The disapplication of the ICT programme of study was a gift to some, but not everyone has been in a position to embrace the new freedoms. Luckily for schools in Havering, an updated curriculum was ready and waiting, says Dave Smith...

For many, the disapplication of the ICT curriculum was a long time coming. Uninspiring and inappropriate, it could no longer enthuse students whose digital know-how had long since outstripped such pedestrian tasks as learning to send electronic mail.

Change is less dramatic in other areas of the curriculum; core skills in subjects such as geography and maths remain relatively static. But technology changes on a daily basis and the ICT curriculum needs to be revised annually, at the very least.

In parallel with developing technology, children’s aptitude and understanding is also constantly evolving – just think how quickly touchscreens and social networking have become the norm – and this has to be reflected in the level of our teaching. ICT has to engage our students and prepare them for the careers they may enter once they have left school.

It was for these reasons that, before Michael Gove suggested putting the ICT curriculum on hold at the 2012 BETT show, we at the London Borough of Havering had already started work on new study materials for a 21st century ICT curriculum.

We began by talking to schools and other groups within and outside of the local authority and quickly realised our view was mirrored by all.

Inadvertently, we also had a conversation with the publisher Rising Stars, who were also devising study materials for a new ICT curriculum. This led to a decision to work together and we agreed to assemble some of the best forward thinkers in educational technology to help us determine what an appropriate primary ICT curriculum should include.

Having gained the support of experts such as Miles Berry of Roehampton University and Naace; the inspirational Terry Freedman, who had formerly worked for the QCA; and Tom Barrett, now senior consultant at NoTosh, our embryonic group spent many hours discussing what a new scheme of work for primary schools should look like. We also addressed the recent Ofsted report on the ‘Importance