FITS case study

Improving delivery of ICT technical support
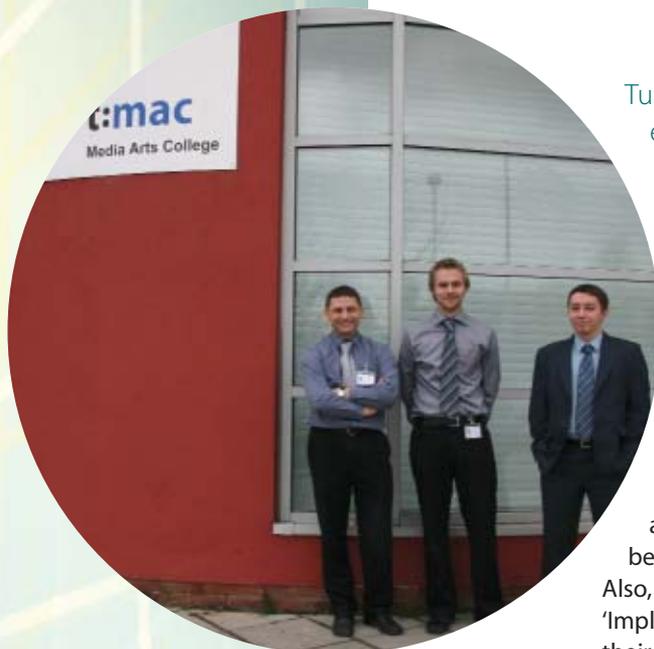
Turton is a school used to delivering good results – as evidenced by its highly favourable Ofsted report and a string of awards and accolades. The school, with specialist status in media and the performing arts, has 106 staff and 1,700 pupils studying a wide range of subjects at all levels. Over the last few years the school has invested extensively in ICT, which it sees as imperative to future curriculum delivery and maintaining its status as a specialist college.

A member of the school's management team has attended a 'FITS Overview' expert workshop, where the benefits of implementing FITS processes were explained. Also, two of the technical support team have attended an 'Implementing FITS' expert workshop, where they assessed their current ICT support processes and analysed their needs to help determine the best order for the school to implement FITS processes.

Tom Kwiatkawski manages the support team that looks after the school network plus over 450 PCs, Apple Macs and laptops as well as interactive whiteboards, projectors and specialist media equipment. Tom says: "When Becta and the LEA approached us about a project to implement FITS guidelines late last year, I was very keen to see how it could improve the service we provide to the staff and pupils at the school. However, the outcomes from FITS have exceeded our expectations – it has been a very worthwhile process."

The school's key focus in implementing FITS has been around the Incident Management and Problem Management processes: the ICT support team has implemented fault forms and developed a relational database for recording and tracking faults. Basing these on the Becta tools, the school has developed them to meet its own requirements by simplifying the form to avoid user confusion, while adding fields to allow more sophisticated analysis of problems. After managing the network more proactively for only three months, the team has

About FITS

Since the launch of the best-practice Framework for ICT Technical Support (FITS) on Becta's website, many schools have implemented the FITS processes to improve their ICT management and support.

Ofsted's report *ICT in Schools 2004: the impact of government initiatives five years on* describes the Framework for ICT Technical Support as an effective tool for those integrating technical support into the strategic planning and management of a school.

For those responsible for ICT implementation, FITS provides a practical manual and toolkit, which serve a growing number of schools well.

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already seen a reduction in the number of calls and an improvement in service delivery. No longer do the team members find themselves only installing and fixing equipment: they now have more time for planning and developing the network. The school intends to continue to implement and adapt FITS, with the establishment of the Service Desk process the next priority.

Both the leadership team and the ICT support staff at Turton have embraced FITS with enthusiasm and since November they have implemented a significant proportion of the processes and guidance. The school recognises that although initially there is some additional workload for support staff in implementing the FITS processes, this effort will pay dividends later by making the team more efficient and effective in the longer term.

Indeed, although primarily aimed at improving management of the ICT in schools, FITS has benefits that go beyond this – as Charlie Taylor, one of the deputy heads, explains: "The ICT technicians at Turton have always delivered good service and so I was pleased when they said they wanted to become even more professional by using FITS. What we have seen is not just an improvement in service, but the team are now actively contributing to the strategic planning and development at the school. Communications between the technicians and the users are very good and the leadership group value the contribution they are making more than ever."

FITS processes

FITS stands for Framework for ICT Technical Support and is based on the IT Infrastructure Library (ITIL) which has been tried and tested over 20 years.

Each of the 10 main process topics covers a different area of best-practice technical support…

- Service Desk
- Incident Management
- Problem Management
- Change Management
- Release Management
- Configuration Management
- Availability and Capacity Management
- Service Level Management
- Service Continuity Management
- Financial Management

The advice given is neither definitive nor prescriptive but should be adapted and adopted to fit each school individually, based on the school's resources and needs.

FITS support

Resources downloadable from Becta
- Advice and guidance
- Toolkits
- Assessment

FITS online community
http://www.becta.org.uk/technicalsupportcommunity

FITS pocket guide
A handy reference book for anyone involved in ICT management or day-to-day technical support in schools

Available to order from Becta publications
[http://www.becta.org.uk/publications]

Training workshops
- FITS overview
- Implementing FITS

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