

Why 2025/26 Is the Time for Schools to Upgrade to FTTP

10 June 2025



Across England, thousands of schools now sit within **Full Fibre to the Premises (FTTP)** enabled areas—yet many continue to operate on ageing, unreliable broadband.

This isn't just a missed infrastructure upgrade. It's a missed opportunity to unlock **secure, scalable, digitally-ready learning environments**, funded and supported by national capital.

And with the **Procurement Act 2023** now in effect, schools have more **flexibility and choice** than ever before when selecting fibre providers and digital infrastructure partners.

Here's what FTTP can do, why it matters now, and how to move fast.

What FTTP Offers to Schools

FTTP provides **gigabit-capable full-fibre connectivity** directly to the school site, enabling:

- **Upload/download speeds up to 1 Gbps**, symmetrical
- **Stable, low-latency connections** ideal for cloud services and video-rich learning
- **Robust performance** for VoIP telephony, safeguarding tools, and CCTV
- **Support for future-ready infrastructure:** IoT, cloud MIS, remote

access, and AI tools

Upgrading to FTTP can immediately transform:

- Staff and pupil log-on speeds
- Network reliability for cloud-based systems (Google Workspace, SIMS, Arbor)
- Whole-school Wi-Fi coverage
- Cybersecurity resilience and disaster recovery planning

Why This Is a Real-Time Priority

Many FTTP-enabled schools are still using:

- **Legacy copper lines** with upload speeds <10 Mbps
- **Outdated leased lines** with high costs and low flexibility
- **Switching and Wi-Fi systems** that throttle fibre performance

The consequences:

- Interrupted access to safeguarding platforms
- Lag in cloud MIS or classroom tech
- Missed CPD opportunities and pupil inequity in digital access
- Long-term capital inefficiencies

Real School Impact

- A **Lancashire primary** upgraded to FTTP and reduced ICT downtime by 80% in one term.
- A **Devon MAT** leveraged FTTP to deploy energy-monitoring IoT sensors, improving estate efficiency and access control.
- A **Birmingham secondary** used its fibre upgrade to deploy site-wide digital signage, VoIP, and Wi-Fi 6—saving £25,000 annually on contracts.

What You Can Do Right Now

1. Check Your Fibre-Ready Status

Use postcode tools (Openreach, CityFibre) or ask your ICT provider. Most schools in urban and semi-rural zones are already FTTP-enabled—even if they haven't been notified.

2. Audit Your Digital Infrastructure

Review:

- Broadband performance (speed, downtime)
- Switching and internal cabling
- Wi-Fi coverage and device load
- Filtering, firewalls, and cloud capacity

3. Secure Supplier Quotes — Powered by the Procurement Act 2023

The **Procurement Act 2023** has transformed how schools can procure digital infrastructure:

- **Wider access to suppliers**, including local, SME, and specialist providers
- Use of **simplified competitive routes**: direct award, open procedure, or dynamic purchasing systems (DPS)
- Evaluation based on **value and service quality**, not just price

Action point: Contact DfE-aligned fibre and network partners. Many will:

- Bundle switching, cabling, installation, and support
- Provide funding support for CIF, DFC, or Connect the Classroom
- Demonstrate proven school deployments

Tip: Avoid restrictive single-vendor frameworks—schools now have more procurement autonomy to find the best fit.

4. Access Funding Streams

Funding Source	What It Can Support	Applies To
Connect the Classroom (CtC)	Internal Wi-Fi, switches, filtering	Priority schools and MATs
Condition Improvement Fund (CIF)	Fibre trenching, switching infrastructure	Eligible academies
Devolved Formula Capital (DFC)	Broadband upgrades, switching	All schools

Funding Source	What It Can Support	Applies To
Pupil Premium (contextual)	Digital access if it supports vulnerable learners	Case-by-case justification

Final Thought

Your school may already be fibre-ready—but if you haven’t upgraded, your digital strategy is running on yesterday’s bandwidth.

The infrastructure is there. The funding is there. And now, with the **Procurement Act 2023**, the **choice and control are finally there too**.

In 2025/26, don’t just plan for digital compliance—build the foundation for a **resilient, scalable, and intelligent school network** that supports every lesson, every pupil, every day.