"Good ICT is a necessity, not a luxury"

As we have renewed the E2BN IT Procurement Framework contract with Think IT, we thought we should ask Neil Watkins, Think IT Director, why he thinks ICT is so important for schools?

Why is ICT important for schools?

Very simply, good ICT is a necessity for a school, not a luxury. You can't run an organisation the size of a school smoothly, effectively or efficiently without it. One of the biggest challenges facing schools though is ICT skills. How can a school be an expert in broadband connectivity, network infrastructure, cyber-security, equipment, cloud storage, productivity tools, e-Safety and everything else required to keep staff and learners productive and safe? I would argue that one person, or indeed one company, can't do it all. That's why we bring together the right expertise for each individual school, all under one simple to administer contract. Our aim is to make ICT easy for schools.

Why would an organisation choose to use Think IT?

The main benefit is that we save you time and money. You don't have to get three quotes or go out to tender – just tell us what you want and we'll get it for you. Buying through the framework means you're fully compliant with DfE guidance and UK procurement law. Because we work with thousands of schools across the country, we can achieve excellent value for money.

We can also help schools identify what they need, especially if they want to transform IT across the whole estate. Our Think IT Readiness Assessment starts with a 'Visioning Workshop' to identify where the school is now and where they want to be. Every single aspect of technology within the school is considered as a whole - teaching, learning, classroom management, business support, connectivity, communication and of course safety and security. The Readiness Assessment informs the IT Strategy. If required we will project manage the entire transformation.

What's next for you?

As I've worked with so many education organisations I'm often asked to share my experience. I'm speaking at the Academies Show in London on the 26th April, my presentation is entitled "7 ways to mess up your schools' IT....REALLY BADLY". Everyone has at least one story about a school who got it or 'IT' spectacularly wrong. So if any of your readers have a story they'd be happy to share, anonymised of course, please contact me.

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Neil Watkins, ThinkIT Director has a passion for education. He has spent the last 14 years delivering large, complex and often challenging change programmes.

What are people saying?

"Since using the services of Think IT and their partners, we have seen improvements in staff productivity and collaboration, and an increased use of innovative technology to support teaching & learning." **David French**, Curriculum Manager at Beeches Primary school.

"The framework provides access to the full spectrum of educational IT suppliers without the need for mini competitions so schools can buy direct without having to get 3 quotes or go out to tender, saving both time and money." **Kirstie Phillips**, ICT Traded Services Manager at Nottinghamshire County Council.

thinkIT
making IT easy for schools