

SCHOOLS'
IT
POLICIES

ENGLISH
MATHEMATICS
SCIENCE
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Sue Harris

nfer

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POLICIES

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1. Introduction

A number of primary and secondary schools sent copies of their current Information Technology (IT) policies to NFER during a project which investigated the use of software in schools, and which was carried out on behalf of the National Council for Educational Technology (NCET) during 1993¹. A short study was therefore set up to analyse the content of the schools' IT policies; this document reports on the study's findings.

A total of 24 primary and 53 secondary schools' IT policies were available for analysis. The schools were predominantly controlled by Local Educational Authorities, although grant-maintained and independent schools were represented at the secondary level. Since the IT policies had originally been sent in during May/June 1993, the schools concerned were contacted about the proposed policy analysis and invited to send in a more up-to-date document, if applicable. The majority of respondents confirmed that the policy previously submitted was still in use; however, two primary and five secondary schools returned revised documents during April/May 1994. The analysis of policy content was carried out on the most up-to-date documents from each school, so that where a revised policy was available, this, rather than the earlier version, was analysed.

The study was carried out in order to clarify **what** primary and secondary schools include in their IT policies. It is hoped that the findings presented in this report will serve as a starting point for school-based discussions about the formulation and content of IT policies and their role as working/reference documents within schools.

2. Methodology

The analysis of the documents submitted by schools was carried out in four stages:

- ◆ an initial examination of all the policies in order to identify the range of contents
- ◆ the contents were grouped into main categories with sub-sections to provide a series of codes
- ◆ the IT policies were re-examined and coded according to content
- ◆ details of each policy's content were recorded on a database and the analysis was then carried out.

¹ The project was reported in Harris, S. and Preston, C. (1993). *Software in Schools*. Slough NFER

3. What should an IT policy contain?

The issue of what a curriculum policy should contain raises questions concerning the purpose the document will serve, for example:

- ◆ Will it act as a reference point for teachers, detailing resources available?
- ◆ Will it provide guidance on integrating IT work across the curriculum?
- ◆ Will it list the IT skills and attitudes that teachers should try to foster and develop in pupils?
- ◆ Will it record the details of the school's current practice and propose future developments?

Clearly, the requirements of individual schools will be related to staff expertise and confidence in using IT, levels of resourcing, pupils' needs (and entitlement to IT-based experiences) and a host of other factors. It is impossible to define, therefore, what any one school's IT policy should contain. However, certain elements may be appropriate for most, if not all, schools. Strack (1991) states:

*No IT policy today can ignore the demands of the National Curriculum, yet the whole thing could be significantly impoverished if in addressing the National Curriculum it ignored the much wider curriculum. The HMI document **Information Technology from 5 to 16** provides useful guidance and any policy needs to have considered the recommendations made by it.*

A number of people have identified the importance of having clear objectives and goals, such as Daly (1994) who suggests, 'The first step is to decide on the school's objectives. These will have to be agreed after consultation with staff...' and Freedman (1990) who states, 'It is important, of course, to state not only long-term goals but short-term targets.'

Richards (1989) identifies a number of discussion points which should be considered when developing a school IT policy, including:

- ◆ Is there a clear rationale behind the use of computers?
- ◆ Is it relevant to the curriculum offered to the children?
- ◆ How can the present resources be used effectively for all the children?
- ◆ Is there a systematic plan for future hardware and software purchase and development?
- ◆ Is there in-service support available and is it being used?

One issue that merits further consideration is that of providing continuity and progression in terms of pupils' curriculum experience and development of IT skills, especially across phases. With this in mind, a number of schools have set up links with other schools, which have influenced their whole-school approach to IT. In describing their school's approach, McGrath and Rowbottom (1990) comment:

Central to our thinking is the idea that there should be continuity in the promotion of IT development from five to eighteen. The school has undertaken a joint initiative with its feeder primary schools...

It is not only by having a written policy that addresses issues such as these that a school can be said to have an effective IT policy, but by having discussed the issues and agreed on the school's perspectives and approach. However, a well-thought-out policy is likely to be evidence of effective IT work being integrated into the curriculum. HMI (1991) report:

The formulation of a sound policy after considering IT initiatives both within the school and beyond, especially in the LEA, was an important factor in good practice. At best, clear policy statements for IT were agreed and understood by all staff and then reviewed regularly to take account of changing circumstances.

4. Influences on the content of IT policies

Examination of the documents produced by schools showed that, apart from the statutory orders (DES, 1990), in which one attainment target is concerned with information technology, a number of documents/factors had influenced the content of the policies, especially:

- ◆ Curriculum Matters 15: Information Technology 5-16 (HMI, 1989)
- ◆ non-statutory guidance for IT produced by the National Curriculum Council (1990a)
- ◆ guidelines prepared by the local education authority (usually written by the advisory/support service for IT)
- ◆ the rapid pace of technological developments in recent years.

A number of policies included references to and quotations from the first two publications. The HMI report was often a source for specifying aims in terms of the types of experience pupils should be offered in schools, and the role of IT in enhancing experiences in different areas of the curriculum. Not surprisingly, the strands of IT capability described in the NCC's non-statutory guidance were frequently referred to, or were implicit in the descriptions of the types of software that pupils should experience. Documents produced by local education authority IT advisory/support staff were mentioned, and, in some cases, reproduced: in one case the LEA had listed assessment criteria for different strands of IT capability which were included to guide teachers in making their own assessments of pupils' IT skills. Many IT policies alluded to the speed of recent developments in IT, including faster processors, more sophisticated peripherals and wider curriculum applications. Some acknowledged the fact that it was virtually impossible for a written school policy to remain up to date.

5. IT policy content

The main categories used to analyse the content of both the primary and secondary schools' IT policies were:

- ◆ background details
- ◆ hardware
- ◆ software
- ◆ what IT is
- ◆ curriculum
- ◆ pupils' experiences
- ◆ responsibilities/management
- ◆ INSET
- ◆ future planning
- ◆ purchasing policy
- ◆ links with others
- ◆ other elements.

Within each main category, a number of sub-sections were identified to analyse the content in more detail. For example, within the main category INSET, three sub-sections were identified: INSET received, INSET required and statements relating to INSET entitlement. In this example the same sub-sections were identified in both primary and secondary schools' policies. However, the different priorities and emphases found within the primary and secondary sectors have meant that there are some sub-sections unique to one phase. Details of the sub-sections within each of the main categories can be found in the Appendix of this report. It should be borne in mind that the fact that a particular sub-section was found in **some** policies within the primary/secondary phase does not necessarily mean that it was found in the majority of policies for that phase.

Details of what schools included in their IT policies are discussed under the main headings derived from the examination of the policies.

5.1 Background details

Three elements were identified as providing useful background information:

- ◆ length of the document (i.e. total number of A4 sides)
- ◆ the date the policy was produced
- ◆ the authorship of the document.

The documents varied substantially in length, although comparisons have to be considered as approximate only, since the size and font style of the type, together with the page layout used varied from one document to another. However, even allowing for the variations due to those factors, considerable variation in the length of the IT policies examined was evident, some being as brief as only half one side of A4 paper, others extending to more than 40 A4 sides. In preparing any policy document, schools have to balance a number of considerations, and decide:

- ◆ what elements or aspects should be included
- ◆ what level of detail should be used for each element.

It seems that some secondary schools find it desirable to include more elements and/or more detail in their IT policies. Examination of the policies submitted showed that the longest policies were submitted by secondary schools, although the median length of secondary schools' IT policies was only 3.5 pages as compared to the primary schools' median IT policy length of 3 pages.

Perhaps surprisingly, not all schools had included details of the date the policy was produced. Given the rapid pace of technological innovation and the increasing sophistication of software, it was unfortunate that only half of both the primary and secondary schools gave this information. Without this, other information can be made meaningless, such as one-year, three-year and five-year goals – a date gives a reference point and sets the whole document in the context of a specific period. It also means that subsequent review and revision of the policy would provide opportunities to reflect on the progress made since the policy was originally produced. Of the policies submitted which included the date they were produced, the primary policies had been drawn up at dates from 1990 to 1994, and the secondary policies from 1989 to January 1994.

Similarly, not all schools made clear who had produced/contributed to the policy: in many schools the IT coordinator will probably have had the ultimate responsibility for producing the written policy, but it is interesting to know the extent to which any or all other teaching staff have been involved. At a more pragmatic level, it is widely accepted that greater staff involvement in the production and development of a curriculum policy leads to a sense of ownership. This increases the likelihood that the policy will be implemented, rather than remaining a document which teachers acknowledge exists but feel has no relevance for them personally. Roughly one third of policies from both phases had some indication of who had produced the policy. Most frequently a name was included, and some stated that the document had been written by the IT coordinator. Only one primary and four secondary policies clearly indicated that the policy had been produced by more than one person/an IT group, although the fact that this was not stated does not necessarily mean that the policy was not the result of several, or indeed all, staff working together.

5.2 Hardware

Within this category, three main aspects were found in primary schools' policies:

- ◆ details of hardware available
- ◆ details of the whole-school resource allocation (including the location of resources)
- ◆ safety/security issues.

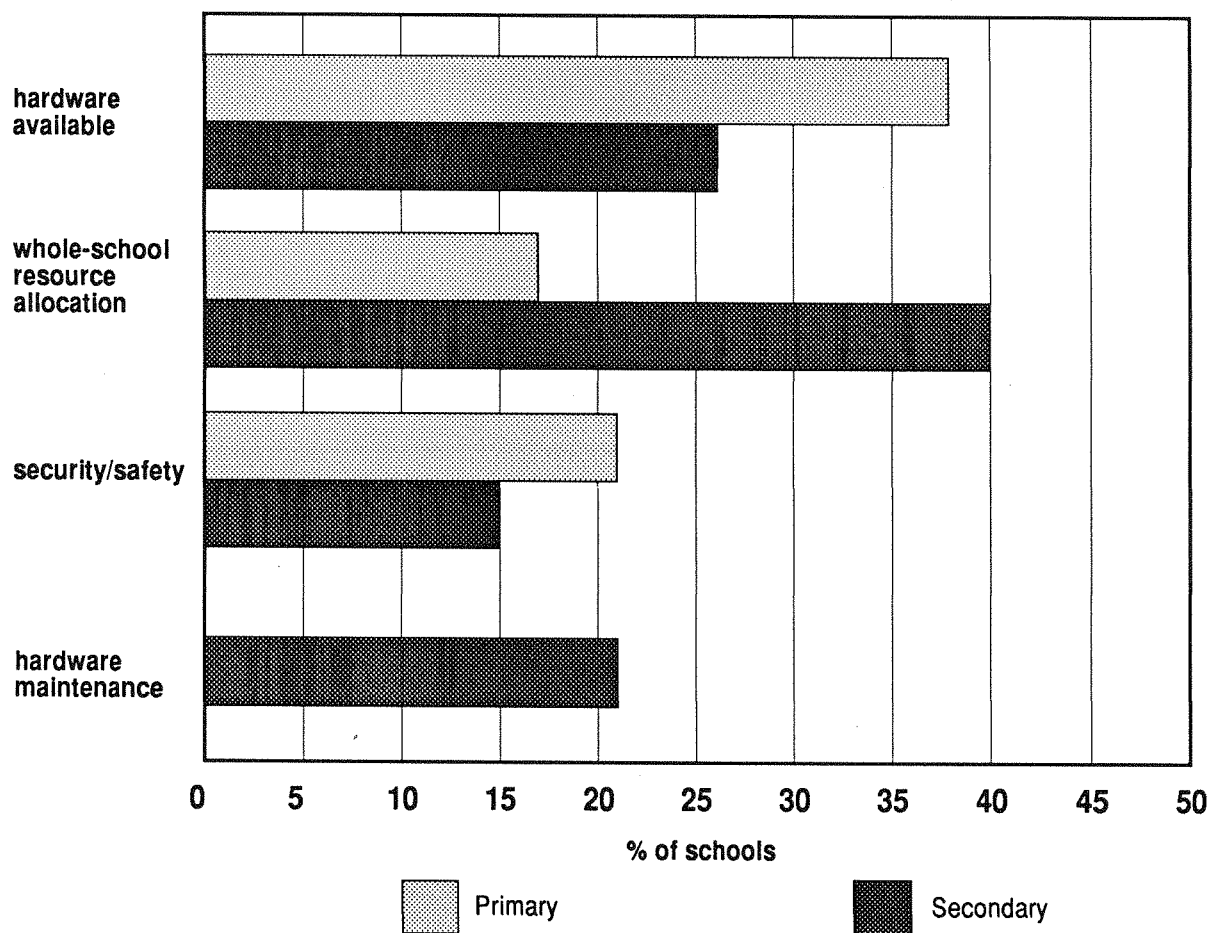
These aspects were also found in the secondary schools' policies, with one fifth of schools also referring to issues and procedures concerned with hardware maintenance.

Significantly, no primary school's policy referred to arrangements for hardware maintenance although clearly procedures would have to be established for occasions when repairs were necessary.

It is interesting to note the difference in the number of schools that included details of the whole-school resource allocation in their IT policy: only one in six primary schools referred to it, whereas two in five secondary schools described this aspect. It is likely that this reflects the different organisation within secondary schools and the need to inform all staff about networked systems and resources allocated to specific departments, whilst in primary schools systems are usually allocated to (or shared between) classes.

Figure 1 shows the percentage of schools in each phase that included each of the above elements in their IT policy.

Figure 1: Hardware



*Based on IT policies from 24 primary schools
and 53 secondary schools*

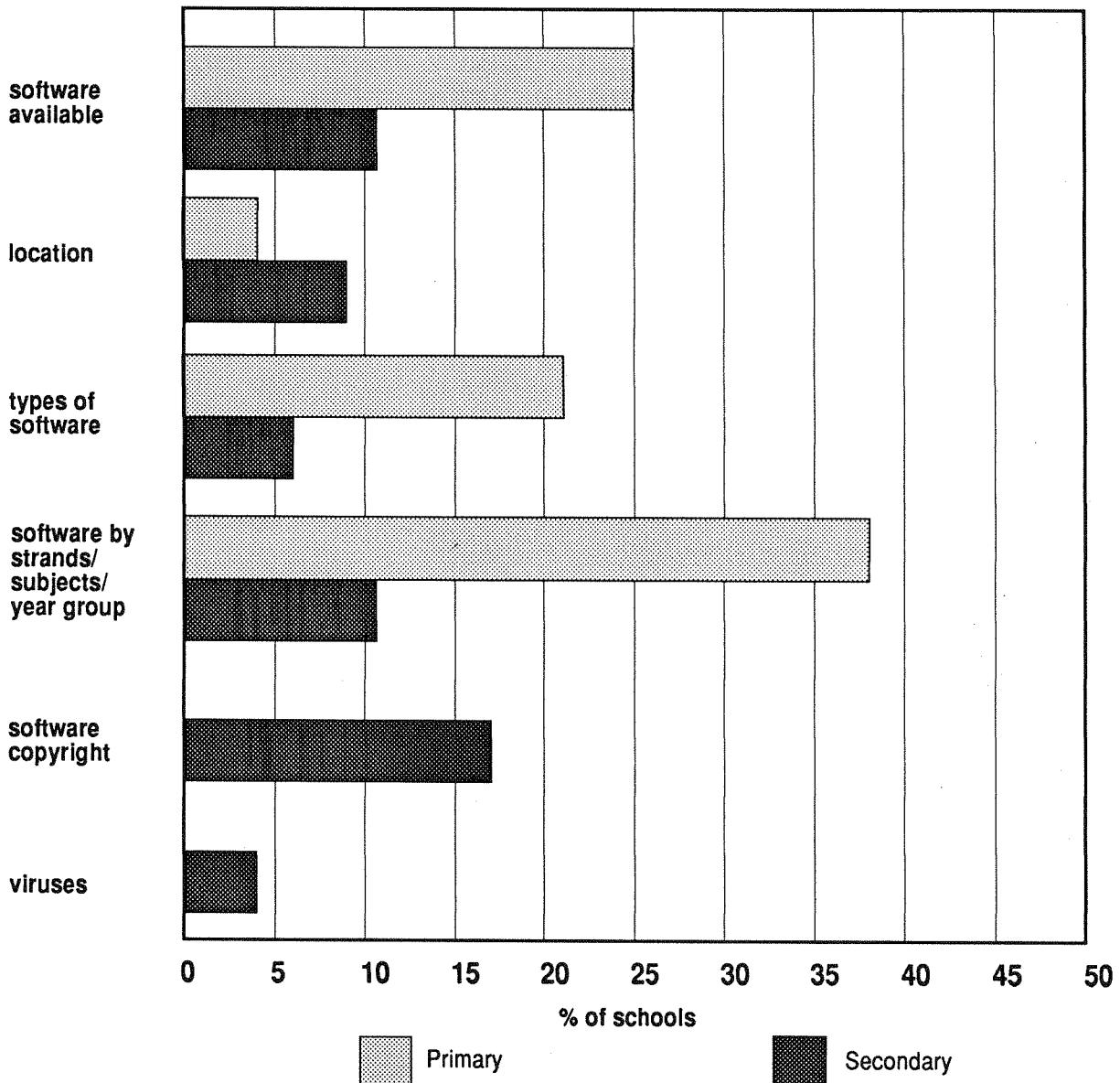
A number of schools were evidently addressing their future hardware requirements, with about two in five secondary schools making reference to these needs (see section on Future Planning).

5.3 Software

Information about software was found in most IT policies. The details given in primary schools' policies can be listed under the following headings:

- ◆ software available within the school (i.e. names of specific programs)
- ◆ location of software (e.g. contents of software packs/boxes accompanying the computers in specific teaching areas; the location of master copies of programs where back-ups were in everyday use)
- ◆ types of software (i.e. different applications)
- ◆ programs listed according to the strands identified in the NCC's non-statutory guidance (1990a) and/or by year group.

Figure 2: Software



Based on IT policies from 24 primary schools
and 53 secondary schools

Two additional categories were found in secondary schools' policies

- ◆ guidance relating to software copyright and site licences
- ◆ information concerning viruses and precautions to avoid them.

In addition to the listing of software by strand and/or by year group, some secondary IT policies listed programs according to their relevance to specific departments. This suggests that some thought had been given to integrating the use of IT across the curriculum (see also section on Curriculum). Figure 2 shows the incidence with which these different aspects concerning software were found within schools' IT policies.

Three of these sub-sections (software available, types of software and software listed by strands/subject/year group) suggest that a number of policies from both phases were giving guidance in this important area. However, there seemed to be more evidence of practical issues (location, copyright/site licences and viruses) being addressed within secondary schools' policies. This is probably a reflection of the fact that, with different departments acquiring software, there is a need for common procedures in a way that is less necessary in primary schools for a number of reasons, including their smaller size.

5.4 What IT is

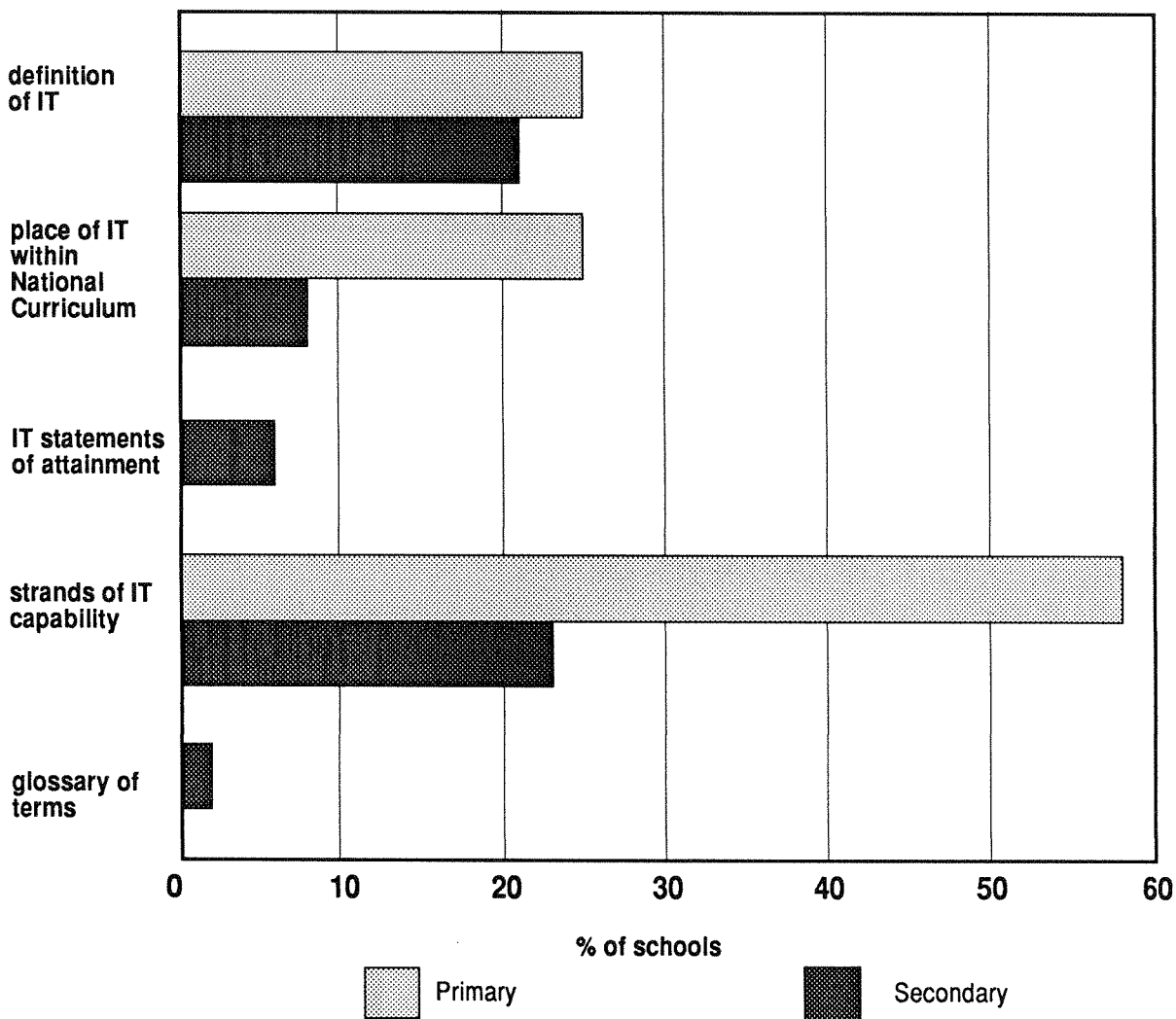
Three of the five sub-sections in this category were common to both primary and secondary schools:

- ◆ definition of IT
- ◆ the place of IT within the National Curriculum (i.e. an attainment target within the technology curriculum and a cross-curricular skill, DES, 1990; NCC, 1990b)
- ◆ the strands of IT capability (NCC, 1990a).

Within secondary schools' policies, two additional sub-sections were identified:

- ◆ the statements of attainment found within the IT attainment target
- ◆ a glossary of IT terms.

Figure 3: What IT is



Based on IT policies from 24 primary schools and 53 secondary schools

In this category, the sub-section most frequently included was the details of the strands of IT capability defined in the NCC's non-statutory guidance, found in over half the primary schools' and nearly one quarter of secondary schools' policies. Figure 3 shows sub-sections included in each phase. The author of the single secondary school policy that included a glossary of IT terms such as *font*, *double click* and *window* was clearly trying to de-mystify the jargon that can make IT appear a 'foreign language' to non-specialists.

5.5 Curriculum

This category had most sub-sections: a total of 14, with the six primary sub-sections having links with the secondary schools' policies, and the remainder relating to implementation of the IT policy within secondary schools only. Figure 4 shows the categories included in each phase.

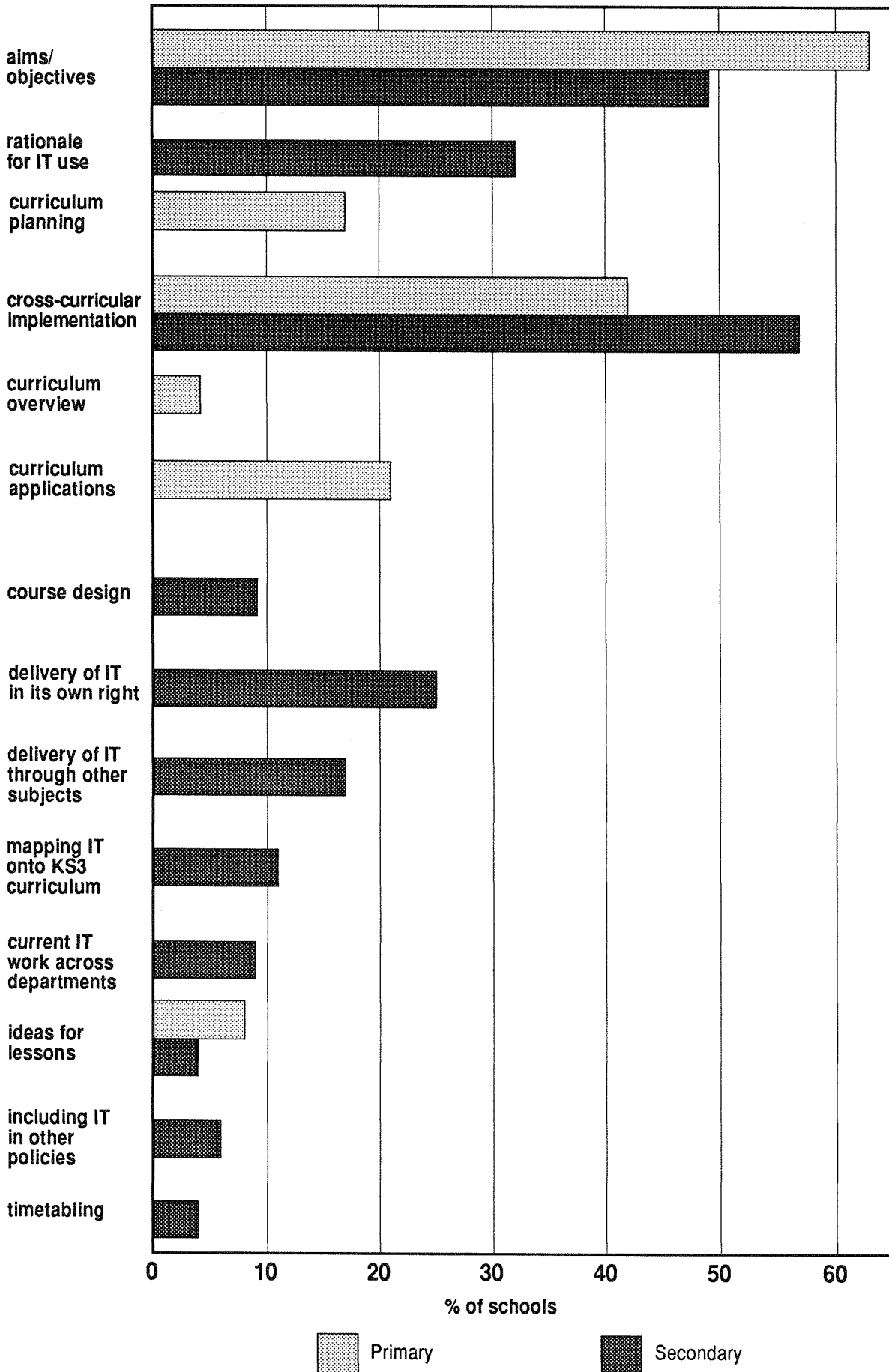
Within the primary schools' policies the sub-sections identified were:

- ◆ aim/objectives in terms of pupils' experience of IT
- ◆ guidance on curriculum planning to include IT within schemes of work
- ◆ cross-curricular implementation in terms of a general policy of integrating IT as fully as possible across all aspects of the curriculum
- ◆ curriculum overview (e.g. relating strands to cross-curricular themes)
- ◆ curriculum applications (e.g. relating specific programs to subjects or themes for particular year groups)
- ◆ ideas for lessons.

The sub-sections identified within secondary schools policies were:

- ◆ aims/objectives (in a few cases these were specifically related to strands or types of software)
- ◆ rationale for IT use (in terms of the role of IT in today's society)
- ◆ cross-curricular implementation (in the form of a general statement suggesting that IT skills should be taught through other subjects, i.e. IT should act as a medium for teaching/learning about specific subjects)
- ◆ course design (general statements concerning the content to be covered in specific year groups)
- ◆ delivery of IT in its own right (detailed information about courses for specific year groups, such as the number of lessons, the total time available per week)
- ◆ delivery of IT through other subjects (indicating, for example, which IT skills – or strands of IT capability – could be delivered through specific subject curricula)
- ◆ mapping IT onto the curriculum for key stage 3 (showing which skills would be covered in particular subjects/year groups: this was usually conveyed by means of a diagram)

Figure 4: Curriculum



Based on IT policies from 24 primary schools and 53 secondary schools

- ◆ analysis/monitoring of current IT work across departments (i.e. the results of an IT audit having been carried out)
- ◆ suggestions for subject applications/sample lesson plans
- ◆ guidance on including an IT element in other curriculum policies
- ◆ timetabling (indicating, for example, which departments had access to particular rooms with IT resources throughout the week).

Specific aims/objectives were included in about half of the policies from both phases, suggesting that schools had a clear idea of what they were hoping to achieve in terms of pupils' experience of IT. Within secondary schools a similar proportion addressed the issue of integrating IT across the curriculum in general terms, although far fewer provided detailed descriptions of the arrangements for developing IT skills within the context of specific subjects. Around one in 10 of the secondary schools' policies showed how IT skills could be 'mapped' onto the key stage 3 curriculum, a helpful strategy to show how IT can support different subjects within the curriculum.

The large number of different types of sub-section within this category means that there were few areas which were included in many schools' policies. However, it also indicates the wide range of guidance and priorities found within policies from each phase – different schools have different needs.

5.6 Pupils' experiences

Both primary and secondary schools' IT policies addressed a range of issues directly related to pupils' experiences of IT. The following sub-sections were common to both primary and secondary schools:

- ◆ pupil access to IT facilities
- ◆ pupil entitlement to experience different aspects of IT work
- ◆ equal opportunities for all pupils, irrespective of ability, gender or race
- ◆ personal and inter-personal skills/attitudes to be developed through IT work
- ◆ a strategy for providing continuity and progression in pupils' IT experiences (related to the development of IT skills)
- ◆ procedures for assessment and recording of IT skills
- ◆ provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN).

Two additional aspects were found in some secondary schools' policies:

- ◆ pupil accreditation
- ◆ pupils' personal profiles.

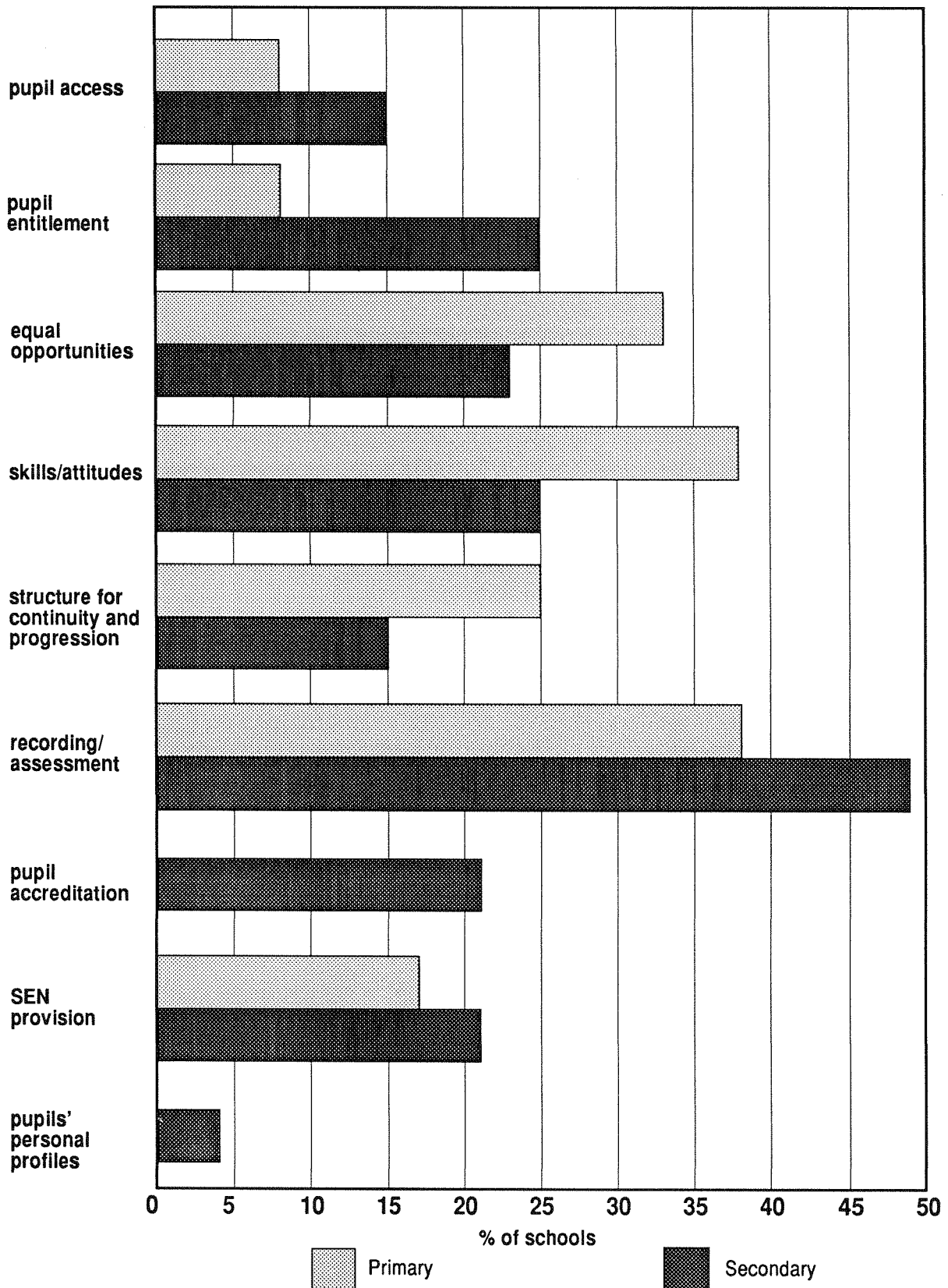
For the primary schools, there was no evidence that any one area was regarded as a more essential part of the policy than others. However, half of the secondary schools' policies examined provided guidelines on assessment and the recording of attainment in IT. The guidance on assessment in one secondary school's policy emphasised the fact that assessment is more complex than merely studying the end-result of a pupil's IT activities:

*Assessment of IT capability can depend upon seeing what a pupil is doing, and gaining a view of the pupil's understanding at the time the pupil is using IT, rather than depending on assessment outcomes. Hence the **when** and **how** IT capability is assessed is as important as the **where**.*

In some cases (about one fifth of secondary schools' policies) details of the opportunities for the accreditation of pupils' IT skills were given, with CLAIT (computer literacy and information technology) being frequently mentioned.

The number of schools that included each sub-section is shown in Figure 5. Interestingly, details of the provision for pupils with special educational needs were found in less than a quarter of both the primary and secondary policies. This may reflect the fact that few schools felt they had pupils who needed specific provision, or perhaps that SEN provision was detailed within separate/specific subject policies.

Figure 5: Pupils' experiences



*Based on IT policies from 24 primary schools
and 53 secondary schools*

5.7 Responsibilities/management

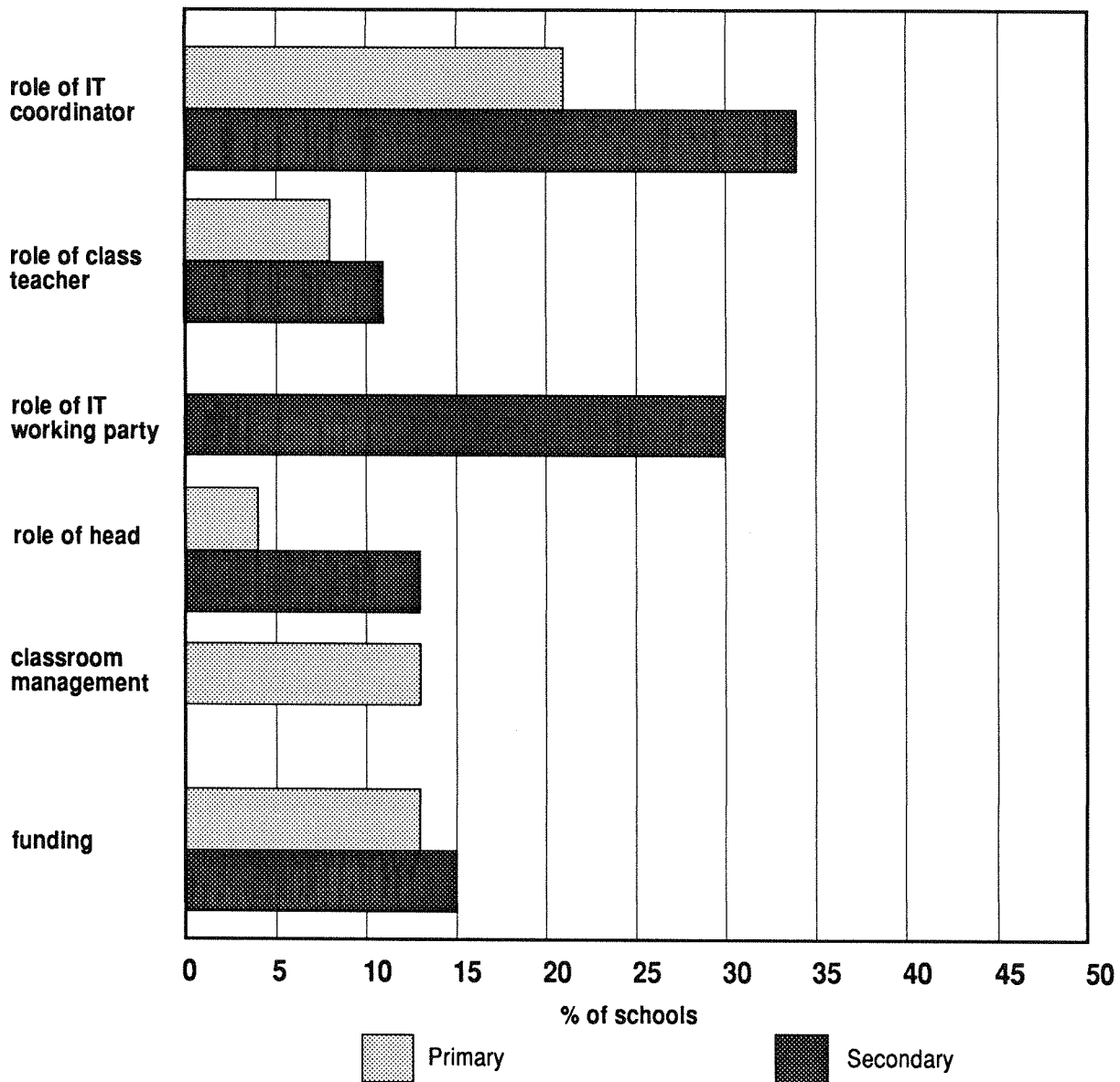
Within this category, six sub-sections were identified, with the following common to both primary and secondary policies:

- ◆ role of the IT coordinator
- ◆ role of the class teacher
- ◆ role of the head
- ◆ funding.

Guidelines on classroom management/the grouping of pupils to facilitate working with a computer were found in a few primary policies. Roughly one third of secondary schools evidently had cross- or inter-departmental strategies for promoting the use of IT across the curriculum, since this number of policies referred to the role of an IT working party or team within the school, or the role of IT link teachers in different departments. Details within the policies showed that link teachers were a means of improving communication between specific departments and the IT department, so that there was a recognised way of conveying information regarding, for example, new equipment, in-service training available and departmental software requirements.

The sub-sections included in schools' policies are shown in Figure 6. Clearly the two sub-sections most frequently included in secondary schools' IT policies were those describing the role of the IT coordinator and the IT working group/link teachers in each department. Far fewer primary schools' policies outlined the role of the IT coordinator, suggesting that within secondary schools there is a greater need to define precisely the role of the IT coordinator (together with the other key personnel involved in other departments). With fewer staff in primary schools, the roles and responsibilities of coordinators are more likely to be generally understood and not necessarily require documentation.

Figure 6: Responsibilities/management



Based on IT policies from 24 primary schools and 53 secondary schools

Amongst the policies which included some details about funding, such as information about the annual budget available for IT, there was evidence that at least some secondary schools were identifying potential sources of funding for IT purchases outside the school, leading one person to comment, *'We should always be seeking sponsorship for IT'*. Also in connection with funding, some policies referred to the need to invest in IT facilities; one secondary school policy emphasised:

I hope that despite impending cuts, SMT appreciate that comprehensive IT facilities are necessary to ensure the quality of cross-curricular education and to attract potential pupils to the school.

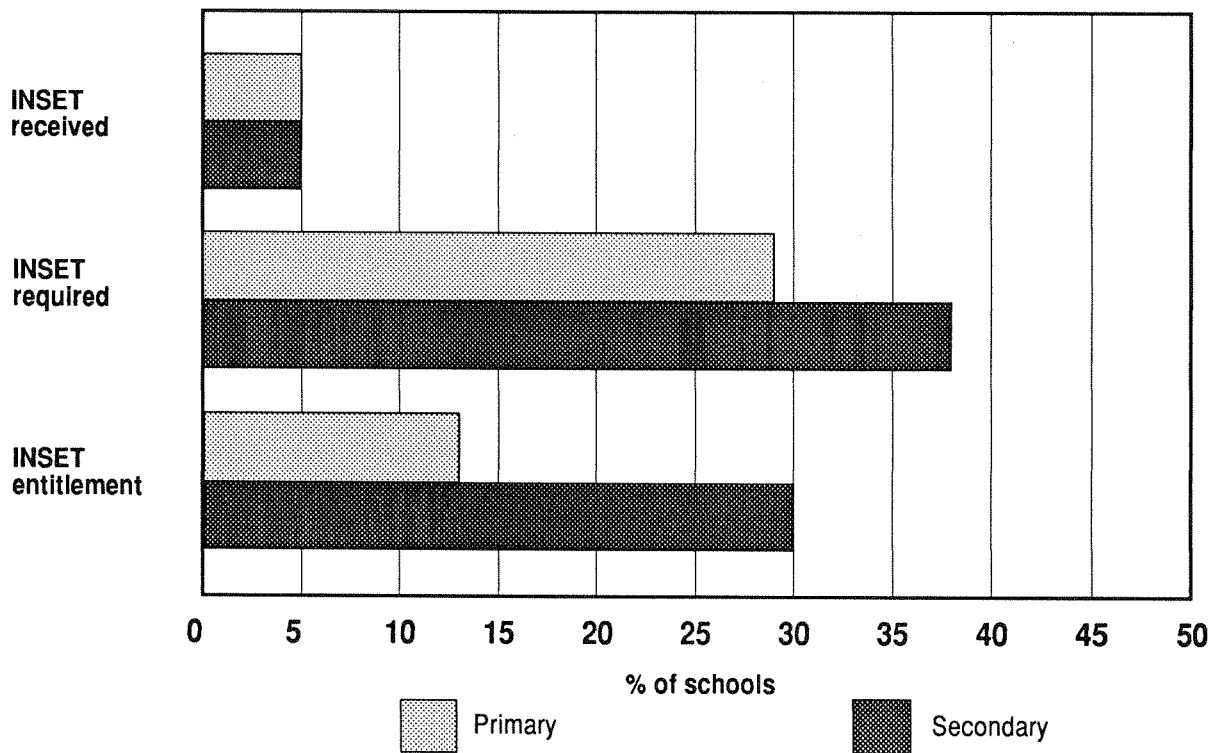
5.8 INSET

In relation to in-service training for teachers, three sub-sections were found in both primary and secondary IT policies

- ◆ INSET received
- ◆ INSET required
- ◆ general statement of entitlement to INSET.

Amongst schools that referred to INSET, training received was the category mentioned least frequently and INSET requirements were most frequently mentioned by both primary and secondary schools, as shown in Figure 7. This confirms the need identified by respondents to a survey concerning current IT practice in schools (Harris and Preston, 1993), that IT INSET is required for IT to be effectively integrated throughout the curriculum.

Figure 7: INSET



Based on IT policies from 24 primary schools
and 53 secondary schools

Some policies recognised that existing expertise within the school could be utilised as an alternative (or complement to) externally provided INSET. One secondary policy noted:

Staff with special expertise should be given opportunities to pass on their skills to colleagues, both from their own department and, where desirable, other departments.

5.9 Future planning

References to future planning in the IT area were more frequently found in the secondary schools' policies than the primary schools'. Only two sub-sections were common to both phases:

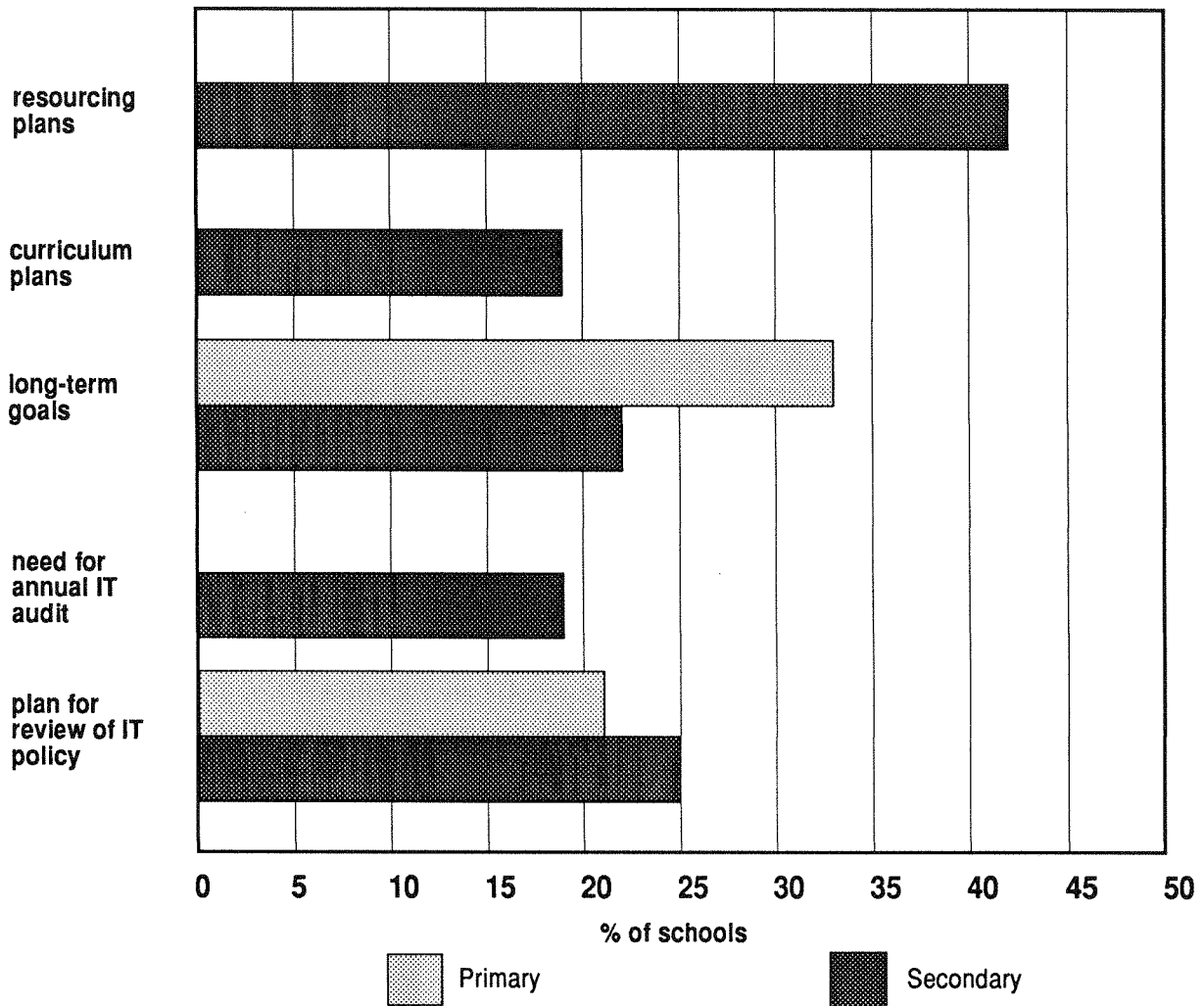
- ◆ long-term plans/goals (which were often for specified periods, suggesting target(s) to be reached within a specific number of years)
- ◆ plan for reviewing the IT policy.

Other areas found only in the secondary schools' policies were:

- ◆ future resourcing plans (referring to hardware resourcing issues such as the replacement of ageing systems and the movement towards a standard machine base throughout the school)
- ◆ future curriculum implementation of IT (indicating the proposed integration of IT across the curriculum)
- ◆ a need for an annual faculty IT audit/review of the implementation of IT within faculties/departments.

These two last sub-sections suggest that some of the authors of secondary schools' policies were aware that having a plan for the integration of IT work across the curriculum was not in itself a means of ensuring that the aims were met, and that an annual review would be a useful strategy for monitoring the integration of IT across the curriculum. At a more general level, and in both phases, some policies highlighted the fact that the IT policy itself should be subject to review. Figure 8 shows the sub-sections included by schools.

Figure 8: Future planning



*Based on IT policies from 24 primary schools
and 53 secondary schools*

Within this category, the single feature which was most prevalent was the issue of future resourcing plans within secondary schools' policies. Given the considerable outlay that secondary schools can make in providing IT resources, it is understandable that two out of five of the policies reviewed addressed this issue. Fewer primary IT policies included specific information related to future planning, although the reasons for this are not clear.

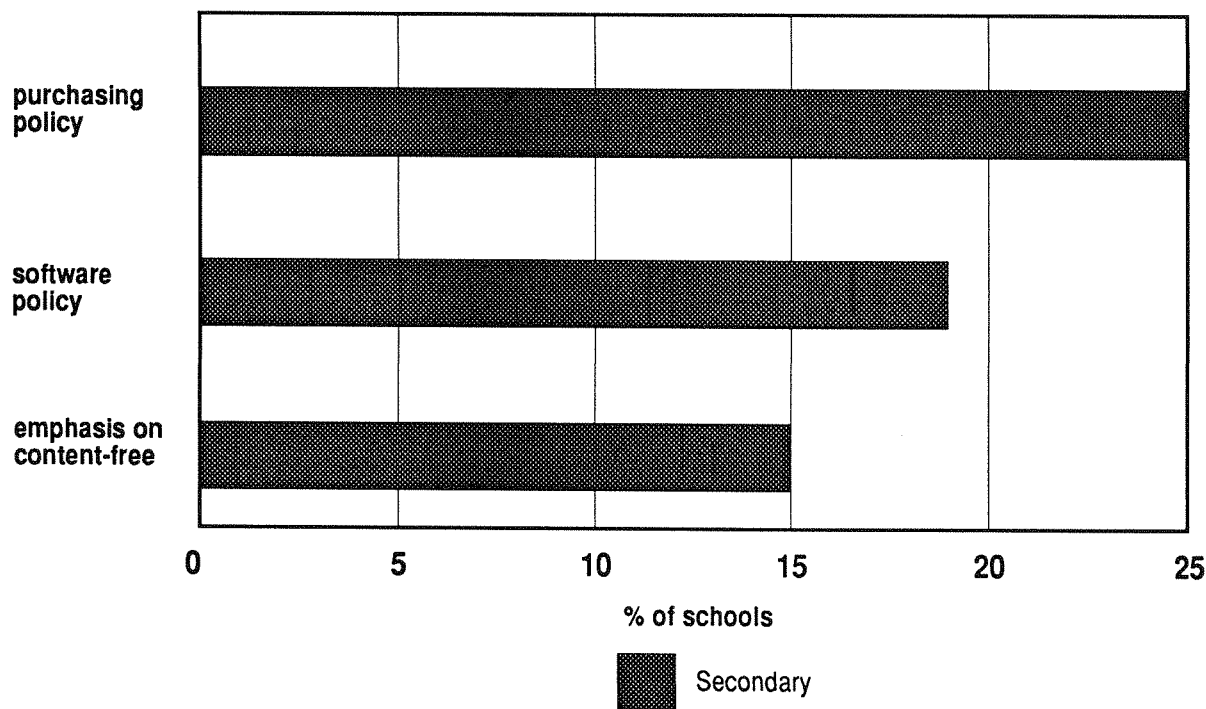
5.10 Purchasing policy

This category relates to policies within secondary schools only. Three sub-sections were identified:

- ◆ general purchasing policy (e.g. any purchases to be approved by the IT coordinator; ensuring purchases are compatible with existing resources; arranging bulk purchases which would qualify for discount prices)
- ◆ software policy (e.g. programs should be industry-standard; site licences should be purchased)
- ◆ emphasis on purchasing content-free software which could be used across different departments rather than content-specific programs which could be used only in connection with particular subjects.

The percentage of schools that included each sub-section is shown in Figure 9. One quarter of the secondary policies examined outlined general principles concerning the purchasing policy, with very few policies referring specifically to principles relating to software purchases alone. Given that the general principles usually indicated that prospective purchases should be approved by the IT coordinator, this would provide opportunities for the person concerned to raise more specific software issues, if appropriate.

Figure 9: Purchasing policy

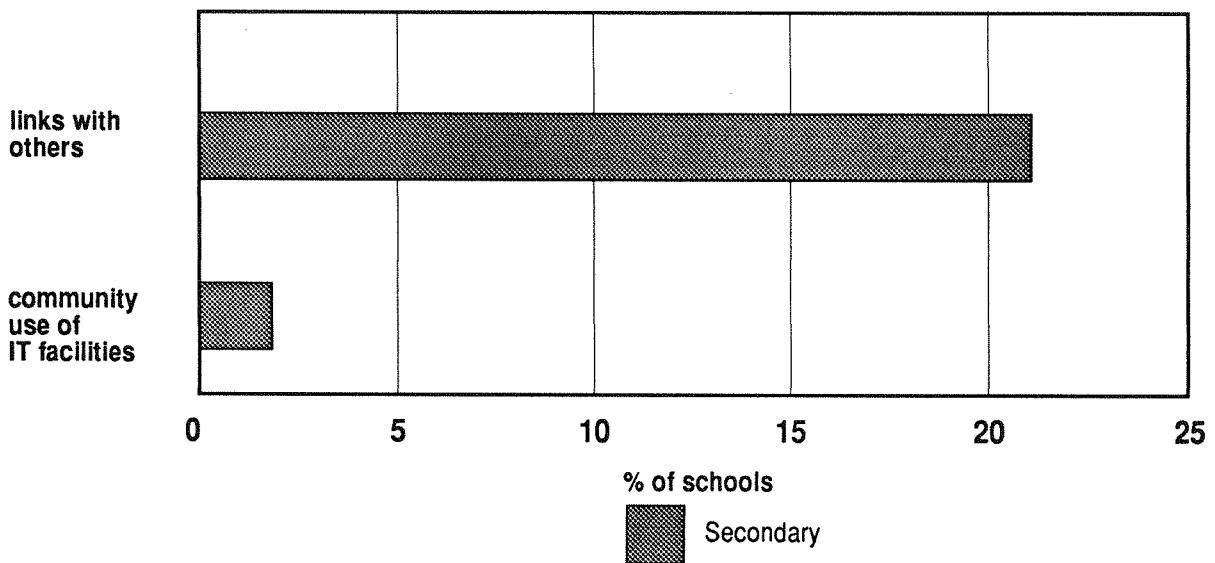


*Based on IT policies from 24 primary schools
and 53 secondary schools*

5.11 Links with others

Again this was a category identified only within secondary schools' policies. Roughly one fifth of schools referred to strategies in place to foster links with others (such as primary/middle schools and/or higher education establishments). Also included within this sub-section was fostering links with industry. One policy included details of how the school encouraged community use of the school's IT facilities, perhaps reflecting strong links with the local community. Figure 10 shows the percentage of schools included in each sub-section.

Figure 10: Links with others



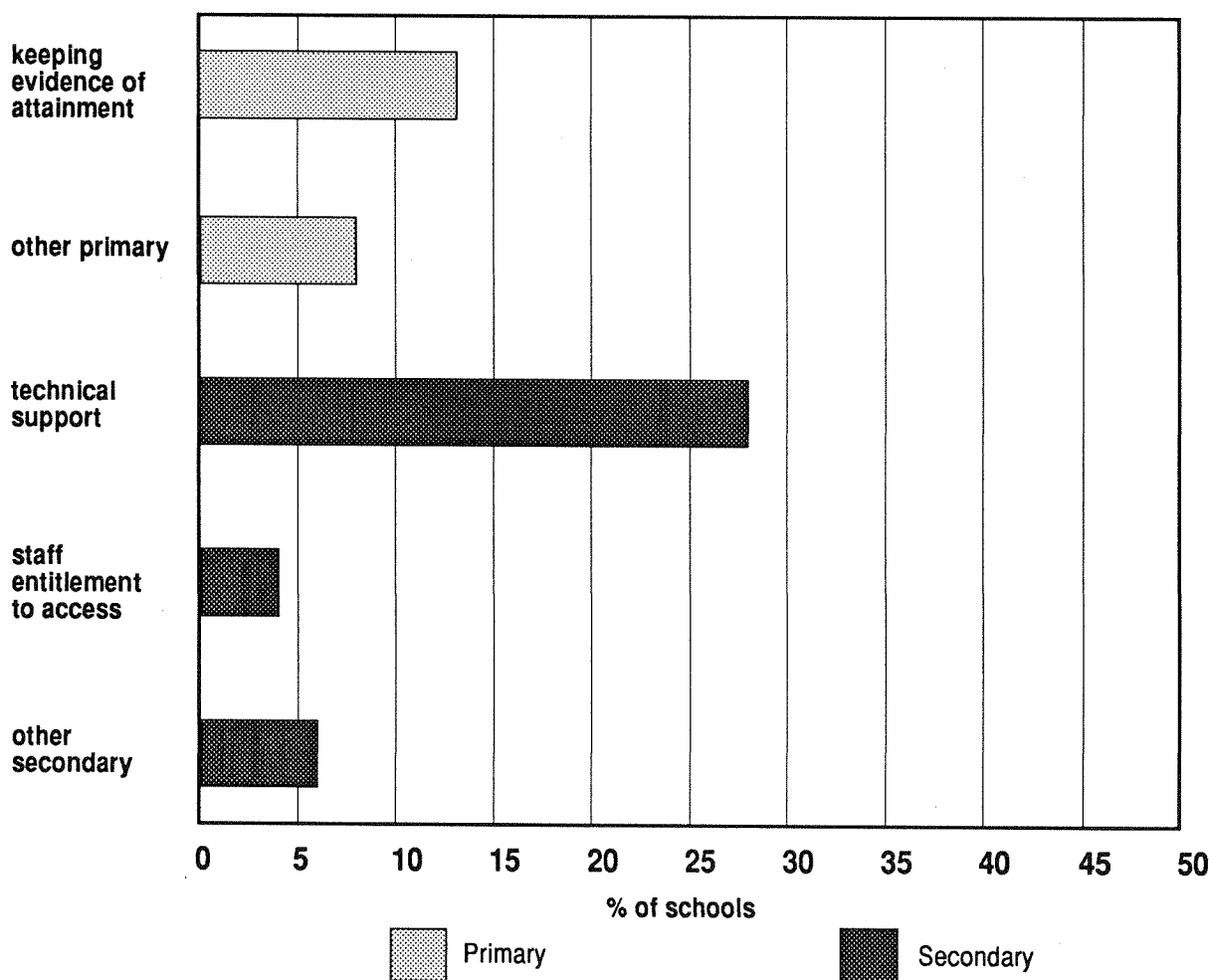
*Based on IT policies from 24 primary schools
and 53 secondary schools*

5.12 Other elements

A small number of elements which did not easily fit into the main categories described above were found in primary and secondary policies, although none was common to both; sub-sections are shown in Figure 11. Only one area was found in more than one primary policy: keeping evidence of pupils' attainment. This aspect was distinct from the area of recording identified within the pupils' experiences category, since it focused on the selection and storage of evidence of attainment. Aspects included in one primary policy only, in each case, were:

- ◆ an audit of teacher confidence in different aspects of IT
- ◆ guidance on 'getting the best out of the computer'.

Figure 11: Responsibilities/management



Based on IT policies from 24 primary schools
and 53 secondary schools

Two secondary policies raised the issue of staff entitlement to access to IT facilities and a number included other aspects. With one exception, these other aspects were each found in only one policy. The elements included in only one secondary policy were:

- ◆ the administrative benefits of using IT
- ◆ software management
- ◆ curriculum vitae of staff in the IT department.

However, one area which was referred to in over a quarter of secondary policies was the issue of technical support (i.e. the identified need for an IT technician or details of the duties carried out by such a person if one was already appointed within the school.) Clearly, schools that had a technician valued their contribution and saw them as an essential part of the IT department; schools that did not have a technician obviously wanted one!

6. Summary and conclusions

The analysis of the IT policies submitted by primary and secondary schools has shown that there is a wide variety in the types of information included in schools' policies, as schools produce documents which they feel are most suited to their own needs. As a result, ten main categories were identified within the policies reviewed, with some additional information in a number of cases. In some instances, specific details (sub-sections) within the main categories reflect the particular priorities and concerns of each phase, so that some were unique to the primary sector and some to the secondary phase. However, it is a measure of the fact that both phases share a similar understanding of the main issues to be addressed that all the main categories except two were common to both primary and secondary schools' IT policies.

Clearly there is some similarity between primary and secondary schools' requirements in terms of the content of IT policies. This would seem to provide a sound basis for extending IT links to other schools, and especially cross-phase links, so that pupils' experiences in IT are planned to provide continuity and a gradual progression in IT skills.

For schools that feel their current IT policy would benefit from review and revision, the areas outlined in this document should serve as prompts for further consideration and discussion, so that teachers can identify the areas which are essential to their school if the policy is to be a useful working document.

The process of developing an IT policy is a valuable exercise in its own right and needs to be guided by several principles, as Banes (1992) suggests:

- ◆ Do we need a policy?
- ◆ What – ultimately – is our intention in this area?
- ◆ Why do we believe that this is the direction we want to take?
- ◆ Where are we now?
- ◆ What realistic goals can we set ourselves towards achieving our ultimate intention?
- ◆ How will we set about achieving those goals?

Finally, we should remember that a policy is not merely a written document, it is also expressed through what happens in schools to enhance the quality of learning: a written statement may be produced by one or more people, but it is by and through the commitment of **all** staff that the policy is implemented.

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Appendix

Main categories and sub-sections found in primary and secondary schools' IT policies

KEY

found in both primary and secondary schools' IT policies (P & S)

found only in primary schools' policies (P)

found only in secondary schools' policies (S)

BACKGROUND

length (sides of A4) (P & S)

date produced

author(s) of policy

HARDWARE

details of hardware available (P & S)

whole-schools resource allocation

security/safety

hardware maintenance (S)

SOFTWARE

software available (P & S)

location (e.g. master copies)

types of software

software listed by strands/subject/year group

software copyright, site licences (S)

viruses

WHAT IT IS

definition of IT (P & S)

place of IT within national curriculum (attainment target within technology curriculum and a cross-curricular skill)

IT attainment target statements of attainment (S)

strands of IT capability (P & S)

glossary of terms (S)

CURRICULUM

aims/objectives (P & S)

rationale for IT use (S)

curriculum planning (P)

cross-curricular implementation (P & S)

curriculum overview (P)

curriculum applications

course design (S)

delivery of IT in its own right

delivery of IT through other subjects

mapping IT onto the curriculum for key stage 3

analysis/monitoring of current IT work across departments

ideas for lessons (P & S)

guidance on including an IT element in other curriculum policies (S)

timetabling

PUPILS' EXPERIENCES

pupil access (P & S)

pupil entitlement

equal opportunities

personal and interpersonal skills/attitudes

structure for continuity and progression – skills-related

recording/assessment

pupil accreditation (S)

SEN provision (P & S)

pupils' personal profiles (S)

INSET

INSET received (P & S)

INSET required

INSET entitlement

RESPONSIBILITIES/MANAGEMENT

role of IT coordinator (P & S)

role of class teacher

role of IT working party/team/link teachers in different departments (S)

role of head (P & S)

classroom management/grouping of pupils (P)

funding (P & S)

FUTURE PLANNING

future resourcing plans (mainly hardware) (S)

future curriculum implementation of IT

long-term plans/goals (often for specified periods) (P & S)

need for annual faculty IT audit/review of implementation of IT (S)

plan for review of IT policy (P & S)

PURCHASING POLICY

purchasing policy (to be approved by IT coordinator etc.) (S)

software policy (e.g. industry standard)

emphasis on content-free software

LINKS WITH OTHERS

links with others (primary/middle schools; higher education; industry) (S)

community use of IT facilities

OTHER ELEMENTS

keeping evidence of pupils' attainment (P)

other primary (each included in only one policy)

technical support (S)

staff entitlement to access

other secondary (each included in only one policy).

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Based on an analysis of primary and secondary schools' IT policies, this report considers the range of information provided in IT policy documents. Amongst the issues covered are:

- what should an IT policy contain?
- influences on the content of IT policies
- the information most frequently included in IT policies.

This jargon-free report will be a useful discussion document and starting point for schools intending to review and revise their existing IT policy. It will also be of considerable interest to all those involved in planning and providing INSET and guidance to schools concerning the development of an IT policy.

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