

# Bedford-Copenhagen Learning Exchange

**B2 Group Visit: 21<sup>st</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup> September 2014**

My focus was on the use and management of technology in Copenhagen's education system.

## **Teaching Resources Centre (CFU)**

The CFU is a £5 million teacher resource centre that covers all aspects of the curriculum. The centre provides physical resources such as books, games, DVDs, and even canoes and mountain bikes to schools within Copenhagen at no cost. The CFU also provides "curriculum" and ICT consultancy to assist schools in developing teaching and learning.

The ground floor is a labyrinthine warehouse, with row after row of science equipment, textbooks, board games, and a million other bits of kit that schools can borrow instead of buying themselves. This idea of centralising resources and management is reflected in many areas of the Copenhagen education system.

The government requires that schools buy all ICT hardware, software, and services through the CFU which allows them to consolidate huge buying power, provide effective support. While this system of procurement gives Copenhagen's schools access to extremely favourable pricing there was concern that this standardisation limits teacher choice in the classroom. This was borne out by two schools who chose to use Google Apps instead of Office 365 against the requirements of the local government. This resulted in some schools using hardware and services that are unsupported.

The CFU also has a room dedicated to ICT purchasing and curriculum consultancy. In what looks like an Apple store, teachers can come to view the hardware supported by the PIT and get face-to-face advice on the most appropriate technology for their curriculum.

## **Teacher Training College & PIT**

Unlike most UK schools where ICT is managed by in-house technicians, through small local clusters, or by external support contracts all Copenhagen school IT support is managed through the PIT.

The PIT is an organisation comprising of specialists in teacher training and technology. In Copenhagen every school network has been standardised to allow for efficient support and management, and every aspect of school networks is controlled centrally from the PIT. Whether it's a faulty printer, a new PC that needs installing, or wireless network installations, it all comes through the PIT. As with the CFU this gives Copenhagen's schools access to extremely competitive pricing and technology specialists. The system has been made so efficient that the PIT administrator claims they can have a new school's ICT systems up and running within 3 days.

There are 10 technicians, and 3 specialist network administrators who manage 64 schools in the Copenhagen region. Support is well organised, but there was a feeling that some schools felt under-supported. In Copenhagen schools there is rarely a technical expert on site that a teacher can go to for assistance. The whole process is efficient but impersonal.

For teacher training there is a small core of specialists and a network of teacher volunteers called "councillors" who liaise with individual schools.

Both the PIT and Teacher Resource Centre demonstrate a hugely confident public sector that is prepared to wield its power like a hammer to provide efficient and cost-effective educational services. It's a shame we are incapable of doing the same in the UK.

Karl Rivers  
BBLE ICT