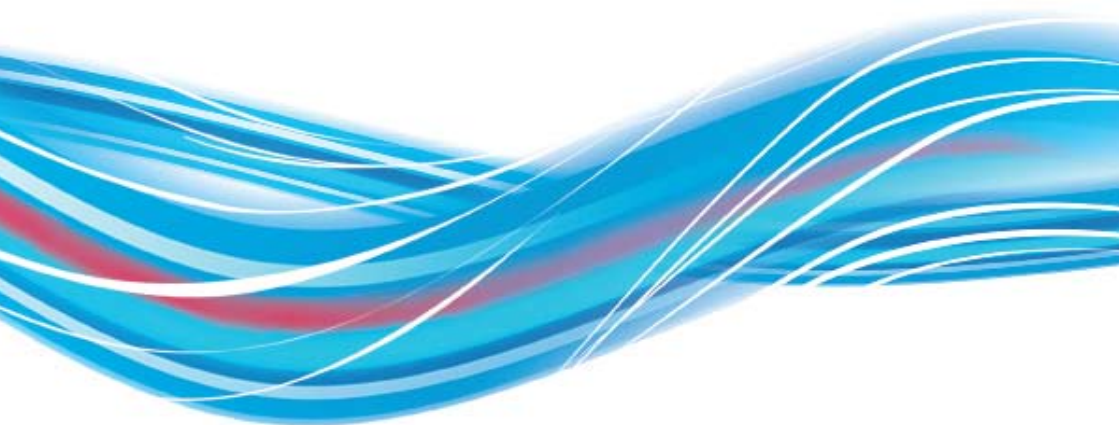


March 2009

Schools

**Becta** leading  
next generation  
learning

# Self-review framework for small schools



■ ■ I would recommend the Self-review framework to any school. Small schools can benefit as much as large schools and, in some ways, I think completing the framework in a small school is an easier task than in a large one. It is a brilliant exercise in self-evaluation and there are benefits from the process which permeate other subjects. The process feeds really well into the SEF (Self-evaluation form) and provides a great preparation for self-review conversations with Ofsted inspectors and School Improvement Partners. ■ ■

Anne Garner, Headteacher, Church Aston Infant School, Newport, Shropshire

# Self-review: making that important decision



As the government's lead agency on the effective deployment of technology in learning and skills, Becta is only too aware of the fact that not enough small schools are registering for our Self-review framework.

We know why this is the case. Some small-school leaders believe that the whole process is too long and that they do not have enough staff to engage with it properly.

At Becta, we naturally want to change this perception. We know that the best way to do this is to provide evidence from other small schools of their experiences.

In these pages, small schools from around the country share how they made the important decision to embark upon self-review, how they worked with the process and the benefits they can now count upon.

# 01

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## Church Aston Infant School Newport, Shropshire

**Type of school:**

Semi-rural infant school

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**Age range:**

4-7 years

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**Number of pupils:**

50

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**Headteacher:**

Anne Garner

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**Self-review framework****lead:**

Anne Garner

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**Self-review framework  
completion:**

March 2007, followed  
by successful ICT Mark  
assessment

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Church Aston Infant School is a small school organised as two classes, R/Y1 and Y1/Y2, each taught by two teachers on a job-share basis. One of this team of four is Anne Garner, Headteacher and ICT Co-ordinator.

**Making the decision**

In 2006, the school was invited to be a 'host' school for the NCSL SLICT programme in recognition of its excellence with ICT. While Anne Garner was undertaking some research into the uptake of the ICT Mark, she recognised the benefits of the Self-review framework for her own school. She immediately set about ICT self-review using the framework.



### Working with the process

As both teaching head and ICT Co-ordinator, Anne was in a unique position to apply her in-depth understanding of her school to the Self-review framework. She also consulted regularly with the other members of staff, ensuring that they were involved.

Anne found the process hugely beneficial, particularly in the context of future planning and school development. She arranged for the Self-review framework process to finish at a time that would be most relevant for the whole-school planning process. As a result, the school could effectively incorporate any development issues arising from the framework into its development plan. For example, the need for all the staff to engage in further professional development. The framework provided clarity on what needed to be done and the outcome was well-focused professional development. Another benefit was the celebration of existing high-quality ICT work in the school. This independent 'pat on the back' was highly motivating for the teaching staff. Anne feels that the Self-review framework process was really good for her as headteacher. "I particularly liked the very clear model for self-review set out within the framework – I wish that other self-review models were as lucid and effective!"



# Church Aston Infant School Newport, Shropshire



## **Counting the benefits**

The school used the framework to gain the ICT Mark and they continue to use it to determine the progress they are making with ICT and to then set new ICT development goals.

“I would recommend the Self-review framework to any school,” said Anne. “Small schools can benefit as much as large schools and, in some ways, I think completing the framework in a small school is an easier task than in a large one. It is a brilliant exercise in self-evaluation and there are benefits from the process which permeate other subjects. The process feeds really well into the SEF and provides a great preparation for self-review conversations with Ofsted inspectors and School Improvement Partners.”

## **Providing good advice**

Anne’s key advice to other schools is to make sure that they set aside adequate time for the process. She also advises, “Don’t try to do the self-review on your own. Make sure that you liaise with your staff and, if possible, link with another school which has been through the process.”

It quickly became clear that the Self-review framework was an excellent tool for self-review. The process really helped me get my mind round the ICT issues in school as well as the more generic issues of quality self-review in school. It prepared me really well for our forthcoming Ofsted inspection and I was sure that the framework would make an important contribution to my SEF. That definitely turned out to be the case.

Anne Garner, Headteacher



Website

[www.churchstoninfantschool.co.uk](http://www.churchstoninfantschool.co.uk)

# 02

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## Clunbury CE Primary School Shropshire

**Type of school:**

Small rural primary school

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**Age range:**

3–11

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**Number of pupils:**

68

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**Headteacher:**

Andrew Davis

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**Self-review framework lead:**

Andrew Davis

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**Self-review framework completion:**

the school achieved the ICT Mark in March 2007

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A small rural school with nursery provision for 14 children. The school is organised into 2 classes for 72 pupils. They have 4 teaching staff, two full-time and two part-time.

**Making the decision**

Headteacher (and ICT coordinator) Andrew Davis first found out about the Self-review framework when he attended a Strategic Leadership of ICT (SLICT) course for heads early in 2006. He had been Headteacher at the school for about 18 months and had decided that ICT was a priority for development.





## Working with the process

Andrew looked at each aspect of the framework online and made an assessment of the school's position. He discussed the levels with staff, achieving a good consensus. He involved teachers and teaching assistants in staff meetings as well as children through class discussions.

This provided the school with a helpful agenda on where and how it needed to improve. It included the use of ICT for assessment procedures and led to the school developing its own progress tracking system online. The school decided to invest in laptops and wireless provision through its Standards Fund money. This led to instant improvements in the way ICT was used by pupils, and in the extent of its use. As a result, the school sought funding for further laptops from the PTA.

The school went on to develop its website and started to use blogging, which also involved parents, as well as running a school radio station and podcasting. The school introduced e-Portfolios for all its pupils. Parents and pupils can comment on the work included in e-Portfolios via the school's learning platform. On Friday evenings a community computer club involves pupils teaching their parents applications they have learnt in school, e.g. animation.



# Clunbury CE Primary School Shropshire



## **Counting the benefits**

The Self-review framework was very helpful in enabling the school to make enormous progress. Andrew: "It helped us to see where we were in relation to other schools, provided a clear structure for progression and gave us clear guidelines, enabling us to set clear targets."

In Andrew's view, learning and teaching have definitely improved – and not just with ICT. The framework process had implications for the school more widely, e.g. in helping it to develop more independent learning and personalisation. It has also led to far greater parental involvement in children's work. All of this was recognised by Ofsted in the 2007 inspection report. Andrew believes the 'outstanding' judgement would not have been achieved without the Self-review framework and the ICT Mark.

Other benefits of using the framework included a marked increase in staff confidence: the achievement of the ICT Mark gave staff an immense boost. "Completing the Self-review framework and then meeting our targets was a massive stepping stone," says Andrew. The framework also inspired Andrew and the staff to develop further the school's vision for ICT – "to put detail into it and to make it real".

### Providing good advice

Andrew strongly advises other small schools to take on the Self-review framework to help them identify current progress and spell out where they need to go in moving forward.

▀▀ In particular, the SRF helped us to see where we were in relation to other schools, provided a clear structure for progression and gave us clear guidelines, enabling us to set clear targets. ▀▀

Andrew Davis, Headteacher



Website

[www.clunbury.shropshire.sch.uk](http://www.clunbury.shropshire.sch.uk)

# Hale Primary School

## Fordingbridge, Hampshire

**Type of school:**

Rural primary school

**Age range:**

4–11 years

**Number of pupils:**

90

**Headteacher:**

Maria McCusker

**Self-review framework lead:**

Maria McCusker

**Self-review framework completion:**

Spring 2007 followed by successful ICT Mark assessment

Hale Primary School is a small rural school organised into four classes, each with a teacher and teaching assistant. Maria McCusker was appointed Headteacher in January 2006, supports all four classes and feels that she knows the school well.

**Making the decision**

Following her appointment, Maria discovered that ICT was poorly resourced and the school had not developed well with it. The impact of ICT on learning and teaching was minimal. She asked local schools how they had developed with ICT and was recommended to immediately embark on the Self-review framework as the basis for the school's development work in ICT.

**Working with the process**

Maria led the self-review process alongside the ICT Co-ordinator and involved every member of staff, including teaching assistants. Initially, the school found that its Self-review framework levels were mostly 4 and 5. This might have deterred progress, but actually inspired the school to improve as quickly as possible. As the self-review progressed, the school identified and began to address key development areas. Soon it was achieving levels at the standard required for the ICT Mark.

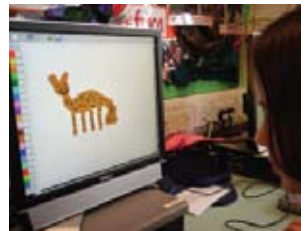
By September 2007, the school had not only completed the self-review and put in place a range of school development activities, but had also received the ICT Mark. "The framework transformed the way we deliver ICT," says Maria. "It was a really powerful agent for change in this school and has significantly improved the quality of learning and teaching."

## Counting the benefits

The school kept parents and pupils informed about progress with the Self-review framework. Parents were pleased to see the school being so proactive in what had obviously been a weak area and pupils recognised the changes in classrooms. One pupil wrote, "We can do ICT for ourselves now."



Staff were quick to see the potential for ICT and, by the end of the self-review process, were becoming highly innovative with ICT in their classrooms. The framework not only helped them to see what they should be doing with ICT but also gave them aspirational targets which raised expectations across the school. Maria enabled them to visit other local schools to see good practice in ICT and encouraged professional discussion about learning and teaching with ICT back in school.



A key benefit of the Self-review framework was the way it helped staff to see the broader impact of ICT across all curriculum areas and to understand its contribution to quality learning and teaching across the board, including developing pupils' learning skills.

The school found the element on Assessment the most challenging and most rewarding. Whole-school moderation of standards in ICT was significantly improved following the work with the Self-review framework.

A year on, and following a major building programme, the school is now planning to revisit some of the framework areas to check on progress and identify areas for further development. "It's an ongoing process for us – we have made a tremendous start and ICT has improved here beyond recognition – but we want to be even better!" says Maria.

# Hale Primary School

Fordingbridge, Hampshire

## Providing good advice

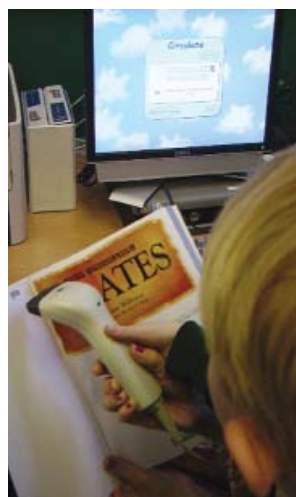
Maria: "We found it really helpful not only to use the Self-review framework to identify where we needed to improve, but to put in place activities designed to address the issues as they emerged. We found that teachers and teaching assistants could see progress being made as we worked through the framework Elements." Maria is really enthusiastic about the process: "If a small school like us can do it, then any school can!"





▀▀ The Self-review framework is so well structured it was a pleasure to use. Although I had a pretty good idea that ICT needed a great deal of attention when I arrived, the framework gave us a very clear development route. I also felt confident that the comprehensive coverage of ICT and its potential for learning would ensure that we did a thorough review. ▀▀

Maria McCusker, Headteacher



Website

[www.hale.hants.sch.uk](http://www.hale.hants.sch.uk)

# 04

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## John Hellins Primary School Potterspury, Northamptonshire

**Type of school:**  
small rural primary  
school

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**Age range:**  
4–11

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**Number of pupils:**  
118

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**Headteacher:**  
Mike Langrish

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**Self-review framework  
lead:**

David Tebbutt

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**Self-review framework  
completion:**  
2007

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A small rural school organised into 4 classes with a 108 pupils. There are 4 full-time and 2 part-time teaching staff with 2 full-time HTLAs. The head job-shares with one of the teachers.

### **Making the decision**

The senior leadership team at John Hellins recognised that ICT needed to develop its impact on work across the curriculum and decided to use the Self-review framework as an improvement tool.

### **Working with the process**

The school started with its vision for ICT. A number of alternatives were discussed with staff and governors and a consensus reached. Discussions with pupils led to valuable inputs and enabled the vision to be expressed in child-friendly language.

Current levels were discussed and agreed across all aspects of the framework, with support provided by an assessor from the local authority. The school sought evidence from classroom work across the curriculum. This was less daunting due to the fact that some evidence – such as the school’s portfolio of ICT-based work – applied across a number of elements. Staff found the action planning suggestions helpful as well as the comments, guidance and exemplars provided.

The school tackled the elements on leadership and management and resources first. As staff had lost confidence in the level and quality of the ICT resources, the school gave some focus to infrastructure and drew up an ICT spending plan, linked to the School Development Plan.



## Counting the benefits

“The process has helped us to embed ICT across subjects and to ensure that staff are fully confident to use it,” says David Tebutt, the deputy head and ICT coordinator who led the process.

The hardest aspect to improve was whole-school consistency – making sure that all staff were using ICT in similar ways. Staff looked together at pupils’ work and identified areas where ICT could help it to improve.

The use of the Self-review framework has led to significant developments in the way pupils learn. Now that all children have their own online space, they can extend their learning by continuing work at home and becoming more independent – something central to the school’s vision. They send their homework to the teachers electronically. Increased use of email has been accompanied by heightened focus on e-safety.

The school was already a high attaining one but improvements have resulted in an increase in the numbers achieving higher levels in core subjects. Ofsted acknowledged the level of improvement in its 2007 inspection of the school.

Headteacher Mike Langrish says, “The Self-review framework has engaged the school beyond our expectations.”



# John Hellins Primary School

Potterspury  
Northamptonshire

## **Providing good advice**

Mike Langrish stresses the need to ensure commitment at all levels – including financial. “Once the infrastructure was in place and reliability was no longer a problem, this made a big difference.”

David Tebbutt advises other small schools that if they involve all staff from the outset, “they will find this a very rewarding process professionally”. He believes that the size of the school can be an advantage: “Although everyone has more curriculum responsibilities, it can be easier to attain consistent change because there are fewer staff.”





▀▀ Teaching has also improved. As a result of the Self-review framework we have had the confidence to develop assessment for learning – which now includes peer and self-assessment and which was started in ICT lessons. ▀▀

David Tebbutt, Deputy Head



Website

[www.Johnhellinsprimaryschool.ik.org](http://www.Johnhellinsprimaryschool.ik.org)

# 05

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## West Oxford Community Primary School

**Type of school:**

Small urban primary school

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**Age range:**

3–11

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**Number of pupils:**

150

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**Headteacher:**

Julie St Clair Hoare

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**Self-review framework****lead:**

Tara Kelly

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**Self-review framework****completion:**

2007

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A small rural school with nursery provision. The school is organised into 5 classes with 113 pupils and the nursery with 51 children. There are 7 full-time teachers.

**Making the decision**

When Headteacher Julie St Clair Hoare attended a Strategic Leadership of ICT (SLICT) course, ICT was already a school priority at West Oxford, as was creativity. As improvement work was already under way, the use of the Self-review framework dovetailed well into the school's work in both areas.

**Working with the process**

Julie's colleague, Tara Kelly, took on the Self-review framework development work, as part of her NPQH qualification. This went well and Tara has since been promoted to deputy head.

Julie and Tara shared with all staff initial thoughts about the framework levels attained. They consulted parents and pupils via questionnaires and engaged governors in the process. The local authority ICT team provided invaluable support.

The main area identified for improvement was assessment. All staff discussed action plans for this and other areas and found the actions suggested in the online tool particularly helpful.

## Counting the benefits

The school moved forward on the use of e-Portfolios of work across the curriculum for all pupils. This helped subject coordinators to gain a clearer view of pupils' achievements and also supported planning.

As a result of the Self-review framework process, the school also invested in more ICT resources. Julie: "Staff have used many more exciting tools and these have brought things to life much more." In particular, there has been growth in the use of digital photography, video making and the use of ICT to present work, incorporating sound files of the pupils talking to accompany the images they have captured. Laptops are now used throughout the school and more visual stimuli are available to the pupils through the use of interactive whiteboards.

Although ICT was previously a challenging area for some staff, they are all now much more confident as a result of the focused and supported improvement activity enabled by the Self-review framework. Governors too are much more aware of how ICT can enhance children's learning and Governing Body meetings have now become paperless.

The school attained the ICT Mark in autumn 2007. Julie feels that using the framework to improve the way ICT is used has had a knock-on effect for the quality of learning and teaching across all subjects. The use of ICT is now routinely included in lesson observations, with an emphasis on what pupils use it for and how it helps their learning.



# West Oxford Community Primary School

## Providing good advice

Julie's advice to other small schools? "Enlist external support to help you through the difficult things – things you don't know you don't know. Schools should not be put off by the time it is likely to take to complete the review process – the end product is well worth it."

Julie feels that the framework's greatest advantage is in spelling out best practice: "If you can achieve this you will know you have raised your game."



▀▀ The framework's greatest advantage is in spelling out best practice. If you can achieve this you will know you have raised your game. ▀▀

Julie St Clair Hoare, Headteacher



Website

<http://west-oxford.oxon.digitalbrain.com/oxon/schools/west-oxford/frontpage/home/>

# Self-review: making the difference



Every school is different. But is every school making the difference it could and needs to be making?

At Becta, we hope that these case studies have encouraged you to think differently about the Self-review framework.

We urge you to contact us for preliminary discussions on your specific situation and how you can make sure you use ICT more effectively for better outcomes in your school.

For more information, please visit the Self-review framework website:

[www.becta.org.uk/selfreview](http://www.becta.org.uk/selfreview)





# Thanks

Our thanks go to all the schools that have participated in the production of this publication and supplied us with photographs.



**Church Aston Infant School**

[www.churchastoninfantschool.co.uk](http://www.churchastoninfantschool.co.uk)

**Clunbury CE Primary School**

[www.clunbury.shropshire.sch.uk](http://www.clunbury.shropshire.sch.uk)

**Hale Primary School**

[www.hale.hants.sch.uk](http://www.hale.hants.sch.uk)

**John Hellins Primary School**

[www.Johnhellinsprimaryschool.ik.org](http://www.Johnhellinsprimaryschool.ik.org)

**West Oxford Community Primary School**

<http://west-oxford.oxon.digitalbrain.com/oxon/schools/west-oxford/frontpage/home/>



■ ■ The Self-review framework transformed the way we deliver ICT. It was a really powerful agent for change in this school and has significantly improved the quality of learning and teaching... If a small school like us can do it, then any school can! ■ ■

Maria McCusker, Headteacher, Hale Primary School, Fordingbridge, Hampshire

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