

NOW FOR THE SCIENCE BIT...



ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Dr Sue Sentance is the National Academic Coordinator for the Network of Teaching Excellence in Computing Science, which is a national CPD programme run by Computing At School and the BCS Academy of Computing. She has taught ICT and computing in schools and colleges in Cambridgeshire, and previously worked in Initial Teacher Education at Anglia Ruskin University.

Changing its name to 'computing' is just the start of what's happening to the ICT curriculum at the moment – and whilst most agree that a serious restructuring was required in order to catch up with both technological and social developments over recent years, many teachers are understandably concerned about how effectively they will be able to teach the new framework. Luckily, though, help is at hand – Computing At School (CAS), together with BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT, has initiated the Network of Teaching Excellence in computer science, a large-scale CPD initiative which will enable you to gain the training you need to be able to deliver the new curriculum in September 2014.

WHO CAN HELP?

The purpose of Computing At School (computingatschool.org.uk) is to promote the teaching of computer science at school. Through its network it supports teachers across the country; CAS is a collaborative partner with BCS through the BCS Academy of Computing, and has formal support from other industry partners. Membership is open to everyone, and is very broad, including teachers, parents, governors, exam boards, industry, professional societies, and universities.

BCS is the professional body for people working in IT. The BCS Academy of Computing is a learned society dedicated to advancing computing as an academic discipline. It has worked together with CAS to ensure that teachers have support and training prior to and once the new computing curriculum is in place in September 2014. The BCS Academy and CAS have received DfE funding to develop the Network of Teaching Excellence in Computer science (NOE). This programme aims to train

FEELING ANXIOUS ABOUT HOW YOU WILL DELIVER THE NEW COMPUTING CURRICULUM? SUE SENTANCE EXPLORES A SOURCE OF SUPPORT THAT COULD PROVE INVALUABLE

and develop a significant number of 'master teachers' who will train and support their local teachers. The emphasis is very much on local face to face support, training and networking, backed up by an active website of resources and discussions.

In 2013 the BCS Academy of Computing also administered, on behalf of the Department for Education, a scholarship scheme to encourage more teachers into computing. To date it has given over 50 scholarships of £20,000 to new trainee teachers starting their teacher training in Computer Science this September. At the time of writing BCS is currently negotiating to run the scholarship scheme in the next academic year with an announcement due soon. It has also campaigned successfully, along with many key employers and industry partners, for computer science to be an English Baccalaureate subject. Computer science is now the fourth science, sitting aside physics, chemistry and biology.

WHAT IS THE NETWORK OF EXCELLENCE?

The Network of Teaching Excellence in Computer Science offers many opportunities for professional development for teachers. Individual teachers can join CAS via their website and schools can join the Network of Excellence. If your school is a member of the Network of Excellence, you will be affiliated to a local CAS master teacher. CAS master teachers have been (and are still being) recruited and trained to offer CPD to their local schools. They are experienced teachers, with good subject knowledge of computer science, and with the skills needed to support other teachers. There are already 70 master teachers across primary and secondary phases, with the target of 600 by April 2015. Your CAS master teacher will offer CPD courses and be available to advise you on how to get ready for computing.

One of the key principles behind the Network of Excellence is local, face-to-face training. There are a range of face-to-face professional development courses now being

offered around the country in all aspects of the new curriculum. Courses may take place in schools, universities and other venues and are being organised at various times of day – one-day courses, twilight sessions, evening classes, holiday courses – to be as convenient to teachers as possible.

CAS Online can also help you get ready to deliver computing in your school. CAS Online is a community website which offers teachers resources, details of events, and a place to ask questions and meet other similarly minded teachers. CAS Online already has over 5000 members and supports both secondary and primary teachers.

WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW?

The new National Curriculum for Computing outlines what students should be learning in computing. There is a useful document published by the Teaching Agency

