bett
A Hyve Event

ExCeL London
21 - 23 January 2026

edtech impact

EdTech Impact's
BUYERS' GUIDE 2026

CONTENTS

About this Guide **Page 3**

Step 1: Define your objective **Page 4**

Step 2: Evaluate the impact **Page 6**

Step 3: Check the small print **Page 9**

Step 4: Privacy and ethical benchmarks **Page 11**

Step 5: Key questions to ask exhibitors **Page 12**

Glossary of commonly used terms **Page 16**

Appendix A: Privacy, Safety, and Ethics – Checklist **Page 18**

Appendix B: Supplier Question Checklist **Page 20**

ABOUT THIS guide

This buyers' guide has been written by EdTech Impact for the Bett UK community.

EdTech Impact is a strategic technology partner for schools, providers, researchers and policymakers – equipping them with the tools, data, frameworks and workflows to intelligently assess the effectiveness and value for money of education technology products at every stage.

This guide draws on the collective experience of the EdTech Impact team, community, and the Bett UK Advisory Board, to provide a systematic process for evaluating the EdTech solutions you encounter at **Bett UK 2026**.

Bett UK runs from **21-23 January 2026** at the **ExCel** in **London** and is FREE for all educators to attend. This includes schools, colleges, universities, school districts, government ministries, government agencies and authorities and practicing tutors.

DEFINE YOUR OBJECTIVE

Know your digital strategy

Before you even consider searching for technology solutions, it's important to first define what you want to achieve. Consider your organisation's needs with these foundational questions:

- What areas or challenges need to be addressed – or where could technology add new value?
- What do you already know about this area and the potential solutions, and where do you need to explore further?
- Who should be involved in those conversations and decisions?
- How should any potential tool align with your wider digital vision – including sustainability, culture, and long-term goals?

Understanding your current EdTech landscape

A thorough EdTech audit is one of the most effective steps a school or trust can take to answer these foundational questions. It provides a holistic view of your digital ecosystem – replacing assumptions with clear, evidence-based insights.

While the value of an audit is clear, the process itself can look very different from one school to another. A well-executed audit will produce clear reporting across the following key areas:

- **Usage:** How frequently each tool is used, by whom, and in what contexts.
- **Impact**: How effectively each tool contributes to the school priorities it was bought to address
- **Finance:** Unnecessary costs, upcoming renewals and overlapping or redundant tools.
- **Compliance:** Which tools comply with data privacy and security regulations

The time it takes to complete an audit can vary widely – from a few weeks to several months – depending on factors such as organisation size, the number of tools in use, how they're recorded, teachers' purchasing autonomy, and who's responsible for managing each solution. In many schools, these duties are spread across teams, which can slow things down.

Because of this, it's helpful to treat auditing as an ongoing process rather than a one-off task. Schools purchase and renew tools throughout the year, so building regular reflection into your routine keeps everything up to date.

That said, formally setting aside a dedicated week or two each year for a full review is an ideal way to prepare for events like Bett UK – ensuring you arrive with a clear view of your current tools, gaps, and priorities, and can focus your conversations on solutions that genuinely meet your school's needs.

A centralised platform, like EdTech Impact Manager, can streamline the auditing process - combining usage, financial, and compliance data to support confident, evidence-based decisions

Retention Rate Legend

90%+ (Excellent) | 70-89% (Good) | 50-69% (Moderate) | 30-49% (Low) | Below 30% (Critical)

	15 – 21 Sep '25	22 – 28 Sep '25	29 Sep – 5 Oct '25	6 – 12 Oct '25	13 – 19 Oct '25	20 – 26 Oct '25
ABCya	43%	100%	29%	N/A	N/A	N/A
AP Central	100%	75%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
ActiveHistory	N/A	67%	100%	50%	N/A	N/A
Adobe Acrobat	N/A	55%	36%	100%	N/A	73%
Adobe Creative Cloud	23%	41%	55%	77%	100%	23%
Adobe Express for Education	19%	40%	27%	64%	100%	57%
AllSides for Schools	N/A	N/A	N/A	75%	100%	N/A
Amplify Science	100%	27%	58%	15%	N/A	N/A

Next, define the outcome your solution should achieve. It's very easy to get drawn into conversations for tools that look fun or impressive but have minimal impact on learning or strategic priorities.

Map solutions against their impact (the outcomes they claim to improve) so that you can quickly filter to those aligned with your needs. Here is a top-level taxonomy to help you categorise the outcomes you're seeking:

Student outcomes

- Increase attainment
- Close attainment gap
- Build student knowledge
- Increase student collaboration
- Improve student behaviour
- Improve student wellbeing
- Improve student employability
- Increase digital fluency
- Increase inclusivity
- Improve accessibility
- Raise aspirations and motivation

Teacher outcomes

- Improve teacher knowledge transfer
- Improve teacher wellbeing
- Improve teacher efficiency
- Improve the quality of assessment and feedback
- Reduce teacher workload
- Increase digital fluency
- Increase teacher collaboration

Organisational outcomes

- Save money
- Streamline product rosters
- Improve data and cyber security
- Provide school data
- Improve school processes and communication
- Reduce duplication
- Improve parent engagement
- Embed cultural digitisation
- Improve staff wellbeing

Identifying your pedagogical alignment:

If you are seeking tools that specifically enhance teaching and learning, it's important to formulate your teaching philosophy – including its goals – in order to make informed decisions. Focus on these broad pedagogical considerations:

- What do you believe great learning really looks like?
- What do you believe great teaching really looks like?
- What kinds of knowledge and skill development do you want to see in your school?
- How should learning in your organisation relate to life outside of it?

A word of caution

Avoid jumping straight to your favourite option without proper research. Poor planning has proven to be the Achilles' heel for many EdTech projects, leading to wasted money and time, decreased staff confidence, and another entry into the (virtual) cupboard of shame.

Moreover, be cautious when relying solely on recommendations from other schools. While peer insights are extremely valuable, each school or college is its own unique ecosystem. Contextual factors like staffing, budgets, student intake, priorities, and skill sets vary significantly, potentially leading to different outcomes even with the same tool.

EVALUATE THE IMPACT

Why might this solution work for your school?

The EdTech marketplace is highly competitive, and reliable evidence of products improving educational outcomes is limited.

Outcomes can vary by context: tools adopted by pathfinders or enthusiasts can perform differently once rolled out to staff and students, and the same product may work well in one school but less effectively in another, depending on implementation.

This is why context matters. Treat bold claims with healthy scepticism: check how the evidence was gathered, whether the setting resembles your own, and what assumptions or biases may be present – then judge whether the claims are likely to hold true for your staff and students.

87%

of teachers now want clear proof that EdTech works before adopting it.

Teacher Tapp survey - 2024

Types of evidence

When evaluating EdTech solutions, you'll encounter many different kinds of evidence – from teacher testimonials to formal research studies. Understanding what each type can (and can't) tell you helps you make more confident, context-aware decisions.

Evidence usually comes from qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods research:

- Qualitative evidence explores how and why something works, through things like interviews, case studies, and classroom observations.
- Quantitative evidence measures what happened and how much change occurred – using data from surveys, analytics, or controlled studies.
- Mixed-methods evidence combines both for a fuller picture.

Both are valuable: qualitative evidence helps you understand experience and context; quantitative evidence depicts scale and pattern.

The table below summarises the four main types of evidence you'll typically encounter in EdTech evaluations – from early user experiences to rigorous research studies. Each tells a different part of the story about whether, how, and why a product works.

Level	What it shows	Examples	What to watch for
1. Experience-based evidence	Early impressions and user stories offering insight into people's experiences with a tool.	Teacher testimonials, blogs, endorsements	Useful for first impressions that may inform further inquiry but rarely demonstrates impact.
2. Descriptive/contextual evidence	Describes how a tool was used over a period of time and what was observed in real settings.	Case studies, surveys, focus groups, recorded observations	Valuable for understanding how things work, but not whether they caused an effect.
3. Correlational evidence	Shows associations between tool use and outcomes.	Usage analytics, comparative studies, randomised controlled trials (RCTs), longitudinal surveys	Correlation can suggest a link between the tool and a specific outcome; it cannot prove causation.
4. Causal evidence	Demonstrates that the product caused a specific change and estimates its size.	RCTs, matched comparison studies	Very rare in EdTech; always check whether the study conditions resemble your own context.

Why this matters

The **Education Endowment Foundation (EEF)** uses similar categories to judge how secure evidence is – from exploratory findings to robust trials. Most EdTech evidence sits in EEF Levels 1-3, which are still valuable for learning and decision-making. Level 4 (causal) evidence is rare and costly, but useful when available.

What matters most is knowing which type of evidence you're looking at and judging how relevant it is to your own pupils, teachers, and context.

RCTs: causal or correlational evidence?

In medicine, Randomised Control Trials (RCTs) are considered the "gold standard" for testing whether an intervention "causes" an outcome, achieved through tightly controlled conditions, placebos, and double-binding.

In education, however, classrooms are far more complex and variable. They are dynamic spaces shaped by teachers' and students' beliefs, motivation, relationships, and wider factors such as school ethos, leadership priorities, and timetable fit. These influences are difficult – arguably impossible – to control fully. As a result, many RCTs in EdTech do not conclusively prove causation; rather, they show strong associations between a tool and an outcome.

Why this matters: The "RCT" label is often presented to provide compelling marketing. However, in practice, this does not necessarily mean a product will definitely work in your school. Look carefully at what was controlled, how the study was run, and how similar that context is to your own.

The rise of peer reviews

Peer reviews have become critical in today's digital world, providing authentic insights into customer experience, product performance over time, and how products rank against competitors.

EdTech Impact has published over 50,000 independent peer reviews from educators, administrators and parents who have used education technology solutions, capturing valuable perceptions of their impact and how products are being used in different contexts.

The platform awards top-rated solutions in different categories and allows you to filter reviews by school setting - because context matters. After all, a review from a small rural school may not help if you work in a large inner-city school.

Trialling a product in your own context

While existing evidence can guide your decision on whether a solution might work, the next step is to test it in your own setting. A useful way to do so is through a trial period.

Before starting a trial, make sure that you have a very clear intention for its use that aligns with your school priorities, and that this is suitably planned. This will make it easier for you to think about how, when and where you will use the product, and whether it has met your needs once the trial period ends.

Though most trials are for 30 days, many suppliers will extend the trial period if you are willing to share your feedback with them. Just beware of online trials that require a credit card or financial sign-up, as they may automatically convert to a paid monthly / annual contract at the end of the trial.

The growing demand for testbeds

While trial periods are a good first step in exploring new tools, testbeds offer a more robust alternative. They allow schools extended, free access to products in authentic classroom environments, affording teachers the time and opportunity to explore how a solution fits their pedagogy and day-to-day practice.

Crucially, testbeds also enable educators to share their experiences through structured feedback loops that feed directly into product development. This means schools not only gain longer access but play an active role in shaping the solutions they use. In doing so, testbeds give educators a stronger voice in the EdTech market, gain critical skills in how to evaluate EdTech more robustly, and help ensure innovation remains grounded in real educational needs.

This shift toward deeper, evidence-informed evaluation is being recognised across the sector. The UK Department for Education is developing a new testbed initiative, and organisations such as GETN have long championed systemic, context-based evaluation. Building on this momentum, EdTech Impact has launched a dedicated testbed environment that is rapidly becoming a central reference point in this space. You can register to participate in EdTech Impact's testbed opportunities here.

Making sense of AI

Artificial Intelligence is now built into a growing number of EdTech products, but not all AI works in the same way or serves the same purpose. Broadly speaking, most tools use one of two types:

- **Machine Learning (ML):** Analyses patterns in data to make predictions or recommendations – for example, identifying students who may need additional support, or suggesting next steps in their learning journey.
- **Generative AI (GenAI):** Produces new content, such as text, images, or feedback, by drawing on patterns it has learned from large datasets. These are the systems behind chatbots, automated lesson generators, and AI teaching assistants.

At Bett UK, you'll encounter many companies eager to shout about their product's latest AI features. Amid the excitement, it's important to stay focused on substance over spectacle. Approach these tools with the same mindset you would apply to any EdTech decision.

Consider how the AI component contributes to impact – does it genuinely enhance learning, teaching, or operational efficiency, or is it simply a novelty? Be critical and inquire about the training datasets, and whether the implemented AI component is the company's own or a third party integration where they have limited control. Applying the same principles of evidence, transparency, and alignment used throughout this guide will help you approach AI tools thoughtfully and systematically.

If you are considering the increased use of AI in your school, this set of insights and recommendations published by a pathfinding group of 23 Multi-Academy Trusts in September 2024 offers practical, sector-led guidance on governance, ethics, and responsible implementation.

Deepen your observations

To get more value from your trial period, consider using the PICRAT framework. Developed by Royce Kimmons and colleagues in 2020, this model helps you systematically evaluate how technology is being used in your school.

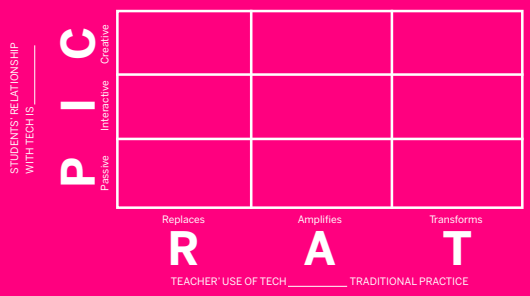
PICRAT examines technology integration across two dimensions:

- **Student's relationship with the technology:** Passive, Interactive, Creative
- **Pedagogical impact:** Replacement, Amplification, Transformation

How to apply it: Ask whether a tool simply replaces traditional methods with digital ones, or transforms the learning experience by enabling previously impossible tasks. By evaluating activities on both dimensions, you can identify achievable steps to move from lower impact uses (passive-replacement) to higher impact ones (interactive-amplification).

This structured approach helps you focus on meaningful improvements rather than adopting flashy but ineffective tools. Instead of asking "Is this technology good?" you can ask "How is this technology being used, and how could we use it better?"

Recording your observations using this framework makes it easier to determine whether a solution truly fits your school's needs and supports continuous improvement in technology integration. For more information on using PICRAT as an evaluation tool, visit here.



CHECK THE SMALL PRINT

What are you signing up to?

Reading contractual small print is never fun, but once signed, your options are limited. Before committing to any EdTech contract, ask yourself:

> *"Am I 100% confident that I know what I'm signing up to?"*

Here are the most common pitfalls to watch out for:

1. Total cost of ownership

Much like buying a car, where the sticker price doesn't include fuel, insurance, or maintenance, technology purchases often have hidden costs beyond the upfront price. To avoid unpleasant surprises in your budget, factor in these potential hidden expenses:

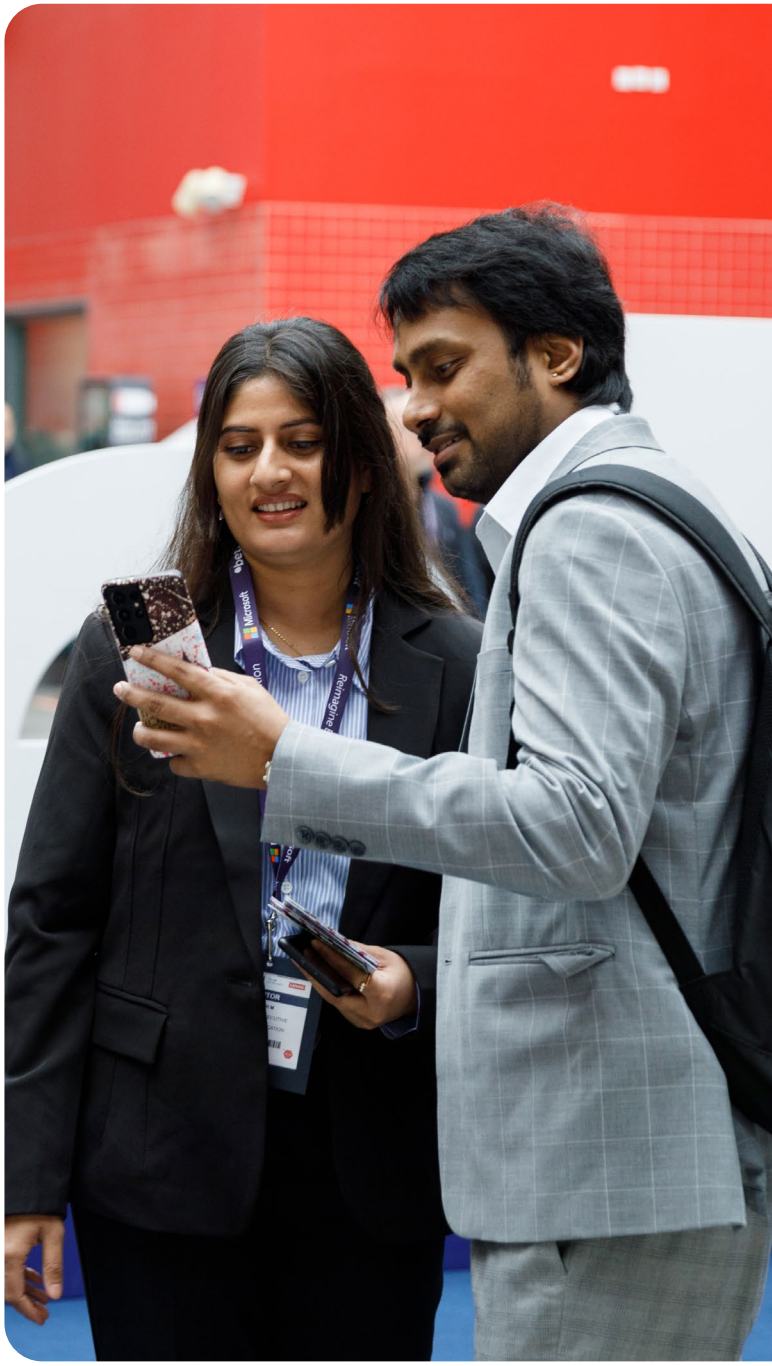
- Staff training (including venues, catering and travel expenses)
- Ongoing support and maintenance fees
- Device compatibility with your infrastructure
- Product lifespan and replacement costs
- Staff time for setup, learning, and implementation

2. Free still comes with a cost

When considering free, freemium or very low-cost options, ask yourself the paradoxical question: "Free, but at what cost?"

Common hidden costs include:

- Time Investment: Free products are typically self-service with minimal customer support, training, and account management
- Data as currency: Instead of money, you may be paying with your personal data, which companies can use or sell to advertisers.
- Opportunity Cost: Time spent struggling with free tools is time not spent on teaching.



> *"We found a free maths solution in the hope it would help our department, but staff were spending so much time getting their heads around it, it began eating into time they could have been using for lesson planning. After 2 terms we pulled the plug having never fully used it."*

3. Training and Support Package

Technology rarely works perfectly "out of the box." Successful implementation depends on the training and support that comes with it, alignment with current priorities, and relevance to the context of those using it.

Be aware of your options. There are thousands of solutions listed on EdTech Impact, and their training and support each fall into 5 buckets:

Training	Support
Live Online Training	Email/Helpdesk
Group Webinars	Telephone Support
In-Person Training	Live Chat
Online Documentation	FAQs/Forums
Online Videos	Knowledge Base

When evaluating solutions, look for the training and support package that best matches your team's needs and capacity.

4. Contract Considerations

An increasing trend in EdTech is for suppliers to offer 3-year contracts. Whilst this isn't inherently good or bad, there are a few considerations to be aware of before committing long-term:

- **Have you used the product before?** If this is your first time using the solution, make sure it's the right fit. Exiting a multi-year contract can be costly, as one school discovered:

> ***"In the demonstrations, the product looked great and we were told it was easy to set up. After 6 months it wasn't fully up and running and we weren't happy so we decided to find a different solution. When I spoke to the supplier, there was no option to cancel early. We ended up paying for 3 years for something we only used for six months."***

- **Consider requesting a break clause.** Ask the supplier if you can add a break clause to the contract. If the solution doesn't meet agreed outcomes, a break clause affords you flexibility to terminate the contract early, avoiding long-term payments for something that doesn't work for your school.

- **Negotiate a bigger discount.** Suppliers often offer a discount for multi-year contracts or for expansion into multiple schools in a group. If that's you, there may be room for further negotiation on price.
- **Look at buying through a third party.** Check if the product is available through a procurement framework rather than directly from the supplier. Frameworks can offer larger savings, especially for bulk purchases.
- **Cancellation procedures.** Many contracts require you to give 90 days' notice to cancel, or they will automatically renew. Some suppliers even require 180 days' notice. That is 6 months and might easily catch you out, so do read the fine print to avoid any unwanted renewals. Implement a subscription tracking system to stay on top of renewals across your ecosystem.

By paying close attention to crucial contractual details, you can avoid costly surprises and ensure the best possible outcome for your school.

An alternative contract model

In Utah, a state grant program reshaped how schools purchase EdTech. Instead of simply selling licences, suppliers were required to **train teachers** on the software and **refund unused licenses** at the end of the year.

The result? 100% of licences were used, and schools gained the reliable usage data needed to evaluate products over time. This allowed the state to identify maths tools linked to measurable gains in student performance.

Consider making similar demands to hold your provider accountable for the successful implementation of their product in your school.

BENCHMARKS to demand

One would assume that all EdTech solutions meet, at a minimum, all appropriate software requirements and standards. This isn't always the case.

The presence of a Data Privacy Impact Assessment (DPIA) doesn't automatically guarantee that the solution has addressed critical issues, such as cybersecurity risks, exploitative data practices, ethical concerns, algorithmic bias, accessibility, or age-appropriate and human-rights respecting designs.

You don't need to be a technical expert to ask the right questions. The aim is simply to make sure any product you consider meets your school's expectations for privacy, safety, and fairness. Here are a few guiding questions to start with:

- **Data use:** What information does the product collect, and how is it stored or shared?
- **Security:** How does it keep users' data safe, and does it integrate securely with your existing systems?
- **Accessibility:** Can every student use it equally, including those with SEND or EAL needs?
- **Age-appropriateness:** Are its features and privacy settings designed for the age group you teach?
- **Ethics and culture:** Who designed the product, and do their values align with yours?

Answering these questions may involve several people across your school - IT leads, data protection officers, SEND coordinators or school leaders – and that's expected. What matters is that these conversations happen before any tool is adopted.

If you're responsible for handling these areas and would like to explore the areas in more depth, a detailed checklist covering compliance frameworks, design codes, and vendor accountability can be found in the appendix.

KEY QUESTIONS to ask exhibitors

The Bett UK show floor can be overwhelming, with hundreds of companies competing for attention. That's why it pays to go in armed with the right questions that can help you cut through jargon, expose weak claims, and show whether a solution will deliver value in your context.

If an exhibitor can't answer on the spot, ask for a follow-up or another team member who can – and don't commit until your priorities are addressed.

Below are the key questions to keep front of mind when you meet with suppliers.

1. Evidence of Effectiveness

Every vendor will tell you their product makes a difference. The question is: can they prove it – and is it contextually relevant? Without solid evidence, you're taking a leap of faith.

- **What breadth of evidence supports your claims?**
  Don't settle for vague claims. Ask suppliers to share their evidence portfolio – studies, published papers, kitemarks, certifications, or awards. The more rigorous and transparent, the more confidence you can have.
- **How rigorous is the research behind your product?**
  Dig deeper into the depth and quality of the research to understand the tool's real impact. Did it thoroughly analyse product usage, or only look at surface-level outcomes and trends? Has it been independently conducted or externally verified?
- **How does the evidence map to outcomes you care about?**
  Ensure alignment with your priorities. For example, improvements in specific areas like student engagement, wellbeing, or specific learning outcomes, rather than academic attainment.

The best evidence base will be one which combines quantitative (measurable) insights with qualitative (descriptive and analytical) insights. A good combination will bring together large scale samples (offering headline facts and figures) with smaller scale case studies (which are much better at surfacing the reality of human experiences and forms of impact which are not easy to measure).

2. Free Trials

Trials should give you a real sense of how a product works in your school. But if they're too limited or poorly designed, you risk walking away with a distorted view of its value.

- **Is the trial long enough to test properly?**
  Many products offer one-month trials, but this is rarely enough. Ask if it can run for at least a term to give staff and students time to properly evaluate its usefulness and potential.
- **What support will our school get during the trial?**
  A trial without training or troubleshooting won't reflect real-world use. Clarify whether staff will receive onboarding, technical help, and implementation support.
- **How will success be measured?**
  Decisions after the trial should be based on impact, not guesswork. Ask which success metrics the supplier recommends tracking and how they suggest evaluating outcomes. It's entirely reasonable to expect companies to proactively guide you through this process.
- **What happens when the trial ends?**
  Clarify exactly what happens when it ends. Losing premium features is one thing; losing access to previously created content and resources can disrupt learning and waste teacher effort.

If you'd like a quick-reference version of these questions, you'll find a condensed checklist in the appendix – ideal for use on the show floor!

3. Implementation & Support

Buying a product is one thing; making it work year after year is another. Without proper training, ongoing support, and a clear plan for embedding it into practice, even the best tools can become shelfware.

- **What ongoing support will our school receive?**
  Don't settle for suppliers who are going to do the bare minimum once the contract has been signed. Ensure they have a clear plan outlined for ongoing support, whether through follow-up sessions, a dedicated account manager, or personalised assistance. Clarify if support will come from an education-focused team or generic customer service, and get commitments in writing. Ask them to reference long-standing customers they've had, and the specific support they received.
- **How will the support provided fit with our CPD calendar?**
  Be upfront about your training schedule. If time is limited, ask about flexible options such as on-demand webinars, video tutorials, or online courses that teachers can access when it suits them.
- **How can our school scale internal expertise?**
  Long-term value depends on staff supporting each other, not relying solely on the vendor. Ask if the company fosters peer learning through user forums or communities, and check whether other schools in your trust are using the product so you can share lessons learned. Strong providers may also offer a train-the-trainer model or advanced deep-dive sessions to help spread expertise across your team.
- **What is your process for handling complaints and feedback?**
  There should be a clear, user-friendly way for staff and students to share feedback – whether that's raising concerns, requesting help, or logging complaints. But collecting input is only the first step. Ask what provisions are in place to act on issues, how quickly problems are resolved, and whether the company employs education specialists who understand school contexts and can offer genuine redress rather than generic responses.

4. Pricing & Terms

A tool might look affordable on the surface, but pricing models can hide costs or lock you into packages that don't fit your context. Without clarity, you risk overpaying or wasting limited budget on features you'll never use.

- **How does your freemium model work in practice?**
  Many freemium products allow teachers to 'earn' access to additional features by generating new sign-ups or referrals. If these adoption thresholds aren't realistic for your school, the "free" tier may have limited value.
- **How is the price calculated?**
  Many suppliers base pricing on total pupil enrolment. This model may be poorly suited if certain groups – such as EYFS, KS1 – are unlikely to ever use the tool, or in specialist settings where staff to student ratios will differ from mainstream. Consider asking for alternative packages based on active users or number of seats (and ask whether seats are fixed or can be reallocated as needed).
- **Are there partnership or bulk discounts?**
  If you're part of a multi-academy trust, group, network, or can coordinate with neighbouring schools, ask about bulk rates. Many suppliers will reduce costs for larger, collective deals.
- **What exactly is included and what costs extra?**
  Understand exactly what you're paying for. Clarify whether things like training, technical support, additional storage, or premium features are included or billed separately. Request a clear breakdown so you can compare suppliers like-for-like and avoid budget surprises.

Newer, smaller companies typically offer more adaptable pricing structures than larger, established providers. Something to bear in mind!

5. Sustainability Strategy

Schools are under pressure to meet sustainability goals – and technology is part of that equation. But not every product is built with environmental impact in mind, and overlooking this can undermine your wider strategy.

- **How efficient is your solution?**
  Ask what steps are being taken to improve energy efficiency, reduce computational load, and adopt green computing practices.
- **What is your long-term environmental plan?**
  Ask how the supplier intends to minimise environmental impact over time – for example, by optimising the lifespan of their software and hardware, reducing energy usage, or offering repair/reuse schemes.
- **How will this product fit into our school's sustainability strategy?**
  Look for practical contributions that relate to your sustainability strategy, such as reducing printing, cutting duplication of work, or lowering overall energy consumption.

6. Future-proofing & Adaptability

EdTech evolves quickly. A product that feels cutting-edge today can be outdated tomorrow if it isn't built to adapt, leaving you facing expensive replacements and disruptive overhauls.

- **What is your product roadmap for the next 3–5 years?**
  Suppliers should be able to share a clear plan for upcoming updates, improvements, and how they'll keep pace with emerging technologies like AI and machine learning.
- **How scalable is the product?**
  Check whether it can grow with your school's digital strategy – from user numbers to new features – without needing a complete switch.
- **How will you ensure we avoid costly overhauls?**
  Ask what measures are in place to ensure the tool will evolve over time without forcing you into frequent replacements or expensive upgrades.

7. Cybersecurity & Data Privacy

Some EdTech products handle sensitive student and staff data. If security and compliance aren't watertight, you're not just facing technical risks – you're exposing your whole school community.

- **Are you fully GDPR compliant and who is the data controller?**
  Get clarity on who holds legal responsibility for data protection, and request evidence of GDPR compliance (such as a Data Processing Agreement). This sets the foundation for accountability.
- **What type of data does your solution access, collect, and process and how is it used?**
  Schools remain legally responsible for verifying compliance, so ensure practices meet your cybersecurity and privacy standards. Probe into what types of data are collected (student, staff, parental), how it is stored, and whether it is ever repurposed for secondary uses such as analytics or training algorithms. Check if it requires direct CSV uploads or integrates with your MIS or other systems. Ask explicitly if any data is shared with third parties and under what terms.
- **How do you reliably keep data secure?**
  Ask about protections against technical failures, security breaches, and third-party risks, especially where the product relies on sensitive content, personal information, intellectual property, or software. Request details of internal and external security controls, such as encryption, penetration testing, or incident response protocols.
- **Will your product integrate safely with our existing systems?**
  A product might function well on its own but still pose risks if it doesn't connect securely with your existing platforms. Ask how it handles data transfers and authentication, and whether it supports single sign-on (SSO). Secure, seamless integration protects data and keeps workflows efficient.

8. Safeguarding

The DfE's Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) guidance has raised expectations for safeguarding in schools and colleges, and the responsibility ultimately lies with them to ensure learners are protected. That makes it vital to uncover whether a product genuinely supports your safeguarding duties.

- **What communication safeguards are in place?** For tools with messaging or collaboration features, ask how learners are protected. Does the system allow anonymous incident reporting? Does it prevent "over-blocking" while still ensuring age-appropriate use?
- **How does the product support prevention as well as reaction?** Safeguarding isn't only about responding to incidents. Ask how the tool helps detect concerns early, prevents escalation, and reduces the risk of repeat incidents.
- **Does it meet filtering and monitoring requirements?** KCSIE guidance and the Ofsted inspection framework stress the importance of filtering and monitoring working in tandem. Check whether the solution is designed to support both functions effectively and in line with these standards.

9. Accessibility & Inclusion

Many products claim to support SEND and EAL students, but support isn't guaranteed – and where it does exist, quality varies widely. If features are missing or half-baked, the very learners who need the most support are excluded from full participation, widening learning gaps and compounding disadvantage.

- **Was accessibility part of the original design?** Products built with accessibility in mind from the outset will always serve learners better than those where features are bolted on afterwards. Ask whether core functions, such as adjustable text size, contrast settings, and alternative formats, were thought about and embedded during development.
- **What support does your solution offer for different learners?** Ask about the tool's support and accessibility features for students who are blind, D/deaf, dyslexic, physically disabled, or learning English as an additional language. Can the vendor demonstrate real examples, not just theoretical claims?
- **Is it compatible with assistive technologies?** Does the product integrate smoothly with required assistive technology, such as screen readers, text-to-speech, or speech recognition? Check this early, as incompatibility can create barriers for learners and add workload for staff.
- **Can you show examples of impact for SEND/EAL learners?** Ask for proof that the product narrows attainment gaps or supports SEND/EAL learners to progress – ideally independent data, case studies, or testimonials from comparable schools.

10. Integration & Compatibility

A product might shine in isolation, but if it doesn't connect with your existing systems it risks adding workload instead of reducing it. Poor integration creates silos and duplication; strong integration unlocks smoother workflows and a bigger impact across your school.

- **Does your product integrate with classroom tools?** Strong integrations with familiar products give staff and learners a streamlined workflow, cutting out the need to juggle logins, reformat content, or constantly switch between platforms. For example, Thinglink, Book Creator, and Mote all link seamlessly with Canva.
- **Can it connect with data and admin systems?** Integration with MIS, LMS, or assessment platforms reduces duplication, prevents errors, and gives leaders clearer insights into whole-school performance. Smooth connections here can save significant admin time.
- **Does it support single sign-on (SSO)?** SSO can reduce login friction for staff and students, so checkif it integrates with your existing identity management systems.

GLOSSARY OF commonly used terms

Term	Explanation
Age-Appropriate Design Code (AADC)	15 standards that ISS solutions need to follow to ensure compliance with their obligations under data protection law to protect children's data online.
Active User	Account holders who are actively using the product.
Account Holder	Account holder but not an active user (potentially wasting a seat/money)
Artificial Intelligence (AI)	Computer systems performing tasks normally requiring human intelligence, such as visual perception, speech recognition, decision-making, and translation between languages.
Data Protection Officer (DPO)	The person ultimately responsible for data protection in your organisation.
Digital Transformation	The integration of digital technology into all aspects of the educational experience, including teaching and learning, and school operations. It can facilitate collaboration and communication, improve access to education, and allow for greater flexibility and individualised tailoring of the learning experience.
Freemium	A free version of a product but with limited features.
General AI	An AI system with human-like intelligence capabilities that can adapt and perform across a wide range of tasks and contexts.
General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)	A legal framework for keeping everyone's personal data safe by requiring companies to have robust processes in place for handling and storing personal information.
Generative AI	Technology with integrated AI models and algorithms capable of learning from large volumes of data to produce new, original content.
Human-in-the-Loop (HITL)	The integration of human oversight into AI or machine learning systems to supervise, guide, or improve their automated functioning. For example, a teacher reviewing the recommendations of an AI-driven adaptive learning platform.
Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	A metric used by suppliers to measure the success of the product.
Large Language Models (LLM)	A type of model used in generative AI that is trained on extensive datasets to grasp the complexities of language structure, grammar, and semantics. Can subsequently generate coherent and contextually appropriate text.
Machine Learning (ML)	Computer systems that use algorithms and statistical models to analyse and draw inferences from patterns in data, allowing them to learn and adapt without following explicit instructions.
MIS Integration	The integration of live data from your Management Information System - also known as School Information Management System - with other systems.

Term	Explanation
Multi-Factor/Two-Factor Authentication (MFA/2FA)	Live data is drawn directly from your school's Management Information System - also known as School Information Management System.
Narrow AI	An AI system designed and trained for specific, well-designed tasks. Excels at its limited scope of function, but lacks broader learning or generalised knowledge capabilities.
NIST, IASME/Cyber Essentials, DfE cybersecurity standards	International standards and guidelines on cybersecurity measures for organisations. Most EdTech suppliers do not adhere to such guidelines, so schools should request to see evidence that appropriate cybersecurity measures are put in place.
Non-Generative AI	Technology with integrated AI models and algorithms capable of learning from extensive data to make predictions, classifications, or decisions based on the acquired knowledge.
Number On Roll (NOR)	Number of pupils on roll - often used for pricing structures.
Operating System (OS)	Many products are web-based and available on any device, but some may be specific to Windows, Mac or Chrome devices.
Randomised Controlled Trial (RCT)	A scientific methodology used to test the impact of an 'intervention' (e.g., an EdTech product) on specific outcomes. Involves assigning two or more groups, with one group receiving the 'intervention' while the others act as control groups. Results between the groups are subsequently compared to see if the intervention has impacted on the desired outcome.
Single Sign-On (SSO)	Enables users to sign in using credentials from an existing system rather than a separate login e.g., Google or Microsoft account.
Software as a Service (SaaS)	Software licensing and delivery model in which software is licensed on a subscription basis and is centrally hosted. SaaS is also known as "on-demand software" and web-based/web-hosted software.
User Experience (UX)	The entire interaction you have with a product, including how you feel about the interaction.
User Interface (UI)	The screens, buttons, toggles, icons, and other visual elements that you interact with when using a website or app.
Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)	An international standard that guides companies that provide online products and services on how to make digital content more accessible to individuals with disabilities.

APPENDIX A: Privacy, Safety, and Ethics Checklist

This appendix expands on the themes introduced in Step 4, providing a detailed reference for those responsible for areas including data protection, IT security, accessibility, and ethical compliance.

Use it to guide due diligence and ensure any prospective EdTech solution meets your school's standards for privacy, safety, and fairness.

1. Data Protection Fundamentals

- [ ] Is the solution fully GDPR-compliant, and who is the data controller?
- [ ] What specific data does the solution access, collect, and process?
- [ ] Who owns the data, and who can access the data?
- [ ] Is there any secondary use, sharing, or computation of data during its lifecycle?
- [ ] How is data secured, and do you ensure ongoing compliance with GDPR and other data privacy regulations?

2. Cybersecurity Requirements

- [ ] What internal and external security controls are in place?
- [ ] Does the solution support single sign-on (SSO)?
- [ ] Can it integrate seamlessly with your school's Management or Student Information System?
- [ ] Does it provide interoperability, and what data standards are used?
- [ ] What functionalities are built into the product? Does it require a webcam, chat feature, or access to third-party apps and content?

3. Accessibility & Inclusion Standards

- [ ] What support does the solution offer for users with specific needs (e.g. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) or English as an Additional Language (EAL) learners)?
- [ ] How does the product adapt to meet the needs and preferences of different types of users?
- [ ] What accessibility principles does the solution implement?
- [ ] Which accessibility features and assistive technology support does the product work well with (e.g., screen readers, text-to-speech, etc.)?
- [ ] Which frameworks and regulations is the solution aligned with (e.g., the EU Digital Accessibility Act, the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines WCAG 2.2) and do they cover everything that your community needs?

4. Age-Appropriate Design Code (AADC)

- [ ] Does the provider visibly adhere to the Age-Appropriate Design Code (AADC) or other privacy-by-design guidelines?
- [ ] Are the solution's policies written in language that is easily understood by its intended users?
- [ ] Are the appropriate and intended age ranges for the solution clearly stated?
- [ ] Are there transparent guidelines on recommended screen time for users?

5. Vendor Accountability & Due Diligence

- [ ] Does the provider display clear information about its audit certifications (e.g. GDPR compliance or Edtech Impact pedagogical assessments)?
- [ ] Who are the individuals behind the product?
- [ ] What is their culture and ethos with regards t o delivering child-centred products?
- [ ] Are ethics integrated into the design stage, and are stakeholders (like your school) considered in any parts of the development process?

APPENDIX A:
Privacy, Safety,and Ethics Checklist

6. Ethical & Cultural Considerations

- [ ] Does the vendor understand cultural differences, or is their solution a "one size fits all" approach?
- [ ] How does the product adapt to meet the needs and preferences of different types of users?
- [ ] Are diverse learning needs and environments considered?

7. Tools with Embedded AI

How do the algorithms work?

- [ ] What is their computational complexity?
- [ ] What datasets were they trained on, and how are these maintained for fairness?

How transparent are the processes?

- [ ] Are the AI's decision-making processes pre-tested before they have been marketed?
- [ ] Are the systems explainable and accountable in the context of student and teacher use?

If the tool uses Generative AI (GenAI):

- [ ] What is the source of the training data?
- [ ] How are safeguarding risks managed and considered (e.g., inaccurate, misleading, or inappropriate content)?
- [ ] How transparent are the processes behind the GenAI? Can its outputs be easily audited and explained?
- [ ] Are the outputs age-appropriate and aligned with educational standards?

How does the AI adapt to contexts?

- [ ] Can it adapt to diverse learning needs or learning environments?
- [ ] Does it support personalised learning paths without perpetuating bias?

APPENDIX B:
Supplier Question Checklist

This list can be used as a quick reference or printable checklist when speaking with suppliers.

Evidence of Effectiveness

- ☐ What breadth of evidence supports your claims?
- ☐ How rigorous is the research behind your product?
- ☐ Has it been independently conducted or externally verified?
- ☐ How does the evidence map to outcomes we care about?

Free Trials

- ☐ Is the trial long enough to test properly?
- ☐ What support will our school get during the trial?
- ☐ How will success be measured?
- ☐ What happens when the trial ends?

Implementation & Support

- ☐ What ongoing support will our school receive?
- ☐ How will the support provided fit with our CPD calendar?
- ☐ How can our school scale internal expertise?
- ☐ What is your process for handling complaints and feedback?

Pricing & Terms

- ☐ How does your freemium model work in practice?
- ☐ How is the price calculated?
- ☐ Are there partnership or bulk discounts?
- ☐ What exactly is included – and what costs extra?

Sustainability Strategy

- ☐ How efficient is your solution?
- ☐ What is your long-term environmental plan?
- ☐ How will this product fit into our school's sustainability strategy?

Future-Proofing & Adaptability

- ☐ What is your product roadmap for the next 3–5 years?
- ☐ How scalable is the product?
- ☐ How will you ensure we avoid costly overhauls?

Cybersecurity & Data Privacy

- ☐ Are you fully GDPR compliant – and who is the data controller?
- ☐ What kinds of data does your solution access, collect, and process - and how is it used?
- ☐ How do you reliably keep data secure?
- ☐ Will your product integrate safely with our existing systems?

Safeguarding

- ☐ What communication safeguards are in place?
- ☐ How does the product support prevention as well as reaction?
- ☐ Does it meet filtering and monitoring requirements?

Accessibility & Inclusion

- ☐ Was accessibility part of the original design?
- ☐ What support does your solution offer for different learners?
- ☐ Is it compatible with assistive technologies?
- ☐ Can you show examples of impact for SEND/EAL learners?

Integration & Compatibility

- ☐ Does your product integrate with classroom tools?
- ☐ Can it connect with data and admin systems?
- ☐ Does it support single sign-on (SSO)?

For further reading, *VISIT...*

uk.bettshow.com

edtechimpact.com

With thanks

This guide was created by EdTech Impact and Bett UK, with thanks to the following collaborators:

- Dr Anna Lindroos Cermakova, EEA/EdTech Impact
- Dr Fiona Aubrey-Smith, One Life Learning
- Dr Velislava Hillman, EDDS
- Fil McIntyre, Natspec TechAbility
- Jamie Toner, Singapore American School
- Andy Perryer, Cognita
- Dr Neelam Parmar, E-Act & Harrow International AISL
- Professor Natalia I. Kucirkova, WiKIT AS
- Dr Wayne Harrison
- Emma Darcy, Chiltern Learning Trust
- James Garnett, Rise Multi Academy Trust
- Daren White, Lift Schools

GOOD LUCK preparing for Bett UK!

We can't wait to welcome you to **Bett UK 2026**. As you plan your visit, we hope this guide helps you make the most of every discovery, conversation, and connection.

Remember, you can use this guide throughout the year to explore insights, innovations, and ideas from across the wider education ecosystem!

Better education, *GLOBALLY*

bett
A Hyve Event

ExCeL London
21 - 23 January 2026

Join us in January to discover more about the latest insights and trends at the world's biggest week in education.

Bett UK, 21 - 23 January 2026

Educators attend for **FREE!**

Get your ticket