

## Reviewing ICT resources

When we use the term ICT we usually think of computers, but the term includes more than this. When planning for any part of the subject, we can consider using other ICT equipment such as tape recorders, hand-held spell-checkers, photocopiers and floor robots, control equipment, sensors and probes. The range of ICT resources has grown and now extends from the software on the classroom computer to the resources and audiences now available through the Internet and the National Grid for Learning.

Here are two reasons why we should include ICT in our teaching repertoire for Maths and Science.

- 1 Using simulations can give pupils access to experiments and ideas that would otherwise be impossible or impractical to demonstrate in the classroom, opening up new ways for learning about and investigating scientific facts and concepts.
- 2 ICT tools that pupils use to control devices and monitor various environments allow them to develop an increased understanding and flexibility of approach to problem-solving activities and allow for greater freedom in investigating, interpreting and exploring cause and effect.

**ICT resources can be described as content-free and content-rich.**

## Content-free resources across the curriculum

When planning to use ICT resources, it is useful to be aware that some resources enable children to use their own ideas, to create those ideas in text or sound or pictures, or to use a combination of all three. These programs are described as content-free tools because the user can mould and experiment with ideas, try out changes in content and form and organise those ideas in a presentation. They tend to have a cross-curricular role.

As children progress in their development of ICT capability, they learn to use these programs with increasing sophistication. The user tools within the program help them refine their work with higher levels of skill. These tools are often referred to as GENERIC tools.

Typical examples are:

- Word processors and other text handling packages
- Art packages
- Music packages
- LOGO programming language
- Graphing packages
- Database or spreadsheet packages
- Multimedia packages.