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## Rose report places technology centre stage in primary curriculum

The Rose review promises to shake up primary education by making ICT as central to learning as the three 'r's used to be. Easier said than done?

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George Cole  
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Information and communication technology (ICT) will sit alongside literacy, numeracy and personal development as a keystone of the curriculum for future generations of primary children under plans unveiled in the Rose primary review.

The review, the biggest shake-up in primary education in a decade, sets out a series of recommendations to modernise learning from 2011, which have been accepted by ministers. Fundamental to the changes is the stipulation that ICT should be one of the core components of the primary curriculum and that it should be taught both discretely and across all subjects. It also calls for extra training for staff to help them teach ICT.

"To argue against the importance of ICT in the primary curriculum is to ignore the increasing digitisation of information worldwide," the review says. "This will require digital literacy of all children."

The findings of the 16-month review, led by Sir Jim Rose, former director of inspection at Ofsted, have been welcomed by Naace, the professional association for ICT teachers and coordinators.

Paul Springford, Naace's professional officer, says: "We submitted a number of proposals, such as ICT being embedded in the curriculum, and these have been endorsed by Rose."

Naace is also pleased that the report recognises teachers will need support if the reforms are to be adopted successfully.

In its evidence to the review, educational technology agency Becta proposed five key skills areas that were incorporated into the final report under four headings: finding and selecting information; creating manipulating and processing information; collaborating, communicating and sharing information; and refining and improving work.

Tony Richardson, Becta's executive director for strategy and communications, says that although the report suggests children would be specifically taught to use technologies such as wikis, podcasts, blogs and Twitter, the change was "not about children using the latest fashion in technology".

He says the key is that children are prepared and really equipped to make intelligent and discriminatory use of the technology. "Our advice has been that it is important to be clear about the essential skills that children will need to have acquired by the end of key stage 2."

### Gains in performance

Research from Becta has found that only around 25%–30% of primary schools are using this technology well. "We need to raise the bar for ICT in primary schools and have high expectations, because we now have evidence that, if ICT is used effectively in schools, there are gains to be had in terms of pupil performance," says Richardson.

Some schools are embracing new technologies across the curriculum in the way envisaged by the review. Torriano junior school, in Kentish Town, London, has a values-based curriculum with an emphasis on citizenship, and ICT and the arts are used to

communicate learning and encourage creative expression. Pupils use videoconferencing and podcasting, and the school has a managed learning environment (MLE) to help support learning and leadership.

Headteacher Bavaani Nanthabalan says: "We welcome the report, seeing it as building on the core subjects and offering more opportunities for schools to develop a cross-curricular approach to learning. Our children utilise their ICT skills across the curriculum – for example, podcasting was used as part of a campaign on the issue of local homeless people."

Decoy primary school in Newton Abbot, Devon, has a theme-based, integrated curriculum. The school makes extensive use of ICT, including podcasting.

Headteacher Len Peach says: "The Rose review recognises that ICT is the real world for these children and that's a good thing. My only reservation with things like blogging is that we have to maintain standards. If blogs go online with poor grammar, for example, we are open to the criticism that standards are falling in schools."

Chris Bayne, acting head at Murdishaw West community primary school in Runcorn, Cheshire, is a big supporter of new technologies such as podcasting. In his former role as deputy head at Weston

Point community primary school in Runcorn, he was involved in dozens of podcast projects with his pupils. "I've found that it helps with the pupils' writing, speaking and listening skills, and boosts their confidence," he says.

Pupils aged 4–11 at Rawmarsh Sandhill primary in Rotherham have also been podcasting, using Podium software and a netbook computer. The school has an open and flexible curriculum, with themed work linked to many subjects. Martyn Reynolds, the school's deputy head and ICT coordinator, approves of the Rose Review's direction: "We try to prepare children for the real world and this definitely means using ICT. If that now means taking on things such as blogging and Twitter, we'll do it."

### **Equal footing**

Barrie Morgan, a curriculum adviser for Rotherham, also agrees with the Rose Review's conclusions: "ICT should be on the same pedestal as literacy and numeracy, so I welcome that," he says.

The Rose Review will also result in primary children using some skills that have traditionally been introduced at key stage 3. Jim McElvee, modern language adviser for Redcar and Cleveland, says: "Key stage 2 children are already using advanced ICT skills, so it's a good idea."

But Andrew Thraves, group publishing director at Granada Learning, thinks the review has missed an opportunity in not dealing with assessment and the primary curriculum in one go.

"There's a lot of talk about personalisation, but it's not just about content and curriculum – it's about assessment too," he says.

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