

# Chapter 1 • September

## 3rd September

### Week 1, Task 1 – Fact-Finding and Creating a Subject Leader File


The first task for any co-ordinator is to assemble a subject leader file if one has not been provided. This is going to be your bible, something you can take along to meetings and show to the head-teacher, even to the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) to demonstrate how the subject is managed and, more importantly, is led. Keep an electronic version also, you might as well learn to think and work digitally if you are not already.

Assembling this folder is going to provide you with your first opportunity to scratch the surface of the subject and to find out what has gone on before. There are a number of formats that you may wish to follow, including any that you may have used previously or that are preferred by the school. However, given that there is now a national 'road-map' for ICT development, it makes sense to adopt this from the outset. Therefore I recommend that you arrange your documentation in line with the BECTA self-review framework categories. Therefore, set up the following sections and collate any existing documentation within this format.

- 1 Leadership and Management
- 2 Curriculum
- 3 Learning and Teaching
- 4 Assessment
- 5 Professional Development
- 6 Extended Opportunities for Learning
- 7 Resources
- 8 Impact on Pupil Outcomes.


In the front of the folder make a list of the documents and note when they were last updated. Try to get everything that you find into this system; if there is a lot of existing paperwork around the school, set up a filing system that replicates these categories. Above all try to do it this week, as it is a great way to take control of the strategy in your first week and to avoid simply getting bogged down in cables and machinery.

## 4th September


#1

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Alex




Posts:




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Heh you'll be pleased to hear that I've started my folder, Gambo; actually I am quite good with files so this should prove quite easy. I have also set up folders on my laptop for each of the sections as you suggested, but I've already been hassled by one of the teachers about providing ink for her printer. I think that most of the staff are trying to give me a bit of breathing space but what do I do if the whole system stops whilst waiting for me to get my act together?



#2


Lisa



Posts:


You have to be firm, Alex that is so not your responsibility. I actually have a teaching assistant who looks after all the printers now. Haven't they heard of Workforce Reform?

I've now completely revisited my coordinator file also. I'm going to start afresh with your system Gambo, as you seem to know what you are doing but please don't desert us!




#3

Alex



Posts:


Hi Lisa, It's great having you along and I shall stand firm. I should be very interested to learn how I go about getting my own teaching assistant?



### 5th September


#1

Gambo




Posts:

Alex, it's important when steering any initiative not to allow events to distract you from your main agenda. I intended examining the whole issue of leadership within ICT with you, and from the outset should recommend that you establish chains of responsibility that will help you to manage and lead the development of the subject.




#2


Toby




Posts:

I've tweaked my file a little, I am backdating the review dates etc. as well it's quite an eye opener, a lot of the material is way out of date, and I mean years out of date. Gambo, I actually enjoy messing around with the equipment and have half a day to do so, do I have to give it up?




 #3


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Roman 


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Good call Toby. I'm with you; the best part of the week is when I get to play with the server.

Posts: 


**6th September**

 #1


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Tess 

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Roman, are you in the right job? Sounds like you are escaping class.


Posts: 

 #2


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Roman 


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Tess, I just enjoy the break. Variety is the spice of life you know.

Posts: 


**7th September**

 #1

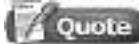
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Gambo 

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In my experience every school is unique, but you have to ask yourself why you are given release time and whether it's good value for you to be doing the technician's job. There is plenty of strategic business for you to attend to, I should review this especially if I were your headteacher.

Posts: 

## ***10th September***

### **Week 2, Task 2 – Vision**

Hopefully you have already been thinking about this and may have found an existing 'vision' for E-learning within your current ICT policy. There are going to be a wide variety of meetings and contexts within which you will need to 'sell' your ideas. There may be opposition from some quarters – staff, parents – as to where all of this technology is leading and you will need some strongly held core beliefs to draw upon. That is why it is worth spending a little time now putting your vision together.

In principle you need to decide how ICT can engage learners and enhance teaching and learning within your school.

Here is one example:

At \*\*\*\*\* we recognize and value the use of ICT as a teaching and learning tool for both children and adults and seek to encourage pupils to become autonomous and independent in its use. We aim to develop a whole school approach to ICT that ensures continuity and progression and which develops the following core beliefs:

- 1 We believe that the rapid development of technology in the home, the workplace and the wider community has had and will continue to have an immense impact on the lives of individuals. Children need to develop a variety of ICT skills, which allow them to harness the power of technology and use it both purposefully and appropriately.
- 2 We believe that ICT is an important medium for learning and study at all educational levels and that through the effective use of ICT pupils and adults may enhance and extend learning opportunities and provide a powerful and motivating means to improve attainment in all curriculum areas.
- 3 We believe that the effective use of ICT allows pupils to communicate their ideas in a creative manner that reaches out beyond the classroom and which carries with it ethical implications and consequences.

The school ICT network is not only important for the children but for all learners at the school, including staff, governors and parents. As an essential skill for life I believe that school facilities have to serve that purpose. Hence, as the debate regarding the need for schools to retain an ICT suite is raised against the expansion of mobile equipment, I remain a supporter of the suite for exactly that purpose. I use this as an example of the vision directly impacting upon practice, strategy and actions.


Take a little time to formulate your ideas at this early stage before you are engulfed by the practicalities of managing the subject. Use your vision statement to encapsulate your core values. You may wish to emphasize the inclusive use of ICT, or the manner in which it promotes different styles of learning. Alternatively you may wish to talk about its balanced and effective use as a deterrent for overuse. Talk to colleagues so that you are not out on a limb; the school's ICT vision should mesh closely with its broader values and ethos.

Also now is a good time to develop your grasp of where E-learning is going. Begin to read around your subject and sample the thoughts of some leading writers in the field such as Marc Prensky or Alan November. Marc Prensky: 'Don't bother me Mom, I'm Learning' is rapidly becoming a formative ICT document ([www.marcprensky.com](http://www.marcprensky.com)) Also Alan November's 'Empowering Students with Technology' ([www.novemberlearning.com](http://www.novemberlearning.com)). Take time to develop your own views about where the technological revolution is ultimately going to lead.

11th September

#1

Alex




Posts:

Thanks for this week's homework, Gambo. Afraid I shall be catching up on the reading at Christmas but I'm going to start some conversations about the whole 'vision thing' whilst out this week, it will help me to form my ideas.

Quote

#2

Toby




Posts:

Gambo, is it okay if I just lift your vision and tweak it a bit? I agree with most of it anyway.

Quote

#3

Lisa




Posts:

That's a bit of a cop out Toby, isn't it? I actually want to get rid of the ICT suite. I think that it imposes restrictions on learning. I want the technology to be seamless and to be available when needed. Also I think the engagement of visual learners etc. is crucial. You have really got me thinking about this Gambo, thanks for that even if I drop out of your 'programme' it seems a bit intense.

Quote

#4

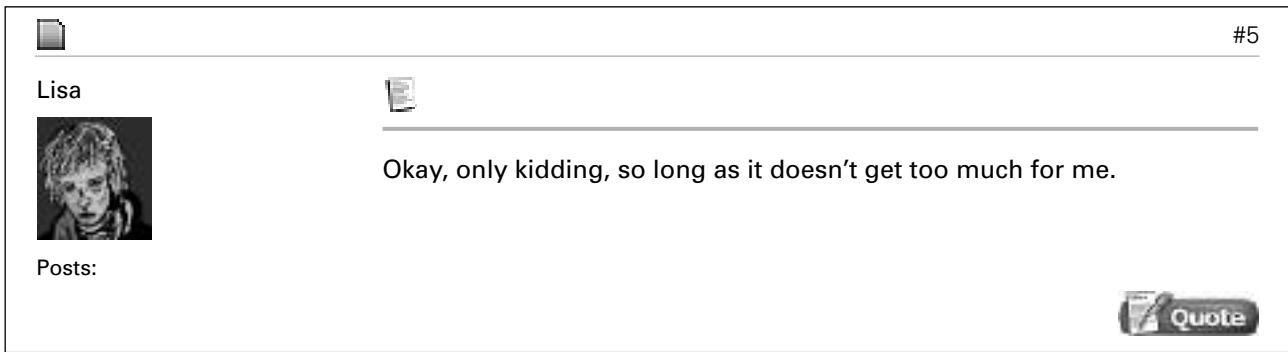
Alex



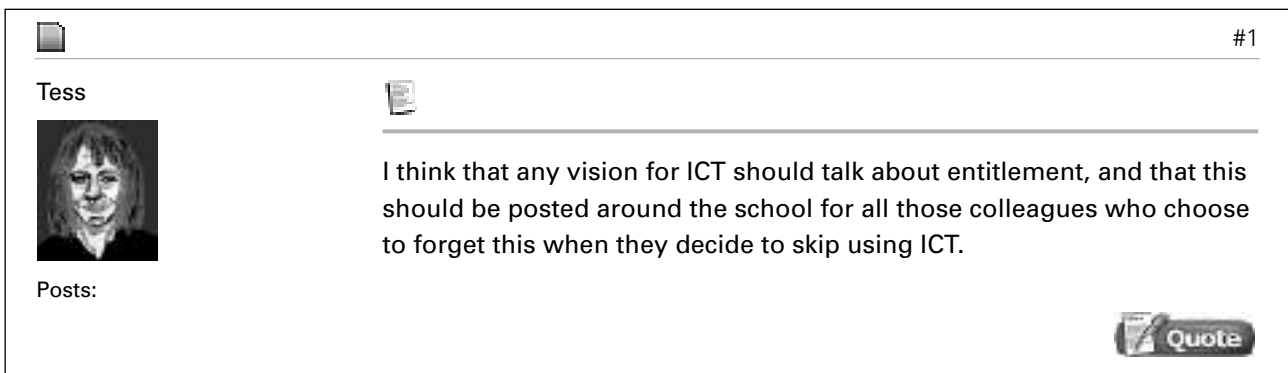
Posts:

Lisa, you are so not dropping out!

Quote



### 13th September

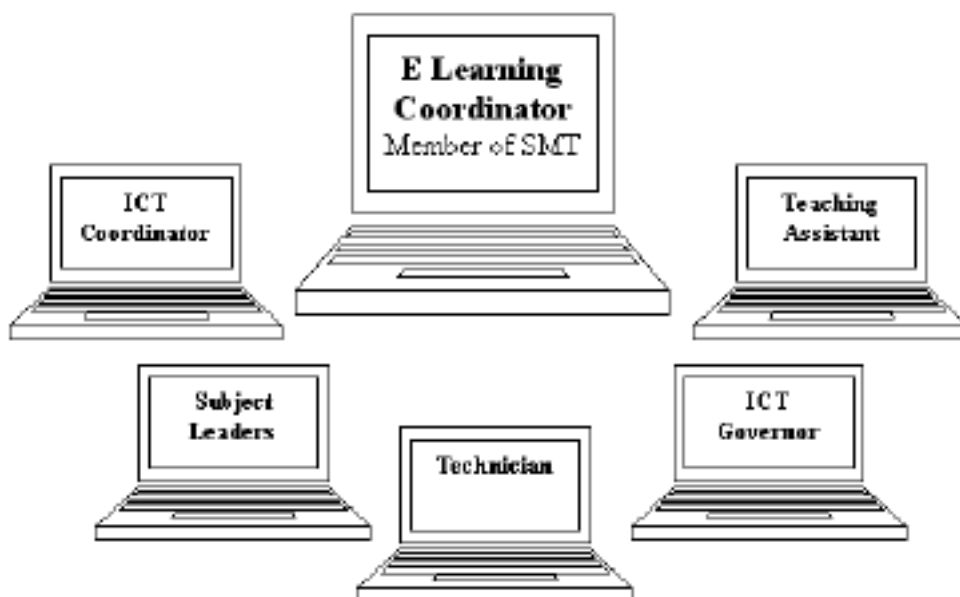


### 17th September

#### Week 3, Task 3 – Leadership

Figure 1.1 provides a model of leadership for ICT within the primary school. At the top is a role I refer to as the E-learning co-ordinator although the title in itself is not important, what is important is the requirement that this person is a member of the school's senior management team. The E-learning co-ordinator will have overall responsibility for the self-evaluation of ICT and for

**Figure 1.1** A model for E-learning leadership




realizing the school's E-learning vision. They will be the lead figure in monitoring provision and progress and the main contributor to the school's self-evaluation form (SEF) with regard to ICT.

So who is this person? As ICT co-ordinator it may be you or it may be the role that you aspire to. The most likely scenario is that the ICT co-ordinator in effect leads the subject but feeds back to the E-learning co-ordinator, who may be the deputy headteacher, perhaps the headteacher or an assistant headteacher in a large school. The title may be largely nominal but there are key areas in which any ICT subject leader must be able to access senior management support, not least when we come to discuss E-safety and the role of the Internet safety co-ordinator.


You need to know who this person is within your school as they are going to make a crucial contribution to your success, or otherwise. Do not become isolated in the role of co-ordinator. I advocate a team of around six individuals (or roles) who are going to contribute to the ICT strategy. Furthermore, a team provides a sustainable system, one that will not simply collapse once the co-ordinator leaves. It is a very common scenario for a primary school to raise its profile off the back of a rising star as ICT co-ordinator, everything begins to take off, then suddenly they leave and the whole system collapses. You need to establish a collegiate approach that will sustain itself should individuals leave. That is the true test of its success. Your task is to be clear about the ICT team for your school, and who does what. I look forward to your feedback and will post again tomorrow to develop these ideas.

#1



Alex

Posts:

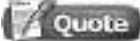


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The E-learning co-ordinator in my school would be the headteacher, but she's called the headteacher!

I can however see the benefit of formalizing this role and relationship, although I can also imagine that many co-ordinators would neither have nor want such a relationship. Mightn't it be intrusive and restrictive?

I also need to hear a bit more about some of the other roles in the diagram.




#2




Toby

Posts:




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Gambo, I don't think that this is practical, My head just wants me to get on with it and I should say that he is pretty supportive if I need something funding.




#3




Gambo

Posts:



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Alex and Toby, in both cases you have a headteacher fulfilling the E-learning co-ordinator role. You and they just need to be clear about what is involved. Also make sure that they are available to chair termly meetings of your ICT teams.



## **18th September**

### *Other subject leaders*

Each subject leader is responsible for developing the use of ICT within their subject area. If they are not doing this in your school then you will end up picking up the pieces and ICT will become marginalized. Establish this from the outset and you will be doing the school a big favour. Produce an action plan with the headteacher (E-learning co-ordinator) for each subject to be put 'on action' in terms of ICT. Incorporate monitoring observations and ask them to produce a plan for software and resource spending to present to the E-learning group's termly meeting. (Note the advantage of having some senior management authority behind you. If you become isolated none of this will be achieved?)

### *Technicians*

I advocate that the school sets up a two-tier technical support service. First, you will need some form of formal contract or relationship with contractors who will ultimately manage your resources. I will address this in detail shortly; you do not want to worry about this during your first month in charge. Secondly, you should have some internal provision, probably in the form of a teaching assistant (TA) who has received some training to look after day-to-day technical duties. However, all we are determining at this point is who these people are in your school and tying them into the loop so that you are clear about communication and the monitoring of these systems.

### *ICT governor*

Every school should have an ICT (E-learning) governor. It is not statutory but it is the hidden message that is relevant; it says that this is an important subject. Generally speaking you will not be able to be selective as governors will not be queuing up for the job, but you should try to bring one into your E-learning group.

It may be the case, as in many school's that you have real ICT expertise within your governing body. If so it is vital that you get this sorted out now. They will either be a total asset or a handicap that will hang over you throughout your time at the school. This is worth expanding upon.

There are many schools in which the ICT governor in effect co-ordinates the subject. They may use their own commercial experience and knowledge to interfere in the day-to-day management of the subject and to overrule every decision that you make. I believe that no matter how experienced they are they are never in a position to take over in this way. It is essential when setting your vision for E-learning that a clear pedagogy, grounded in sound primary education, embraces all that you aim to achieve. Make this clear and your governor will understand their role.

That said they will have extremely valuable expertise to share, but so have you. Establish an effective working relationship from the outset and then benefit from their support. The ICT governor should meet with you and the wider team on a regular basis with particular involvement in E-safety and all Health and Safety procedures relating to ICT.


To conclude, establish your team, decide upon a suitable meeting cycle and meet as soon as possible to discuss your vision and the results of your fact-finding review.



**18th September**


#1

Amina




Posts:

Thought provoking. I like this top-down approach to managing the subject. I am going to speak to my head about this. I am actually an assistant headteacher at my school and am a member of SMT. I want a colleague to shadow me, in effect as co-ordinator, this is just what I was looking for. Thanks



#2


Alex



Posts:

I should be quite intimidated about monitoring other subject areas and arranging the work of other subject leaders, but I am going to adopt this model too. It will be great to feel supported but I should still want to be able to make a lot of decisions myself.


Hey Lisa! You are very quiet about this subject, I hope you haven't ducked out!



**19th September**

#1


Lisa




Posts:


Hi Alex, Hi Everyone. Don't worry, I am here for the long haul, it's just been a bit hectic at school these last few days.

Gambo, my first reaction was dismissive for this whole leadership thing but teaching has taught me not to be afraid of trying out different approaches to difficult tasks. I like the idea of having a colleague at the school available for technical support and they will be a lot cheaper than the commercial guys' who can be difficult (I think you know what I mean). You say we will be discussing this later, please do as I know I need to completely re-examine the way that their work is accountable within my school. I would worry about training for the teaching assistant, any suggestions? I don't think that the local authority provides anything like that.




 #2

Alex





Posts:




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Hi Lisa, hope you are out of the heat at school now, you sound very focused!




 #3

Toby





Posts:




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Welcome back Lisa! Work-life balance? Time management?




 #4

Lisa





Posts:




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Toby, I'll remind you of that when it's your next parents' evening.  
Gambo, we've got two weeks to set up the meeting, right? I feel as though I am actually gaining control of events and beginning to set the agenda. Thanks!




 #5

Alex



Posts:



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Thanks Gambo, I'm going to work on this over the next week or so. I also feel I have accomplished a lot already. Look forward to seeing the new plan for October. Lots of audits to begin I believe?

