

*The Use of iPads to Improve Attainment in Technology for Pupils with Learning Difficulties*

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**Abstract**

A radical change to how and what children in Wales are taught is underway 26 years after the National Curriculum was first introduced. The Successful Futures report recommends computer programming and I.T to be on an equal footing with literacy and numeracy in all classes (Donaldson2015). Whilst pupils with learning difficulties could struggle with technology requiring high levels of cognitive competence it is reassuring to note that technological advances can also allow those pupils access to educational opportunities unavailable to them in the past. Following a whole school review of pupils' access to the curriculum through ICT, it was agreed to undertake a whole school investment in the use of iPads as a tool for teaching and learning. Staff received training and each iPad was personalised to match the needs of each individual pupil and Apps were purchased. The school used an assessment package to assess pupil's progress in ICT. At the end of the school year the analysis software used the data recorded by teachers to produce a report and graphs. Individualised school iPads helped to improve pupils' ICT skills with attainment in ICT improving by over a P Level (1.1) from 19% of P5 to 28% of P6 for the 2014-2015 academic year, compared to an increase of 0.6 for 2013-2014 academic year. The rapid improvement in pupil attainment within the area of ICT from January 2015 –June 2015 was likely to be due to the introduction of individual school iPads.

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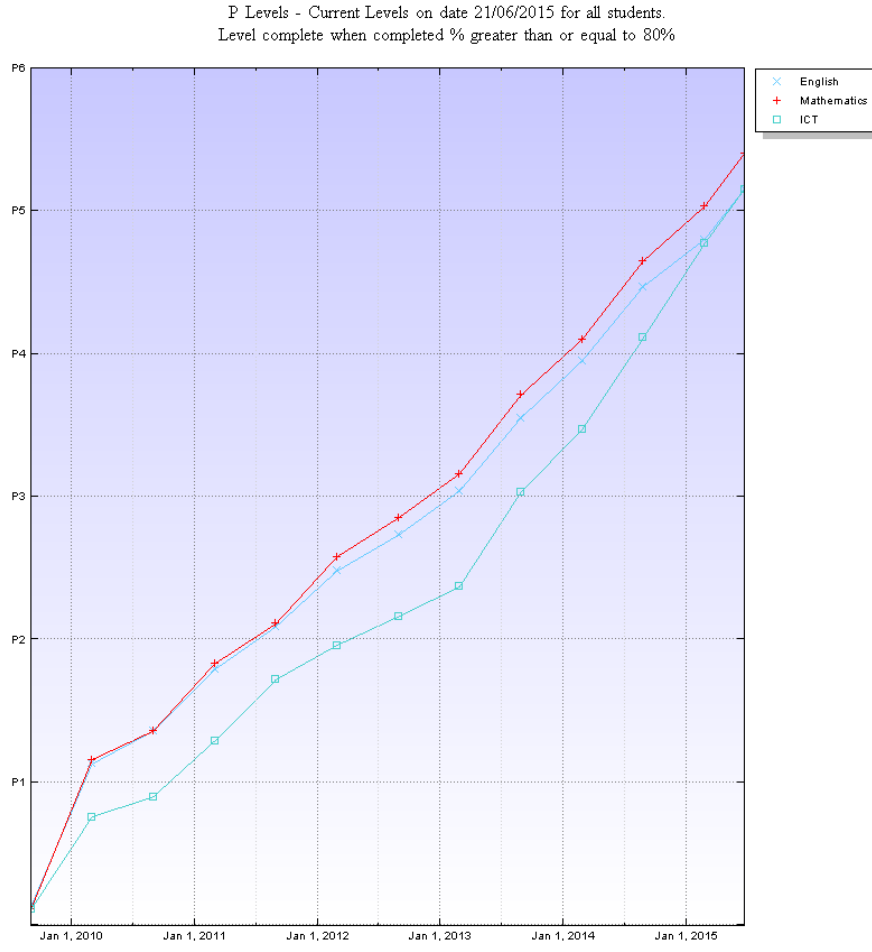
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## Introduction

Believing in the opportunity for the iPad to have a big impact in a special school due to the communication needs of its pupils the senior management team decided that forward planning was needed to enhance the curriculum development of our pupils through the use of individualised iPads. In the autumn term 2013, we undertook a whole school practical enquiry into the use of the iPad tablet as a tool for teaching and learning. This involved each teacher being given an iPad and training in the use of iPads before trialling the technology in classes. In the summer term 2014 teachers worked closely with the ICT coordinator and school technician to determine suitable iPad apps for each individual pupil. In the autumn term 2014 pupils were given individualised iPads.

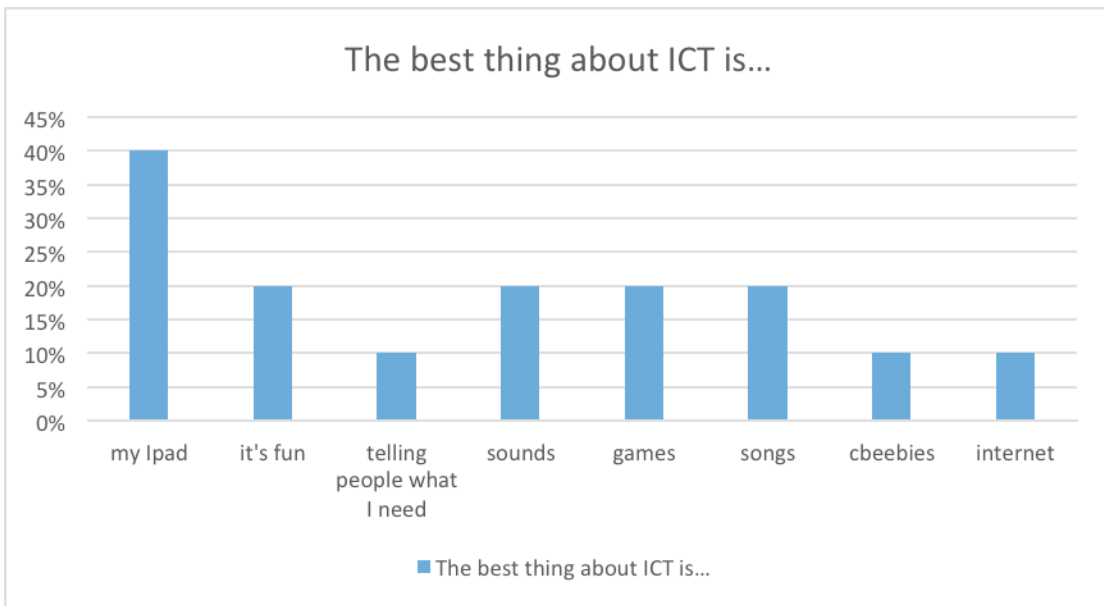
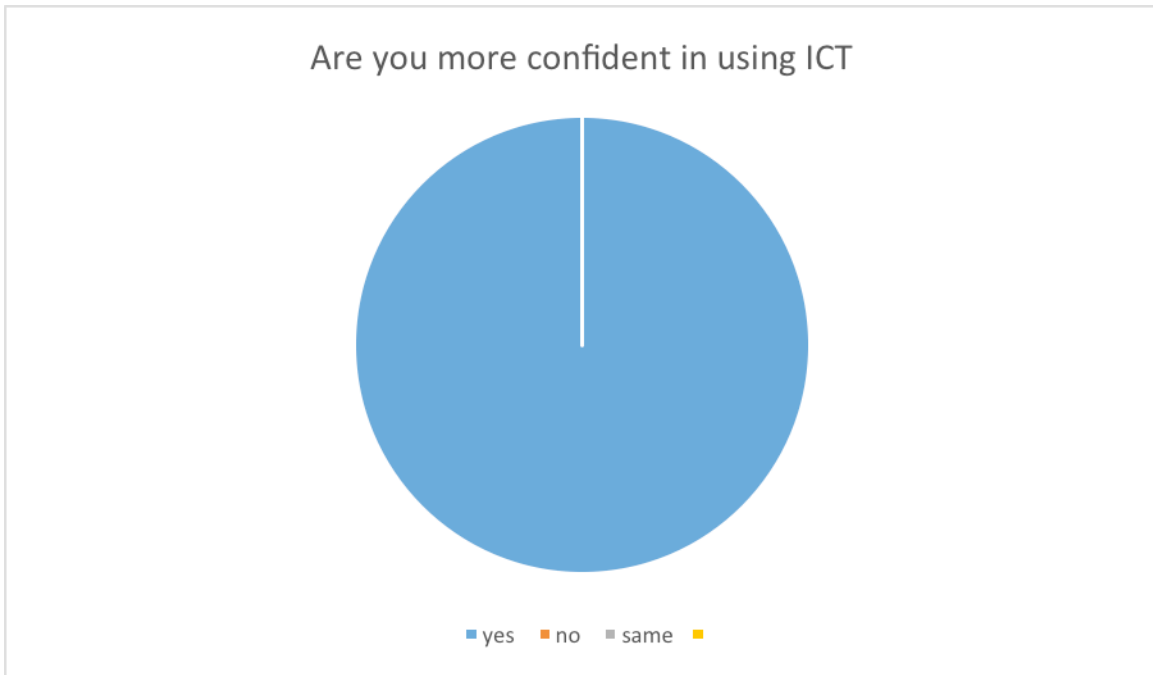
Impact on provision and learners' standards is outlined below

### Graph showing ICT progression over 5 years period



## Pupil Responses

In July 2015 pupils were given questionnaires about their use of ICT. The response from pupils was overwhelmingly in favour of continued use of iPads.



## Conclusions

Individualised school iPads helped to improve pupils' ICT skills  
Attainment in ICT shows a sharp increase from Sept 2014 to June 2015,  
compared to previous years.  
The rapid improvement in pupil attainment within the area of ICT was likely  
to be due to the introduction of individual school iPads.

Examples of how technology has helped pupils to improve their learning include:  
increased cause and effect and exploration skills through use of a touch  
screen and individualised Apps  
improved independent choice making using tablet computers to help  
multiple sensory processing.  
increased communication for both verbal and preverbal pupils increased  
ability to make choices  
Progression shown on B Squared

Jay Ashcroft , director at Learnmaker reports “ Having worked with Apple products  
in education for a number of years, I've seen the proof first hand that iPads in  
particular have the potential to transform the learning experience. The reality is,  
however, that there are so few schools who have really succeeded with iPad that very  
few have experienced that transformational learning experience themselves. Many  
schools I meet feel that the financial impact is the barrier to a good tablet computing  
project, but in reality the only thing stopping your school having the same success is  
leadership.”(Ashcroft 2015)

## **References**

Ashcroft ,J.(2015) iPads and Ofsted. [learnmaker.co.uk/blog/2015/9/ipads-and-ofsted](http://learnmaker.co.uk/blog/2015/9/ipads-and-ofsted)

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