



## Gloucestershire enhance special needs provision

A report published by Ofsted states that the crucial factor in determining whether a child with special educational needs (SEN) will flourish in a school is the quality of support provided by the local authority to teachers and Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs). Gloucestershire County Council's Advisory Teaching Service (ATS) provides advice and guidance on SEN to teaching staff in over 300 schools across the region. With the professional support of Capita Children's Services (Capita CS) they have been able to ensure the care and support they provide teachers of pupils with SEN is directly targeted to their needs.

Gloucestershire County Council supports 252 primary, 42 secondary and 14 special schools. As part of their continuing commitment to improving efficiency and services, the authority brought in Capita CS Support Consultant, Debbie Nelson to work on a 40-day project reviewing the structure of the service's Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Hand-picked by Capita CS for her extensive knowledge of the systems involved, Debbie's experience was ideally matched to the task ahead. She began by moving the authority away from paper-based processes, which were time-consuming for staff.

The first stage of the project was to concentrate on the authority's support services for pupils with visual and hearing impairment. Debbie met with team leaders to learn more about the teams' procedures, and find out exactly what they wanted from the system before she began examining processes and making changes.

A priority for Gloucestershire was ensuring up-to-date information on pupils with SEN could be maintained on the new system in order to continue providing the best possible service to teachers and SENCOs. Work had already started on helping the teams easily track and monitor pupils' movements between schools by sharing

data with schools electronically on a daily basis. Re-using existing information from within the authority's main pupil database, the **One** Management Information System, ensured that time spent in administration was significantly reduced and the risk of errors from multiple data-entry were minimised.

The ability to re-use data from within the system will play a key role in helping the Hearing Impaired Team send information on pupils with varying auditory needs to the British Association of Teachers of the Deaf (BATOD) quickly; which they are required to do every two years. Previously a paper-based task, compiling and preparing all the necessary pupil information was time-consuming. With the new system in place, the team will be able to produce the data required for the BATOD report much more efficiently; as it is simply drawn directly from **One**.

"The support we received from Capita CS before the start of the project was incredibly valuable because it helped us concentrate our efforts on what we wanted to achieve and put targets in place for each stage of the project," states John Deane, ICT Application Support Manager at Gloucestershire. "Having Debbie on board was a great advantage as her job focussed solely on developing the capability of the system and her extensive knowledge of the technology enabled her to work very quickly."

# CASE STUDY

## Support Services

"It is remarkable what we have achieved in such a short space of time by engaging an external consultant in this project. Debbie very quickly understood what it was we wanted and has played a key role in helping us to achieve it. She slotted straight into the team very easily. We knew she would be flexible if we needed her to be and were always confident her time would be maximised."

**John Deane,**  
ICT Application Support Manager

One of the most important things an authority can do with the information they collect each day is to utilise it in driving standards up and improve the services offered to schools, which was an essential part of Gloucestershire's expectation of the new system. Debbie's work involved setting up the necessary criteria which would allow the teams to produce complex analytical reports using the data in **One**, which could then be used to inform decision-making. We had this anyway before on our database.

The provision of training for teachers and SENCOs is crucial to the service Gloucestershire County Council provides and was an important element in the on-going success of the project. The authority runs many courses attended by teaching staff each year and the administration and management of courses is made much simpler with the use of **One** Training Manager. From September, Gloucestershire County Council hopes to manage their training courses through Training Manager, with course and delegate information or venue details being updated instantly should they change. This will help ensure the training support schools receive from the authority is efficient and professional.

Gloucestershire County Council has been so pleased with progress of the project, and how cost-effective it has proved, that they plan further short-term projects in partnership with Capita CS within other teams across the authority.

## Services & Support

Capita CS Support Services can also be combined with any or all of training, consultancy and project management to provide a complete solution where none or limited internal resource is available to develop or implement modules.

"The exchange of data with schools each day helps ensure we have access to a comprehensive, up-to-the-minute record for the children in our care. We know where each child is, which school they attend and can instantly see what equipment or services they are receiving. This helps us target our resources more effectively."

**John Deane,**  
ICT Application Support Manager

## Contact us

If you require further information on how our Support Services team can improve the existing use of **One** within your local authority either through short term focused projects like Gloucestershire County Council, or through longer term support then please contact either Carole Phillips on 07711 927149 or your Account Manager.