <http://www.nof.org.uk/edu/edu.htm>.

Becta has developed the ICT Support Network (ICTSN) for schools and colleges, with an on-line national directory which covers a wide range of services including training, curriculum and technical support: <http://www.becta.org.uk/projects/support/services/index.html>. Advice and training provision is available from LEAs, and their sites can be accessed from a number of sources, including <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/info/dfeslea.htm>. Further information about training providers in general is available on the Becta web site: <http://www.becta.org.uk/start/teachers.html>

Governors may wish to review the training already on offer and consider recommending that the school consider ICT training for part-time and support staff, and perhaps also for peripatetic and regular supply teachers, together with additional training for staff who have already attended their NOF courses.

### **What role can a school governor have in producing an ICT policy and plan?**

The ICT policy for a school is often written by the ICT co-ordinator and passed for consultation to the ICT governor and leadership team, before being passed by the governing body. The ICT development plan, however, is written by the ICT co-ordinator, the headteacher and the ICT governor, before being passed to the governing body for approval. In some schools, there may be an ICT steering sub-committee which carries out these tasks. A version of this plan should already exist as a prerequisite for initial NGfL funding. The continued NGfL funding made available to the school is dependent on a suitable updated ICT development plan being accepted by the LEA which is complementary to their Education Development Plan (EDP), and which is challenging, achievable and realistic (ie, sustainable). The updated plan should be incorporated within a whole school development plan, and should:

- indicate how the school will use ICT to help raise educational standards by enhancing the delivery of the National Curriculum
- indicate how investment in ICT will be co-ordinated with meeting the professional development needs of its teachers, including through the take up of training opportunities funded by the New Opportunities Fund (NOF)
- indicate how the school will integrate the use of ICT for school management and administration purposes through adoption of the standards set out in the DfES's Information Management Strategy (IMS)
- indicate how the school's ICT facilities will be made available for use out of school hours by pupils and for community purposes
- indicate how ICT will be used to promote inclusion, for example by supporting pupils with special educational needs and by developing home-school links (including the development of a school web site)
- set out the school's acceptable use policy for ICT, together with a statement regarding filtering of both e-mail and internet content
- contain an audit of levels of equipping, network use and teacher development currently being undertaken, and set out the school's policy for how this will be managed, developed and sustained. The school is also required to detail its strategy for disposal of ageing/obsolete equipment and materials.

Becta's Inspection site – <http://www.becta.org.uk/supportproviders/inspection/schools/index.html> – contains a school self-review section which may be helpful to governors and senior managers in schools when assessing/auditing the current ICT provision in the school.

The Becta Senior Managers area offers two interactive tools for developing an ICT policy and plan: <http://www.becta.org.uk/schools/smanagers/schools/tools.html>. There is guidance on writing a plan in 'Connecting schools, networking people': <http://www.becta.org.uk/publications/connecting.html>.

The Governing body needs to consider the opportunity for access to ICT within the school's ICT plan. One of many avenues that may require investigation is the Computers for Teachers scheme, from which over the past two years the Government has funded individual teachers (@ 50%) to buy their own personal desktop/laptop computers. The most recent phase was aimed at Key Stage 3 mathematics teachers. The Government has committed to £50 million investment in the future. See <http://cft.ngfl.gov.uk> for details of the first two phases. An evaluation report will be available shortly.

A vision of the future use of ICT should be included in the ICT policy. The **classroom of the future** is likely to use networked computers, internet access, video conferencing, interactive whiteboards and other new technologies. Governors need to be aware of the possible use of these in schools. The Technology, Advice and Information section of the Becta web site – <http://www.becta.org.uk/technology/index.html> – gives helpful information about projects involving new technologies, including desktop video conferencing, curriculum support materials, and the Teachers Online project: <http://top.ngfl.gov.uk/>.

A safe use policy for e-mail and the Internet needs to be included in the ICT policy. Guidance for developing this is given in 'Superhighway Safety' – <http://safety.ngfl.gov.uk/> – which also includes advice on health and safety and computers. Becta's information sheets, Acceptable Use of the Internet and Health and Safety and ICT offer further advice. Care needs to be taken when developing a school web site concerning internet safety, especially intellectual property issues and pupil security. Becta information sheets: <http://www.becta.org.uk/technology/infosheets/index.html>

Information about the ergonomic aspects of locating/designing a computer workstation or computer suite in school is covered on the Building the Grid web site: <http://buildingthegrid.becta.org.uk/-planning/school/policy.html#new1>.

### **How can a school governor help with the ICT plan for the curriculum?**

Implementing the plan has to take into account the co-ordination of resources within the school and the requirements of the teaching staff. Teachers are required to use ICT in subject teaching: 'Supporting the Curriculum with ICT' is an area on the Virtual Teacher Centre (VTC) that provides guidance. The Curriculum IT Support (CITS) projects are included which provide working examples at: <http://vtc.ngfl.gov.uk/docserver.php?temid=60>. Governors can give informed support by being aware of good practice in other local schools.

ICT can provide much support and assistance to special needs pupils within the curriculum. Becta information sheets cover a range of special needs and inclusion issues and can be found at: <http://www.becta.org.uk/technology/infosheets/sen.html>. Becta also manages the Inclusion site, which is a database of resources for supporting inclusion issues in schools: <http://inclusion.ngfl.gov.uk/>.

The encouragement of home-school links to support the curriculum can be aided by governors. This is an important current initiative which is closely linked to ICT as a communication aid. Parent governors have the parental perspective on computer links and how these can help with learning, homework and other communication.

### **How can a school governor help with the ICT plan for administration?**

The management and administration plan and the curriculum plan need to be co-ordinated. Governors need to be aware that this plan should address the government's administrative targets for 2002 that include an internet-connected administration system:

"At the heart of the Information Management Strategy is the establishment of a common basic data set (CBDS). ... The CBDS will eventually consist of four levels: pupil, adult, school and LEA. Implementation in schools during 2001 will focus on pupil-level data linked to a unique pupil number (UPN)."

The DfES's 'Information Management Strategy' (IMS) is explained on the DfES web site: <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/ims>. The Teachernet Mailing – <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/Mailing> – provides registered schools with monthly batch mailing of government publications and an e-mail alerting service. Schools are being encouraged to move to an integrated electronic management information system (MIS) for administrative and curriculum management where possible.

There are several web sites providing detailed information that may be of interest to governors, particularly ICT governors. The Audit Commission – <http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/> – has advice on management and administration plans. There are two new Becta web sites: ICT Technical Support – <http://technicalsupport.ngfl.gov.uk> – offers a guide to managing the ICT support in your school, and Get Connected – <http://getconnected.ngfl.gov.uk> – provides advice on telecommunications connectivity and networking issues.

A leaflet has been published outlining the benefits of using computerised management information systems (MIS). 'Management Information. Supporting Success in Primary Schools' contains brief case studies about how MIS can reduce administrative tasks and leave more time for effective management and teaching. It also provides a comprehensive directory of where to find more information and guidance about management information systems. For details, see <http://www.becta.org.uk/schools/smanagers/>. The web pages provide information for senior managers in schools to help lead and manage the school more effectively by using case studies and other resources as guides and for direction.

#### **Where can a school governor go for further help?**

Your own LEA ICT adviser should be your first contact for planning, funding and training advice. The following internet and helpline sources will also give assistance.

DfES Governor Advice and Helpline  
Tel: 08000 722 181  
Open: 9 am–10 pm (weekdays); 11 am–4 pm (weekends)  
GovernorLine is available to all 370,000 governors in England. Free to users and supported by National Association of Governors and Managers (NAGM) and National Governors Council (NGC).

National Governors' Council (NGC).  
Tel: 01363 774 377  
<http://www.ngc.org.uk/>  
E-mail: [ngc@ngc.org.uk](mailto:ngc@ngc.org.uk)

Information for School and College Governors (ISCG),  
Tel: 020 7229 0200  
E-mail: [iscg@governors.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:iscg@governors.fsnet.co.uk)

The National Association of Governors and Managers (NAGM)  
Tel: 0121 643 5787  
<http://www.nagm.org.uk/>  
E-mail: [governorhq@hotmail.com](mailto:governorhq@hotmail.com)

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- standard HTML: <http://www.becta.org.uk/technology/infosheets/html/governors.html>
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