Voice Recognition

Voice Recognition (VR) technology allows the user to use and control a computer through voice. While this may be useful for pupils with special needs, it is a relatively advanced technology and its potential success depends on a range of factors. For example:

1. the initial training period during which the voice recognition software 'learns' the operator's voice (sometimes referred to as 'enrolling' the software) requires patience and significant commitment from both the pupil and teacher - the age and learning characteristics of the pupil should, therefore, be carefully considered. The training usually requires the reading of text that may prove difficult for pupils with learning difficulties.
2. a stable environment in relation to noise. A classroom is not an ideal setting, as the variations in background noise would upset the recognition characteristics. However, a setting such as a resource room, as well as a pupil's home, might be ideal.
3. a computer with a higher level of processing capacity, so that the pupil will not become frustrated by processing delays.
4. accurate positioning of the microphone (which usually requires assistance and thus increases the dependency factor associated with this technology)

Voice recognition is a rapidly developing technology and advice on the latest development should be sought from AT service providers. VR is sometimes not recommended for younger children and it is a matter of judgement as to whether, and when, the pupil might benefit from the technology.