

The magazine for Schools, Colleges, Employers, Trainers and Advisers  
May 2009

on

OCRnews

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Bringing  
creativity  
into focus

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OCR   
RECOGNISING ACHIEVEMENT

# Welcome

to our May 2009 edition of OCR News. The changes to English, Maths and ICT in 2010 are at the forefront of events and in this issue we take a snapshot of what can be expected from OCR. In addition, we showcase the outstanding work by OCR creative and media students all over the country. Updates on initiatives in Wales and Northern Ireland also feature.

Any comments on this edition of OCR News can be sent to [editor@ocr.org.uk](mailto:editor@ocr.org.uk)

Fraser Tennant *Editor*

## News in brief



01

### 01 Talking about Maths and English

March and April 2009 saw OCR hosting a series of highly successful regional events focusing on Maths and English.

Aimed at educational professionals, teachers and Local Authority advisors interested in Key Stage 4 education, the five *Talk Maths* and four *Talk English* events featured entertaining and informative presentations from a number of high profile speakers.

The *Talk Maths* events included a keynote address from Maths expert, Rob Eastaway, with further contributions provided by fellow experts, Dr Jennifer Piggott, Simon Singh and Andrew Jeffrey. For *Talk English*, former Poet Laureate, Andrew Motion, was on hand to discuss the challenging aspects of English accessibility and the teaching of poetry. All the events – which took place in Newcastle, Manchester, Bristol, Birmingham (see 02: Andrew Motion with Birmingham's Poet Laureate, Megan Bradbury) and London – offered networking opportunities and the chance to collect practical content for classroom use. Overall, the events were attended by over 600 people, placing them amongst the most successful events ever run by OCR.

Don't miss our FREE 2010 GCSE Expo this summer. An excellent opportunity for you to learn about the new GCSE English, Maths and ICT specifications.

You can visit stands to speak with subject experts, publishers and associated stakeholders. A range of subject specific presentations will run throughout the day. See [www.ocr.org.uk/events](http://www.ocr.org.uk/events) for details.

### Functional Skills: Entry-Level Qualifications pilot underway

Entry-Level Functional Skills qualifications in ICT, Maths and English are now available for pilot centres to start delivering. You can join the pilot scheme by visiting: [www.ocr.org.uk/functionalskills](http://www.ocr.org.uk/functionalskills).

Designed to help learners gain the most out of work, education and everyday life, our Entry-Level Functional Skills qualifications are extremely flexible. They are internally assessed and externally moderated; are available on-demand (meaning learner's can be entered at any time); can be assessed during normal teaching and learning time; and involve no costs until certification. A number of documents, including a centre handbook, assessment materials, assessment records, and entry level unit details, are also available to help participating centres through the pilot stages.

- Please see page six for our reaction to the Government's revised policy on functional skills
- Our functional skills Expo event takes place on 25 September at the National Motorcycle Museum in Birmingham. To find out more, email: [training@ocr.org.uk](mailto:training@ocr.org.uk)

Also available: *Functional Skills in ICT, Maths and English at Levels 1 and 2.*



03

03

### OCR offers money management skills

Learning to manage your personal finances – a unit of OCR's new Business, Administration and Finance Diploma – aims to teach effective money management skills.

Combining theoretical and practical learning, the Diploma consists of units designed to teach transferable personal, learning and thinking skills and how to apply them to the world of business and finance. Principal Learning is a component of the Diploma, providing learners with knowledge and skills relevant to specific employment sectors. Upon completion of the unit, learners will be able to budget effectively, plan their future spending, and will have had the opportunity to choose appropriate bank accounts based on their knowledge of savings and borrowings and interest calculations.

The OCR Diploma in *Business, Administration and Finance* will be available for first teaching from September 2009.



02

### 02 Posters pack Psychological punch

Striking new posters are available for download on our A Level Psychology (new specification) site. Designed by a working teacher, these A3 posters are intended to be an effective tool for teachers delivering Unit G542: Core Studies.

The posters include Loftus and Palmer's eye-witness testimony research and Freud's case study of Little Hans. Each poster includes an introduction to the study, details of the research method used and a conclusion. They provide an excellent overview of each of the Core Studies and are a great accompaniment to the unit.

Hard copies of the posters will be available at OCR INSET events from May 2009.

### Fresh approach to Religious Studies

OCR is piloting a new specification – GCSE *Religious Studies C: Religion & Belief in Today's World* – which encompasses a range of topics including biotechnology, ethics, human rights, politics and culture in today's Britain.

The specification takes a fresh approach in that it requires students to study aspects of two or more religions in an inter-faith framework, looking at social issues such as community cohesion and the value of diversity. Available from September 2009, the specification is based on recommendations from the 2007 Ofsted report: *Making Sense of Religion*.

# Active Results

**Clara Kenyon, OCR Qualifications Director, guides us through our new Active Results Service which equips teachers with unique exam results analysis methods.**



"I am delighted to announce the launch of our new Active Results Service (16 March) following the publication of results from the January pilot series. The first teachers to benefit from this service are those teaching OCR's GCSE Twenty First Century sciences and GCSE Gateway sciences.

"Active Results is a free results analysis service to help teachers review the performance of their students. It has tremendous advantages in that it provides a rapid and detailed analysis of candidates' examination results, allowing teachers to export data in different formats such as tables and graphs for reporting to fellow teachers or senior management and to the students themselves. The service features 10 different report types when analysing results at unit, module and specification level, as well as when examining the results of whole centres or individual candidates. Additionally, our Active Results service is the first from an awarding body to allow teachers to use 'value-added' data to measure the progress of their students by comparing students' attainment with Key Stage 3 data.

"Prior to the service going live, it had been piloted by more than 350 GCSE Science centres who have responded very enthusiastically. Below are just some of the many positive comments we have received:

**"Fantastic analysis tools to support my role as Head of Faculty. Active Results will enable me to support individual pupils and Science staff to raise attainment. Thanks OCR!"**

Mrs Julie Gauntlett, Pensby High School for Girls

**"By allowing me to identify specific areas of underperformance, I've been able to target improvement strategies more effectively. An invaluable service! Thank you."**

Mr Steve Toor, President Kennedy School

**"This system saved me a lot of time. I no longer have to design my own reports, search my data and validate it to make sure it is correct."**

David Tointon, Richard Lander School

"We have received very strong interest in the Active Results service and following the successful launch of the GCSE sciences, it is planned that this service will be extended to other qualifications in the future. The next to benefit will be teachers of GCSE Mathematics for which Active Results will be available following the June 2009 series."



More information, including a short video and list of *Frequently Asked Questions*, is available at:

[www.ocr.org.uk/interchange/active\\_results.html](http://www.ocr.org.uk/interchange/active_results.html)




## DO DIPLOMAS WITH OCR

**"Learners are excited by the focus on practical activities"**

**"The variety on offer with Diploma will maintain our students enthusiasm"**

**"Encourages new and interesting ways of learning"**

Teach Diplomas with us and you'll get a full range of support including: Case studies, OCR Diplomabank and E-communities. We're accredited for a range of principal learning plus Projects and functional skills.

For more information on OCR Diplomas visit:  
[www.ocr.org.uk/diplomas](http://www.ocr.org.uk/diplomas)



# OCR CREATIVE MEDIA COURSES



Through our extensive range of creative media courses, we provide ideal opportunities for students to harness their talents and showcase their work.

## An Exploration of Identity: **Farnborough Sixth Form College**



**Students from Farnborough Sixth Form College** were picture perfect as they showcased their photographic work at a special exhibition – *This is Me: an Exploration of Identity through Form and Style* – mounted as part of their one-year OCR Media National Certificate course.

Held at the West End Community Arts Centre in Aldershot, the exhibition featured the work of 12 students (all aged 16–17) who were inspired by the themes of identity and the importance of family and friendship. Using a range of classical and experimental forms and styles, the students presented a colourful and diverse collection of portraits, landscapes and still lifes. Before this project, all the young photographers had little or no experience of camera use outside holiday snapshots.

Sixteen year old Sophie Tibbitts, said: "This exhibition shows everyone a little part of ourselves. It has been great to have our hard work showcased." Tutoring the students has been Rachel Jarvis, the College Subject Leader for Media. Rachel said: "The students have put so much hard work into this exhibition. The photographs look fantastic – they could easily be the work of professionals. The whole project has embraced our key aims of motivating students in a meaningful way in order to raise their achievement."



*Student Alex Turner with tutor*



## South East Cornwall Consortium takes on Eden Project Challenge

A consortium of schools in the South East (Callington, Liskeard, Looe, Saltash and Torpoint) – the South East Cornwall Consortium – have seen their students taking part in the piloting of a new Creative and Media Diploma unit from OCR – *Responding to an External Brief (Unit 4)*.

Run in collaboration with the Cornwall-based Eden Project – one of the UK's top gardens and conservation tourist attractions – the pilot was written so that it would meet the specifications of the OCR unit whilst acknowledging the ethos of the Eden Project.

The pilot involved teams of students being set a challenge – to create an idea/product to highlight sustainability at the 'Eden Sessions' (a series of six summer concerts held at the Eden Project).

Using a multi-disciplined approach combining different creative and media skills, students set to work on the challenge then pitched their ideas to a panel of Eden Project judges.

The eventual and worthy winners were Torpoint School who designed 'the Florch' – a combination of a torch and a drinks flask, made from recycled material with a wind up torch. The judges were very impressed at the level of research, design, development and marketing all the teams had shown, adding that the choice of winner was a close-run thing.

Pam Horton, The Eden Projects Education Development Officer, said: "Enabling the students from each school to work collaboratively made the project work well and proved to be a good experience ahead of the introduction of the

new Diploma. The pilot has been a great success giving both students and staff an exciting taste of things to come and further projects are already being planned."

Looe Community School and Performing Arts College is the lead school in the delivery of the Creative and Media Diploma for the South East Cornwall Consortium. Following completion of the pilot, the Diploma will start in September 2009 for students aged 14-19. The pilot was written with the intention that it would meet the OCR specifications of Unit 4: *Responding to an External Brief*. The unit will run in conjunction with the Eden Project.



## Spelthorne 14-19 Network celebrates artistic innovations at Creative 50

An exhibition entitled *Creative 50*, which celebrates innovations in photography, art, drama, dance, music and other media over the last 50 years, took place at the Orleans House Gallery in Twickenham and showcased a wide range of work by *Foundation and Higher Level Creative and Media Diploma* students.

The students – from Matthew Arnold and Thamesmead Schools, working in collaboration with Brooklands College (known collectively as the Spelthorne 14-19 Network) – put together an innovative mix of performance work, incorporating music, dance and drama, and two and three dimensional artwork.

"The wide range of disciplines studied within the Diploma has resulted in the production of exceptional work of which the students can be justifiably proud", said Peter Rodin, Head Teacher of the lead school, Thamesmead in Shepperton.

"We are delighted with the dedication shown by our students and those from Matthew Arnold School. We are grateful to Brooklands College for the support they have given this project and to OCR for their work with the Spelthorne Network.

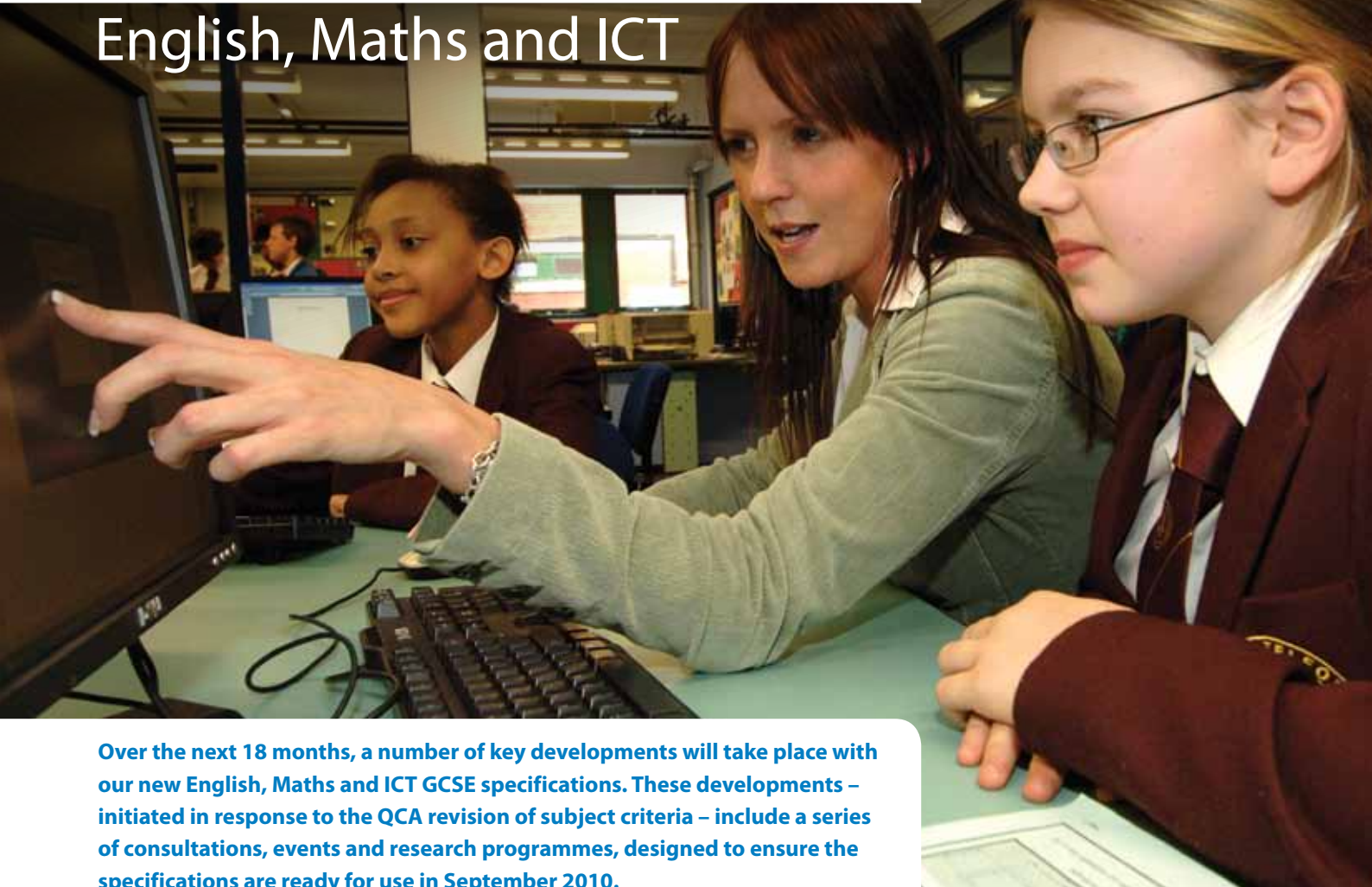
OCR has contributed greatly to a really successful first year, of which this exhibition formed a major part. The Diploma has given these students a true insight into the Creative and Media industries and we are proud to have been involved from the outset."



# 2010

## GCSE Developments

### English, Maths and ICT



Over the next 18 months, a number of key developments will take place with our new English, Maths and ICT GCSE specifications. These developments – initiated in response to the QCA revision of subject criteria – include a series of consultations, events and research programmes, designed to ensure the specifications are ready for use in September 2010.

#### Functional skills and GCSEs

The requirement to achieve functional skills at Level 2 to access Grades A\* – C has been removed in relation to GCSE English, Maths and ICT.

These skills are going to be crucial to young people and their employers in a time of economic turbulence and, by allowing them to stand independently from GCSEs, the government will ensure a particular focus on them within the curriculum.

OCR supports the government's decision that the teaching of functional skills must be a core element of all young people's learning, whatever their programme of study. Employers are signalling that they will attach high value to young people who get the separate functional skills qualifications.

Greg Watson, OCR Chief Executive, said: "Requiring learners to achieve a functional skill qualification as a precursor to a related GCSE would have been unnecessarily complex, would have distorted English and Maths GCSEs and could have risked holding capable learners back from achieving these skills before the age of 16. OCR provided strong advice to government and Ofqual against the creation of this artificial 'hurdle' and we are pleased that our views have been heard".

For the latest updates on OCR functional skills visit:  
[www.ocr.org.uk/functionalskills](http://www.ocr.org.uk/functionalskills)

#### English, Maths and ICT: Expo events – July 2009

To help raise the profile of OCR's new 2010 specifications, a series of awareness raising events for English, Maths and ICT will be taking place around the UK in July 2009.

The events will provide an ideal opportunity for teachers to respond to the specifications and influence the final stages of development.

Key staff will be on hand alongside stakeholders and industry speakers to demonstrate OCR's commitment to English, Maths and ICT – providing updates on major issues such as functional skills and emerging GCSE ICT technology. OCR publishing partners will also be in attendance to demonstrate proposed specification materials.

#### Dates and Venues:

- 1 July 2009: **Newcastle FC**
- 3 July 2009: **Manchester Central**
- 6 July 2009: **Chelsea FC**
- 10 July 2009: **Ricoh Arena, Coventry**
- 14 July 2009: **Bristol Marriott**

For further information on these events, please go to: [www.ocr.org.uk/events](http://www.ocr.org.uk/events)

## English

Following a programme of nationwide research and consultation, OCR has accumulated a wide range of comments and suggestions from English teachers regarding its English GCSE specifications.

Overall, the challenge is to develop a suite of English qualifications which teachers and pupils will find motivational and inspiring.

The specifications will embrace the key concepts of competence, creativity, and cultural and critical understanding. Structural changes will allow learners greater choice and flexibility when choosing qualifications. For example, they will be able to take English as a single qualification or in addition to either English Language or English Literature. The new GCSEs will also offer a clear route to A Level English qualifications.

### Proposed changes for 2010

September 2010 will see the introduction of the GCSE English Language specification meaning that there will now be three GCSEs in total – the others being GCSE English and GCSE English Literature. Importantly, due to amendments to the rules governing what kind of information is recorded by school and college achievement and attainment tables, centres will have to consider whether they offer learners English or English Language/English literature. Centres may wish to offer all three depending on the ability of their learners.

Assessment changes mean that coursework will be replaced by a system of Controlled Assessment – introduced by QCA to address persistent problems such as plagiarism. GCSE English and GCSE English Language will include 60% Controlled Assessment and GCSE English Literature, 25%.

These qualifications can either be sat in a linear or modular way and are available at both foundation and higher tier. Learners can be entered across two or more examination series and units can be retaken only once, subject to Terminal Assessment Rules.

Supporting the specifications is a comprehensive package of resources being developed by OCR including INSET, specimen assessment materials, a controlled assessment guide, guidance on the changes and delivery, and materials from OCR publishing partner, Oxford University Press.

## Maths

A review of 14-19 education and the Secondary Curriculum Review, led to the QCA revised the subject criteria for GCSEs in Maths for first teaching in September 2010.

Applicable to all awarding bodies, the revisions recognise the changes to Key Stage 4 programmes of study and also incorporate functional elements of Mathematics. As a direct result of these revisions, OCR has taken the opportunity to redevelop its Maths GCSE qualifications in close consultation with teachers and other key stakeholders within the Maths teaching community. In doing this, specifications can be shaped to meet the specific needs of centres and learners.

### Proposed changes for 2010

The most significant changes generated by the redevelopment of OCR's Maths GCSEs include the introduction of new subject criteria with new Assessment Objectives – recall and use knowledge of the prescribed content (45–55% weighting); select and apply mathematical methods in a range of contexts (25–35% weighting); and interpret and analyse problems and generate strategies to solve them (15–25% weighting). Also, September 2010 will see the introduction of a 'twin' GCSE Maths pilot that is part of the new Key Stage 4 programme of study and will require candidates to sit qualifications in both Applications of Mathematics and Methods in Mathematics. It is intended that the twin pilot will incorporate additional content over and above that of the single GCSE.

OCR recognises the challenges for implementation and teaching that the introduction of the new Assessment Objectives and functional skills will bring. This is why we are fully committed to developing a robust package of support to help you manage the changes with the minimum of disruption. OCR is working closely with publishing partners Hodder and OUP and key stakeholders to ensure the new GCSE Maths and functional skills qualifications are well supported and contain everything teachers require to teach them with confidence. Like the English and ICT GCSE materials, the Maths equivalent includes INSET training, specimen assessment materials, and guidance on changes and delivery.

## ICT

As the current market leader for GCSE ICT, OCR strives to continue its development of innovative and engaging specifications. The new GCSE ICT specification is drawing on extensive customer consultation, as well as guidance from the QCA, with the intention of producing a refreshed specification for 2010.

OCR has consulted widely on the changes made to the specification – asking what they mean for centres and learners so that their requirements are fully met. Feedback is invaluable – knowing what is liked and what is not means provision is improved and popular features maintained. The consultation process has also involved close links with publishers and key stakeholders to ensure the new qualifications are well supported.

### Proposed changes for 2010

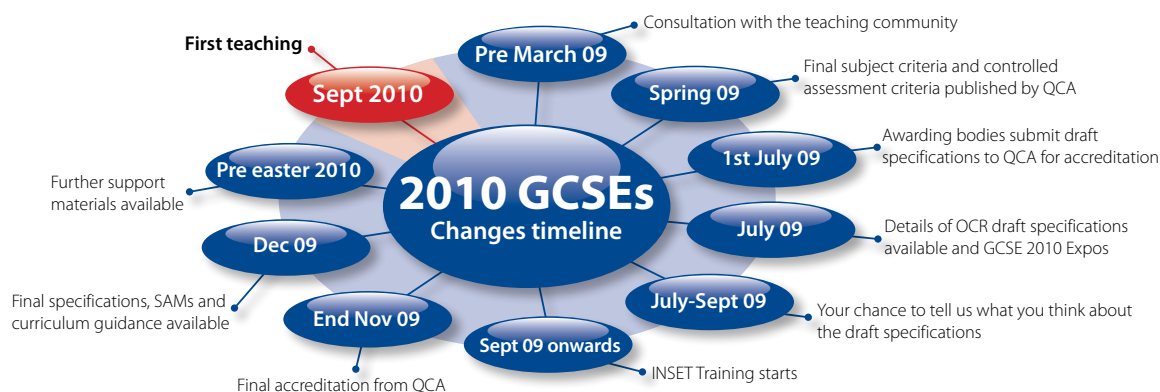
Changes include a shift in focus, with the introduction of a more practical and hands-on approach from the outset. OCR considers the new GCSE ICT to be an ideal opportunity to revitalise perceptions and manage expectations to create a wholly modern and up-to-date specification. Further changes to the specification include the replacement of ICT coursework with Controlled Assessment – 60% Controlled Assessment and 40% external assessment. Controlled Assessment units are likely to have board set tasks which can be contextualised to suit your centre's requirements.

Supporting the development of the specification is a comprehensive support package for teachers and learners. Core support materials will include: sample schemes of work and lesson plans; a teachers' handbook; and a Guide to Controlled Assessment. Additionally, there will be a range of student books, teaching materials and electronic resources available from Hodder Education.

### DID YOU KNOW?

OCR's **Active Results** – an online results analysis tool (see page 3) – will also be available for the new 2010 Maths and ICT GCSEs.

## English, Maths and ICT Timeline





**“The conference was really excellent.”**

Jane Simister  
Northwood College, London

**“Conference was good. It is important for people to be aware of this new qualification.”**

Colin Hall  
Luton VI Form College

**“Excellent conference. Particularly the morning sessions.”**

Paul Hickling  
King Edward VI College

**“A useful and informative day. Workshops very valuable.”**

Kevin Dowd  
Alumwell Business and Enterprise College

**“Excellent location, good structure and opportunities to network.”**

Jennifer Hornsby  
Solihull Sixth Form College

This thought-provoking OCR-hosted conference welcomed more than a hundred delegates to Rugby School in Warwickshire to explore the cross-curricular benefits of thinking skills and that of 14-19 thinking skills-based qualifications. The event-packed day included contributions from distinguished speakers such as **Professor Stephen Higgins** of Durham University who looked at Thinking Skills at all Key Stages of Education; **Patrick Robins**, Head of Sixth Form at Bishop Challoner School discussed Teaching Practice of the GCE in Critical Thinking; Rugby School’s own **Sarah Fletcher** considered Thinking Skills used in The Project (foundation, higher and extended); and **Geoff Willis** from Stoke Sixth Form College who introduced OCR’s new Thinking and Reasoning Skills course. The day included networking opportunities aplenty as well as a range of workshops.

**OCR has a packed schedule of conferences and other events in 2009, details of which can be found on the OCR website.**



Photography: Stuart Hill

## Thinking and Reasoning Skills Level 2

**The Thinking and Reasoning Skills Level 2 qualification is set to be piloted by OCR from September 2009 and has been produced in response to schools’ concerns over the lack of a qualification at this level in this area.**

OCR is currently recruiting a broad range of centres for the two year pilot which is scheduled to run until September 2011. The qualification features a blend of reasoning and broader thinking skills, giving students the opportunity to develop in a number of areas such as:

- Conceptual thinking in order to explore ideas and their connections
- Enquiry skills enabling them to generate their own questions in relation to evidence and information
- Problem solving – so that they can organise and analyse data and draw conclusions from it
- The ability to question evidence for relevance, significance and credibility.
- Reasoning – so that they can analyse arguments, evaluate reasoning and develop logical arguments of their own.

Pilot centres taking up the new qualification will be supported by a kick-off meeting in the summer term 2009, ready for first teaching in September 2009. OCR plans to provide resources such as lesson plans, assessment materials, and schemes of work to support teachers in preparing and delivering lessons.

A *Frequently Asked Questions* document covering the Thinking and Reasoning Skills qualification is available in the News section of the OCR website.



# Changing Interchange

OCR Interchange – our secure website for centres – has undergone major development work to make it even more user-friendly and accessible. David Bosworth, Head of Service Delivery in OCR Operations, takes us through the changes.

As exam series come and go, more and more processes are being conducted electronically. For the vast majority of centres, this movement towards the paper-free administration of exams is a welcome development. But if the electronic processing of entries, coursework moderation and post-results services is to be made easier, the technology underlying it must be equal to the task.

This is why all the feedback we have received from exams officers and teachers nationwide has been assembled and used to develop our secure extranet, OCR Interchange – aiming to make it more accessible and user-friendly for centres, with an initial focus on entries. Accordingly, Interchange has just unveiled its new image, showcasing a whole new look and feel, complete with a brand new logo. Improvements have been made in the overall theme of the site, with a design and colour scheme that are much more visually appealing.

## Using the Site

Upon entering the site, users are greeted by a single menu for all qualifications – dispensing with the need to choose from separate general and vocational qualification categories. If a user has logged in simply to search for a particular function,

the new menu will make browsing easier, as all qualifications are accessed in the same way.

Whether searching for a candidate or an assessment, a variety of search criteria can be used to locate what you are looking for. Search for a candidate by name, UCI or candidate number; or search for an assessment by code, title or part title. Additionally, having chosen what you wish to view on Interchange, there is now the option to print at every stage, using the print page functionality

## Redevelopment

Whilst preparing students for their OCR exams, centres will undoubtedly have been made aware of the availability of past papers to download from the OCR main website. The most recent past papers can now also be downloaded – free of charge – exclusively from Interchange. This allows their use for mock exams without the risk of students seeing them in advance.

In addition, if you are a science teacher and access controlled materials via Interchange, users will notice that this area has also been improved. Access to science materials is now available, not only for GCSE Gateway Sciences and GCE Sciences, but also for Entry Level Science.



The redevelopment of Interchange will continue as we strive to improve our online post-results services. We would like to express our thanks to the customers who have been involved in the project as their input has been invaluable. As always, we welcome feedback and would be delighted to hear our customers' views on the changes we have made.

Any questions or comments regarding the new Interchange website should be sent to our Customer Administration Support Team at [cast@ocr.org.uk](mailto:cast@ocr.org.uk)

Further information can be found at: <https://interchange.ocr.org.uk> or on the OCR website: [www.ocr.org.uk/interchange](http://www.ocr.org.uk/interchange)



GCSE **English, Maths**  
and **ICT** are *changing...*

# 2010

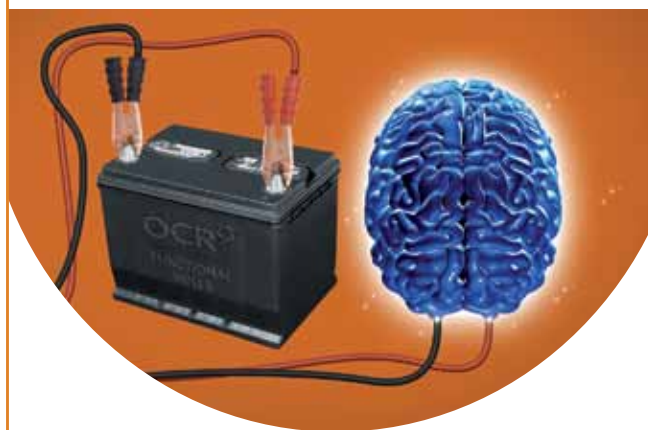


Register for updates at [www.ocr.org.uk/updates](http://www.ocr.org.uk/updates)

[www.ocr.org.uk/gcse2010](http://www.ocr.org.uk/gcse2010)



## FUNCTIONAL SKILLS



## Deliver That Spark...

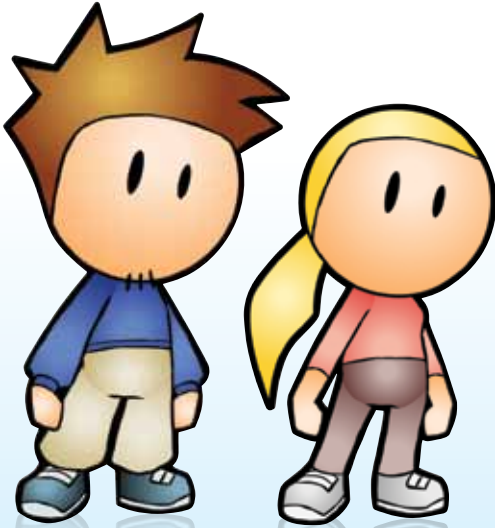
**Functional skills are practical skills in English, Maths and ICT to help learners gain the most out of work, education and everyday life.**

Having functional skills will give learners the mental agility to take on new challenges in a range of new and unforeseen settings. Our functional skills qualifications have been designed to offer open-ended task based assessments, designed to draw out learners' thinking and problem-solving abilities.

To find out more, visit [www.ocr.org.uk/functionalskills](http://www.ocr.org.uk/functionalskills) where you can download past papers and sample assessment materials and view case studies from centres that are already delivering our functional skills pilot.

**Equip your learners for life**





# Game on OCR!

**Over four million people play  
Reach for the Sky on-line game**

**Reach for the Sky, our online game which promotes an exam-free approach to learning, has become an overnight success – attracting over four million players to date.**

Reach for the Sky is part of an campaign promoting our OCR Nationals qualifications – an exam-free alternative to GCSEs that encourages engagement through a practical approach to learning and assessment. The game features three gaming levels, representing the three levels of OCR Nationals. The player has to jump on OCR books to escape the exam hall – reinforcing the message that OCR Nationals, although innovative and rigorously assessed, do not feature formal examinations.

Since its launch earlier this year, over four million people have played the game – making it one of the most successful viral ad campaigns in the world according to viralchart.com. Michelle Hughes, OCR eMarketing Manager, said: “The objective of the game was to raise awareness of OCR Nationals across a wide range of audiences including, teachers, students, parents and employers. Viral marketing is a good mechanism for doing this as it allows OCR to spread the message that there are no exams with OCR Nationals to a large audience very quickly. With over four million game plays so far I think it has more than exceeded expectation.”

Stephen Bishop, Product Manager for OCR Nationals, added: “The effectiveness of our Reach for the Sky awareness raising campaign demonstrates that this is arguably the most successful campaign of its type ever run by OCR. OCR Nationals appeal to a more vocational oriented student base and we wanted to raise the profile of all the National offerings in addition to our already popular ICT subject area.”

**Reach for the Sky can be played by going to:  
[www.ocrnationals.com/game](http://www.ocrnationals.com/game)**



**OCR Nationals are exam-free alternatives to GCSEs and A Levels that offer an engaging and practical approach to learning and assessment.**

*Students are motivated through the use of a 'real work' style in addition to having optional units available to study, which in turn will help them to develop skills that can be used in the workplace.*

*Offered at Levels 1 to 3, they cover a wide range of industries and sectors: Business, Travel and Tourism, Information Technology, Health and Social Care, Sport, Public Services, Design, Science and Media.*

## Apprenticeships build Employment and Skills Strategy for Northern Ireland

"A properly skilled workforce is fundamental to a thriving economy and the work being taken forward by the Department for Employment and Learning is already paying dividends." These are the words of Northern Ireland Employment Minister, Sir Reg Empey, as he welcomed the news that uptake of Apprenticeship programmes in Northern Ireland is well on course to achieve the target of 10,000 apprentices by 2010.

The September 2008 launch of the Northern Ireland Apprenticeships programme saw the introduction of all-age provision and an opportunity for those working reduced hours to train as apprentices. Despite the major economic downturn experienced by many industries, employers in Northern Ireland have recognised the benefits of investing in their workforce and preparing for the future.

Supporting this view, Sir Reg has encouraged employers to consider Apprenticeships as a means of raising the skills level of their workforce

and help plug any future skills gaps. Playing a pivotal role in the Apprenticeships programme has been OCR Northern Ireland which has seen 300 of its registered retail candidates (ranging in age from 16 to 65 years) benefit from guidance provided by Craft Training, in collaboration with Global Horizon Skills (an approved OCR centre). Employers involved in the programme include Dunnes Stores, Supervalu, Spar, Centra, Costcutters and SD Kells.

All have stated their delight at being given the chance to upskill their employees; an opportunity which has not only had a positive impact on raising the morale of staff, but has also helped identify business needs for the future. Likewise, the apprentices have found the programme to be an enjoyable and worthwhile experience.

Confident that the programme's success is down to its flexibility and its tailoring to the needs of individuals and employers alike, OCR Northern Ireland is delighted to pledge its on-

going support – looking forward to successful achievements by candidates, and in playing a key role in the Skills Strategy for Northern Ireland.



## School and College partnership provides Innovation in Learning

Although 14-19 policy in Wales is determined by the Welsh Assembly Government, it does have two significant aspects that are common to all parts of the UK – a desire to broaden choice for learners, and an expectation that different providers will need to work in partnership to sustain this increased choice.

Exemplifying this, Monmouth Comprehensive School and Coleg Gwent have joined forces to produce an innovative qualification – the OCR *Environmental and Land-based Science* GCSE. Working alongside Coleg Gwent, Monmouth Comprehensive has become the first school in Wales to deliver the qualification, gaining a 100% pass rate in the process. Introduced in 2006, this innovative qualification is the first and only GCSE that is completely e-assessed.

Tim Bird, deputy head of the school, is one of the teachers delivering the Environmental and Land-based Science GCSE. Tim said: "The course engages students in the learning process because it is often relevant to either their lives or the surroundings in which they live. It helps explain the agricultural landscape of the UK and where our food comes from. It also gives students the opportunity to investigate the

science behind food production, farming, and horticulture generally. The practical and applied nature of the course and our methods of e-assessment supports students in the development of their transferable learning skills."

One method of teaching involves students travelling to Coleg Gwent's Usk campus to attend outdoor learning sessions at a farm where they can work with live animals and experience feeding, milking and fertilising processes. Students then consider and evaluate their own data and conclusions – using ICT to research, present and organise information, making pragmatic and ethical judgements to evaluate evidence and consider the implications for society.

Throughout the course, students build an electronic portfolio of their achievements, combining all their classroom, laboratory and field experience with the technical knowledge required for further study or to pursue vocational opportunities in the Land and Environment sector. The *Environmental and Land-based Science* GCSE also forms part of the Monmouthshire 14-19 Learning Pathways network development plan and is approved by the Welsh Assembly Government for delivery at Key Stage 4.

For further information about the *Environmental and Land-based Science* GCSE, please contact OCR Cymru on 02920 537810.



# Forthcoming events

OCR has a packed events schedule over 2009. Why not come and visit us?

**25**  
JUNE

## G&T Chemistry Conference

*King's School, Ely, Cambridge*

OCR is delighted to attend the Chemistry Network's national conference which aims to explore and celebrate the potential of gifted and talented chemistry students.

**25**  
JUNE

## North West D & T Festival 2009

*Edge Hill University, Ormskirk*

OCR will have a stand at this event which will feature a high-technology trade fair and an exhibition of work by design and technology students from a selection of schools in the North West.

**24 25 26**  
JUNE JUNE JUNE

## afPE Annual Conference

*Cotswold Water Park Hotel, Gloucestershire*

Our GCSE PE moderator and subject specialist for the September 2009 GCSE PE will be available throughout the event on the OCR stand – bringing the specification to life with inspired ideas on teaching and practical guidance on assessment.

**8**  
JULY

## OCR GCSE Design and Technology Innovator Suite Conference

*National Motorcycle Museum, Solihull*

This FREE conference will include presentations and workshops by subject specialists covering issues relevant to OCR's new GCSE Design and Technology Innovator Suite of specifications. Workshops will focus on: controlled assessment and prototyping, sustainability, and unitisation and flexible approaches to course planning.

**9 10 11**  
JULY JULY JULY

## ATP Annual Conference

*Exeter University*

OCR is delighted to launch the new GCSE Psychology specification at ATP 2009. Learn more about OCR's inspired approach to Psychology from our qualifications and examining team, who will be available during the event. OCR will also be giving a presentation on the new spec, which will introduce some of the core studies and give hands-on guidance to first teaching.

**26 27 28**  
AUGUST AUGUST AUGUST

## RGS Annual International Conference 2009

*University of Manchester and Manchester Metropolitan University*

OCR will profile our popular GCSE and A Level Geography specifications at this prestigious conference and exhibition which celebrates Geography on a global scale. We will have a stand at this event and will be discussing the new Geography GCSE A and B, ahead of their introduction in classrooms this September.

**18 19 20**  
SEPTEMBER SEPTEMBER SEPTEMBER

## Earth Science Teachers Association

*National Oceanography Centre, Southampton*

OCR will exhibit at ESTA's 2009 conference – *Integrated Earth Science* – to discuss and offer support on our popular A Level Geology specification. Visitors to our stand will have direct access to our Qualifications Manager and Chief Examiner.

[www.ocr.org.uk](http://www.ocr.org.uk)

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