

Foreword

The research findings in this report make an important contribution to our understanding of the professional development needs of our teachers. They also make essential reading for those who engage in providing professional development opportunities for teachers whether they work in LEAs or in the independent sphere.

Teachers are hard pressed at the best of times and when they are presented with opportunities for professional development they will need to be assured that their time is well spent in engaging with them. Teachers need high quality, relevant and efficient opportunities which are well researched and well matched to their needs as classroom practitioners. Naace does not endorse specific products or training materials but does welcome this report and its reflection on teachers' perceptions of their needs and the ways in which they can be met.

All professional development initiatives, whatever their level of real or perceived success, should shed light on both the personal development process and the future needs of those that will follow with new initiatives. This report is particularly successful in this respect. It comments on the effectiveness of teachers' previous training and experiences whether delivered in the initial training stage, or in-service, and gives us a clearer view of where teachers are in their current stage of expertise, competence and confidence with ICT. It also reflects on some of the outcomes of the New Opportunities Fund (NOF) Training programme and identifies some of the training needs which have yet to be met for all teachers.

There is continuing debate on the balance between teachers' confidence with ICT as a technology and teachers confidence with ICT as a tool for enhancing the quality of teaching and learning in their subject or phase specialism. This is highlighted in this report which recognises that neither, on its own, is sufficient to ensure that teachers engage appropriately with ICT in the classroom. Teachers need to be able to handle the technology with confidence, rather than feeling that they are "busking it" only one step in front of (or behind!) the pupils; they also need to hold a well-informed pedagogic belief that ICT makes a difference to their teaching and makes a fundamental difference to children's learning. Taken together, teachers' technical and pedagogical confidences in ICT make a potent contribution to learning.

There are also important messages in this report about teachers' preferred learning styles, how their learning can be organised and delivered and how their learning can be assessed and celebrated. As we develop ever more sophisticated approaches to teachers' professional development and make more effective use of e-learning we will need to build on these key perceptions.

Naace is pleased to welcome this report. We look forward to it informing, not only future developments of the specific scheme to which it relates, but also more widely to it influencing all new professional development opportunities in ICT.

Stephen J Bacon
Naace General Secretary

National Association of Advisors for Computers in Education (Naace) is the UK professional association for those who are engaged in advancing education through the use of information and communication technology.