Harnessing Technology local authorities survey 2007

Rupert Sinclair and Ed Mortimer

NatCen (National Centre for Social Research)

Prepared for Becta

July 2007

Contents

Executive summary

The web survey of local authorities was commissioned by Becta to complement the work on e-learning in schools. The survey presents information on how local authorities currently support the use of ICT in education and how Becta can assist in this process. Directors of children's services in a total of 154 authorities were invited to take part. Fieldwork took place in March and April 2007, with eligible responses from 75 authorities (49%).

Strategy/vision for ICT use in education

Three quarters (74%) of local authorities had in place a strategy or vision for the use of ICT in schools. Almost all of the other authorities that responded said that a strategy was being prepared. In those authorities with a strategy, almost half (47%) said that the strategy was reviewed systematically at least once per year. A further 22 per cent said they reviewed their strategy every 1-2 years. The same number said they reviewed theirs every 2-5 years.

More than nine in ten said that the authority's strategy incorporated three of the national priorities: the Every School Connected strategy (broadband) (98%), learning platforms (95%) and online learning space or e-portfolios for learners (91%).

The curriculum areas most frequently prioritised for ICT support by local authorities were mathematics (89%), ICT studies (85%), English (83%) and science (59%). The main reason given for this was that these curriculum areas are part of nationally-identified priorities or national initiatives.

Every Child Matters agenda

Respondents were asked to which key aspects of the Government's Every Child Matters agenda they felt their authority could make the most important contribution. Most of those responding (90%) highlighted the 'enjoy and achieve' strand, with over half (55%) choosing the 'be safe' strand.

One quarter of authorities (24%) already had a fully operational database for collecting indicator data for this agenda from schools, with a further 71 per cent saying that this was being planned.

When asked how this agenda impacted on the authority's capacity to provide ICT support to schools, half (49%) said that it had a positive effect on their capacity, with a further 40 per cent saying it made no difference. Only one in ten (10%) respondents said that the Every Child Matters agenda had a negative impact on the authority's capacity to support schools in the use of ICT.

Technical support services for schools

Almost half (47%) of authorities said that responsibility for co-ordinating and monitoring the provision of technical support services was shared between the local authority and its schools. Just over one quarter (29%) said that the schools were mainly or wholly responsible for this and 14 per cent said that the authority was mainly or wholly responsible. In a small number of authorities, a private contractor was responsible for providing this service.

Three quarters (77%) of respondents felt that the local authority should offer schools all the advice and support they needed on educational technologies. These respondents were split fairly evenly between those that felt they were already delivering (more or less) such a service (37%) and those that said their authority did not have the resources to deliver it (40%). The remaining quarter (23%) of authorities did not feel this was their role. However, all said that they did refer schools on to other service providers if necessary.

Almost all (96%) authorities used ICT to share information on learners between their own institutions. They were evenly split between those who shared information in this way as a rule (47%) and those who shared it only in specific situations (49%).

In one quarter (28%) of authorities, there was a single management information system used by schools and the authority. However, in most other areas (62%), while there were potentially several systems, these were compatible, thus enabling data to be exchanged. Only one in ten (10%) authorities did not have any integration of management information systems with their schools.

Just over one third of authorities (37%) said that they ran an integrated learning platform for all schools in their area, with one in five (21%) saying that they ran one for at least some schools. Sixteen per cent said that the authority did not run a learning platform, but that some schools in their area did. The remaining quarter (26%) said that there was not currently any provision of an integrated learning platform.

Almost all (94%) authorities employed an ICT curriculum adviser, with three quarters (78%) employing more than one full-time equivalent. Just over three quarters (79%) employed an ICT strategy manager, with over half (57%) employing at least one full-time equivalent.

Educational support for schools

All authorities provided advice or recommendations to subject teachers on digital resources for use in the curriculum. In one third of local authorities (37%), this was provided for all curriculum subject areas. In the remaining 63 per cent, there was provision for at least some curriculum areas.

Nine in ten (90 percent) authorities provided schools with access to digital resources for teaching and learning. Most of these (71%) provided such access to all schools, with 19 per cent making it available only to some schools in the area.

There was considerable variation in the provision of online support services for learners aged 14-19. Over half (54%) of local authorities provided an online prospectus, while two in five (40%) provided advice on pathways and careers. However, only one fifth (22%) provided online courses and a similar proportion (19%) said they provided no online support for this age group.

There were also noteworthy differences between authorities in the provision of an area-wide e-portfolio system for learners to record progress. One fifth (21%) were currently providing this for all learners, while 12 per cent provided it for some learners. In addition, seven per cent were implementing the provision during the 2006-07 academic year while over half (57%) planned to introduce e-portfolio systems in the 2007-08 academic year.

The use of ICT for hard-to-reach learners was promoted in some way by 89 per cent of authorities and not promoted at all in the remaining 11 per cent. In areas where ICT use for hard-to-reach learners was promoted, this mainly took the form of providing expertise (70%), providing equipment (47%) and providing specialised software (42%).

Procurement

Three quarters (73%) of local authorities said that they acted as aggregators of demand for schools in their area, facilitating large-scale purchasing of equipment and/or services. This service was not necessarily provided to all schools, but most reported that it covered the majority of schools in their area.

Becta's procurement frameworks were used by over three quarters (78%) of authorities. While Becta's were not the only procurement frameworks used, they were used more than any other.

Infrastructure and capacity to support schools

All authorities provided schools with advice about their ICT infrastructure, but this happened in different ways. Over half (60%) provided such advice on request, while just over one third (37%) did so systematically to all schools. The remaining three per cent employed an external organisation to provide this support.

One third (33%) felt that their capacity to support schools in using ICT had declined over the previous two years, with just over one quarter (29%) reporting that the authority's capacity had increased in that period.

Development and monitoring

Most authorities (82%) felt that the most important aspect of ICT to monitor in schools was its use in learning and teaching. Typically, ICT standards in schools were formally monitored through ICT advisers visiting schools (88%), reviewing Ofsted inspection data (87%), reviewing feedback from School Improvement Partners (64%) and reviewing the Ofsted self-evaluation form. Most authorities (89%) already had a formal system in place to monitor levels of use of broadband bandwidth by schools.

Headteachers' needs for continuing professional development in ICT were assessed by the headteachers themselves in two thirds (64%) of authorities. Local authorities did this assessment in just ten per cent of areas. This contrasted with authorities' views on who should be responsible for assessing these needs; over one third (38%) thought this assessment should be carried out centrally by the local authority, half (47%) thought it should be carried out by the schools, and the remaining 16 per cent felt it should be carried out by another organisation.

Almost all local authorities provided ICT training for school staff other than headteachers. Ninety-four per cent provided training for teachers. The same proportion provided training for learning assistants and other classroom support staff. Also, 92 per cent provided ICT training for school administrative staff.

Over half (53%) of authorities felt that the self-review framework was a very effective tool for assessing standards of ICT leadership and use in schools, with a further 40 per cent rating it as fairly effective.

E-safety and e-security

All local authorities taking part in the survey provided guidelines on e-safety and e-security and almost all (96%) made use of Becta's advice in these areas.

Local authorities provided a range of services to enhance e-safety and e-security. Most commonly these were guidelines on safe internet browsing (88%), authority-wide security and/or firewalls for all schools (87%) and advice on network security and firewalls (68%).

Most areas (91%) alerted schools to the existence of Becta's material on these topics. However, many areas went further than this; three quarters (76%) used Becta's advice to inform the writing of the authority's own policy and advice to schools. Almost the same proportion (74%) used the material in training courses and continuing professional development. Only four per cent of authorities that responded did not make use of Becta's material.

Knowledge of and contact with Becta

Almost all (94%) respondents knew about the support that Becta could provide. These were split evenly between those who said they knew precisely what Becta could offer (46%) and those who said they knew more or less (48%). Becta's services and advice were felt to be most helpful to authorities in the areas of e-safety (88%), ICT leadership and the self-review framework (88%), emerging technologies (78%), dissemination of effective practice (78%), procurement (66%) and learning and teaching (65%). All respondents felt that Becta's services were of use in at least one area.

When asked whether they would be positive about Becta, nearly three quarters (72%) said they would, while one quarter (24%) said they would be neutral. Four per cent said they would be critical of Becta if asked.

Email was local authorities' preferred mode of communication with Becta, chosen by two thirds (64%) of respondents.

Conclusions

The majority of local authorities that responded to the survey were genuinely engaged with their local schools over the use of ICT in teaching and learning. They were also working closely with the schools to support ICT use. A minority of authorities was less engaged with their schools on one or more of the issues covered in the survey.

Most authorities recognised Becta as a source of support and advice on the use of ICT in education. Becta was widely used by local authorities and was generally rated highly by them.

Strategies on ICT use

Almost all local authorities had a written strategy on ICT use in schools or were preparing one. Also, almost all those with a strategy in place involved at least some schools in drawing it up. The great majority had plans for a regular systematic review of the strategy, with almost half doing this at least annually.

local authorities' strategies on ICT use in schools were strongly influenced by national priorities and initiatives, particularly the Every School Connected strategy, learning platforms and the provision of e-portfolios.

Support for schools

Most authorities were closely involved in supporting, enabling and advising on the use of digital resources for teaching and learning in schools. All authorities provided at least some level of support and/or advice on e-safety and e-security issues.

There was widespread support and provision for the professional development and training of headteachers, classroom teachers, administrative and support staff in the use of ICT.

Views on Becta

Local authorities responding to the survey were very aware of Becta and the support that it offered local authorities in relation to the use of ICT in education. Most authorities made use of Becta's support, particularly in e-safety and e-security, the self-review framework and, to a lesser degree, procurement.

Almost three quarters of respondents said that they would be positive about Becta, and only a very small minority felt negatively towards the agency.

1   Introduction

A.1 Background

This report presents the findings of the local authorities study conducted by the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen) on behalf of Becta.

Becta is responsible to the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) for the e-strategy, Harnessing Technology: transforming learning and children's services. A key feature of this work focuses on improving educational institutions' use of technology for learning.

The purpose of this study was to develop an understanding of how local authorities currently support the use of ICT in schools and how Becta can best assist local authorities in doing this.

A.2 Survey objectives and methodology

This online survey of local authorities was conceived as an adjunct to the Harnessing Technology Schools Survey. As well as extending Becta's evidence base, this survey was intended to support Becta's work with local authorities. It would do this by complementing findings from the e-learning in schools survey in relation to the operation of the self-review framework for local authorities.

This survey was conducted during March and April 2007. Data were collected via an online questionnaire hosted by Gide. The questionnaire had been developed jointly by Becta and NatCen. The questionnaire focused on:

- how local authorities support ICT development in their schools
- the capacity of local authorities to provide this support on an ongoing basis
- current technology-related policy and practice in the delivery of the Every Child Matters agenda.

The initial contacts for the survey were directors of children's services in each local authority in England. In many cases, directors asked a colleague/colleagues to complete the questionnaire (or parts of it) on their behalf. However, it is not possible to state how many directors delegated responsibility for completing the survey.

Representatives of 154 local authorities (those in England plus Jersey, Guernsey and the Falkland Islands) were invited to take part. Following an initial advance letter, respondents were sent an email at the start of fieldwork on 2 March 2007, with a link to the questionnaire as well as a unique access password for their local authority. This was followed at subsequent stages by a letter reminder, a telephone reminder, a further email reminder and, finally, a targeted telephone reminder.

Letters and emails were sent by NatCen's research team and telephone reminder calls were made by NatCen's Telephone Unit. The final targeted telephone chase was carried out by Becta. Details of these fieldwork stages can be found in the technical report.

Respondents could access the questionnaire at any time during the fieldwork period (2 March to 25 April 2007) and could save their answers to return at another time. This enabled them to find answers that might not be immediately available. They could also refer the survey (or parts of it) on to colleagues who might be better placed to answer some questions. Respondents could move freely through the questionnaire and were not forced to give an answer to one question before moving on to another. While this had the advantage of avoiding a situation where a respondent might give up, it also meant that it was not possible to check that all relevant questions were answered.

Calculating a response rate for the survey is complicated. In total, 88 respondents out of the 154 contacted (57%) accessed the survey's 'welcome page', and this would be the highest estimate. However, some of these answered no questions or very few and these have been discounted. Sixty-nine respondents (45%) reached the final page of the questionnaire, though only 63 (41%) of these had clicked on the 'submit' button to confirm that they had completed their questionnaires. This figure of 41 per cent would be the lowest estimate of response rate. However, many of those who had accessed the survey answered sufficient questions to be considered as valid partial responses. These were included in the analysis. Taking the partials together with completed questionnaires, the overall number of useable responses was 75 (49%).

A.3 Analysis

1.3.1 Interpretation of tables

Weights have not been applied to the figures presented in this report. The purpose of non-response weighting is to correct for known bias in a dataset. For example, certain groups may be over-represented, because they were more likely to respond. Data in this report was checked for bias due to differential response and no evidence of bias was found, meaning that weights were not required. As such, tables and figures in this report show unweighted percentages, means and base sizes.

The following symbols have been used in tables in this report:

[ ]   to indicate a percentage based on fewer than 50 respondents

*   to indicate a percentage value of less than 0.5 per cent

–   to indicate a percentage value of zero.

Non-responders have been excluded from the bases of all tables and figures. Respondents who entered the questionnaire, but answered fewer than seven questions have also been excluded.

Answers given by all respondents should be taken to reflect the policies of the local authority and not the personal views or opinions of the respondent. The terms 'respondent' (as in 'Approximately one quarter of respondents…') and 'local authority' (as in 'The majority of local authorities…') are used interchangeably throughout the report.

A.4   Report structure

Chapter 2 presents findings on leadership and policy issues relating to the use of ICT in schools, including ICT strategies and the impact of the Government's Every Child Matters agenda. Chapter 3 focuses on the supply of ICT hardware and support to schools, as well as ICT funding. Chapter 4 examines how different aspects of ICT usage in schools are monitored as well as the support and training provided by the local authority. Finally, chapter 5 looks at local authorities' awareness of, and views on, Becta and the self-review framework.

Also included are authorities' general suggestions for ways in which the use of ICT in education could be improved.

2   Leadership and policy

This chapter presents findings on leadership and policy issues relating to the use of ICT in schools. First, the chapter looks at ICT visions and strategies that are in place at the local authority. It then explores elements of policy and types of school that are prioritised under the ICT strategy or vision. The chapter concludes by looking at the impact of the Government's Every Child Matters agenda on the way in which support is provided to schools.

A.1 Vision and strategy

2.1.1 Formulation of strategy

Respondents were asked whether the local authority had a written strategy or vision in place for the use of ICT in schools (hereafter referred to as 'strategy')[1].

Three quarters of local authorities (74%) reported having a strategy in place, with the remaining quarter (25%) not having one.

Seventy-three per cent said the strategy was drafted by the local authority. Only one per cent said the strategy was not drafted by the local authority.

The 25 per cent who said that they did not have strategy in place, comprised 24 per cent reporting that a strategy was being planned and one per cent saying that a strategy was not being planned.

Table 2.1 Whether a written strategy is in place for the use of ICT in schools

	Percentage
Yes, but it was not drafted by the local authority	1
Yes, and it was drafted by the local authority	73
No, but it was being planned / prepared	24
No, and it was not being planned / prepared	1
Base	74

Base: all respondents answering.

Note: one respondent did not answer this question. As with all tables, percentages have been calculated from the responding base.

---

[1] In the Harnessing Technology Schools Study (2006), 98 per cent of primary schools and 91 per cent of secondary schools had a written strategy for ICT. Nearly all headteachers (94% primary, 83% secondary) said that the local authority had provided information and advice that influenced the school's e-learning strategy.

Local authorities reporting that a strategy was in place were asked to identify the national priorities that were incorporated within this.

Nearly all local authorities (98%) reported that the strategy incorporated the Every School Connected initiative (broadband) and learning platforms (95%), while approximately nine in ten reported that it incorporated an online learning space for every child (91%). Between one half and two thirds said that the strategy incorporated the Computers for Pupils initiative (64%), the Building Schools for the Future programme (62%), e-assessment (58%) and universal access to technology for learners at home (55%).

Table 2.2 National priorities incorporated within strategy

	Percentage
Every School Connected (broadband)	98
Learning platforms	95
An online learning space for every child/e-portfolio	91
Computers for Pupils	64
Building Schools for the Future	62
E-assessment	58
Universal access to technology for learners at home	55
None	-
Base	55

Base: all respondents reporting that a strategy was in place for the use of ICT in schools (either drafted by the local authority or not drafted by the local authority).

Note: percentages sum to more than 100 as respondents could select more than one category.

Local authorities reporting that they had an ICT strategy in place, were asked whether schools in their area had been actively involved in formulating this strategy.

The vast majority of local authorities (98%) reported that schools in their area had been involved in this process in some capacity. It was most common for local authorities to report that some schools had been involved, with 42 per cent saying that schools selected by the local authority had participated and 29 per cent saying that some schools had volunteered to take part. One quarter of local authorities (27%) reported that all or most schools in their area had been actively involved in this process.

Table 2.3 Whether schools were actively involved in formulating strategy

	Percentage
Yes, all or most schools	27
Yes, some schools, ie (mainly) schools selected for this process	42
Yes, some schools, ie (mainly) schools that volunteered to participate	29
No	2
Base	*55*

Base: all respondents reporting that a strategy was in place for the use of ICT in schools (either drafted by the local authority or not drafted by the local authority).

The vast majority of local authorities said that their strategy was scheduled to be reviewed on a systematic basis (93%).

Around half (47%) said that their strategy was reviewed on at least an annual basis, while just over one fifth reported that it was scheduled to be reviewed once every 1-2 years (22%) or 2-5 years (22%).

Table 2.4 Whether strategy was reviewed on a systematic basis

	Percentage
On an annual basis or more often	47
Every 1-2 years	22
Every 2-5 years	22
Less often than once every 5 years	2
It is not reviewed systematically	7
Base	*55*

Base: all respondents reporting that a strategy was in place for the use of ICT in schools (either drafted by the local authority or not drafted by the local authority).

Local authorities reporting that they reviewed their strategy systematically, were asked to rate the importance of monitoring and evaluating four aspects. These are:

- whether planned activities are being realised (timely and as agreed)
- the extent to which the activities are effective in achieving their objectives

- the extent to which the effects of the activities contribute to your vision
- how cost-effective planned activities are being implemented.

All respondents considered the monitoring and evaluating of all four aspects to be important (either fairly or very).

Respondents were least likely to think the cost-effectiveness of planned activities was very important (56%).

Table 2.5 Rating of importance of monitoring/evaluating aspects of strategy during review process

	Very important	**Fairly important**	**Base**
Implementation – whether planned activities are being realised (timely and as agreed)	80%	20%	50%
Effectiveness – the extent to which the activities are effective in achieving their objectives	88%	12%	50%
Impact – the extent to which the effects of the activities contribute to your vision	92%	8%	50%
Efficiency - how cost-effective are the planned activities being implemented	56%	44%	50%

Base: all respondents reporting that a strategy was in place for the use of ICT in schools (either drafted by the local authority or not drafted by the local authority) and the strategy was reviewed systematically.

Note: one respondent did not answer this question. As with all tables, percentages have been calculated from the responding base.

2.1.2 Strategic Leadership of ICT programme

Almost all local authorities (96%) reporting that they reviewed their strategy systematically actively encouraged headteachers to participate in the Strategic Leadership of ICT programme, which is delivered by the National College for School Leadership.

Eighty-four per cent reported that all headteachers were encouraged to participate, with a further 12 per cent saying that selected teachers were encouraged to participate.

Table 2.6 Whether headteachers are encouraged to participate in the Strategic Leadership of ICT programme

	Percentage
Yes, all headteachers	84
Yes, selected headteachers	12
No	4
Base	*50*

Base: all respondents reporting that a strategy was in place for the use of ICT in schools (either drafted by the local authority or not drafted by the local authority) and the strategy was reviewed systematically.[2]

Note: one respondent did not answer this question. As with all tables, percentages have been calculated from the responding base.

2.1.3 School improvement partners

Respondents were next asked whether the work of School improvement partners had been valuable in supporting the use of ICT in schools in their local authority.

Respondents tended to be dissatisfied with the work of School improvement partners, and were twice as likely to have found their work to be not valuable (36%) as valuable (19%).[3]

Forty-five per cent said that they were unable to assess the value of School improvement partners.

Table 2.7 Extent to which School improvement partners have been valuable in supporting the use of ICT in schools

	Percentage
Very valuable	5
Quite valuable	14
Not very valuable	31
Not at all valuable	5
Cannot assess	45
Base	*74*

Base: all respondents answering

Note: one respondent did not answer this question. As with all tables, percentages have been calculated from the responding base.

---

[2] This question should have been asked of all respondents. However, because of a routing error in the questionnaire, it was only asked of 51 respondents (filtered as shown in the Base description), rather than 75.
[3] This difference is statistically significant.

A.2 Policy priorities

2.2.1 Prioritised elements of strategy

Local authorities with a written strategy for ICT in schools were asked identify up to three elements that had been given priority in their strategy from a list.

Two thirds (66%) identified 'personalising learning by means of ICT' as a priority, and half (51%) identified 'ICT supporting pedagogical innovations' as a priority. They identified 'using ICT for educational administration' as a priority in 42 per cent of cases, with a similar proportion (45%) identifying 'ICT to support inclusion of learners'. One quarter of local authorities reported that 'school staff professional development in using ICT' (23%) and 'online safety (e-safety)/provisions for safe use of the internet' (23%) were priorities.

Table 2.8 Elements given priority in strategy

	Percentage
Personalising learning by means of ICT	66
ICT supporting pedagogical innovations	51
ICT to support inclusion of learners	45
Using ICT for educational administration (such as management information systems)	42
School staff professional development in using ICT	23
Online safety (e-safety)/provisions for safe use of for safe use of the internet	23
Bridging the digital divide	9
ICT skills development for learners	8
Teacher time saving/teacher productive time	8
Systems' security	4
Other	9
None	-
Base	53

Base: all respondents reporting that a strategy was in place for the use of ICT in schools (either drafted by the local authority or not drafted by the local authority).

Note: two respondents did not answer this question. As with all tables, percentages have been calculated from the responding base.

Note: percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could select more than one category.

2.2.2 Areas prioritised for ICT support

Next, respondents were asked to identify, from a list, the single most important factor in prioritising ICT support in their local authority.

Phase (primary/secondary) was considered most important in 17 per cent of local authorities. However, the majority of respondents (61%) reported that the most important factor for their local authority was something not listed ('other'). When asked to specify these other factors, many of these respondents said that the varying needs of individual schools were the most important consideration. A few reported that all schools in their area received equal levels of support. Nineteen per cent of respondents said that there was no single most important factor in prioritising ICT support.

Table 2.9 Single most important factor in prioritising ICT support in local authority

	Percentage
Phase	17
Level of socio-economic deprivation/free school meals	3
Geographic location	0
Other	61
None	19
Base	*70*

Base: all respondents answering

Note: five respondents did not answer this question. As with all tables, percentages have been calculated from the responding base.

Those reporting that phase of schooling was the single most important factor in prioritising ICT support, were asked to identify the school type which was the main recipient of ICT support in their local authority. Of the 12 respondents that were asked this question, nine reported that primary schools were the main recipients and three reported that secondary schools were the main recipients.

Respondents were then asked to identify up to five curriculum areas which receive the highest priority when deploying the local authority's ICT support (across all educational phases).

Maths (89%), English (83%) and ICT (85%) were prioritised in the largest proportion of local authorities. Fifty-nine per cent of local authorities reported that science was prioritised.

A small minority reported that geography (6%), physical education (3%) and history (2%) were priorities. No respondents reported that religious education was a priority.

Table 2.10 Curriculum areas with highest priority for ICT support

	Percentage
Maths	89
ICT	85
English	83
Science	59
Technology and Design	29
Modern Foreign Languages	21
Geography	6
Physical Education	3
History	2
Religious Education	-
Base	66

Base: all respondents answering

Note: nine respondents did not answer this question. As with all tables, percentages have been calculated from the responding base.

Note: percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could select more than one category.

For each curriculum area identified as a priority, respondents were asked to select a reason from the following list:

- Evidence says ICT is most effective/valuable in this subject.
- For this subject, most ICT resources (for instance, educational software) are available.
- In this subject, there are most weaknesses in schools' achievement.
- This subject is nationally prioritised/as part of a national initiative.
- Other reason.

Respondents tended to report that the national prioritisation of a subject was the main reason for it being prioritised for ICT support by their local authority. For maths (73%), English (80%) and ICT (45%) respondents were significantly more likely to select this than any other reason.

Reasons for prioritising technology and design differed from other subjects, with many citing evidence that ICT is most effective in this subject. National prioritisation of the subject was not cited as a reason by any respondents, suggesting that no such prioritisation is in place.

Table 2.11 Main reason for selecting curriculum area as a priority

	Evidence says ICT most effective/ valuable	Most ICT resources available	Weaknesses in schools' achievement	Nationally prioritised/ national initiative	Other	Base
Maths	7%	5%	7%	73%	8%	59%
Science	[13%]	[15%]	[8%]	[44%]	[21%]	39%
English	2%	2%	7%	80%	9%	55%
Modern Foreign Languages	[21%]	[14%]	[7%]	[14%]	[43%]	14%
ICT	13%	15%	15%	45%	13%	55%
Technology and Design	[47%]	[26%]	-	-	[26%]	19%

Base: respondents identifying subject area as 'highest priority'.

2.2.3 National policy initiatives

Respondents were asked to identify national policy initiatives that were being evaluated by the local authority. Eighty per cent reported that at least one such initiative was being evaluated. Half of the local authorities said that the Computers for Pupils (49%) and Building Schools for the Future (48%) schemes were being evaluated, while the Hands on Support programme was being evaluated at 38 per cent. The Schools Whiteboards Expansion project was being evaluated in around one third of local authorities (32%).

Table 2.12 National policy initiatives being evaluated by the local authority

	Percentage
Computers for Pupils	49
Building Schools for the Future	48
Hands on Support	38
Schools Whiteboards Expansion	32
Other	9
None of these	20
Base	69

Base: all respondents answering.

Note: six respondents did not answer this question. As with all tables, percentages have been calculated from the responding base.

Note: percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could select more than one category.

A.3 Every Child Matters agenda

Every Child Matters is a new government approach to the well-being of children and young people from birth to age 19.

Respondents were presented with a list of the five key aspects of the Every Child Matters agenda and were asked to asses the importance of the ICT contribution to each on a scale from one (most important contribution) to five (least important). They used each number only once.

The five aspects of the Every Child Matters agenda:

1   Be safe.
2   Be healthy.
3   Enjoy and achieve.
4   Contribute to society.
5   Achieve economic well-being.

Local authorities felt they could make the most important contribution to the 'enjoy and achieve' aspect of the agenda, with 90 per cent selecting either category one or two (the 'most important' categories).

Local authorities felt least able to make an important contribution to the 'stay healthy' aspect of the agenda, with only eight per cent selecting categories one and two.

Figure 2.1 Percentage of respondents selecting categories one or two (categories indicating they could make the most important contribution)
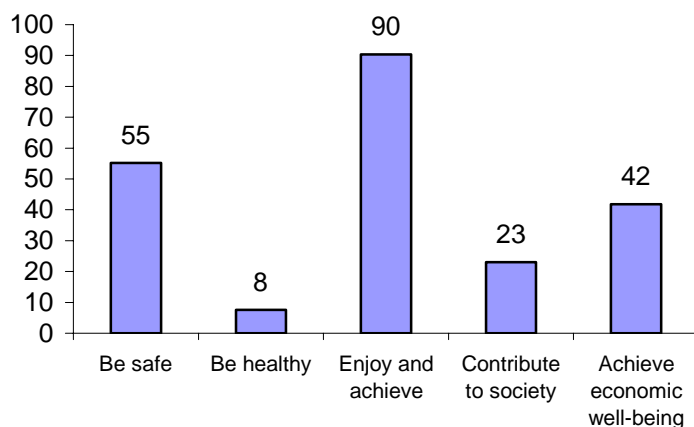
Base size: Be safe, 58; Be healthy, 66; Enjoy and achieve, 62; Contribute to society, 65; Achieve economic well-being, 67.

Base: all respondents answering.

Respondents were asked to asses the impact that the Every Child Matters agenda has had on the local authority's capacity to provide ICT support to schools. Forty per cent of respondents reported that there had been no impact on their capacity to provide ICT support. A similar proportion (49%) felt that there had been a positive impact (either small or significant) and one in ten (10%) felt there had been a negative impact (either small or significant).

Table 2.13 Impact of the Every Child Matters agenda on the local authority's capacity to provide ICT support to schools

	Percentage
A significant positive effect	12
A small positive effect	37
No effect	40
A small negative effect	9
A significant negative effect	1
Base	67

Base: all respondents answering.

Note: eight respondents did not answer this question. As with all tables, percentages have been calculated from the responding base.

Respondents were asked whether their local authority had a fully operational database for the collection of Every Child Matters indicator data from schools. Only a quarter of local authorities (24%) reported that they had such a database.

In the majority of cases, local authorities reported that they did not have such a database at present but planning was underway for one (71%). A small minority (5%) said that they did not have one and no such plans were in place.

Table 2.14 Whether local authority has a fully operational database for the collection of Every Child Matters indicator data from schools

	Percentage
Yes	24
No, but we are planning for this	71
No, and this is not being planned	5
Base	63

Base: all respondents answering.

Note: twelve respondents did not answer this question. As with all tables, percentages have been calculated from the responding base.

A.4 Summary

- Three quarters of local authorities (74%) reported having a strategy in place for the use of ICT in schools.

- Among local authorities with a strategy in place, nearly all reported that the strategy incorporated the Every School Connected initiative (broadband) (98%) and learning platforms (95%). About nine in ten reported that the authority incorporated an online learning space for every child (91%).

- Ninety-eight per cent of local authorities with a strategy in place reported that at least some schools in their area had been actively involved in formulating that strategy.

- Among local authorities with a strategy in place, two thirds (66%) identified 'personalising learning by means of ICT' and half (51%) identified 'ICT supporting pedagogical innovations' as priorities in their strategy. 'Using ICT for educational administration' was identified as a priority in 42 per cent of cases, with a similar proportion (45%) identifying 'ICT to support inclusion of learners'.

- Maths (89%), ICT (85%) and English (83%) were prioritised when deploying the local authority's ICT support resources in the largest proportion of local authorities. Respondents tended to report that the

national prioritisation of a subject was the main reason for it being prioritised for ICT support.

- With regard to the five key aspects of the government's Every Child Matters agenda, local authorities felt they could make the most important contribution to the 'enjoy and achieve' aspect and the least important contribution to the 'stay healthy' aspect.

- Regarding the impact of the Every Child Matters agenda on the local authorities' capacity to provide ICT support to schools, 40 per cent reported that there had been no impact, while a similar proportion (49%) felt there had been a positive impact. One in ten (10%) felt there had been a negative impact.

3   Resources and organisation

Chapter 3 focuses on the supply of ICT hardware and support to schools, as well as ICT funding. It begins by examining the organisation of technical support at the local authority, as well as managed service provision agreements and learning platforms. The chapter then moves on to look at the procurement of ICT equipment, before finally considering funding streams.

A.1   Organisation

3.1.1 Responsibility for technical support/advice

Responsibility for co-ordinating and monitoring the provision of technical support services was shared between the local authority and schools in about half of local authorities (47%). Among the remaining local authorities, schools were twice as likely to be responsible (either mainly or wholly) for these tasks (29%) compared with local authorities themselves (14%).[4]

Table 3.1   Responsibility for co-ordinating/monitoring the provision of technical support services

	Percentage
The local authority is mainly or wholly responsible	14
The schools are mainly or wholly responsible	29
Responsibility is shared between the local authority and the schools	47
A private sector provider under managed service contract is responsible	6
Other	4
Base	70

Base: all respondents answering.

Note: five respondents did not answer this question. As with all tables, percentages have been calculated from the responding base.

---

[4] In the Harnessing Technology Schools Study (2006) 46 per cent of primary schools and 28 per cent of secondary schools obtained technical support and maintenance services through the local authority. In 22 per cent of primary schools and one per cent of secondary schools a local authority support service was responsible for network maintenance.

Respondents were asked whether they adhered to the idea that local authorities should offer schools all the advice and support they need on educational technologies and if so, whether their authority was delivering this approach.

Three quarters reported that they did adhere to this idea (77%), with the remaining quarter saying that they did not (23%). Among those who adhered to the idea, there was a fairly even split between the proportion reporting they were 'more or less delivering it' (37%) and those who said they did 'not have the resources to deliver it' (40%). Among those who did not adhere to the idea, all (23%) said that they referred schools to other service providers if necessary.

Table 3.2   Whether the authority adheres to the idea that they should offer schools all the advice/support they need on educational technologies

	Percentage
Yes, and we are more or less delivering it	37
Yes, but we do not have the resources to realise it	40
No, we but we do refer schools on to other service providers if necessary	23
No, we believe schools should take responsibility for finding their own way	-
No position	-
Base	70

Base: all respondents answering.

Note: five respondents did not answer this question. As with all tables, percentages have been calculated from the responding base

In nearly all cases (96%), the local authority used ICT to share learner information between its own institutions (for instance, to support transition between phases or schools). Local authorities were evenly split between those who shared information in this way as a rule (47%) and those who shared it only in specific situations (49%).

3.1.2 Sharing learner information

Table 3.3 Whether the local authority uses ICT to share learner information between its own institutions

	Percentage
Yes, we do this as a rule	47
Yes, but only in specific situations	49
No	4
Base	68

Base: all respondents answering.

Note: seven respondents did not answer this question. As with all tables, percentages have been calculated from the responding base.

3.1.3 Management information systems

Nine in ten local authorities reported that their management information systems were integrated with the systems in their schools. They were twice as likely to report that several compatible systems were used (62%), than that a single system was used by all (28%).

One in ten local authorities did not have management information systems that were integrated with the systems in their schools.

Table 3.4 Whether local authority's management information systems are integrated with the systems of its schools

	Percentage
Yes, there is a single system everyone uses	28
Yes, there are several systems, but they are compatible (enable data to be exchanged)	62
No	10
Base	69

Base: all respondents answering.

Note: six respondents did not answer this question. As with all tables, percentages have been calculated from the responding base.

3.1.4 Managed service provision

A managed services provision is an arrangement by which ICT resources are provided with full service, including technical support and maintenance. Respondents were asked to indicate the local authority's position on managed services provision for ICT resources in schools.

Local authorities were split with regard to their position on these. Half (50%) left this decision to the schools themselves. Among the remaining half, one third (31%) recommended managed services provision, but did not provide them, and one fifth (19%) arranged them for their schools.

Table 3.5 Local authority's position on managed services provision for ICT resources in schools

	Percentage
We arrange this provision for our schools	19
We recommend this to our schools	31
We leave this entirely to the discretion of the schools	50
We do not recommend this / advise against it	0
Base	68

Base: all respondents answering.

Note: seven respondents did not answer this question. As with all tables, percentages have been calculated from the responding base.

3.1.5 Learning platforms

Local authorities varied in their approach to integrated learning platforms. In all, 42 per cent reported that they did not run an integrated learning platform for their schools, while 58 per cent reported that they ran one for at least some of their schools[5].

---

[5] In the Harnessing Technology Schools Study (2006) 11 per cent of primary schools and 46 per cent of secondary schools had a learning platform.

Table 3.6   Whether local authority runs an integrated learning platform for its schools

	Percentage
Yes, for all schools	37
Yes, for some schools	21
No, but some schools have their own	16
No/not yet	26
Base	70

Base: all respondents answering.

Note: five respondents did not answer this question. As with all tables, percentages have been calculated from the responding base.

Local authorities reporting that they did not have an integrated learning platform were asked what stage their planning for this had reached. Of the 29 local authorities who answered this question (13 did not answer), all said that they had begun the planning process. However, only two schools had reached the point of implementation.

3.1.6 Curriculum advisers and ICT strategy managers

Respondents were then asked whether they had a designated ICT curriculum adviser and strategy manager and, if so, the number of full-time equivalent posts for each job title.

Nearly all local authorities reported having a designated ICT curriculum adviser (94%), with around four fifths (78%) saying they had at least one full-time equivalent post.

Local authorities were less likely to report having an ICT strategy manager, though over three quarters had someone in this role (79%).

Table 3.7   Whether local authority has a designated ICT curriculum adviser/ICT strategy manager

	No/none	Yes - less than one full-time equivalent (fte)	Yes - one fte	Yes - more than one fte	Base
ICT curriculum adviser	6%	15%	48%	30%	66%
ICT strategy manager	21%	22%	49%	8%	63%

Base: all respondents answering.

Note: nine respondents did not answer part a (regarding the ICT curriculum adviser) and 12 respondents did answer part b (regarding the ICT strategy manager). As with all tables, percentages have been calculated from the responding base.

A.2 Procurement

In three quarters of cases (73%), local authorities reported that they acted as aggregators of demand for schools wishing to purchase ICT equipment and services.

Those reporting that they acted as aggregators of demand were asked to indicate the proportion of schools in their area for which they provided this service. Of the 49 respondents who answered this question, 19 said that they provided such a service for all schools, 22 for some schools, four for about half of schools and four for less than half of schools.

All respondents were asked to specify the frameworks that they used when running ICT procurement competitions. Respondents were allowed to select more than one category as local authorities can use more than one framework. 'Becta frameworks' (78%) were most commonly used, while 'Regional Broadband Consortium' and 'own procurement' frameworks were both used by 54 per cent of local authorities.

Table 3.8   Frameworks used to conduct ICT procurement competitions

	Percentage
Becta frameworks	78
Own procurement framework	54
Regional Broadband Consortium frameworks	54
Regional Buying Consortia frameworks	32
Office of Government Commerce frameworks	24
Other	7
Base	68

Base: all respondents answering.

Note: seven respondents did not answer this question. As with all tables, percentages have been calculated from the responding base.

Note: percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could select more than one category.

Those reporting that they did not use Becta frameworks to conduct ICT procurement competitions were asked why they did not. Of the 15 respondents who answered this question, 10 said that Becta frameworks were not their preferred option. A further four respondents were not aware of the Becta frameworks and one did not understand how to use them.

Respondents reporting that Becta frameworks were not their preferred option for conducting ICT procurement competitions were asked to explain their reasons for this in an open question format. Ten respondents were routed to this question, but not all provided an answer. Among those who did, two reported using other providers and one mentioned past technical difficulties in accessing and using Becta frameworks. Another mentioned partial use of Becta frameworks, saying that they used Becta frameworks for anti-virus software purchase and also 'as part of the South West Grid for Learning's learning platform procurement'. Otherwise, they used a 'school quote to aggregate demand.

A.3 Funding streams

3.3.1 Importance of funding streams

Respondents were asked to indicate the importance of a number of funding streams in supporting the use of ICT in schools with regard to their total spending in this area. For each funding stream they were asked to evaluate its importance at present as well as their expectation of its importance in 1-2 years' time.

With the exception of 'EC-subsidies and EC-funding', all funding sources listed were considered to be important at present as well as in 1-2 years.

'Standards funding' was considered the most important present source of funding with almost all respondents (97%) saying it was 'very' or 'moderately' important. About two thirds considered the 'central local authority budget' (64%) and 'buy-back' (63%) to be either 'very' or 'moderately' important.

Similar levels of importance were expected for the listed funding sources in 1-2 years time, the only exception being a decrease in the importance of 'standards funding' (85% compared with 97%).

Six respondents cited other sources of funding, of which three mentioned the Building Schools for the Future programme.

Table 3.9   Importance of different funding streams in supporting the use of ICT

	Very important source of funding	Moderately important source of funding	Source of funding of limited importance	Insignificant / nil	Cannot assess	Base
Central local authority budget						
Present	34%	30%	10%	21%	4%	67%
In 1-2 years	32%	23%	20%	17%	9%	66%
Standards funding						
Present	88%	9%	-	1%	1%	67%
1-2 years	75%	10%	6%	1%	7%	67%
Buy-back						
Present	48%	15%	21%	14%	2%	66%
1-2 years	56%	18%	15%	5%	6%	66%
EC-subsidies/EC-funding						
Present	6%	2%	13%	58%	21%	62%
1-2 years	5%	10%	13%	42%	31%	62%

Base: all respondents answering.

Note: numbers of respondents not answering: central local authority budget 8/9; standards funding 8/8; buy-back 9/9, EC-subsidies/EC-funding 13/13.

3.3.2 Shortfalls in funding

Respondents were asked how they mainly intended to meet potential funding gaps created by a decrease in funding or rising costs of supporting ICT in schools, if such funding gaps were expected.

Eighty-six percent of local authorities said that they did expect a funding gap. They most commonly reported that the shortfall would be met through contributions from schools (45%).

Table 3.10 How local authority intends to close funding gap created by decrease in funding/rising costs

	Percentage
Mainly by contributions from schools	45
Mainly by reducing our services	17
Mainly by internal changes in organisation	6
Mainly by applying for funding from separate sources	5
Mainly by applying for more national funding	3
Other	9
We do not expect a funding shortfall/not applicable	14
Base	64

Base: all respondents answering.

Note: eleven respondents did not answer this question. As with all tables, percentages have been calculated from the responding base.

3.3.3 Capacity to support schools

Taking all factors into account (including financial factors) respondents were asked whether their overall capacity to support schools in using ICT was higher or lower compared with two years ago.

Similar proportions reported that their capacity was higher (29%) and lower (33%) than before. The remainder (38%) said that their overall capacity to support schools in this area was roughly the same as two years ago.

Table 3.11 Whether overall capacity to support schools in using ICT was higher or lower than two years ago

	Percentage
Higher	29
Roughly the same	38
Lower	33
Base	66

Base: all respondents answering.

Note: nine respondents did not answer this question. As with all tables, percentages have been calculated from the responding base.

Those who reported that the local authority's capacity to support schools in using ICT was either higher or lower than two years ago were asked to identify the main factors that had led to this. Respondents were asked to select up to three of the following factors:

- DfES finances/funding
- Funding from any other sources than the DfES
- Changes in the availability of human resources
- Organisational changes within the local authority
- Changes in role of organisations outside the local authority (for example, at the DfES or Becta)
- School's demand for ICT support from the local authority
- Other.

Nineteen respondents reported that their overall capacity to support schools in using ICT was higher than two years ago. Of these, 15 said that 'DfES finances/funding' was a main factor. Other main factors include 'organisational changes within the local authority' (14 respondents) and 'schools' demand for ICT support from the local authority' (13 respondents).

Twenty-two respondents reported that their overall capacity to support schools in using ICT was lower than two years ago. Of these, 14 cited 'DfES finances/funding' and 13 cited 'organisational changes within the local authority' as the main reasons for this.

A.4 Summary

- Responsibility for co-ordinating and monitoring the provision of technical support services was shared between the local authority and schools in approximately half of cases (47%). Among the remainder, schools were twice as likely to be responsible (either mainly or wholly) for these tasks (29%) compared with local authorities themselves (14%).

- Three quarters (77%) adhered to the idea that local authorities should offer schools all the advice and support they need on educational technologies. Among these, there was a fairly even split between the proportion saying they were 'more or less delivering it' (37%) and the proportion saying they did 'not have the resources to deliver it' (40%).

- In nearly all cases (96%), local authorities used ICT to share learner information between their own institutions (for instance, to support transition between phases or schools).

- Nine in ten local authorities (90%) reported that their management information systems were integrated with the systems in their schools.

- Half of local authorities (50%) left the decision on whether to use a managed services provision to the schools themselves. Among the remaining half, one third (31%) recommended these, but did not provide them, and one fifth (19%) arranged them for their schools.

- Local authorities varied in their approach to integrated learning platforms. Forty-two per cent said that they did not run an integrated learning platform for their schools, and 58 per cent said that they ran an integrated learning platform for at least some of their schools.

- Nearly all local authorities reported having a designated ICT curriculum adviser (94%), with 78 per cent saying they had at least one full-time equivalent post.

- Three quarters of local authorities (73%), reported that they acted as aggregators of demand for schools wishing to purchase ICT equipment and services.

- 'Becta frameworks' (78%) were the ones most commonly used for running ICT procurement competitions. 'Regional Broadband Consortium' and 'own procurement' frameworks were both used by 54 per cent of local authorities.

- 'Standards funding' was considered the most important present funding stream for supporting the use of ICT in schools. Almost all respondents (97%) said it was 'very' or 'moderately' important. About two thirds considered the 'central local authority budget' (64%) and 'buy-back' (63%) to be either 'very' or 'moderately' important.

- Eighty-six percent of local authorities said that they expected a funding gap, caused by a decrease in funding or rising costs of supporting ICT in schools. It was most commonly reported that the shortfall would be met through contributions from schools (45%).
- Overall capacity to support schools in using ICT was higher than two years ago in 29 per cent of cases and lower in 33 per cent. The remainder (38%) stated that their overall capacity to support schools was roughly the same.

4 Support and development

Chapter 4 considers how different aspects of ICT usage are monitored as well as the authority's approach to support and training.

The chapter first considers the formal processes in place to monitor ICT standards and local authorities' views on the importance of this. It also looks at the provision of training and assessment for school staff as well as the provision of services designed to enhance e-safety and e-security. Finally, it explores the means by which local authorities communicate with their schools.

A.1 Monitoring

4.1.1 Importance of monitoring aspects of ICT usage in schools

Respondents were asked to rank the relative levels of importance of monitoring aspects of ICT usage in schools. Using a scale of one to five (where one was the most important and five the least important), respondents were instructed to assign a number to each aspect. They could use each number only once across all aspects of ICT usage.

'Use of ICT for learning and teaching' was ranked as the most important aspect to monitor, with nearly all respondents (96%) selecting categories one or two. No respondents selected categories four or five. The aspect of ICT usage considered second most important was 'use of ICT for management and administration in schools', with half (50%) selecting categories one or two. The least important aspect to monitor was reported to be the 'use of ICT for inclusive practice/mainstreaming special educational needs (SEN) learners'.

Table 4.1   Importance of monitoring aspects of ICT use in schools

	1 (most important)	2	3	4	5 (least important)	Base
Use of ICT for learning and teaching	82%	14%	5%	-	-	65%
Use of ICT for management and administration in schools	8%	42%	14%	15%	22%	65%
E-safety	14%	17%	24%	20%	26%	66%
Use of ICT for learner assessment	2%	21%	33%	28%	16%	61%
Use of ICT for inclusive practice/ mainstreaming of SEN learners	-	11%	25%	36%	28%	61%

Base: all respondents answering.

Note: numbers of respondents not answering vary according to given aspect. These are: Use of ICT for management and administration in schools,10; Use of ICT for learning and teaching,10; Use of ICT for learner assessment,14; Use of ICT for inclusive practice/mainstreaming of SEN learners,14; E-safety, 9.

4.1.2 Monitoring ICT standards in schools

Respondents were asked to identify the formal processes in place to monitor ICT standards in schools.

Approximately nine in ten local authorities reported that ICT advisers visited schools (88%) and that the local authority reviewed Ofsted inspection data (87%). Two thirds (64%) reported that the local authority reviewed feedback from School Improvement Partners on the use of ICT in schools, and around half reported that the local authority reviewed Ofsted self-evaluation forms (54%) and ICT sections of school improvement plans (46%).

Table 4.2   Formal processes in place to monitor ICT standards in schools

	Percentage
ICT advisers visit schools	88
Review of Ofsted inspection data	87
Review of feedback from School improvement partners on the use of ICT in schools	64
Review of Ofsted self-evaluation form	54
Review of ICT sections in school improvement plans	46
Other formal process	35
None	1
Base	69

Base: all respondents answering.

Note: six respondents did not answer this question. As with all tables, percentages have been calculated from the responding base.

Note: percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could select more than one category.

4.1.3 Monitoring broadband bandwidth in schools

Approximately nine in ten (89%) local authorities reported that a formal system was in place to monitor levels of use of broadband bandwidth by schools. A small minority (4%) reported that they did not have such a system and there were currently no plans to establish one.

Table 4.3   Whether formal system in place to monitor levels of use of broadband bandwidth by schools

	Percentage
Yes	89
No, but we plan to establish one	7
No, and there are currently no plans to establish a system	4
Total	70

Base: all respondents answering.

Note: five respondents did not answer this question. As with all tables, percentages have been calculated from the responding base.

A.2 Support and continuing professional development

4.2.1 Provision of training and continuing professional development (CPD)

Respondents were asked to select the description that came closest to the provision made in their local authority for training and CPD in using ICT.

Nearly all local authorities (97%) said that they offered formal training or CPD opportunities.

Similar proportions reported that the local authority offered formal training on the basis of its own policy priorities (35%), individualised formal training opportunities on the basis of a systematic assessment of needs (36%) and formal training as requested by headteachers (26%).

Table 4.4   Best description of the provision of training and CPD in using ICT in schools at local authority

	Percentage
The local authority offers individualised formal training/CPD opportunities on the basis of a systematic assessment of needs	36
The local authority offers formal training/CPD opportunities on the basis of its own (policy) priorities	35
The local authority offers formal training/CPD opportunities as requested by headteachers	26
The local authority does not offer any formal training and/or CPD opportunities	3
Base	66

Base: all respondents answering.

Note: nine respondents did not answer this question. As with all tables, percentages have been calculated from the responding base.

4.2.2 Prioritisation of skills in professional development of headteachers

Respondents were asked to identify, from the list below, the ICT skill that was prioritised as 'most important' and 'least important' when considering the professional development of headteachers.

Strategic skills were considered most important, with three quarters of respondents (75%) identifying them as such. Skills relating to management of resources were considered least important by about half of respondents (47%).

Table 4.5   ICT skills that are most important/least important in the professional development of headteachers

	Most important (%)	Least important (%)
Pedagogical (teaching with ICT)	15	19
Strategic (ICT leadership skills)	75	6
Management of resources (financial monitoring and reporting)	2	47
Management of standards and performance	7	15
Other	2	13
Base	61	47

Base: all respondents answering.

Note: fourteen respondents did not report a highest priority, 28 respondents did not report a lowest priority. As with all tables, percentages have been calculated from the responding base.

4.2.3 Assessment of headteachers' CPD needs

Respondents were asked to report how headteachers' CPD needs in the field of ICT were assessed.

Eighty-five per cent of respondents indicated that these needs were assessed in some way. In the majority of cases (64%), headteachers assessed their own needs. One in ten (10%) reported that these needs were assessed by the local authority and a small minority (3%) indicated that they were assessed by an external organisation.

Table 4.6   How headteachers' CPD needs in the field of ICT are assessed

	Percentage
Headteachers assess their own needs	64
Assessed by the local authority	10
Assessed by an external organisation	3
Other	7
They are not assessed	15
Base	67

Base: all respondents answering.

Note: eight respondents did not answer this question. As with all tables, percentages have been calculated from the responding base.

Respondents had mixed views on where the assessment of the CPD needs of headteachers should take place. Similar proportions felt such assessment should be conducted centrally by the local authority (38%) as felt it should take place locally, by schools (47%).

Sixteen per cent felt such assessment should take place by another organisation. When prompted, Becta was suggested as an alternative by some of these respondents (working either alone or in conjunction with the local authority/schools).

Table 4.7   Where the assessment of CPD needs of headteachers should take place

	Percentage
Centrally (ie, by local authorities)	38
Locally (ie, by schools)	47
Should take place by another organisation	16
Base	64

Base: all respondents answering.

Note: eleven respondents did not answer this question. As with all tables, percentages have been calculated from the responding base.

4.2.4 Training for staff other than headteachers

Almost all local authorities provided ICT training for school staff other than headteachers.

A similar proportion of local authorities provided ICT training for teachers (94%), learning assistants (94%) and administrative staff (92%).

Fifteen per cent reported that the local authority provided ICT training for staff other than those listed. When prompted, many of these respondents said that training was provided for 'technicians' or 'ICT technicians'.

Table 4.8   Whether the authority provides ICT training for school staff other than headteachers

	Percentage
Teachers	94
Learning assistants and other classroom support staff	94
Administrative staff	92
Other	15
Base	66

Base: all respondents answering.

Note: nine respondents did not answer this question. As with all tables, percentages have been calculated from the responding base.

Note: percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could select more than one category.

4.2.5 Advice and services provided to schools

Almost all local authorities (97%) provided schools with advice about their ICT infrastructure. It was most common for this information to be supplied on request (60%), but 37 per cent provided it to all schools systematically.[6]

---

[6] In the Harnessing Technology Schools Study (2006), 55 per cent of primary schools and 26 per cent of secondary schools obtained advice about designing their school's ICT infrastructure from the local authority.

Table 4.9   Whether the authority provides schools with advice about their ICT infrastructure

	Percentage
Yes, systematically to all schools	37
Yes, on request	60
No, but we employ an external organisation for this purpose	3
Not at all	0
Base	68

Base: all respondents answering.

Note: seven respondents did not answer this question. As with all tables, percentages have been calculated from the responding base.

Respondents were asked whether their local authority provided an 'area-wide e-portfolio system for learners to record their progress'.

One third said they currently had such a system for at least some learners (33%).

Most others (64%) had plans to introduce a system during the current academic year (2006-07) or the following academic year (2007-08).

Table 4.10 Whether the authority supports an area-wide e-portfolio system for learners to record their progress

	Percentage
Yes, for all learners	21
Yes, for some learners	12
This is planned for this academic year (2006-07)	7
This is planned for the next academic year (2007-08)	57
No	3
Base	68

Base: all respondents answering.

Note: seven respondents did not answer this question. As with all tables, percentages have been calculated from the responding base.

All local authorities reported that they provided advice or recommendations to subject teachers on digital resources for use in the curriculum.

In the majority of cases (63%) such advice was provided for some subject areas only. However, in 37% of cases this advice was provided for all subject areas.

Table 4.11 Whether the authority provides advice or recommendations to subject teachers on digital resources for use in the curriculum

	Percentage
Yes, for all curriculum subject areas	37
Yes, for at least some curriculum subject areas	63
No	-
Base	67

Base: All respondents answering

Note: eight respondents did not answer this question. As with all tables, percentages have been calculated from the responding base.

Ninety per cent of local authorities provided at least some schools with access to digital resources for teaching and learning (for example, via a learning resource repository or learning platform). Of these, 71 per cent provided all schools with such access and a fifth (19%) provided just some schools with access.

Table 4.12 Whether local authority provides schools with access to digital resources for teaching and learning

	Percentage
Yes, for all schools	71
Yes, for some schools	19
No	10
Base	68

Base: all respondents answering.

Note: seven respondents did not answer this question. As with all tables, percentages have been calculated from the responding base.

The majority of local authorities (81%) provided online support to 14- to 19-year-olds.

More than half provided such support through access to online prospectuses (54%), followed by online pathways or career advice (40%).

Table 4.13 Whether local authority provides online support for 14- to 19-year-olds

	Percentage
Through access to online prospectuses	54
Through online pathways/career advice	40
Through online courses	22
Any other way	25
None of these	19
Base	63

Base: all respondents answering.

Note: twelve respondents did not answer this question. As with all tables, percentages have been calculated from the responding base.

Note: percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could select more than one category.

Respondents were asked how, if at all, the local authority promoted the use of ICT for hard-to-reach learners, including those with special educational needs.

Local authorities most commonly promoted the use of ICT for these groups by providing expertise (70%). Around half (47%) said that they provided equipment and 42 per cent said that they provided specialised software.

4.2.6 Hard-to-reach learners

Table 4.14 How local authority promotes the use of ICT for hard-to-reach learners

	Percentage
Providing expertise	70
Providing equipment	47
Providing specialised software	42
Providing earmarked funds	19
Providing other resources	34
Not at all	11
Base	64

Base: all respondents answering.

Note: eleven respondents did not answer this question. As with all tables, percentages have been calculated from the responding base.

Note: percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could select more than one category.

Respondents were asked whether the local authority ran any schemes besides the national Computers for Pupils initiative, to support the provision of ICT resources to learners at home. About one third of local authorities (31%) ran such schemes.

A.3 E-safety and e-security

All local authorities reported providing services for enhancing e-safety and e-security. The services most commonly provided were guidelines for safe internet browsing (88%) and authority-wide security or firewalls for all schools (87%). About two thirds (68%) said they provided advice on network security or firewalls.

In a separate study, just over one fifth (22%) of schools said that their local authority provided other services for enhancing e-safety and e-security. These included provision of acceptable use policies and web content filtering[7].

Table 4.15 Services provided by the local authority for enhancing e-safety/e-security

	Percentage
Guidelines for safe internet browsing	88
Authority-wide security/firewalls for all schools	87
Advice on network security/firewalls	68
Provisions against theft of ICT hardware	29
Other	22
None	-
Base	69

Base: all respondents answering.

Note: six respondents did not answer this question. As with all tables, percentages have been calculated from the responding base.

Note: percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could select more than one category.

Respondents were asked to identify the ways in which e-safety advice from Becta publications and the Becta website were promoted by their local authority.

Almost all respondents (99%) said that such advice was promoted in one or more of the listed ways.

Nine in ten local authorities (91%) reported that 'schools in the local authority [were] alerted to the existence' of such material. Three quarters used the advice to 'inform

---

[7] Some 75 per cent of primary schools and 49 per cent of secondary schools purchase content filtering through the local authority, according to the Harnessing Technology Schools Study, 2007.

the writing of the local authority's policy and advice to schools' (76%) or for 'training/courses and other CPD run by the local authority' (74%).

Seven per cent of respondents reported that Becta's e-safety advice was promoted in ways other than those listed. When prompted, many of these respondents reported that the advice was disseminated at conferences.

Table 4.16 Ways in which Becta's e-safety advice is used/promoted in local authority

	Percentage
Schools in the local authority are alerted to the existence of the material	91
To inform the writing of the local authority's policy and advice to schools	76
Used on training/courses and other CPD run by the local authority	74
Other	7
The local authority is not aware of/familiar with Becta's role in this area	3
None	1
Base	68

Base: all respondents answering.

Note: seven respondents did not answer this question. As with all tables, percentages have been calculated from the responding base.

Note: percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could select more than one category.

A.4 Communication

Respondents were asked to identify the types of media that their local authority used to communicate with schools for the following purposes:

- To share effective ICT practice among schools
- To disseminate best-practice from external sources
- To generally communicate with schools about ICT.

Local authorities tended to use a range of methods to communicate with schools.

In order to share effective ICT practice among schools, local authorities most commonly used special events (83%), websites/intranet (80%) or cluster meetings (79%).

Special events (76%), websites/intranet (71%) and cluster meetings (70%) were also the media most commonly used to communicate with schools for the purpose of disseminating best practice from external sources.

In order to communicate with schools in general about ICT, email (85%), special events (84%), cluster meetings (82%) and websites/intranet (76%) were most commonly used.

Table 4.17 Types of media the local authority uses to communicate with schools

	News-letter	Website /intranet	Learning platform	E-mail	Cluster meetings	Special events	Base
Share effective ICT practice among schools	55	80	45	68	79	83	66
Disseminate best-practice from external sources	54	71	33	60	70	76	63
Generally communicate with schools about ICT	66	76	36	85	82	84	67

Base: all respondents answering.

Note: numbers not answering vary according to approach. These are: Share effective ICT practice among schools, 9; Disseminate best practice from external sources, 12; Generally communicate with schools about ICT, 8. As with all tables, percentages have been calculated from the responding base.

Note: percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could select more than one category.

Almost all local authorities (95%) reported that they convened a school leader group or network to discuss ICT development and best practice. On the whole, these were physical meetings (91%). However, in a small proportion of cases (4%) these were virtual meetings.

Table 4.18 Whether local authority convenes a school leader group/network to discuss ICT development and best practice

	Percentage
Yes, physical meetings	91
Yes, virtual meetings	4
No, we do not have the resources to do this	4
No, this is not a priority	0
Base	68

Base: all respondents answering.

Note: seven respondents did not answer this question. As with all tables, percentages have been calculated from the responding base.

A.5 Summary

- With regard to formal processes in place to monitor ICT standards in schools, approximately nine in ten local authorities reported that ICT advisers visited schools (88%) and that the local authority reviewed Ofsted inspection data (87%).

- Eighty-nine per cent reported that a formal system was in place to monitor levels of use of broadband bandwidth by schools.

- Nearly all local authorities (97%) indicated that they offered formal training or CPD opportunities.

- Eighty-five per cent reported that headteachers' CPD needs in the field of ICT were assessed in some way.

- A similar proportion of local authorities provided ICT training for teachers (94%), learning assistants (94%) and administrative staff (92%).

- Almost all local authorities (97%) provided schools with advice about their ICT infrastructure. It was most common for this information to be supplied on request (63%). However, 37 per cent provided it to all schools systematically.

- One third of local authorities provided an 'area-wide e-portfolio system for learners to record their progress' for at least some learners (33%). Most others (64%) had plans to introduce such a system.

- All local authorities provided advice or recommendations to subject teachers on digital resources for use in the curriculum. In the majority of cases (63%), such advice was provided for some subject areas only. However in 37 per cent of cases, this advice was provided for all subject areas.
- Ninety per cent provided at least some schools with access to digital resources for teaching and learning (for instance, via a learning resource repository or learning platform).
- Four fifths of local authorities (81%) provided online support for 14- to 19-year-olds.
- All local authorities reported providing services for enhancing e-safety and e-security. The services most commonly provided were guidelines for safe internet browsing (88%) and authority-wide security or firewalls for all schools (87%).
- Almost all respondents (99%) said that e-safety advice from Becta publications and the Becta website was promoted in one or more ways.
- In order to share effective ICT practice among schools, local authorities most commonly used special events (83%), websites/intranet (80%) or cluster meetings (79%).
- Special events (76%), websites/intranet (71%) and cluster meetings (70%) were also the media most commonly used to communicate with schools for the purpose of disseminating best practice from external sources.
- Almost all local authorities (95%) reported that they convened a school leader group or network to discuss ICT development and best practice.

5   Becta and the self-review framework

Chapter 5 explores local authorities' awareness of, and views on, Becta and the self-review framework. First, it examines respondents' awareness of the services provided by Becta and areas in which Becta's services could be helpful to them. Next, the chapter looks at views on the self-review framework. Finally, it considers respondents' general suggestions for ways in which the use of ICT in education could be improved.

A.1 Becta

5.1.1 Services provided by Becta

Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they were aware of the support that Becta could provide for them.

All respondents had some knowledge of the support available, and the vast majority reported knowing either 'precisely' (46%) or 'more or less' (48%).

Table 5.1   Extent to which respondent is aware of the support Becta can provide

	Percentage
Know precisely	46
Know more or less	48
Have limited knowledge	6
Do not know	-
Base	69

Base: all respondents answering.

Note: six respondents did not answer this question. As with all tables, percentages have been calculated from the responding base.

All respondents identified areas in which Becta's services could be helpful to their local authority. Furthermore, for each area listed, the majority of respondents felt Becta's services would be helpful.

About nine in ten reported that Becta's services could be helpful in the field of ICT leadership/the self-review framework (88%) and e-safety (88%). A similar proportion felt such services could be helpful for emerging technologies (84%) as well as in the dissemination of effective practice (78%). Between one half and two thirds of respondents reported that Becta's services could be helpful for procurement (66%), learning and teaching (65%), advice on digital resources (60%) and technical support (57%).

Table 5.2   Areas in which Becta's services could be helpful to the local authority

	Percentage
E-safety	88
ICT leadership/the self-review framework	88
Emerging technologies	84
Dissemination of effective practice (research findings)	78
Procurement	66
Learning and teaching	65
Advice on digital resources	60
Technical support/advice (including on infrastructure)	57
Other	13
None of these	-
Base	68

Base: all respondents answering.

Note: seven respondents did not answer this question. As with all tables, percentages have been calculated from the responding base.

Note: percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could select more than one category.

5.1.2 Past experience with Becta

Nearly all respondents (99%) reported having had some interaction with Becta in the past year. Of these, 14 per cent reported having had 'intensive' interaction, 71 per cent said they had 'moderate' interaction and 13 per cent said they had 'very little' interaction.

Respondents reporting that they had interacted with Becta in the past year were asked to select the category which best described what they would say about the agency, in a conversation with colleagues.

Responses tended to be positive, with one fifth (19%) reporting they would be positive without being asked and a further half (53%) saying they would be positive if asked. Only four per cent said they would be critical if asked and no respondents said they would be critical without being asked.

Table 5.3   What respondent would say about Becta in conversation with colleagues

	Percentage
Would be positive about Becta without being asked	19
Would be positive about Becta if asked	53
Would be neutral toward Becta	24
Would be critical about Becta if asked	4
Would be critical about Becta without needing to be asked	-
Base	68

Base: respondents reporting that they had interacted with Becta in the past year.

5.1.3 Communicating with Becta

Respondents most commonly reported that email was (or would be) their preferred mode of communication with Becta (64%). One fifth (19%) preferred face-to-face communication and one in ten (10%) favoured communication via the Becta website.

Table 5.4   Preferred mode of communication with Becta

	Percentage
Email	64
Face-to-face	19
Website	10
Telephone	4
Mail	1
Other	1
Base	69

Base: all respondents answering.

Note: six respondents did not answer this question. As with all tables, percentages have been calculated from the responding base.

A.2 The self-review framework

Respondents were asked how effective they thought the self-review framework was 'as a tool for assessing standards of ICT leadership and use in schools'. Ninety-three per cent felt the self-review framework had been either 'very' or 'fairly' effective in this respect.

Table 5.5 Effectiveness of self-review framework as a tool for assessing standards of ICT leadership and use in schools

	Percentage
Very effective	53
Fairly effective	40
Not very effective	1
Cannot assess	6
Base	68

Base: all respondents answering.

Note: seven respondents did not answer this question. As with all tables, percentages have been calculated from the responding base.

Nearly all local authorities (96%) reported actively promoting the participation of schools in the self-review framework. The vast majority of local authorities also said that they provided support for participating schools (93%).

A.3 Suggestions for improvements in ICT use in schools

Respondents were asked how the use of ICT in education could be improved within schools in the local authority.

The issue of funding was raised by many respondents, with some suggesting that additional funding for ICT in general was necessary. Others identified particular areas that were in need of funding. These included funding to promote new initiatives by local authorities, update ICT equipment or establish integrated platforms.

Respondents suggested that funding be 'dedicated' to these areas or 'ring-fenced'. In one example, a respondent suggested having 'dedicated funding for training and CPD, rather than just software and hardware'. Another suggested 'sustainable earmarked funding to provide technical, teaching and learning support'.

Another recurring theme was that of increasing co-ordination and consistency in the approach of the local authority. In one example, a respondent suggested that the use of ICT in education could be improved through 'an ability to provide consistent ongoing targeted support for all'. Another suggested that the local authority be 'more

co-ordinated in [their] approach' and added that this 'should be seen as a major priority by senior staff across the council'. Others suggested a more co-ordinated use of resources and sharing of 'best practice'.

Some respondents reported that the use of ICT could be improved by changing the way in which schools currently use and perceive ICT. For instance, one respondent suggested that 'ultimately [they] would like schools to be using ICT as a tool - essentially a ubiquitous utility that can help to enhance learning and teaching'. Another said that 'secondary schools still perceive ICT to be the territory of the information technology department' and added that 'many interactions at subject teacher level have to be brokered through the ICT department and/or network manager'. In another example, a respondent suggested that the use of ICT in education could be improved by 'convincing more [headteachers] of the impact ICT can make on teaching and learning'.

In all, 54 respondents answered this question. Responses were allocated to the broad subject categories outlined above. Table 5.6 shows the proportion of respondents giving comments under these categories. Please note that in some cases, a respondent's answer touched on more than one of the themes, so respondents may have been counted under more than one category. In cases where a respondent's answer did not touch on any of the outlined themes, it has not been included under any of the categories (but has been included in the base).

Table 5.6   Suggestions for improving use of ICT in education within schools in the local authority

	Percentage
Increased co-ordination/consistency	24
Changing way in which schools use/perceive ICT	20
Increased funding (other than dedicated/ring-fenced)	17
Dedicated/ring-fenced funding	13
Base	54

Base: all respondents answering this question.

A.4 Summary

- All respondents had some knowledge of the support available from Becta, and the vast majority reported knowing either 'precisely' (46%) or 'more or less' (48%) about this.

- All respondents identified areas in which Becta's services could be helpful to their local authority, with about nine in ten reporting that they could be helpful in the field of ICT leadership/the self-review framework (88%) and e-safety (88%). A similar proportion felt such services could be helpful for emerging technologies (84%) and in the dissemination of effective practice (78%).

- Nearly all respondents (99%) reported having had some interaction with Becta in the past year.

- Respondents tended to report that they would be positive about Becta in conversation with colleagues (72%). Only four per cent said they would be critical.

- It was most commonly said that email was (or would be) the preferred mode of communication with Becta (64%). One fifth (19%) preferred face-to-face communication and one in ten (10%) favoured communication via the Becta website.

- Ninety-three per cent felt the self-review framework had been either 'very' or 'fairly' effective 'as a tool for assessing standards of ICT leadership and use in schools'.

- Nearly all local authorities (96%) said they actively promoted the participation of schools in the self-review framework. The vast majority of local authorities also said that they provided support for participating schools (93%).

- Suggestions for improvements in the use of ICT in education included increased funding, ring-fenced funding for specific areas and increased co-ordination and consistency in the local authority's approach.

6   Conclusions

Overview

While achieving a very respectable level of response for an internet survey, it is likely there will have been a degree of bias in those local authorities motivated to take part, and that caveat should be borne in mind when interpreting the results and drawing conclusions.

With that one reservation, it seems clear that the majority of local authorities that responded to the survey were genuinely engaged with their local schools over the use of ICT in teaching and learning and were working closely with the schools to support ICT use. A minority of authorities was less engaged with their schools on one or more of the issues covered in the survey.

Most authorities recognised Becta as a source of support and advice on the use of ICT in education. Becta was widely used by local authorities and was generally rated highly by them.

Strategies on ICT use

Almost all local authorities had a written strategy on ICT use in schools or were preparing one. Nearly all of those with a strategy in place involved at least some schools in drawing it up. Also, nearly all authorities had plans for a regular systematic review of the strategy, with almost half doing this at least annually.

The contents of local authorities' strategies on ICT use in schools were strongly influenced by national priorities and initiatives, particularly the Every School Connected strategy, learning platforms and the provision of e-portfolios.

Every Child Matters agenda

There were mixed views on how the Every Child Matters agenda impacted on authorities' capacity to provide ICT support to schools. While half of authorities felt that the agenda had a broadly positive impact on their provision of ICT support, 40 per cent felt it made no difference. In addition, one in ten said that it had a negative impact on the authority's capacity to provide support.

Support for schools

Most authorities were closely involved in supporting, enabling and advising on the use of digital resources for teaching and learning in schools. All authorities provided at least some level of support and/or advice on e-safety and e-security issues.

There was widespread support and provision for the professional development and training of headteachers, classroom teachers, administrative and support staff in the use of ICT.

Looking at local authorities' responses, there were different gradations in how the respective roles of the authorities and the schools were viewed. These ranged from respondents who said that their local authority played an active, leading role in developing strategy and providing support to schools (the largest group), to those areas where the authorities generally worked collaboratively with schools on strategy and implementation of policies on ICT use. In the smallest group of respondents, the authority acted more as a general enabler or source of advice for schools, but left considerable responsibility for ICT use in teaching and learning with the schools themselves.

Views on Becta

Local authorities responding to the survey were very aware of Becta and the support that it offered local authorities in relation to the use of ICT in education. (This is not particularly surprising, given that the survey was commissioned by Becta and we would expect a higher degree of response from those who were familiar with the agency.) Most authorities made use of Becta's support, particularly in the fields of e-safety and e-security, the self-review framework and, to a lesser degree, in procurement.

Almost three quarters of respondents said that they would be positive about Becta, and only a very small minority felt negatively towards the agency.

Appendix A - Demographic profile of local authorities

One hundred and fifty four local authorities were contacted to participate in the study. Seventy five eligible responses were collected, representing a response rate of 49 per cent.

This table provides a demographic breakdown of sampled and responding local authorities.

		Total sample	Responding local authorities	
		n	n	% of valid responses
Region	Middle	34	16	21
	North	49	26	35
	South	68	33	44
	Other	3	-	-
Base		154	75	100
Type of LA	Borough	74	42	56
	City	23	8	11
	County	36	18	24
	District	4	1	1
	Unitary	14	6	8
	Other	3	-	-
Base		154	75	100
No of learners in LA*	0-30.000	50	26	35
	30.001-48.000	48	21	28
	48.001+	53	28	37
Base		151	75	100
% of learners in LA that receive free school meals*	0-11	44	24	32
	11.01-18	44	23	31

	18.01+	63	28	37
Base		151	75	100

*Data on number of learners and free school meals were not available for Guernsey, Jersey and The Falkland Islands

Appendix B

This appendix explores the relationship between key questionnaire variables and local authority-level demographic indicators. Its purpose is to establish whether local authorities with certain demographic characteristics were more or less likely to provide learning platforms for schools or have a greater capacity to support their schools than they did two years previously.

The following questionnaire variables are examined in this appendix:

- Whether the local authority ran an integrated learning platform for its schools (table 3.6 in main body of report).
- Whether overall capacity to support schools in using ICT was higher than two years ago (table 3.11 in main body of report).

In order to allow for meaningful analysis with the small achieved sample size (75 local authorities), the authorities were divided into three roughly equal sized groups for both of these demographic indicators. These groupings are based on numbers only, rather than on a particular policy-related basis.

The following demographic indicators and bands were used:

- Number of learners in the local authority – up to 30,000; 30,001 to 48,000; over 48,000.
- Percentage of learners eligible for free school meals in the local authority – up to 11 per cent; over 11 per cent up to 18 per cent; over 18 per cent.

(The percentage of learners eligible for free schools meals acts as a proxy measure for social deprivation.)

Please note that due to the small sample size, differences quoted are not statistically significant unless explicitly stated.

B.1 Provision of integrated learning platforms

The likelihood of a local authority running an integrated learning platform for its schools increased as the number of learners in the local authority increased.

Among local authorities with more than 48,000 learners, almost three quarters (72%) provided learning platforms for at least some schools. This compared with 60 per cent among local authorities with between 30,000 and 48,000 learners and 44 per cent among local authorities with up to 30,000 learners[8].

Whether local authority runs an integrated learning platform for its schools by number of learners in local authority

	0- 30,000 learners (%)	30,001- 48,000 learners (%)	48,001+ learners (%)	Total (%)
Yes, for all schools	32	35	44	37
Yes, for some schools	12	25	28	21
No, but some schools have their own	16	15	16	16
No / not yet	40	25	12	26
Base	25	20	25	70

Local authorities with the highest levels of eligibility for free schools meals (free school meals) were also most likely to provide an integrated learning platform for schools.

Among local authorities with over 18 per cent free school meals eligibility, three quarters (75%) reported that learning platforms were provided for at least some schools. Levels of learning platform provision fell to around half for local authorities with 11 per cent to 18 per cent free school meals eligibility (52%) and also for authorities with up to 11 per cent free school meals eligibility (47%)[9].

---

[8] The difference between local authorities with more than 48,000 learners (72%) and up to 30,000 learners (44%) is statistically significant at the 95 per cent level.
[9] The difference between local authorities with over 18 per cent FSM eligibility (75%) and up to 11 per cent FSM eligibility (47%) is statistically significant at the 95 per cent level.

Whether local authority runs an integrated learning platform for its schools by percentage of learners eligible for free school meals

	0-11% free school meals eligibility (%)	11.01% -18% free school meals eligibility (%)	18.01%+ free school meals eligibility (%)	Total (%)
Yes, for all schools	30	35	46	37
Yes, for some schools	17	17	29	21
No, but some schools have their own	26	13	8	16
No/not yet	26	35	17	26
Base	23	23	24	70

B.2 Capacity to support schools in using ICT compared with two years ago

Local authorities with the highest numbers of learners were most likely to report having a lower capacity to support schools in using ICT compared with two years ago, while the opposite was true of local authorities with the lowest number of learners.

Local authorities with over 48,000 learners were twice as likely as local authorities with between 30,001 and 48,000 learners to report having a lower capacity (54% compared with 26%). They were also three times as likely to report having a lower capacity as those with up to 30,000 learners (17%)[10].

---

[10] The difference between local authorities with more than 48,000 learners (54%) and up to 30,000 learners (17%) is statistically significant at the 99 per cent level.

Whether overall capacity to support schools in using ICT was higher or lower than two years ago by number of learners in local authority

	0- 30,000 learners (%)	30,001- 48,000 learners (%)	48,001+ learners (%)	Total (%)
Higher	39	32	17	29
Lower	17	26	54	38
Roughly the same	43	42	29	33
Base	23	19	24	66

More deprived local authorities (with higher levels of free school meals eligibility) were most likely to report that their capacity to support schools in using ICT was higher than two years ago.

Among local authorities with above 18 per cent free school meals eligibility, two fifths (39%) reported higher capacity in this area compared with two years ago. This compared with 29 per cent of local authorities with between 11.01 per cent and 18 per cent free school meals eligibility and just one fifth (18%) of local authorities with up to 11 per cent free school meals eligibility.

Whether overall capacity to support schools in using ICT was higher or lower than two years ago by percentage of learners eligible for free school meals

	0-11% free school meals eligibility (%)	11.01% -18% free school meals eligibility (%)	18.01%+ free school meals eligibility (%)	Total (%)
Higher	18	29	39	29
Lower	36	38	26	38
Roughly the same	45	33	35	33
Base	22	21	23	66

B.3 Conclusion

Local authorities with the fewest learners and local authorities with the highest levels of free school meals eligibility were most likely to run an integrated learning platform for their schools.

Local authorities with the greatest numbers of learners were most likely to have a lower capacity to support ICT use in schools compared with two years ago. In terms of deprivation, those local authorities with the highest levels of free school meals eligibility were most likely to report that their capacity to support schools in using ICT was higher than two years ago[11].

---

[11] A weak negative correlation existed between the number of learners in the local authority and the percentage of learners eligible for free school meals (-0.225), meaning that local authorities with fewer learners tended to have a greater proportion of learners eligible for free school meals. This association is significant at the 90% level (0.052), but not at the 95% level.