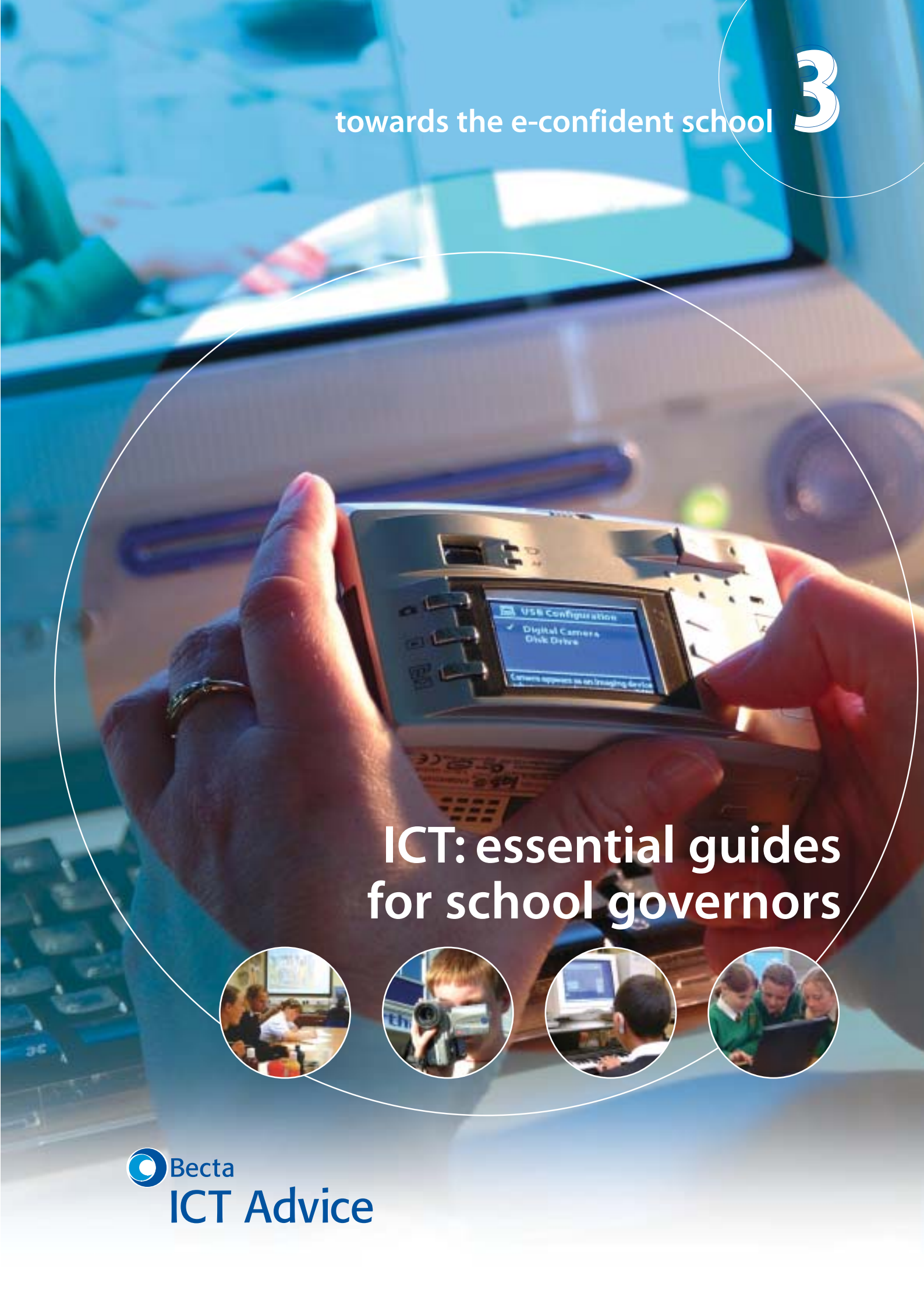
towards the e-confident school 3



ICT: essential guides for school governors

Becta
ICT Advice

This is one of a series of documents for school governors produced by Becta. This guide focuses on informing governors about the key features of an e-confident school.

E-confidence has been identified as a major focus for the ongoing use and development of ICT in schools in 2004–2005. The Government's vision for ICT, *Fulfilling the Potential*, states that 'We want every school leader and governor, every teacher and member of support staff and every pupil to become e-confident'.

So what is e-confidence and how can you ensure your school is making the most of developments in this area? The National College for School Leadership (NCSL) has identified ten possible key features of e-confidence; some of these features are expanded below, emphasising the points that are relevant to governors and governing bodies.

The e-confident school

- High levels of staff confidence, competence and leadership
- Re-designed teaching, learning and assessment, integrating effective use
- Leading and managing distributed and concurrent learning
- Effective application within organisational and management processes
- Secure, informed professional judgement
- Coherent personal learning development, support and access – for all leaders, teaching and non-teaching staff
- Appropriate resource allocation to ensure sustainable development
- Availability, access and technical support
- Pupils/students with high ICT capability
- School as the lead community learning and information hub.

A shared vision for ICT

A shared vision for ICT is crucial if schools are to become fully e-confident. In the previous leaflet, 'Developing a Vision for ICT', the importance of a broad vision for ICT was stressed; Becta and NCSL believe that ICT will enable schools to be seen increasingly as 'learning and information hubs for the whole community'.

Case study

Kenilworth Secondary School & Sports College, Warwickshire has established an ICT Strategy group consisting of the head and one other SMT member, two managers associated with ICT as a subject and ICT across the school, together with the chair and 3 governors. The group has been established to plan and recommend a phased whole-school development strategy in order to address the characteristics of an e-confident school. All minutes and agendas are circulated by email, as is all other documentation. Budget and Buildings information is modelled electronically and displayed using a projector in the school library. The school website was launched last year and the group are about to establish an area to update the community on ICT plans for the school [**http://www.ksn.org.uk/**].

In building this vision it is important to raise governors' awareness of ICT and of its potential. Previously, ICT strategy has not been an area that most governing bodies paid a great deal of attention to, with a tendency to 'leave it to the experts'. However, ICT is becoming so pivotal to the successful delivery of learning and teaching, the management of schools and within the wider fabric of society that governors now need to view this as a central concern.

A good starting point is for the whole governing body to use ICT as the medium for communication. Do your governors receive meeting and other information by email? It is entirely legitimate for the school's investment in ICT to include resources and training for the governors so that they are able to operate in the same way as the rest of the school and even to lead the way.

To drive the ICT agenda forward many schools have appointed a lead governor on ICT, an 'e-governor' (or a small working group), who can liaise with the school's ICT team and who can keep abreast of new thinking and developments. Apart from working within the school, the 'e-governor' could forge links in the community and look at how the school can build relationships with local employers and agencies that have a strong ICT vision.

Dynamic leadership and management

ICT increasingly pervades all aspects of school life. The e-confident school will have a strong leadership team that can drive forward the vision using secure, informed professional judgement.

The team will work closely with the e-governor and with all of the staff to keep the school on track and to monitor the rapidly changing context for ICT. They will be innovative and forward thinking but will also carefully assess risk on key issues such as internet safety.

High ICT capability across the school community

The e-confident school will have teaching and support staff that are confident in applying ICT to all aspects of their work in an imaginative and relevant way. This is a formidable challenge, as there are still widespread variations in confidence and competence.

Schools will need to offer continuous ICT training and development opportunities for all staff. Some of this will be delivered inhouse but there is much to be gained from consortium-based approaches with other schools or educational settings. Some schools have formed productive links with other ICT-driven enterprises in their vicinity; e-learning is now a feature of the work environment in such areas as financial services, retail and design industries and schools can benefit from their advanced practice.

A wide range of opportunities for pupils to maximise the use of ICT

The e-confident school will strive to provide excellent ICT facilities and applications so that children can develop all-round competence. These facilities will be inter-connected with the home and community. It is important to ensure that there is a range of skill development opportunities for all children that goes far beyond the basic ICT curriculum currently on offer in many schools.

Integrated teaching, learning and assessment

The effective use of ICT in the e-confident school will enable an increasingly integrated approach to teaching, learning and assessment. This embraces a curriculum that:

- is enriched and expanded, making full use of the range of resources and connections that are available to learners
- can be accessed in ways that extend far beyond traditional learning methods
- is tailor-made to the individual child's learning needs and which responds to their preferred learning styles.

A well-developed infrastructure

None of the above will be possible without a well-developed ICT infrastructure that supports all activities and functions of the school, including governance. ICT is not just a learning resource; it is a powerful tool that facilitates management and learning processes including the work of governors and the governing body.

A number of ICT developments are converging to create the possibility of 'ubiquitous computing'. They are highlighted in a table reproduced opposite from *Fulfilling the Potential*.

If schools are to maintain up-to-date systems that are sustainable, they will have to put in place long-term investment plans and coherent processes for securing and maintaining new equipment. There will also be a need for skilled technical back-up and additional technical support.

Enabling arrangements

One aspect of the e-confident school that is frequently overlooked is the impact that ICT is having on the wider school environment and on traditional timetabling. The school of the future will be a very different kind of place because of ICT.

- **Learning spaces**
  The traditional place for learning in school is the classroom. Group learning spaces will still be a feature of schools in future but they will be furnished with new technologies such as whiteboards. The physical configuration of the classroom and the types of furniture used will need to be more adaptable.

  New technologies require flexible spaces where students can make full use of digital production equipment and in which displays, presentations and performances can be mounted.

  Wireless technology will also enable students to interconnect individual learning spaces in the library, in the classroom and at home.

- **Flexible timetabling**
  It seems likely that rigid timetabling of school activities will change as schools move to an extended learning environment. There will still be fixed timetable points – assemblies, group learning and team activities. Increasingly, this timetabling will be built around student choices and there may be less emphasis on school-based learning as children get older.

All of this may seem very different from the kind of schooling that most governors experienced. Change is always challenging and the ICT agenda is one of the most dynamic aspects of school development. The e-confident school is a key concept and some schools have made great strides in this direction. Governors need to play an active role in planning and agreeing the direction that their school will go in and be e-confident themselves.

Case study

Cornwallis Technology College, Maidstone, Kent has a reputation for innovation with technology at the forefront of its development.

Cornwallis broadband case study. [**http://www.dfes.gov.uk/ictinschools/ict_active/composite.cfm?partid=83**]

Cornwallis is one of 8 schools featured on the DfES ICT-active Schools area of the website. [**http://www.dfes.gov.uk/ictinschools/ict_active/composite.cfm?compositeid=13**]

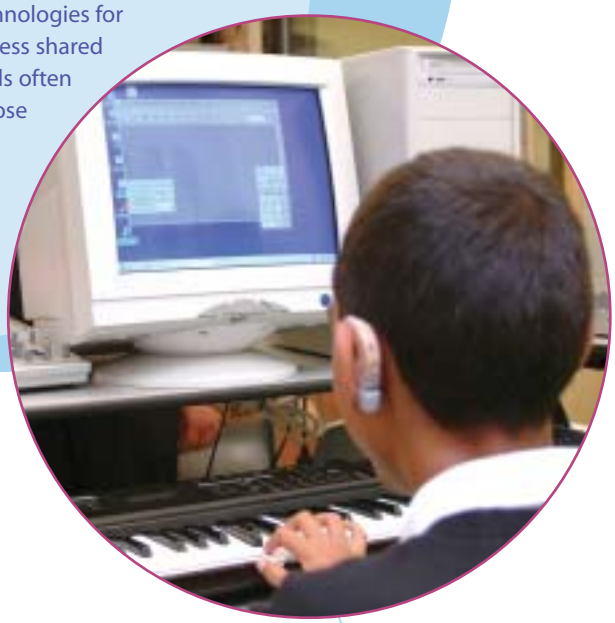
The 'e-confident' school: likely trends in ICT provision

2006

Connectivity	Broadband connections, typically of at least 2Mbs (primary) or 8Mbs (secondary) to support greater simultaneous access to the Internet, access to media-rich resources and use of video conferencing and video streaming services.	**Higher bandwidth connections**
Networking	Whole school networks, including caching servers (where practicable) to locally host digital learning resources – thereby helping to optimise available bandwidth.	**Increasing use of wireless networking**
Computers	An appropriate profile of desktop, laptop and handheld devices to deliver e-learning opportunities across the full curriculum and to support professional development of the school workforce.	**Profile shifts in favour of more mobile kit**
Managed Learning Environments	Growing use of managed learning environment (MLE) software to provide seamless links between curriculum and administrative systems, to support assessment and to facilitate e-learning across home-school and cross-sector/cultural boundaries.	
Whole Class Displays	Teaching areas progressively equipped with (or with access to) electronic whiteboard or digital projection facilities.	
Creative Technologies	Learners have access to a range of audio-visual tools, together with opportunities to record and 'publish' their creations.	
Access Technologies	Communication aids and intelligent deployment ensure that ICT facilities are fully accessible to learners with special educational needs and disabilities.	

Inclusion

An inclusive e-confident school is one which views technology as important but also as just another tool for learning. In such schools, ICT is used to record pupils' individual needs, progress and attainment and this information is available for teachers to inform their planning at the point of need, usually in the classroom via the network. Learning and teaching materials are created, delivered and assessed using ICT and are also made available for pupils to access from home. E-confident inclusive special schools combine the use of individual technologies for students who need them with seamless shared access to ICT resources. These schools often use the technology to provide close links between special and mainstream schools to share their expertise and knowledge of meeting a diversity of needs.



Case studies

Special schools working towards e-confidence include Fleming Fulton School in Belfast, where the science lab is used as a resource not only for pupils who have physical disabilities attending the school but also as a resource for all schools in the city [**http://www.flemingfulton.org.uk/**]. The outreach service at Wilson Stuart School in Birmingham [**http://www.wilsonst.bham.sch.uk/**] shares expertise via its website and Priory Woods School in Middlesbrough [**http://www.priorywoods.middlesbrough.sch.uk/**] makes learning resources and teaching ideas available for downloading via its website.

What the Research Says

Becta's 'What the Research Says' series aims to give an initial idea of the available research evidence on aspects of using ICT in schools and colleges.

What the Research Says – Interactive Whiteboards:

- encourage more varied, creative and seamless use of teaching materials
- engage pupils, increase motivation
- facilitate pupil participation and interaction.

What the Research Says – Portable ICT devices:

- increase enthusiasm, motivation, confidence and sense of ownership
- allow greater classroom and curriculum integration of ICT
- increase independence and self-initiated learning in pupils.

Handheld Computers (PDAs) in schools:

- potential for making the work of leadership teams and teachers more efficient.

[**http://www.becta.org.uk/research/research.cfm?section=1&id=546**]

Useful information

Where can you go for further help regarding ICT?

Your own LEA ICT team, particularly the ICT adviser, should be your first contact for planning, funding and training advice. Your LEA Governor Training section may be able to direct you to support.

Becta

http://www.becta.org.uk/

Becta is the Government's lead agency for ICT in education.

Building the Grid

http://buildingthegrid.becta.org.uk/docs/Leading%20the%20way-final%20summary.pdf

Leading the Way in ICT: a seminar for Chief Education Officers. Governors might find this seminar useful.

DfES

http://www.dfes.gov.uk/ictinschools/uploads/docarchive/fulfilling_potential.pdf

Fulfilling the Potential publication.

E- Learning Strategy

http://www.dfes.gov.uk/elearningstrategy/index.cfm

The overriding objective of the e-learning Strategy Unit is to encourage a constructive national debate on how e-learning can contribute to the future role of education, involving all key stakeholder groups.

The Innovation Unit

http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/innovation-unit/

This unit acts as a catalyst for change in education. It bridges policy and practice to create an arena in which all parties can develop innovative responses to learning challenges facing the education system. One of the Unit's activities is to manage a piece of legislation called 'The Power to Innovate'. This is the provision whereby the Secretary of State can exempt schools, LEAs and Education Action Zones wishing to test new ideas for raising standards in education from any education legislation that is preventing them putting their ideas into practice.

Naace

http://www.naace.org/impict/leadership.html

Naace's publication *Implementing ICT* has been substantially revised in line with changes in the nature of ICT in schools, and the corresponding management and co-ordination issues associated with this subject. One section that relates to e-confident schools is on Leadership and Coordination.

National College for School Leadership (NCSL)

http://www.ncsl.org.uk/index.cfm?pageid=ldev-strategic-slict-conference

NCSL pioneered the concept of the 'e-confident school'. In 2003, a series of conferences was held around the country offering an opportunity for LEA senior advisers and headteachers to consider the strategic implications for leading ICT and providing an insight into developing e-confident schools. These were organised by NCSL and Becta, and supported by DfES. Full details, including presentations, are on the NCSL site.

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

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Becta
British Educational Communications and Technology Agency

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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