

AI in schools: a *practical* strategy.

A real AI strategy is more involved than any single page can capture, but the thinking has to start somewhere, and this is a good place to begin. Most schools open with the tool. The more useful starting point is the learning you want to protect. Six principles to keep a school steady while the technology keeps moving.

01

Start with the learning

Begin with a question worth answering: what part of teaching or learning are we trying to improve? Tie any use of AI to your curriculum, your pedagogy and your commitment to inclusion. A tool that cannot answer that question does not belong in the plan yet.

02

Build the capacity to keep going

Decide what is allowed, what is not, and who is responsible, and set out your safeguarding and data rules in plain terms. Name a lead or a small group to hold it, and revisit the approach as the tools change. Stay close to the evidence, and aim for something you can sustain.

03

Back your teachers

Give every layer of staff the chance to learn, from teaching assistants to senior leaders. Share concrete uses, such as simplifying a text, building a retrieval quiz or drafting sentence stems, and let people get confident with the basics before reaching for anything clever. The training that sticks is sustained and collaborative, rarely a one-off INSET or twilight.

04

Mind the gap

Ask who actually benefits. Check access, watch for bias, and keep an eye on the digital divide. Used carelessly, AI widens the gaps you are trying to close. Used well, it narrows them, and it takes work off teachers rather than piling more on.

05

Keep people at the centre

Let AI buy back time for the things only people do well: feedback, relationships, the creative parts of teaching. It can inform professional judgement. It cannot replace it. Learning is still something that happens between people.

06

Teach students to use it well

This is for students as much as staff. Teach them to use AI with one eye on their own thinking: when it genuinely helps them learn, when it is doing the work their minds should be doing, and how to tell the two apart.



Let's talk about *AI* in your school.

José Picardo, founder of Azimuth, works with schools and trusts on strategy, professional development and leadership. For the full picture, download the guide *Beyond the Device*, or email hello@azimuth.org.uk.