

How to support inclusion using ICT

What is inclusion?

Inclusion in education involves the processes of increasing the participation of students in, and reducing their exclusion from, the cultures, curricula and communities of local schools. All students have a right to an education in their locality. Diversity must not be viewed as a problem to be overcome, but as a rich resource to support the learning of all.

Inclusion is concerned with the learning and participation of all students, not only those with impairments or those who are categorised as 'having special educational needs'.

[The Index for Inclusion \[http://inclusion.uwe.ac.uk/csie/indexlaunch.htm\]](http://inclusion.uwe.ac.uk/csie/indexlaunch.htm) (published by the Centre for the Study of Inclusive Education), suggests an approach through which schools can develop more inclusive practice. Throughout this process, the use of ICT to achieve teaching and learning goals should be considered.

The Index for Inclusion suggests the following approach:

Phase 1: Starting the Index process (half a term)

The school development planning team establishes a co-ordinating group. The group inform themselves and the rest of the staff about the Index concepts, materials and methods for gathering together knowledge about the school from all members of the school's communities, including the ways in which ICT can be integrated into school practices.

Phase 2: Finding out about the school (one term)

Detailed exploration of the school and the identification of priorities for development. The use of ICT should be viewed as integral to any development needs identified.

Phase 3: Producing an inclusive school development plan (half a term)

Amend the school development plan to make it reflect inclusive aims and the particular priorities identified in phase 2. The development plan must reflect ICT needs of the school to enable the inclusion of all pupils. The total costs involved in ICT provision must be considered.

Phase 4: Implementing developments (ongoing)

Implementation and support.

Phase 5: Reviewing the Index process (ongoing)

Review of the school's progress in developing inclusive cultures, policies and practices including the use of ICT.

ICT to support inclusion

As information technology becomes increasingly more accessible in daily life, we become more aware of its potential for learners who are at risk of being excluded. For the successful implementation of an ICT solution, we need more than the right equipment matched to the needs of the individual pupil. At the heart of all debate must be the learners themselves but the demands of the school and home contexts will also need to be considered.

For some pupils, a technological solution will be the only way to ensure they can make their needs, opinions and views known. For them, access to appropriate ICT-based solutions is a lifeline to inclusion.

To find out more

[Communication Aids Project \(CAP\) \[http://www.becta.org.uk/inclusion/cap/index.html\]](http://www.becta.org.uk/inclusion/cap/index.html) – a two-year project funded by the DfES to help support pupils with significant communication difficulties (applies to England only)

To find resources to support pupils communication, try the [Inclusion web site \[http://inclusion.ngfl.gov.uk/\]](http://inclusion.ngfl.gov.uk/) on the NGfL

Information from Becta

For some pupils, using specific pieces of technology within a classroom situation can enable them to access the same curriculum as their peers. It will be important that teachers are clear about the organisational issues involved and able to ensure the technology being used will meet the specific pupil's need. The information below describes the use of ICT to support a wide range of learning needs:

Pupils with communication difficulties, physical disabilities and visual impairment

[Choosing access technologies and alternative access devices \[http://www.becta.org.uk/inclusion/sen/technology/index.html\]](http://www.becta.org.uk/inclusion/sen/technology/index.html)

[Useful addresses of organisations which may support such pupils \[http://www.becta.org.uk/inclusion/sen/orgs/index.html\]](http://www.becta.org.uk/inclusion/sen/orgs/index.html)

[The use of multi-sensory environments which support communication skills \[http://www.becta.org.uk/inclusion/sen/resources/multisensory/index.html\]](http://www.becta.org.uk/inclusion/sen/resources/multisensory/index.html)

[Using technology with pupils for whom English is a second language or from minority communities \[http://www.becta.org.uk/inclusion/communities.html\]](http://www.becta.org.uk/inclusion/communities.html)

[To engage in discussions with other practitioners about inclusive practice \[http://www.becta.org.uk/inclusion/discussion/bectalists.html\]](http://www.becta.org.uk/inclusion/discussion/bectalists.html)

[How to use speech-recognition systems with pupils who have particular needs \[http://www.becta.org.uk/technology/speechrecog/\]](http://www.becta.org.uk/technology/speechrecog/)

[Examples of the ways in which technology can be used to differentiate work with pupils \[http://www.becta.org.uk/inclusion/sen/resources/index.html\]](http://www.becta.org.uk/inclusion/sen/resources/index.html)

Direct examples of how ICT is supporting pupils

[<http://www.becta.org.uk/inclusion/sen/resources/casestudies/index.html>]

Discussion forums

Teachers will always need access to information about current issues relating to their pupils. They also welcome opportunities to talk to other practitioners about issues relating to their teaching and their pupils' learning. There are a number of specialised mailing lists on Becta's site.

VTC conferences [<http://www.becta.org.uk/inclusion/sen/resources/casestudies/index.html>]

Other useful mailing lists [<http://forum.ngfl.gov.uk/cgi-bin/WebX?vtc>]