Improving your school’s computing offer

A guide for governors and trustees in primary and secondary schools and colleges.
About this guide

This guide has been created by the National Centre for Computing Education (NCCE).

Funded by the Department for Education, the NCCE supports schools to provide young people with an inspirational, world-leading education in computing.

Our ambition is to transform the way computing is taught in schools across the country – and enable more young people to benefit from studying this important subject.

This guide includes information for:

- school governors
- trustees in multi-academy trusts

It covers how they can support school leadership teams to improve and develop their school’s computing provision, including taking advantage of the NCCE’s support.

Find out more at teachcomputing.org

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“Our vision is for every child in every school in England to have a world-leading computing education”

The National Centre for Computing Education
Why computing should be a priority for school governors and trustees

Computing is an important subject, which many schools are finding challenging to deliver.

A vital subject

A foundation subject for all students from key stages 1 to 4, computing is an important part of a broad and balanced curriculum. It is transforming the world around us, surrounding us in everyday life, and it will continue to shape our lives in ways we cannot yet imagine.

Skills for a digital world

We need to ensure our children can develop the knowledge and skills they need to prepare them for opportunities that will come their way. As a foundational subject discipline that every child should learn from primary school onwards, computing is an instrumental pillar to equip our children for the jobs of the future.

In addition, through computing young people develop computational thinking skills and problem-solving ability, which are transferable to other subjects and careers.

The challenge for schools

Many schools are facing multiple challenges around delivering a high quality computing curriculum, which makes it an area where governors and trustees can provide particular impact.

In the wake of the move from ICT to computer science, there is a shortage of teachers with the right skills and knowledge to deliver strong results across all key stages, and drive uptake at GCSE level.

For primary schools, staff confidence can present issues; and at secondary level, recruiting and retaining teachers in this subject is presenting enormous challenges.

Find out more at teachcomputing.org
Supporting the school leadership team

Promoting a stronger computing offer

To help promote a stronger computing offer, school governors and trustees should:

- understand the expectations around the teaching of computing, as a compulsory subject at key stages 1 to 4
- have the confidence to start conversations and challenge senior leaders on current provision
- understand how computing shapes students’ experiences and the importance of preparing them to be creators, rather than only consumers, of technology
- ensure their school is making the most of the free, high quality support provided by the NCCE (see page 7)

Questions for governors and trustees to ask

- What is our curriculum intent for computing?
- Is the school prepared for an Ofsted deep dive in computing?
- How are the computing subject leader and teachers supported to develop their subject knowledge?
- Is computing/computer science sustainable in the school? What happens if the subject leader/specialist teacher leaves?
- **Secondary**: Are there teachers of other subjects with spare capacity, who could pick up computing as an additional subject, or who might want to upskill?
- **Secondary**: If we are not offering computer science at GCSE, how can we work towards this?

Find out more at teachcomputing.org
Recruiting IT and computing professionals

When vacancies arise on the governing body, aim to recruit someone with computing skills, as this will enhance your ability to support the school in this area.

The NCCE has produced Becoming a school governor or trustee, a leaflet for IT and computing professionals who are considering taking on one of these roles.

For more information, visit teachcomputing.org/governors-and-trustees.

Simon Peyton Jones, Chair of the National Centre for Computing Education, and governor at Chesterton Community College.

“Computing professionals are particularly valuable as governors. Schools need our belief in our subject, our technical expertise and our address books. Every school is working out what computing as a school subject means, what a great education in computing looks like and how to offer pathways in computing that suit every child.”
How the NCCE can help

Meeting schools’ needs

Schools must provide a broad and balanced curriculum delivered by expert teachers, with attention paid to teacher workload – which may be especially an issue in recent times due to the impact of COVID-19.

The NCCE can provide high quality resources and training that can improve your school’s computing provision without adding greatly to staff workloads.

“Learners study the full curriculum. Providers ensure this by teaching a full range of subjects for as long as possible, ‘specialising’ only when necessary...

Teachers have expert knowledge of the subjects that they teach. If they do not, they are supported to address gaps in their knowledge so that pupils are not disadvantaged by ineffective teaching...

Leaders... are realistic and constructive in the way they manage staff, including their workload.”
The NCCE offer

Staff training

Teach primary computing certificate

This national qualification offers subsidised training and enrichment to help teachers deliver and lead the computing curriculum and improve learning across your school.

Computer science subject knowledge certificate

Computer Science Accelerator is a comprehensive professional development programme with flexible training options, designed to drive up teaching and attainment in schools across England. We provide all schools in England with the opportunity to upskill teachers in any subject to teach computing up to GCSE level.

The programme is free to all state-funded schools, with generous bursary funding also available (see page 9).

Teach secondary computing certificate

This certificate is for teachers who have already gained the Computer science subject knowledge certificate. It offers a diverse range of courses and professional development opportunities including subject leadership and pedagogy.
High quality resources

The Teach Computing Curriculum offers free, ready made, editable schemes of work that cover the entire teaching curriculum from key stages 1 to 4. This enables teachers to deliver effective, high quality learning, while saving time and not unduly adding to their workloads.

Support from subject matter experts

Our network of subject matter experts provide fully funded consultancy and guidance to schools and colleges who meet our eligibility criteria. Our experts can work with your school to identify an action plan to enable the effective delivery of computing and computer science.

Preparing for a deep dive

Here are some of the questions that Ofsted may ask during a deep dive into computing.

- **How does your curriculum meet the needs of all your students?**
- **How does your offer differ from the National Curriculum and why?**
- **What topics do you teach in each year group and why is your curriculum sequenced in this way?**
- **Have teachers had access to CPD? What has the impact of this been on their workload?**

Find out more at [teachcomputing.org](http://teachcomputing.org)
NCCE bursaries for schools and colleges

Primary courses

A bursary of £220 is available to state-funded primary schools in England each academic year to send one teacher on a primary computing course during the school day. All primary courses are also heavily subsidised for state schools.

Computer Science Accelerator

Bursaries are available for teachers at state-funded secondary schools and colleges in England, with up to £1,800 available for every teacher:

- £300 ring-fenced bursary (for resources or professional development) could be payable upon completing two courses
- £620 for completing the programme
- £220 per day of face-to-face or remote CPD (starting at or before 2:30pm), for up to four days (£880 in total)

This could be to pay for travel and cover, and support the computing department.

With some schools sending multiple members of staff on the courses, the bursaries can add up and make a significant difference to your computing department.

Annie Cuffe Davis, Computer Science teacher

“The bursary has had a real, visible impact. We have been able to invest in our department, getting laptop computers for our students and robots for our coding clubs. We’ve also now got so many resources for our lessons that have come from all of the courses I took, which my colleagues are using now too.”

Other bursaries and support

Secondary schools not already delivering GCSE computer science are entitled to fully-funded subject matter expert support, and may qualify for additional bursaries up to £5,400:

- £1,400 for engaging with an SME to create an action plan
- £4,000 once computer science is confirmed as an option at GCSE

Primary and secondary schools in Local Authority District 5 and 6 areas are eligible for half day of fully funded computing subject matter expert support.

You can find more information about available support and funding at teachcomputing.org/bursary

Find out more at teachcomputing.org
Any questions?

If you have any questions, please send them to info@teachcomputing.org and we will be in touch to help!

teachcomputing.org  WeAreComputing  @WeAreComputing