

Soham Village College

Sand Street, Soham, Cambridgeshire
www.sohamcollege.org.uk

Age range: 11 to 16 years

Number of pupils: 1,350

Self-review framework lead:
Martin Lewis, Assistant Principal and ICT Strategy Manager

Self-review framework completed:
5 days over 6 weeks

In approaching the self-review framework process, Assistant Principal Martin Lewis would advise all school leaders to make broad judgements about how their school is achieving through ICT and then start on a positive note by determining where its strengths lie.

Martin, who is the ICT strategy manager at Soham Village College in Cambridgeshire, also says one person must manage the overall process and have a clear overview of the self-review framework as it is completed. David Lunn, Principal, and Jenny West, ICT Curriculum Co-ordinator, also played key roles in the process at Soham. The secondary school, which has 1,350 pupils, worked through the self-review framework in just under five days over a period of six weeks. Martin, David and Jenny were supported in the process by six representatives from the different faculties and also consulted other staff and pupils where necessary.

Martin added: *"It was important at the start to look at what we were good at. The framework is extensive and it would be easy to be daunted, although the language is clear and the document very well thought out.*

"We read through all the outline statements which described each of the elements and got a feel for which level the school was at."

The school then used the identified level as their starting point for review; looking at the level above and below to double check their perceptions. *"It was very easy then to find out which areas needed development."*

Before undertaking the self-review framework, Soham Village College had two ICT groups in place, which Martin says gave them a head start in the process.

The school has an ICT co-ordinating group which comprises ICT representatives or specialists from humanities, technology, English, science, maths, expressive arts and modern languages, and which Jenny leads. It also has an ICT strategy group that Martin, David and Jenny attend together with the community education co-ordinator, the network manager and a webmaster.

The groups already meet every half term, and Martin explained that they used those meetings to discuss the self-review framework. He added: *"Initially David and I met to get a general overview, which took about four hours, and then I spent a further seven or eight hours planning and making judgements on how we were doing. After that we met colleagues in the ICT co-ordinating group to look at the self-review framework in detail.*

"We easily reached agreement on the school's level in each area. The nature of the document ensures that consensus is inevitable.

"The process is as important as the outcome – the discussion, plus the identification of strengths and weaknesses enables everyone involved to become clear about where the school is heading."

A maths teacher at Soham for eight years, Martin became assistant principal about six weeks before the school undertook Becta's self-review framework. He commented that the process had given him a new perspective on the whole school and formed an ideal introduction to his new role.

Soham Village College sourced evidence for the self-review framework from its ICT development plan, the school development plan, website, minutes from meetings, working documents about cross-curricular use of ICT, assessment databases, pupils' work, 'pupil voice' surveys and reports to governors.

