Connect the Classroom Phase 2

15 May 2025



You've Been Selected for Connect the Classroom – What's Next?

Congratulations – your school has been selected by the Department for Education (DfE) as eligible for fully funded digital infrastructure upgrades through the Connect the Classroom (CtC) programme. This is a pivotal moment to strengthen your school's technology and connectivity.

Whether you're celebrating this recognition or wondering where to begin, this guide walks you through every step — with real school case studies and lessons learned from Phase 1.

Understanding Your DfE Notification

Being notified means:

- Your school qualifies for 100% funded internal network upgrades.
- The funding is earmarked to improve Wi-Fi, cabling, switches, and security.
- You are expected to deliver a compliant infrastructure upgrade based on DfE's defined standards.

This is your chance to build a future-proofed network environment without the usual financial barriers.

What You're Required to Deliver

Your project must meet these core DfE technical standards:

- **Latest Wireless Standards**
  Compliant with up-to-date Wi-Fi Alliance protocols (such as Wi-Fi 6 or newer).
- **Complete Site Coverage**
  Wireless access in every learning area, administration office, and, where applicable, outdoor teaching spaces.
- **Centralised Network Management**
  Your network should allow central control and real-time monitoring of performance and issues.
- **Security Compliance**
  Built-in firewalling, traffic filtering, and secure authentication to protect staff and student data.



From Eligibility to Execution: A Step-by-Step Guide

1. **Understand Your Offer**

Review the DfE letter or email carefully — it outlines your funding ceiling, the required standards, and timelines. It may also direct you to national guidance pages.

2. **Assemble a School ICT Oversight Team**

This should include your leadership, IT lead (internal or external), and any governors or business managers involved in infrastructure procurement.

3. **Select a Delivery Partner of Your Choice**

You are free to choose who delivers the work. Select someone who:

- Understands education environments
- Offers structured rollout plans and post-installation support
- Can walk you through surveys, installation, and validation

4. **Conduct a Site Survey**

Your partner should complete a physical survey to assess:

- Cabling condition
- Number and placement of wireless access points
- Switch capacity and compatibility
- Any legacy issues or risks

5. **Create a Disruption-Free Delivery Plan**

Align work with your school calendar. Consider holidays, SATs/exams, and peak IT periods.

6. **Implement and Test the Infrastructure**

Ensure the system is:

- Professionally installed
- Signal-tested in every teaching space
- Properly documented for audit compliance

7. **Review, Sign-Off, and Report**

Collect final deliverables, ensure DfE compliance, and gather feedback from staff. Prepare internal documentation for reference and funding assurance.



Real Results: Case Studies from Phase 1

Burley and Woodhead C of E Primary School (Bradford)

This rural school upgraded its entire internal network infrastructure, transitioning to a high-speed, secure, and cloud-friendly platform.

- **Funding received**: ~£50,000
- **Results**: Reliable access in every classroom and hall; capacity for 1:1 student device use.

Europa School UK (Oxfordshire)

A bilingual secondary school that had long struggled with slow, unreliable connectivity used CtC to completely refresh its network.

- **Funding received**: Estimated £75,000
- **Results**: Full Wi-Fi coverage, reduced downtime, smoother digital lesson delivery.

Inspiring Futures Through Learning Trust (Milton Keynes)

Several schools in the trust participated, each receiving funding based on individual site assessments.

- **Funding per school**: Ranged from £40,000 to £85,000
- **Results**: Unified, fast networks with central visibility across campuses, improving both IT management and learning continuity.

Watch Out for These Pitfalls

- **Delaying supplier engagement** – timelines can move quickly once notified.
- **Under-scoping your needs** – legacy systems may need more than just access points.
- **Poor documentation** – record everything for compliance and future maintenance.

Planning Ahead

Even with DfE funding, make smart choices:

- Choose **scalable** hardware (think 5–10 years ahead).
- Ensure compatibility with cloud platforms like Google Workspace and Microsoft 365.
- Discuss **resilience** – battery backup, fallback routing, and future upgrade paths.

Final Thoughts: Lead with Confidence

This is more than an IT upgrade — it’s a step toward transforming how your staff and students interact with technology. With full funding, the power to choose

your own partner, and lessons from peers already ahead in the process, you’re well equipped to deliver a high-impact result.

Act decisively. Plan wisely. Deliver confidently.