Guidance

Organisation & Management

Staff Management

Bureaucracy Cutting Toolkit

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Introduction

Cutting unnecessary burdens on teachers is an essential part of ensuring we have a valued and motivated teaching profession. It also allows teachers to concentrate on what they do best – teaching, to achieve their key goal – raising standards. We are therefore delighted to present to you this Toolkit. Together with the companion examples of good practice these form a practical guide with a wealth of information that will help **all** schools and teachers.

The Toolkit and two volumes of good practice examples have grown out of a project involving 20 schools in Derby City, Kent, Surrey and Birmingham LEAs, working with the Department and PricewaterhouseCoopers. Together they represent a simple but effective approach. That is what makes them so useful – often simple solutions can be implemented without huge resources, and often it is the simple solutions that save the most time.

Please let other school know what you are doing. Word of mouth is very important in ensuring that documents like these are used effectively.

We have set up the 'Cutting Burdens' website on TeacherNet (www.teachernet.gov.uk/cuttingburdens), which has online versions of this Toolkit and the two volumes of good practice examples. However, there are inevitably areas not covered by these examples, so the website also allows you to join a discussion area to share good practice and feedback your ideas. Furthermore, the website contains information on school workforce reform – including the Time for Standards consultation, the National Agreement and remodelling advice and guidance.

The National Remodelling Team (NRT) has been established to ensure the development of a national network of support to help schools implement workforce reform. The team is led by Dame Patricia Collarbone, Director of Leadership Development Programmes at the National College for School Leadership (NCSL). The NRT provides advice, guidance, case studies and training materials for schools. The NRT are working closely with LEAs to take over 23,000 schools in England through the remodelling process. They are training and supporting LEA remodelling champions to help schools manage the change process and encourage them in developing their own solutions and in learning from other schools. Further information can be found on the NRT website – www.remodelling.org.

Also, as part of the Department's National Agreement commitments, we have set up the Implementation Review Unit (IRU), featuring a regionally based Practitioners' Panel made up 9 headteachers, 2 senior teachers and 1 bursar. The IRU considers the impact of new and current policies on the 'front line' staff who implement them. The Panel has direct access to Ministers and will make sure that grass-root concerns get through to the Department and central agencies and are tackled. For further information please see the IRU website – www.dfes.gov.uk/iru.

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1 What is bureaucracy?

Most of what you do is not bureaucratic – it is essential to the education and personal development of the pupils in your care. Even some of the paperwork you have to produce is directly related to this aim and therefore cannot be called bureaucracy as such.

So for the purpose of this Toolkit, we suggest you think about the following four types of **activity**:

- activities which do not appear to relate directly to delivering an effective education to your pupils;
- activities carried out more frequently than strictly necessary, inefficiently or in unnecessary detail;
- administrative activities carried out by teachers which could better be done by support staff;
- activities which could benefit from the effective use of information and communications technology (ICT).

Corresponding to these four types of activity, there are four types of **strategy** you can employ to cut bureaucracy:

- **stop doing some things** which may be unnecessary;
- **redesign the way you do things** to ensure that they are done efficiently, effectively and no more often than necessary;
- ensure that you **match staff to activities** in such a way that you use "the best staff for the job";
- ensure that you **make the best of ICT.**

In this Toolkit, we will explore all four strategies. Our next section gives advice on getting started.

2 Get started

Begin by asking **how will the "bureaucracy cutting" project be managed?**

Cutting bureaucracy is a key element of successful remodelling, to allow schools to concentrate on the essentials of teaching and learning. The 32 Pathfinder schools have used a variety of resources, including this Toolkit, when developing their overall strategy for ensuring effective remodelling.

The experience of the Pathfinder schools has pointed to the empowering effect of involving staff from **all** parts of the school workforce in the remodelling process, by setting up school 'change teams'. A project to cut bureaucracy using this Toolkit, together with the two accompanying volumes of good practice examples, can therefore be 'project managed' by a member or members of such a group, which ever is most appropriate.

A bursar/senior administrator can be an ideal person to oversee this process, as many of the issues involve the effective use of all resources available to the schools. For more details on the Department's Bursar Development Programme please see the Bursars area on the TeacherNet website (www.teachernet.gov.uk/bursars). This includes:

- details of the bursar training developed by NCSL
- the 'Looking for a Bursar?' document, which contains a modular job description to help schools assess their needs to recruit and/or train accordingly
- 'case histories' featuring examples from both Primary and Secondary schools and also 'shared bursar arrangements', which demonstrate the impact a suitably qualified bursar can have in enabling schools remodel successfully.

Where to start

A good place to start is with the vision of the school.

Several pilot schools chose to review areas which had been identified as weaknesses by OFSTED. So their bureaucracy cutting projects were linked directly to their post-OFSTED action plans.

You may wish to use the school development plan or to consult staff and governors afresh. Try to go beyond generalised statements to identify specific areas in which your school is trying to improve or make progress. In this way your bureaucracy cutting project will be informed by the "bigger picture" of where your school is going and is more likely to be seen as part of the plan for getting there.

Another starting point could be the need to address criticisms or weaknesses identified by outside bodies such as the LEA, OFSTED or parents.

Hartsdown Technology College reviewed the arrangements for collecting cash from students in registration periods for school visits, school fund and charity collections. As a result all cash collection has been transferred to the school office with significant saving in scarce tutorial time estimated at 315 hours per year.

So which areas of school activity, and potential bureaucracy, should you start with? Here are some suggestions:

1. Start with a relatively straightforward area of school activity where you think you will be able to demonstrate "quick wins"; i.e. significant reductions in bureaucracy with little effort and expense. This will help staff, and governors, "buy in" to investigating other areas.

2. If there is an activity or procedure which has caused real concern to staff in the past, then start with it.

3. If there is a particular activity which is new, or about to be done in a new way (e.g. with ICT), then focus on it first.

4. Consider the time of year. If the activity you are reviewing involves an annual process, does it make sense to start now?

5. Start with a project you are interested in. Enthusiasm is very useful in the early, "learning" stages.

St James Primary School wanted to investigate more sophisticated ICT approaches to the preparation of reports for parents. Use of the mapping and ICT procurement techniques outlined in the Toolkit enabled them to clarify what they were trying to achieve before any investment was made in the new systems. These are expected to save as much as half an hour of teacher time per report.

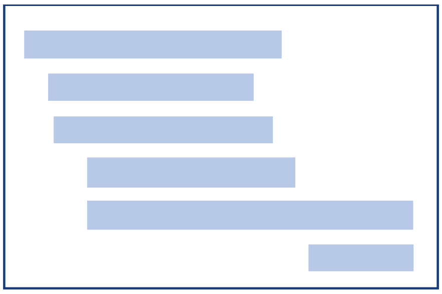
The pilot schools started out with between three and five projects each, because project time was limited. They also had the support of external consultants. However, many dropped one project along the way. So no school ended up covering more than four projects.

Obviously these suggestions may result in five different ideas for "where to start". Two is a good number to start with as this gives you a chance to drop one if progress is slow or the benefits seem small. One option you might want to consider is working in partnership with other schools who are facing similar problems.

A full list of the project areas covered by the pilot schools can be found in the two companion volumes of good practice examples available at http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/cuttingburdens

Drawing up a plan

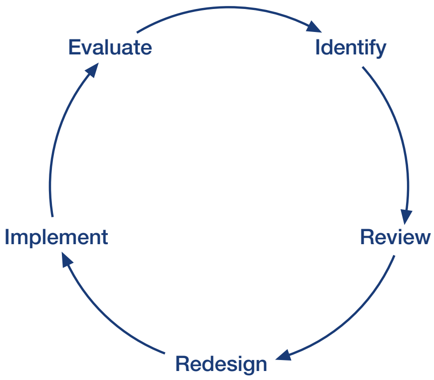
Once you have decided which areas you are going to cover, ask the project manager to **make a plan**. This should identify tasks, ensure accountability, indicate resource requirements and project milestones. It is worth setting a time limit on each project and being sure of the end result that you are looking for.



A sample project plan is in Annex A

The first step in drawing up a plan is to list all the tasks that need to be carried out. Then arrange the tasks into the correct chronological order. Are there any tasks missing? Can some tasks be amalgamated with others? Are there natural groupings of tasks which cluster together as a "stream" of work?

Once you are happy with the grouping and order of tasks, then transfer them to a chart with the elapsed time required for each and the person responsible for carrying it out. Once you have completed the chart, consider and record what resources (time, supply cover, administrative support, cash) will be needed for each task. You can use specialist IT software (e.g. Microsoft Project) to create the plan if available.



Most project tasks can be grouped together into the following streams of work:

- **identify** the area to be reviewed – include all tasks associated with getting approval for the project plan and the resource requirements;
- **review** the area concerned – "map" the current position, exploring alternatives and generating options for change;
- **redesign** the process or the way it is carried out – identify the preferred changes and the resources required to implement them;
- **implement** the changes;
- **evaluate** the benefits of the changes – including a comparison with the original baseline, consideration of the overall costs and benefits, and a decision whether to continue with the change in whole or in part.

Risk management

For large or complex projects, schools may wish to carry out a risk assessment as part of the project planning. Annex F provides advice on risk assessment and management.

3 Map activities

The first task of the review stage is to understand the process concerned in detail. The best way to do this is to **map the process.**

A process map will capture:

- how the activity is carried out;
- who does it – including possible cover arrangements;
- how long it actually takes;
- how it impacts on, or depends on, other activities;
- what resources are involved;
- who uses the outputs of the process, when and for what purpose.

How to map processes

A key use of the map is to capture all the resources a process consumes, mainly in terms of staff time. The map will then act as a **baseline** against which you can measure the reduction in bureaucracy your changes achieve.

As you are probably aware, a simple process map can be created with a large sheet of plain paper, using post-it notes to identify the stages in the process and marker pens to show the links between the activities/stages. The map should refer to any policies, procedures, forms etc. currently used in relation to the task, and input will come from key staff members who are familiar with the process.

The benefit of using this format is that it allows a number of people to contribute (e.g. at a staff meeting) and encourages people to challenge the current procedure more than if they were presented with a finished chart.

The starting point is to be clear on what drives the process, whether Department for Education and Skills regulations, QCA guidance, LEA procedures or school policies. This will highlight whether certain changes will require consultation with, or clarification from, external bodies.

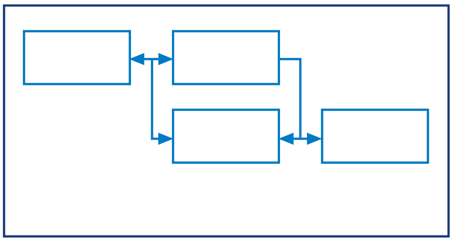
Ridgeway Infants School were concerned at the amount of teacher time involved in assembling basic data on newly admitted pupils. The mapping process revealed that a total of 3 reception teachers, 3 nursery teachers, the head teacher and a clerical assistant were all involved in creating new entrant's records. An increase in the hours of the clerical assistant has enabled the teachers to be relieved of much of this activity with a total saving of 25 teacher hours per year.

Five Acre Wood School, a special school for children with severe learning difficulties relies heavily on electronic teaching aids. By logging the time spent by teachers on dealing with ICT problems they were able to conclude that investing in the support of an ICT technician would release an average of 11 hours per week of teacher and support assistant time for work with children.

For the process for reporting to parents on pupil progress, you might use the post-it notes to present the following stages on your process map:

- consult latest guidance and inform all staff of requirements (head teacher);
- draft report for each pupil (class teacher);
- check and amend reports (class teacher);
- check reports for each class (head teacher);
- amend individual reports returned by head teacher (class teacher);
- comment and sign each completed report (head teacher);
- copy and envelope reports (school secretary/ administrative officer);
- distribute individual reports (class teacher).

As you identify the various activities, you can also record how much time has been spent on each stage in the process. Other resource costs should be included at the appropriate stage too.



Sample process maps from the pilot project are included in Annex B

Once you are satisfied that the sequence of events provides an accurate description of the process, draw lines to link up the stages. Where stages take place simultaneously, these can be presented by putting one stage above the other, as in the diagram opposite.

As you work through and start to create the process map, you will probably find that many of the issues you will wish to review start to emerge. It is helpful to re-visit the map later as other things may have occurred to you and you may also want to check on particular points.

Once the process map is complete, you may want to tidy up the presentation and condense it for future use. You can recreate the process using the drawing tools in a standard word-processing package, such as Word.

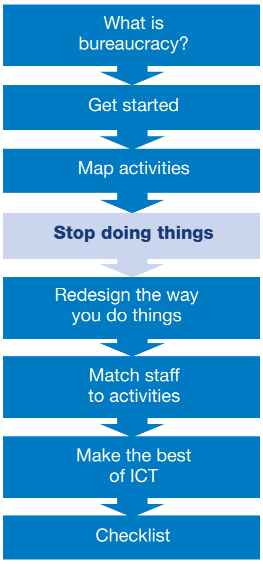
4 Stop doing things

You will remember that the first, and most straightforward, strategy for reducing bureaucracy we described in Section 1 was simply to stop doing things.

Your process maps (from Section 3) should have identified who uses the outcomes of your mapped activities, and you should have spoken to these users already.

Saying no to information requests

There are a number of circumstances in which (at least from the school's point of view) you can reasonably stop doing a bureaucratic activity. Most of these involve the collection or analysis of information:



1. The output(s) of the activity are no longer needed.
2. A new information request was introduced which wholly or partly superseded an earlier request.
3. You are being asked to summarise information already supplied, perhaps in a different format or already in the public domain.
4. The information, while claimed to be "needed", is not as far as you can see acted upon, i.e it makes no discernible difference to the learning of pupils in your care.
5. The information collection activity is carried out more often than the information is required.
6. The information was prepared purely for the benefit of a third party.

In all of these instances, you are entitled to raise the issue of whether you need to supply the information requested. You may of course have a legal duty to do so. But if not, assess what justification is given for the information requested.

How to say no

Of course, the easiest way of saying "no" is just to stop returning the information required and see what happens. This is potentially high risk, of course and should **certainly** not be used where information is required by law.

We came across an example of an LEA officer who requested schools to provide information on free school meal numbers and number on roll by age group in October. But it was only when this need was challenged by schools that it became apparent that the LEA already collected the data by other means as follows:

- *via form 7 in January;*
- *via class data collected each September;*
- *via its assessment of eligibility for free school meals.*

The request was subsequently cancelled.

A safer strategy is to make contact with whoever requested the information asking them to justify it.

Most schools receive requests from "researchers" for information, in which case the above points apply equally. Rather than saying "no" you could invite the researchers to come and collect the information for themselves, and give a presentation to staff on the emerging findings from the research. If researchers are sufficiently committed, they will probably agree and the school will have gained some in-service training at little or no direct cost.

A special case of saying "no" arises when the activity you are carrying out is one you have set yourself. Examples might be period-by-period attendance registers, or providing adult supervision in the library/resource area to prevent theft of books.

The principle to adopt here is that of **cost-benefit analysis**. Every activity which you decide to carry out has costs and also (presumably) yields benefits. Costs tend to be financial, while benefits are non-financial; so they are not always easy to compare. But it is still worth having a go.

For example, the cost of staff supervision needs to be weighed against the volume of books likely to be stolen when the library is unattended. Of course, there are many specifically **educational** advantages in providing adult support for learning in resource areas. When deciding how to staff the resource area, it is important to keep these two purposes distinct.

Examples of where cost-benefit analysis could be valuable include the collection of money by individual teachers and the effort put into fundraising activities.

5 Redesign the way you do things

In Section 1, we pointed out that we need to ensure they are done:

- efficiently;
- effectively;
- no more often than necessary.

The discipline of mapping an activity or process (see Section 3) is often enough to raise all sorts of improvements. Sometimes colleagues will have had good ideas for years about how to improve things, and have been waiting to be asked.

Below are some further pointers and principles to use.

1 Information should be collected properly, only once, and not in bits. For example, collect all pupil/parent data at the same time.

2 Avoid excessive checking by different individuals. The aim should be that information should be "right first time" and not require checking.

3 Try checking a sample of the data, or try using your pupils to check information. For example, print out the information you have on them and get them or their parents to check it.

4 Keep the paper down. Are all the memos sent to staff needed? If necessary, have a small pile of copy memos on a table under the noticeboard for staff to take away.

5 Make greater use of email if you have it – but don't turn a paper mountain into an email deluge. Establish a protocol for who can email what and to whom, and monitor the results.

Hinchley Wood School realised that giving individual departments the responsibility for organising their own school trips, including collecting money from pupils to fund them, was resulting in a loss of teacher time on administration. Also income was falling short of estimates with consequences for the school fund. By shifting the whole responsibility to the school office, there has not only been a saving in teacher time but also more efficient planning and administration of school trips and less shortfall on income.

Effectiveness

As conscientious and caring individuals, we all want to do everything as well as possible. But, doing things too well can take too long and cost too much. Just being aware of this human trend to do things "too well", and watching out for it in potentially bureaucratic activities is usually enough to bring about considerable improvements.

Three project schools worked on strategies for streamlining their approach to preparation of reports for parents. The mapping process revealed the extent of checking, redrafting and correction that was taking place before each report was signed off. A clearer understanding of the steps involved enabled the schools to focus on cutting out those which were unnecessary.

The following suggestions and examples illustrate the point:

1 **Ask** how well a task needs to be done. If the school is required to draw up a new policy, for example, ask how many A4 pages are expected, or precisely what list of topics should be covered. If they don't know, then just do one page.

2 Be **sure** a task is competitive before treating it as such. If you are asked to bid for funds, is there already an indicative allocation to your school, or is it "all to play for"? Ask what the bid should contain. Agree approaches with colleagues.

Gayton Junior School was concerned at the time spent by office and other staff on trying to ensure that parents renewed their children's entitlement to free school meals each year by visiting the LEA office to have their DSS documents checked. The school achieved a significant saving in time for teachers and office staff by simply photocopying the documents for parents and forwarding the photocopies to the LEA.

3 Carry out a **cost-benefit analysis** of the kind discussed in Section 4. If you do something less well, then does the saving in cost outweigh the loss of benefit.

Here are some specific examples:

4 Do you need to write so many **letters?** What about compliment slips, brochures or using the telephone instead?

5 Are you using email to contact colleagues in other schools? It is quicker and simpler than letters and telephone calls, and you can set up mailing lists.

6 Do you need to take minutes of meetings – or will a list of action points do?

7 Can you produce the action points at the meeting using a laptop, rather than writing them up after the meeting?

Frequency

It is also important to ensure that the frequency of regular tasks is "just often enough." Writing to parents, holding staff meetings and organising curriculum planning all fall into this category.

Staff at Meadow Farm School were concerned that their lesson and curriculum planning processes were more complex than was necessary. By reviewing their methods, making more use of good practice exemplars, developing electronic versions of documents to aid preparation and updating and streamlining procedures generally, they have introduced changes which it is estimated will ultimately yield savings of 20-30% in teacher time spent on curriculum and lesson planning.

Again, a good approach is cost-benefit analysis. What is the extra benefit of the more frequent meeting or letter? Almost certainly it will decline as the number of meetings/letters goes up. In particular:

1. Review with participants/recipients what they think they gain. If a meeting, do they contribute? If a letter, do they read it? Do they need to be informed? Will a notice on the board do?

2. Unless a particular activity is absolutely uniform across the year, periodic (e.g. weekly or monthly) meetings can be inappropriate. If you are running a working party, then all meetings of the working party should be of the same "weight". If a meeting seems "thin", then it has been held too soon.

Governing bodies

The way in which you and your colleagues interface with the governing body makes a good case study to which to apply most of the points made above.

Ridgeway Infants School has worked with its governing body to review committees, terms of reference, frequency of meetings, and the structure and management of meetings to ensure that they are efficient and effective in terms of the school's needs and size.
A significant saving in head teacher and teacher governor time is anticipated without any dilution of the governors' role and responsibilities.

Governing bodies have key responsibilities and these are increasing. The workload is substantial and many governors devote a great deal of time to undertaking their responsibilities and this can place additional burdens on the head teacher and senior staff. Much of the management information sought by governing bodies to fulfil their statutory responsibilities needs to be documented anyway, but governing bodies should be asked to justify any requests for additional information.

Governing bodies should themselves be taking stock periodically of what they do and whether it needs to be done in the same way. The Terms of Reference Regulations set out the respective roles and responsibilities of governing bodies and head teachers. Accompanying guidance will invite governing bodies to review their delegation arrangements to ensure that they operate strategically and don't get involved in unnecessary management issues. This might result in less direct activity by the governing body in some areas, but they will still need sufficient management information to satisfy themselves that legal responsibilities are being met.

Consider the following examples of areas where existing practice can be challenged and reductions in bureaucratic burdens achieved.

1 Responding to **consultation exercises** can be time consuming. The significance of the issue to the school and the likelihood of the views expressed being influential need to be weighed before deciding to respond and then also in preparing the response.

2 Most governing bodies have adopted a **committee structure** based on a standard model of a minimum of four committees, often meeting twice a term. In addition there are various committees required under the Articles which meet as and when needed. The arrangements in the smallest primary schools are often identical to those in the largest secondary schools and the total time spent is often very similar. Governing bodies should look critically at the justification, costs and benefits of their committee structure and the frequency and length of committee meetings.

3 Agreed action should be properly recorded and individual governors given specific responsibility for progress between meetings. Nothing saps the energy of governors and staff more than revisiting issues where no progress has been made.

There are many similar instances where questioning existing practice could lead to a reduced workload and increased efficiency.

6 Match staff to activities

Once you have reviewed activities to ensure that you only do what is necessary, you need to ensure that work is allocated appropriately. **Tasks should be carried out by the staff best qualified for them**. In general, this means that tasks directly related to the planning and delivery of learning and teaching are carried out by teachers, administrative tasks are carried out by administrators, clerical tasks are carried out by clerical staff, and manual tasks by manual staff. In theory, it is usually pretty clear which is which.

The reality, however, tends to be different. Too often teachers are seen washing brushes, photocopying materials. There are four reasons, we suggest, why teachers end up doing tasks that could be better done by others:

- convenience;
- tradition;
- bad planning;
- unavailability of the right staff.

Bredgar School reduced the administrative load on its teachers by appointing an ancillary assistant to provide support to teachers with photocopying, recording of marks, and maintaining and preparing learning materials. The estimated saving in teacher time was estimated to be at least equivalent to the 9 hours per week for which the assistant was employed.

Of these four reasons, "convenience" is the most convincing – it may well be convenient for teachers to carry out some tasks because briefing others would be too slow. Or there may be educational benefits that merits leaving the task with a teacher. But it is worth querying how often the tasks concerned come round and how large the benefits are. A good test is whether the task in question requires someone with a teaching qualification. Investing some time now in training up an administrative colleague might pay dividends later.

"Tradition", however, is not convincing at all and is no reason to leave tasks in teachers' hands. Likewise "bad planning" is no excuse. A failure to look ahead and anticipate future requirements does not legitimise using teachers to fill in for other staff.

This leaves the remaining argument – the unavailability of appropriate support staff.

Obviously, the amount of money a school has at its disposal is limited; and the scope for changing the balance between support staff and other expenditure will vary between different schools. In general, the larger the school, the more scope there will be to vary the balance. Moreover primary schools must ensure that the government's class size regulations are met for

Key Stage 1 classes and that these are not achieved at the expense of substantially larger Key Stage 2 classes.

Transfer of administrative tasks from teachers to support staff

To raise standards further, we need to free teachers to teach. The Time for Standards suite of documents made it clear that the Government is committed to recruiting more teachers **and** more support staff in schools. A vision of the future was outlined in which lessons are delivered more flexibly and teachers and heads are supported by a wider range of staff and ICT.

West Park Secondary School are transferring the role of the examinations secretary from a teacher to an administrative member of staff. When this is complete, there will a gain of some 9 teaching hours per week.

West Park has also reviewed the need for invigilation of examinations to be undertaken by teachers. In a successful pilot, the school employed its existing meals supervisors as invigilators with a total saving in teacher time of 151 hours. Extension to internal and other external examinations is expected to yield even greater savings in future.

The PricewaterhouseCoopers report on teacher workload, published in December 2001, found that teachers were spending 20 per cent of their time on administrative and supervisory tasks that could be done by others.

We need more people who can relieve teachers of basic administrative tasks. We also need more skilled and trained professionals who can supervise pupils as they move around the school. More radically, we also need to create a new stream of support staff: highly skilled, highly trained teaching assistants who can help pupils with their learning, under the direction of qualified teachers.

The National Agreement includes phased provisions to amend teachers' contracts, to ensure schools really do divert teachers away from basic administrative tasks and give them time for lesson planning, preparation and assessment of pupils' progress. As a result, teachers and heads will:

- not routinely undertake administrative and clerical tasks;
- have a reasonable work life balance;
- have a reduced burden of providing cover for absent colleagues. A limit of 38 hours per year will be put in place from September 2004;
- have guaranteed planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) time, to support their teaching, individually and collaboratively. We shall work towards teachers having some 10% of their teaching time for lesson planning by 2005.

Examples from the project of tasks being successfully delegated from teachers to support staff include ICT technical support, teacher cover administration in a secondary school, preparation of new entrants' records, administration of work experience and supervision of periods of preset work and individual study when teachers are absent.

Progress on delivery will be monitored by the Workforce Agreement Monitoring Group – a group for Signatories to the Agreement, but involving other partners as necessary – which will promote the Agreement, help to finalise the new contractual and legal framework and initiate change on the ground.

See annex C for a list of tasks which should be transferred to support staff by September 2003.

7 Make the best of ICT

What is bureaucracy?
Get started
Map activities
Stop doing things
Redesign the way you do things
Match staff to activities
Make the best of ICT
Checklist

You probably already have an information and communication technology (ICT) system in place. This Toolkit should give you ideas about how to use it more effectively. If you are thinking about investing further in this area, particularly to take advantage of Standards Fund grants for the National Grid for Learning, then this section is for you.

Guidance on how to purchase and use ICT systems can be found on the BECTa website at http://www.becta.org.uk.

What follows is some brief guidance and pointers to start you on your way.

Key principles

There are great productivity gains to be made from investing in ICT. But when deciding how to invest, it is worth having the following thoughts in mind.

Otford Primary School has converted all routine SEN processes to electronic format and provided the SENCO with a laptop dedicated to SEN administration. All SEN record keeping, IEPs, statements and annual reviews will in future be kept in electronic format making significant savings in time for the SENCO who also has to carry a full time class responsibility.

Teachers at Bredgar Primary School now have shared use of a laptop for lesson preparation and curriculum coordination. On the updating of plans alone the saving in teacher time in this 3 teacher school is estimated to be 9 days a year with savings of about 3 days of secretarial time.

1. Converting a process to ICT requires **extra** effort in the early stages, which is gradually repaid later.

2. Many ICT systems allow you to carry out a task significantly better than in the past, for only a slight increase in workload. But is this what you wanted?

3. Don't under-estimate the power of the spreadsheet or word processor in preference to complex specialist software.

4. Bear in mind that **buying** the ICT equipment is the easy bit. Most private sector companies calculate that the recurrent costs of ICT far outweigh the initial capital investment. Managed Service providers are a possible means of securing comprehensive network solutions. They offer schools a new procurement option through a single point of contract. They provide an all-in-one service (excluding telecom costs and curriculum software) at predictable pricing levels. Details of providers can be found at http://managedservices.ngfl.gov.uk.

Buying yourself an IT system

*In the jargon, the list of tasks which the new system has to do is known as the **statement of user requirements (SOUR)**. A sample of SOUR for a reporting to parents system is shown in Annex D.*

This example was developed by one of the project schools (Hartsdown Technology College) and the resulting clarification of the schools requirements has enabled it to enter into negotiations with a major software supplier. Their objective is to ensure that "off the peg" systems are capable of meeting the school's specific need for a report writing system that is user friendly enough for all teachers to be required to use it.

The above principles are not intended to put you off purchasing an ICT system to meet a particular administrative need. A well managed investment in ICT can have revolutionary effects on the way school staff work.

Having determined what opportunities exist for ICT, consider the following steps.

1 Choose the really important things which your new system **must** be able to do, rather than the "nice to haves". These will become your selection criteria.

2 Consult your LEA or BECTa (02476 416 994). They may well have experience of the system you want and be able to provide advice and support to you through all the stages of the buying process. Your LEA may also be able to offer discounts and ongoing support for equipment that they have negotiated with suppliers.

3 Consider whether you can join with other schools to purchase the system. This may help spread costs.

4 Find as many different systems as you can which will do at least some of what you want. Think of using standard business software such as databases, spreadsheets or word processors as well as specialist software. Go to "reference sites" like the National Grid for Learning (http://www.ngfl.gov.uk). Get the suppliers to come to you. Talk to colleagues.

5 Assess the different systems you have seen against your selection criteria.

6 Ask the supplier lots of questions (if you have not done so already). How many schools are using this system for your purpose? How many have stopped using it, and why? What guarantees are offered (especially on hardware)? What support will the supplier provide after purchase, and how much will it cost? Is there a helpline? Can user training be provided? Can the system be expanded? What impact does expansion have on performance? If the system is a network with a server, how many extra terminals can be added and is this enough for future needs?

7 Establish **what** it is all going to cost, initially and per year thereafter? Are there any circumstances in which it may end up costing more?

If you are investing (or even if not) take time to consider how ICT can help you be more effective. Further guidance is available on the Virtual Teacher Centre website at http://vtc.ngfl.gov.uk

8 Checklist

This final section provides a checklist which summarises some of the main action points in the toolkit.

1. What is bureaucracy?

Define what you mean by bureaucracy

Identify areas where staff are working "cross role"

2. Get started

Decide how best to manage the project – consider the use of whole school "change teams"

Consider the best way to use the bursar/senior administrator on the team

Agree reporting requirements to governors

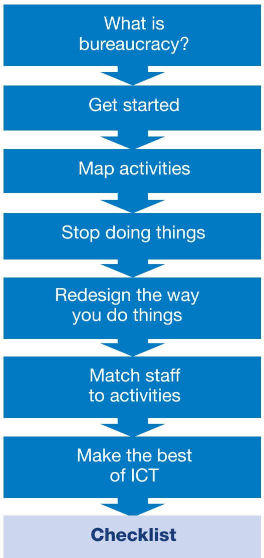
Generate a list of possible areas to review

Narrow down the choice to key areas to pursue

Consider working with another school

Draw up a detailed project plan and review this from time to time

Assess risks and consider a risk management strategy



3. Map activities

Map the process being reviewed

Capture the resources used by the process

Produce a "baseline" against which future progress can be measured

List out the issues the map raises

Revisit the map at intervals to review the issues

Create a final typed up version of the map on paper

Consider benchmarking the process against other schools

Check the benchmarking available through your LEA

4. Stop doing things

Check whether the activity meets a statutory need

Clarify the purpose of the activity

Contact users to check the value of the outputs

Review your policy on providing information to researchers

Adopt a cost benefit approach to activities you initiate

5. Redesign the way you do things

Review the efficiency of the activity

Ensure tasks are done “just well enough” and not to a higher standard than necessary

Review the frequency of activities to ensure they are done “just often enough” and not too frequently

Review the operation of the governing body and its committee structure

6. Match staff to activities

Ensure tasks are carried out by the staff best qualified to do them

Identify the reason why teachers do administrative tasks in your school

Review the balance between the teaching and non-teaching staff complements

Ensure arrangements are in place to comply with the changes to teachers’ contracts, including the transfer of administrative tasks to support staff by September 2003

7. Make the best of ICT

Recognise the extra effort ICT requires in the early stages

Choose commercially available software in preference to developing your own bespoke software

Seek advice from the LEA or BECTa on ICT use and procurement

Follow a carefully structured procurement process

Reconsider the process being computerised in the light of the capability of ICT systems

Annex A

Sample project plan

This is a sample project plan developed for one of the pilot schools.

Bureaucracy Cutting Project

Review area: reporting to parents

Date plan was last revised:

Task	Responsibility	Qtr 1			Qtr 2			Qtr 3		Qtr 4	
		Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July
1 Identity											
1.1 Gain approval to project plan	**H**										
1.2 Map current provision and produce baseline	DH/CT/AO										
2 Review											
2.1 Consult LEA and DfEE on core requirements	DH										
2.2 Consult other schools in cluster	DH/CT										
2.3 Contact IT systems suppliers/visit ref. sites	DH/CT										
3 Redesign											
3.1 Generate options for redesign and select preferred option	H/DH/CT/AO										
3.2 Work up detailed proposals	DH/CT										
3.3 Gain approval to changes from governors	H										
4 Implement											
4.1 Brief staff on changes	DH										
4.2 Place order for new system	DH										
4.3 Install system	DH										
4.4 Train staff on new system	**DH/CT**										
4.5 Use new system to produce reports for parents	DH/CTI/AO										
5 Evaluate											
5.1 Rebaseline and compare with original baseline	DH/CT										
5.2 Gather staff and compare with original baseline	DH/CT										
5.3 Consider costs/benefits of change	H/DH/CTI/AO										
5.4 Identify any further changes to system											

Responsibilities: H=Head; D=Deputy Head; CT=Class Teacher; AO=Admin Officer

Resources required (excluding implementation costs): 8 days supply cover for CT; £200 for visits to other schools/reference sites.

These kind of plans should be updated throughout the project, with more detail added over time to the later stages. At the beginning it is unlikely that it will be possible to complete the implementation stage other than being able to indicate when it might take place.

Annex B

Process mapping

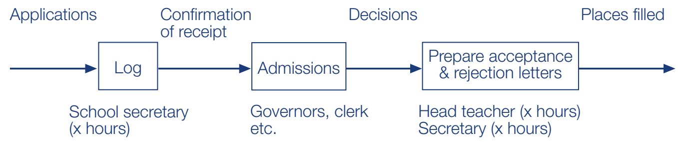
A process is the sequence of events or activities which take place to enable the completion of a task. It is helpful to make a distinction between these and to be clear as to how one relates to another. Using a school example, admissions is a **task** which all schools have to undertake. This will incorporate a number of individual **activities** and stages, involving a range of different people, which collectively form the admissions **process**.

How do I create a flowchart?

To create a flowchart showing the process for delivering a task, you need to know:

- **inputs** – the data and materials which are required to produce the output of an activity;
- **resources** – in most instances this will be the time spent by individuals in converting the input into an output. There may be other material resources that you want to take into account too, e.g. paper, printing costs etc;
- **controls** – these regulate the way things are done, e.g. school plans, LEA procedures, Department for Education and Skills regulations etc;
- **output** – this is the end result of the activity The output from one activity will often be an input to the next.

Using the same school admissions example, the flowchart might be presented along the following lines:

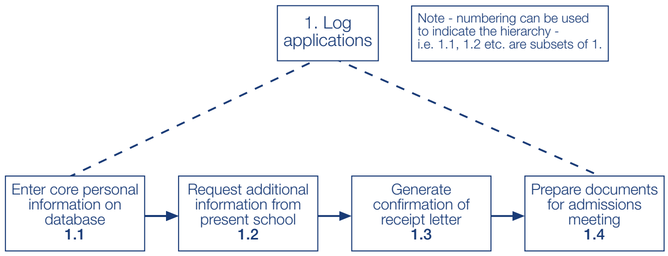


Although this example does not cover all the stages in the process, it should give you some idea of what might be included in a process map. In some processes you may find that the inputs and outputs are not easily identifiable. If this is the case, you can probably get by with recording the activities and the resources. However, it is always helpful to establish the initial input (i.e. application) and the final output (i.e. filled places).

Aim to ensure that the activities which you are capturing are all at the same level. Moving from one major or high level activity to another minor or lower level one is likely to lead to confusion. Try to ensure that you are recording things at a consistent level. In a complex process, you may find that there are sub-processes which contribute to the main activities and you may decide that you want to capture these as a lower level process. Going back to the example above, there might be a number of lower level activities involved in the logging of an application.

If you think that you need to look at these in more detail, create a lower level map stemming from the activity box as demonstrated below. Avoid getting down to too low a level unless this is considered to be essential, as the scope for significant gains is likely to be limited.

Example of detailed lower level activity model



What will a completed process map look like?

The examples contained in this Annex are from schools involved in the pilot. They used the “post it” note method described in Section 3. The working versions were transferred onto a word processing package using the drawing facility. Having identified and implemented areas for improvement, a follow up exercise was undertaken in which the maps were revised to reflect changes to the process. This enabled the schools to easily and quickly identify improvements to the process.

In addition to helping you improve processes, the updated process maps can add value in other areas, such as the induction information for new staff, or informing governors about how certain tasks are carried out.

Annex C

Administrative tasks carried out by teachers

This Annex contains a list of common tasks carried out by teachers which should be transferred to support staff. The list is based on work in the pilot schools and also on other research on the use of teachers time and support staff. It is also confirmed in the National Agreement.

- Collecting money
- Chasing absences: teachers will need to inform the relevant member of staff when students are absent from their class or from school
- Bulk photocopying
- Copy typing
- Producing standard letters: teachers may be required to contribute as appropriate in formulating the content of standard letters
- Producing class lists: teachers may be required to be involved as appropriate in allocating students to a particular class
- Record keeping and filing: teachers may be required to contribute to the content of records
- Classroom display: teachers will make professional decisions in determining what material is displayed in and around their classroom
- Analysing attendance figures: it is for teachers to make use of the outcome of analysis
- Processing exam results: teachers will need to use the analysis of exam results
- Collating pupil reports
- Administering work experience: teachers may be required to support pupils on work experience (including through advice and visits)
- Administering examinations: teachers have a professional responsibility for identifying appropriate examinations for their pupils
- Administering teacher cover
- ICT trouble shooting and minor repairs
- Commissioning new ICT equipment
- Ordering supplies and equipment: teachers may be involved in identifying needs
- Stocktaking
- Cataloguing, preparing, issuing and maintaining equipment and materials
- Minuting meetings: teachers may be required to communicate action points from meetings
- Coordinating and submitting bids: teachers may be required to make a professional input into the content of bids
- Seeking and giving personnel advice

- Managing pupil data: teachers will need to make use of the analysis of pupil data
- Inputting pupil data: teachers will need to make the initial entry of pupil data into school management systems.

Annex D

User requirements

This is a statement of user requirements for a system for reporting to parents. It is based on a specification drawn up for one of the pilot schools and was circulated to software suppliers for their responses.

Purpose

1 This secondary school reports to parents on the performance of their children each half term and at the end of each term. A prototype system has been produced which uses a bespoke statement bank held in an Access database and outputs the reports to Word. This has enabled the school to clarify its requirements for such a system and these are summarised below.

2 The overall purposes of the system are to:
- reduce the burden for teachers and school administrative staff in producing those reports;
- improve the quality of reports to parents;
- use key stage assessment and non core assessment data.

3 The school is a SIMS user but does not have the Assessment Manager module installed. The Windows version of SIMS is in use.

4 The paragraphs below set out the requirements to be met by the Reports to Parents system. Suppliers are asked to indicate against each item the extent to which their system is compliant with these requirements by indicating:

F Fully compliant in current version;

NP Not compliant but planned for future version (indicate date expected);

P Partially compliant;

N Not compliant.

5 Suppliers are asked to indicate also:
- the software modules which will be required;
- the minimum hardware configuration to run these modules;
- the indicative costs for the software.

6 This specification is being sent to a limited number of suppliers in order to assess:
- the business case for installing such a system;

- the potential impact on the bureaucratic burden for schools;
- the availability of proprietary software or the need for software to be developed.

7 All information received will be treated as commercially sensitive. It is recognised that indicative prices quoted may vary if formal tenders are sought in due course.

Business requirements

8 The business requirements to be met by the system are set out in the tables below.

Table 1 – General System Requirements

Requirement	Response
General requirements – the system will:	
1.1 Be fully Windows compliant and allow data transfer to other systems using the appropriate links (e.g. to Word, Access and Excel)	
1.2 Be easy to install and require a minimum of training to use;	
1.3 Provide absolute integrity in terms of data quality and processing;	
1.4 Provide a secure audit trail facility for all transactions;	
1.5 Incorporate context sensitive help facilities;	
1.6 Provide a high level of security incorporating user defined passwords and access levels allowing users access to common data and the appropriate subject data;	
1.7 Provide on-line facilities to enable input by individual members of staff or in batches;	
1.8 In all interfaces and data storage, the century in any date must be specified either explicitly or by unambiguous algorithms or inferencing rules.	

Table 2 – Data Requirements

Requirement	Response
The requirement for data are set out below	
2.1 The system should provide a statement bank which can be amended to include bespoke statements or other proprietary statement banks.	
2.2 The statement banks should be held centrally and made available to all users.	
2.3 Users must be able to download the relevant statements and select the appropriate statements for report.	
2.4 Once selected the user must have the facility to amend individual statements on-line either.	
2.5 The system should provide templates in Word 97 to which individual reports can be exported.	
2.6 Once Word documents are created, they will be reviewed and amended by quality reviewers.	

Table 3 – Input Requirements

Requirement	Response
The system must be capable of receiving data in the following ways.	
3.1 On-line data entry through a networked PC.	
3.2 Batch outputs from the databases:	
• SIMS STAR Pupil personal details;	
• SIMS or other proprietary Assessment Manager database for Key stage assessments;	
• Non-core assessments including NFER-Nelson tests from SIMS or other proprietary database;	
3.3 Batch outputs from OMR readers.	

Table 4 – Process Requirements

Requirement	Response
The system must provide the following processing capabilities.	
4.1 Import and amendment of standard statements.	
4.2 Creation of database records for each report to parents.	
4.3 Updating of report database records when reports are amended.	
4.4 Flagging of database records to indicate quality reviews.	
4.5 Creation of Word 97 documents from a database session.	
4.6 Update Word documents from as a result of a database session.	
4.7 Statistical analysis including:	
• Value Added for individuals or groups;	
• Progression lines, predictions and targets;	
• Gap analysis – distance of individual pupils from targets.	

Table 5 – Output Requirements

Requirement	Response
The system must be capable of providing the following outputs	
5.1 Reports to parents as Word documents.	
5.2 User selected batch files for update of the Assessment database.	
5.3 A flexible extraction and reporting tool is required to produce reports within the system and to link to Microsoft Office tools.	
5.4 Flexible output to facilitate record transfer to other schools, initially SIMS schools but ultimately any school through the common basic dataset.	
5.5 Analysis data for the calculation of statistical analysis such as measurement of value added of individuals or groups.	

Annex E

What is benchmarking?

Benchmarking challenges assumptions about the way we do things by showing that alternatives do exist.

What can be benchmarked?

Almost anything can be benchmarked. The most common benchmarking is around expenditure and outputs. In schools this might relate to expenditure on different items of the budget (e.g. energy, teaching staff, non teaching staff, etc.) and exam and test scores (e.g. GCSE and SAT performance). But it can be used to compare processes too (e.g. how schools report to parents, how they organise governing body committees).

New staff members can contribute positively to your own benchmarking. You might ask them to produce a list for you at the end of each of their first three terms of “the things we used to do differently in my last school” with an asterisk for those which used less teacher time, less non-teaching staff time, or did the job better.

You could also use meetings of your professional association to share the different ways in which schools do things.

You might use a supply or training day to send a teacher to a range of neighbouring schools with the task of finding out how the other schools do the things you want to review.

Benchmarking expenditure

Many LEAs now provide such a “benchmarking” service to compare the costs of what one school does with another. Some LEAs produce annual tables of each school’s expenditure shown across a range of different categories (say teaching staff and non teaching staff). The best services show the different schools’ costs on a per pupil basis so that easy comparisons can be made. In the larger LEAs the service shows which schools are in the top and bottom bands of expenditure per pupil for each heading.

Using these tables, you can compare the amount per pupil you spent last year on, say, heating or even “broken windows” with other schools of a similar size and in a similar area. This can help you raise questions about your own school which would not arise otherwise.

Benchmarking processes

Benchmarking the different ways in which similar schools do things – as opposed to what they spend on them – is harder for the LEA to help with. As well as staff keeping their eyes and ears open for what their colleagues are doing in other schools, you might consider exchanging process maps with other schools so that they can comment on where their approach differs and why.

Interpreting results

Benchmarking rarely provides a simple solution and usually raises more questions than answers. In particular it will highlight a difference in cost, output or process but not the underlying reason for the difference. This is likely to require deeper examination.

No two schools are identical and so there will always be an issue of whether you are comparing like for like. But where significant differences are highlighted, be wary of excusing them solely on the grounds of their unique school characteristics without further investigation.

For further information you can visit the 'A to Z of School Leadership and Management' (http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/atoz) and look at topics such as 'Best Value' and 'Value for Money' within it.

See also the 'Looking for a Bursar?' document on the Cutting Burdens website at www.teachernet.gov.uk/cuttingburdens to find out how bursars/school business managers can use their expertise in benchmarking.

Annex F

Risk assessment and risk management

Any project is likely to involve some risks – good ideas not working as well in practice as in theory; key staff leaving just as they are getting to grips with what needs to be done; badly needed IT kit arriving late, not working as expected, or both.

These things are always likely to happen but the key is not to use them as an excuse for never starting any projects. Any project needs a balanced approach which avoids the extreme optimism of believing that nothing can ever go wrong or the extreme pessimism of suspecting nothing will go right.

Risk and the risk register

"Risk management" is the generic name for a set of techniques aimed at helping achieve this balance.

The first step in project risk management is **to think of all the risks you can**. Draw up a table of risks (known technically as a **risk register**). For each risk, you will need:

- a description of what the risk is (e.g. "key staff leave for other schools");
- some assessment of whether the risk is likely to happen ("not very likely"; "very likely"; "50-50", or whatever);
- notes on what the effect of the risk happening would be – particularly to the project costs and timescale ("we would need to train up a replacement, and we would be delayed three months");
- a date when the risk should be reviewed, to see if matters have become better or worse;
- a decision on when the risk will have passed ("by December we will not have to worry if (s)he does leave");
- to appoint someone to worry about it (the "risk owner").

You probably should not own all the risks of a project. So detail colleagues to keep an eye on the technology risks, the human resource risks, etc.

Contingency plans and countermeasures

There are two kinds of things you can do about risks:

- **countermeasures** – things you do **now** to lessen the impact of the risk, should it happen, e.g. ensuring that two people know about each aspect of the project, in case one leaves;
- **contingency plans** – plans that you make now but do not put into effect until the **future** if the risk starts to happen. You need to define what "the risk starts to happen" means, because it is not always obvious.

Reviewing risks

You will want to review risks in "batches", not one at a time, but you may not need to review each risk at every meeting. When reviewing a risk, consider the following questions:

1 If there was a countermeasure, has it worked? What further countermeasures might be needed?

2 If there is a contingency plan on file, is it still appropriate? Should it be implemented?

3 Has the risk now "gone away"?

4 If not, when should it be reviewed again?

Summary

By proceeding along these lines, it is possible to manage risks quite effectively. This will help ensure that you have done all you can to deliver a successful project.

Further information

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