

OCR Nationals ICT Case Study 4

“The major benefit is that, compared to traditional GCSEs, it’s more practically-based. They are getting on in a lesson and they’re achieving the practical skills that they’ll need when they leave school.”



Whitby High School
Ellesmere Port, Cheshire
Number of students: 1601

Key Feedback

- **Value-added** – Whitby High School elected to offer OCR Nationals because it seemed a good way to improve results, increase qualification achievement and raise the school’s CVA, which allows more meaningful comparisons to be made between schools with different intakes.
- **Inclusive to all** – The full range of students take OCR Nationals, from the least to the most able.
- **Practically-based** – OCR Nationals are highly practical. Free of theory and exams, they’re designed to help pupils get on in the world and achieve the practical skills they’ll need outside school.
- **Worthwhile** – Staff really appreciate the practical aspects of OCR Nationals and find the qualification very worthwhile, even though the presentation of the evidence does involve greater administrative work for teachers.
- The school frequently use the ‘core’ Nationals ICT specification to develop and broaden the teaching of ICT, adding value and enabling students to challenge themselves further.
- **Motivating the less able** – OCR Nationals seem to benefit less able students most, and ‘C-D’ level students find them particularly motivating.
- **Increasing relevance** – The school’s strategic direction is changing with students staying on until aged 17, so OCR Nationals ICT level 3 will become more important. The school sees a great opportunity to develop the teaching of ICT with OCR Nationals.

www.ocrnationals.com

02476 851509

email: ocrnationals@ocr.org.uk

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ICT Case Study 4

“In terms of overall success... the students work harder. What I'd call the traditional 'C - D borderline', they're the ones it really suits”

Mr D Bell, Head of ICT
Whitby High School



OCR Nationals ICT – a flexible qualification allowing staff to 'raise the bar' in ICT

Whitby High School has run OCR Nationals in ICT for the past two years. The full range of students take OCR Nationals, from the less able to grade A and B students. While the qualification suits the less able students extremely well, care is taken to ensure the school's more able students are also being stretched.

Staff find they are able to continually explore new units and new aspects in order to keep bright A and B grade students interested and motivated. This is possible due to the flexible nature of the qualification.

The flexibility to adapt to student needs

The school has a very mixed intake and ability levels change every year. The school changes focus accordingly. In ICT it offers A Levels some years when the intake is more academic, in some years it provides OCR Nationals, in other years both.

Practical relevance to business

After their OCR Nationals, most Whitby High School students go on to take OCR A Levels. In future the school will be creating links with employers and local businesses with the aim of improving students' work-related needs, in line with changes to the school's catchment area.

The OCR Nationals ICT qualification is very well suited to developing broader opportunities for students to progress into higher education or employment.

ICT Nationals Overview

The specifications aim to:

- Develop learners' skills, knowledge and understanding – with special relevance to jobs in ICT.
- Enable progression to further education programmes or occupational training, enter employment or enhance their current employment status.
- Develop a learner's ability to work autonomously and effectively.
- Enable learners to develop knowledge and understanding in specialist areas of ICT.
- Promote interaction between employers, centres and learners.

Features include: centre-assessed and externally moderated by OCR; no timetabled exams; candidates complete units at a time that suits the centre; grades are Pass, Merit or Distinction.

Level 1, 2 and 3 – eligible for funding under the Learning and Skills Council.

For other OCR Nationals qualifications, see our website.

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