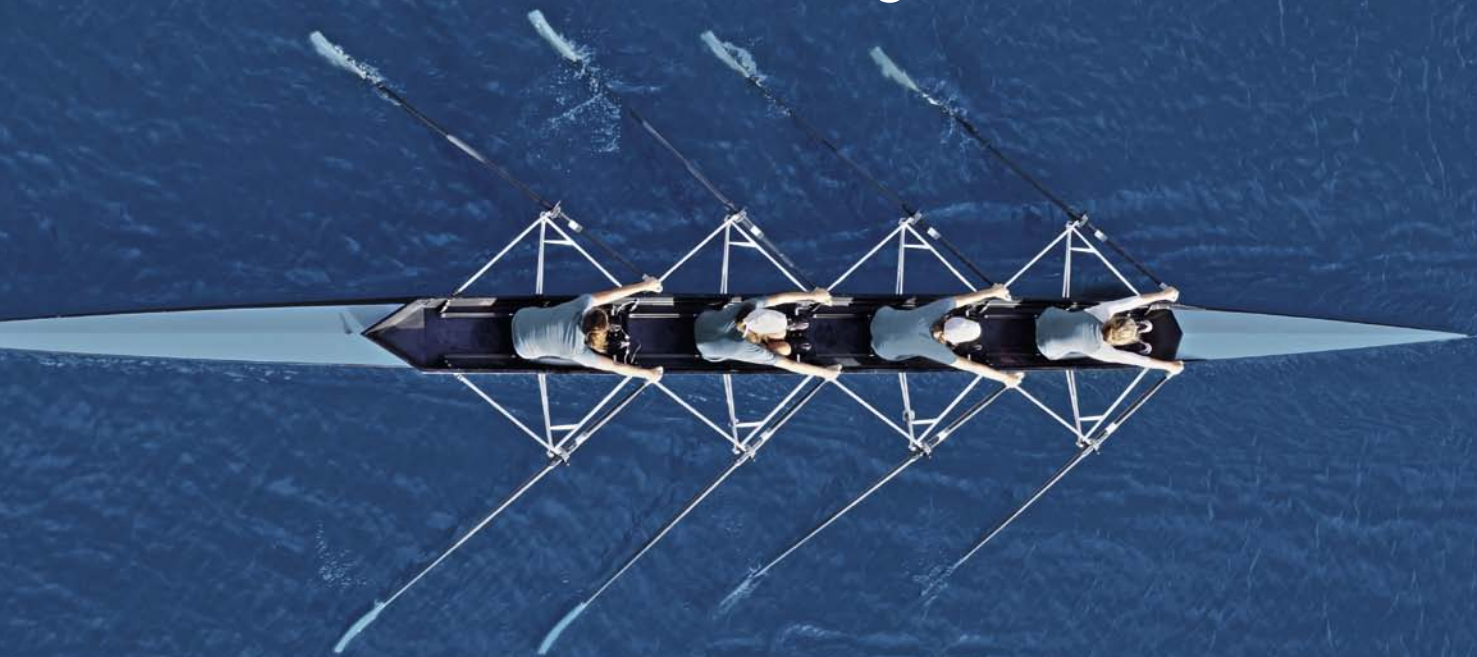


# Let's Pull Together

Because together, we achieve more



## Skills and Employment Update – 2

July 2014



**CHARLOTTE BOSWORTH**  
DIRECTOR OF SKILLS  
AND EMPLOYMENT



Welcome to the 2nd issue of our Skills and Employment update.

Following the great feedback we had on the first issue, we have decided to continue with the update and focus this issue on English and maths, a topic that is on all our minds especially in light of recent announcements.

While I agree it is a fantastic aspiration to have a 'GCSE for all', my concern is about how this could work in practice. While the GCSE is vital for helping young people prepare for their next steps, the approach – whether this be the assessment type (examined/moderated) or the delivery model (modular/linear) – doesn't necessarily meet the diverse needs of all post-16 learners.

The fact remains that a functional approach to English and maths can sometimes be more realistic – and appropriate – for different programmes and learning styles. Improving English and maths skills is vitally important

– however, my belief is that the GCSE should not be seen as the only way of realising this ambition. More contextualised vocationally-focussed qualifications can play a vital role in making 'English and maths' for all, not just for some' a reality. With this in mind, what I would like to see is a vocational modular GCSE alternative that could be offered to those where the traditional GCSE is not the appropriate route to take.

In this issue, we take a look at the links between the different English and maths qualifications we have at OCR, how they can be taught together and the support we have put in place to aid your delivery and assessment of your learners' ability to put them on the right path. We also touch on the changes to GCSE maths from 2015. We hope it provides useful information and tips to help with your English and maths delivery.



# OCR'S ENGLISH AND MATHS QUALIFICATIONS



The range of our English and maths offer provides you with three distinct qualifications to help your learners succeed, with each qualification having a distinct and important role during the learner's journey.

These qualifications are:

- Cambridge Progression
- Functional Skills
- GCSEs.

The QCF bite-sized English and maths units in Cambridge Progression are all about the essential concepts and principles that learners will encounter when studying English and maths. These provide the underpinning skills needed for Functional Skills and GCSEs, while also allowing learners to access other vocational and academic qualifications.

Underpinning skills means spelling, grammar rules and punctuation for English together with addition, subtraction, fractions and measurement for maths.

To succeed in a Level 1 Functional Skills assessment, a learner should be confident in all of the Level 1 underpinning skills. Similarly, to succeed in GCSE English or Maths, learners should be confident in all of the Level 2 underpinning skills.

Since the arrival of the **Cambridge Progression English and Maths** qualifications over a year ago, tutors can now assign the time to teach the wider thinking skills found within Level 1 **Functional Skills** that learners need for their future jobs, such as information processing and problem solving alongside conceptual thinking and creative thinking. At Level 2, problem solving is the essential cognitive thinking skill needed for vocational careers. In a Functional Skills programme, learners should be given a series of problem solving tasks in which they use their English and maths underpinning skills in the process of solving the tasks.

## SO WHAT ARE THE WIDER THINKING SKILLS THAT LEARNERS NEED TO BE TAUGHT?

### • Discovery (Research)

- What information is needed to be able to solve the problem?
- How can you find this information? e.g. internet, libraries, asking people etc?

### • Assumptions

- Challenging yourself about your own assumptions
  - are they correct?
- Always check and verify your assumptions before you decide what to do.

### • Categorising the information

- Sorting out the information
- What is the necessary information? What do you need? What information is unnecessary or of no value, so can be discarded?

### • Identifying the solutions

- Deciding on the best or most appropriate solution, possibly from many options
- How to communicate your solution e.g. report, presentation, data chart etc.
- The importance of checking that your solution is the right one.

## A BROADER RANGE OF CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS

For those learners who would like to pursue more academic paths, a broader range of critical thinking skills (analysis, evaluation and synthesis) is needed. These skills are taught within the **GCSE English and Maths programmes**. This is why it is important that all the Level 2 underpinning skills are mastered so that they can be used to develop and perform these new cognitive thinking skills.



# Cambridge Progression – suitable for all learners

The Cambridge Progression qualifications are very flexible and suitable for all learners – learners can target specific skill areas of English or maths and receive an Award qualification for each unit achieved. Units can be taken at any of the five levels (Entry 1 to Level 2), with learners starting at the level that is right for them, for example if they are good at data handling they can choose a higher level unit in that topic and a lower level unit in something they might struggle with.

Units are worth between 1 and 5 credits, so if a learner accumulates Award qualifications and achieves 13 credits or more they will receive a Cambridge Progression Certificate qualification, which is motivational – we will issue that automatically. The level of the Certificate qualification is determined by the level of units/Awards achieved (for example, if 51% of the units are at Level 1, the learner receives a Level 1 Certificate).

All of our Cambridge Progression Maths and most of our English assessments are tests – we set and mark these – saving you time and money. Tests are available on paper or on screen; the choice is yours and all are available on demand. (Speaking; Listening and Discussion units are internally assessed and externally moderated.)



They can provide excellent support for SEN learners. Many centres are choosing to have their learners complete the 13 credit Cambridge Progression Certificate as part of the school's 'local offer' in English and maths, which enables differentiation for individual learner needs.



**SUSAN SALTER**  
SECTOR SPECIALIST –  
ENGLISH AND MATHS

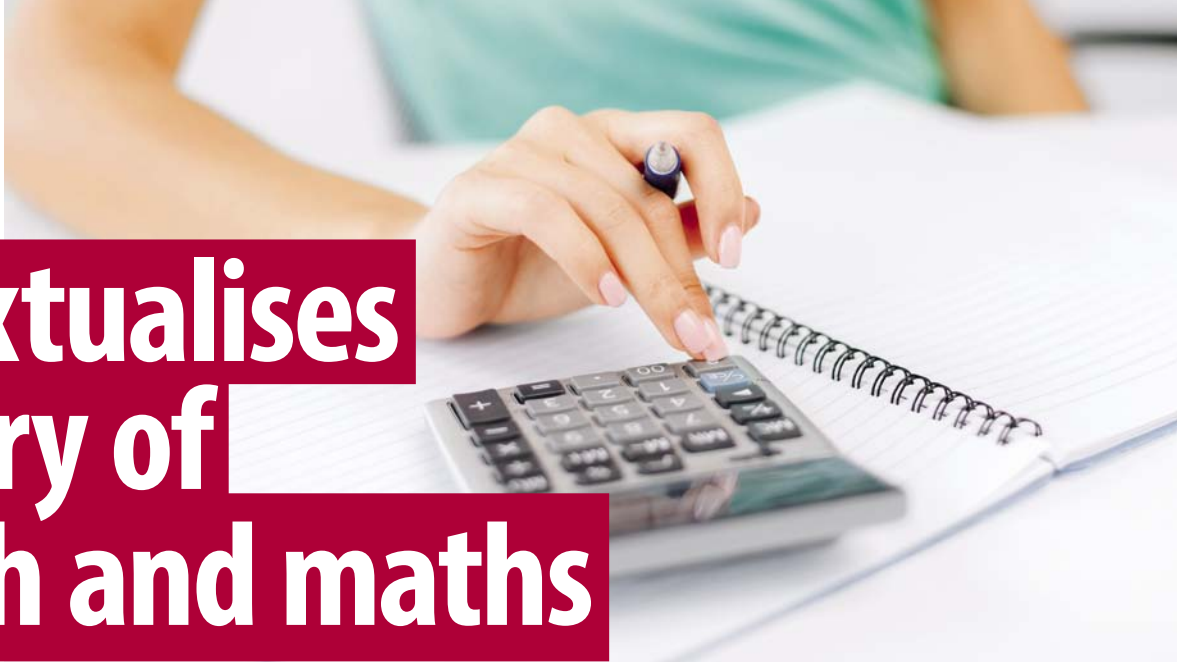
Susan Salter is responsible for English and maths vocational qualifications, from Entry Level to progression into GCSEs. As an experienced English practitioner in schools, FE and as an FE Manager; Susan has more than 30 years' experience in education and teaching.

In addition, Susan has extensive professional experience of delivering workshops for government bodies including LSIS, NIACE and NRDC, together with speaking at conferences covering Skills for Life, Functional Skills and Core English, as well as maths development and delivery.

## Hints and tips for delivering English and maths

Upon diagnosis of skills gaps, the first term can be used to deliver the English and Maths Cambridge Progression units needed, then the second term used to deliver Functional Skills. For GCSE retake learners, the Cambridge Progression units can be embedded within GCSE programmes to help motivate and give the necessary support to disengaged learners. The Cambridge Progression qualifications can also be used as part of the centre's local offer to differentiate for individual needs.

# OCR contextualises delivery of English and maths



Learners progressing into the workplace need good English and maths skills. Research and successful practice in educational centres have shown that delivering contextualised English and maths skills within employability and vocational programmes is an effective strategy. This type of delivery is motivational, as it shows learners that English and maths skills are relevant in the workplace. Learners are also prepared and able to use these skills with confidence in the workplace when they start their new job.

## WHAT DOES CONTEXTUALISED MEAN?

Contextualised delivery means delivering an English or maths skill within employability or vocational tasks. It is recommended that English and maths specialists work collaboratively with employability and vocational tutors together with local employers, if possible, to develop a contextualised programme for the learners.

## HOW OCR SUPPORTS CONTEXTUALISED LEARNING

The idea that learners learn English and maths through contextualised problem solving tasks has been at the core of our English and maths qualifications, and resource development since the early days of the Functional Skills qualifications.

With the arrival of our new Cambridge Progression qualifications, contextualising English and maths skills into vocational programmes has been made easier. These new qualifications support the learning of

English and maths underpinning skills, which support learners into Level 2 Functional Skills or GCSE English and Maths. The delivery of contextualised English and maths within vocational learning programmes allows for a more efficient delivery model with delivery running in parallel.



Working smartly to deliver the English and Maths Cambridge Progression units through contextualisation

within a vocational programme could involve delivering the maths unit on measurement to a Health and Social Care cohort who are learning about blood pressure, temperature or body mass. Similarly, a maths unit about using decimal points in money could be delivered alongside an employability unit about personal accounts. This approach supports learners who are still developing their underpinning skills, but also targets the skills immediately needed for that occupation.

OCR is developing a series of resources, which show detailed models with guidance of how to deliver our contextualised Cambridge Progression qualifications within our vocational qualifications. Two resources are already available – English and maths contextualised with our Employability Skills offer.

**These are appropriate for any programme and were launched at the AELP conference in early June 2014.**



# Changes to GCSE maths for first teaching from 2015

For first teaching in September 2015 towards first assessment in June 2017, we'll now have reformed GCSEs in English and maths, with reforms in more subjects coming through in subsequent years.

The new GCSEs will be linear and feature a new grading scale using numbers 1-9 to identify levels of performance (with 9 being the top level). GCSE maths will remain tiered, with a Foundation tier covering grades 5, 4, 3, 2 & 1 and Higher tier grades 9, 8, 7, 6, 5 & 4 (along with an allowed grade 3 for candidates with a 'small number of marks' below grade 4).

## Changes to GCSE assessment in maths

- A minimum of four and a half hours assessment time at both tiers
- GCSE maths will be double weighted in secondary school performance measures from 2016
- An increased list of subject content required to be taught for GCSE maths
- A greatly increased expectation for candidates to memorise key mathematical formulae by heart, with few formulae allowed to be provided to candidates in the exam
- A revised set of Assessment Objectives, with an emphasis on decreasing rote learning and more problem solving, which will often require multi-step solutions. Questions in assessments will be less clearly structured and more open ended, frequently set within real-world contexts.

## The new OCR J560 GCSE in mathematics

- A syllabus developed by teachers specifically for teachers, laying out the required content clearly in terms of both topic area and difficulty, facilitating candidates' progression through the content.
  - Foundation and Higher tier topic content set out next to each other on the same page, so the progression of content is clear.

- A column of required content suitable for initial learning is set out, ensuring that the basics can be established with learners before moving on to more difficult areas.
- A simple assessment model:
  - Three papers at each tier, all equal length, mark allocations and subject topic weightings.
  - Two papers at each tier where candidates are allowed access to a calculator.
  - Professional language modifiers review all OCR GCSE Maths papers and attend setting meetings to ensure that the wording used is as clear and simple as possible for candidates. Contexts used are kept succinct, without excess wording.
  - All OCR GCSE Maths papers begin with the simpler questions targeting the lower grades at each tier, before moving on and building steadily through the paper to questions targeting the upper grades at each tier, developing the candidate's confidence as they go.
  - Mathematical formulae, which can be provided to candidates in question papers, will be provided to them when relevant to each question in OCR GCSE Maths papers. They will not be supplied together on a formula sheet at the front of the question paper booklet for the candidate to then have to pick and choose from.
- A range of high-quality maths resources for teachers, along with skills guides, a scheme of work creator, ExamCreator (our new past paper test builder), Active Results and a new mock exam service coming soon!

View and download the new OCR GCSE Maths specification, question papers and resources online now at <http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/gcse-mathematics-j560-from-2015>



# CAMBRIDGE PROGRESSION

## EFA FUNDING RULES

**Cambridge Progression is approved on Section 96 for use for learners 14+, however, it doesn't meet the funding condition. As 16 to 18-year-olds are funded by programme type, no individual qualifications are funded per se.**

A condition of the funding requires providers to put learners without a GCSE grade A\*- C on an English and maths programme. To meet the funding condition, providers must use GCSE, Functional Skills or FSMQ.

However, Functional Skills and FSMQ are seen as 'stepping stones' to GCSE and it is the intention that the requirement becomes GCSE only once the revised qualifications are in place.

For study programmes, we position Cambridge Progression as additional support to help learners achieve the GCSE or Functional Skills threshold – so part of the programme rather than the main aim itself.

## SFA FUNDING RULES

**On Wednesday 4 June 2014, the Skills Funding Agency published new guidance on funding for QCF English and Maths qualifications, following a review earlier this year.**

We welcome the new guidance and are pleased that for our customers, this means that the vast majority of the Cambridge Progression suite of qualifications will remain fundable for learners looking to improve their English and maths skills.

Charlotte Bosworth, OCR Director of Skills and Employment, commented: "The latest funding news is good for Cambridge Progression. It also recognises the successful path that Progression qualifications can play in providing a stepping stone to other qualifications, such as GCSE and Functional Skills, according to the needs of the individual learner. We are pleased that our qualifications for English and maths can continue to play a key role in filling the gap left by Key and Basic Skills."

All QCF English and maths qualifications will have to meet three new business rules to be approved for funding. These new rules mean that QCF English and maths qualifications are no longer automatically approved for funding. This means that OCR, along with all other awarding bodies will be required to resubmit affected qualifications to the SFA in order for them to be funded in 2014/15. We will keep you updated on the progress of the OCR qualifications.

**The guidance is available on the SFA website:**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sfa-english-and-maths-qcf-qualifications/english-and-maths-qcf-qualifications>





Now that there are three distinct qualifications to support English and maths skills, many centres are being imaginative in how they deliver these programmes. Going forward, we have the offering to enable centres to identify appropriate English and maths qualifications to give their learners the right support in these subjects that is needed to fulfil their ambition.

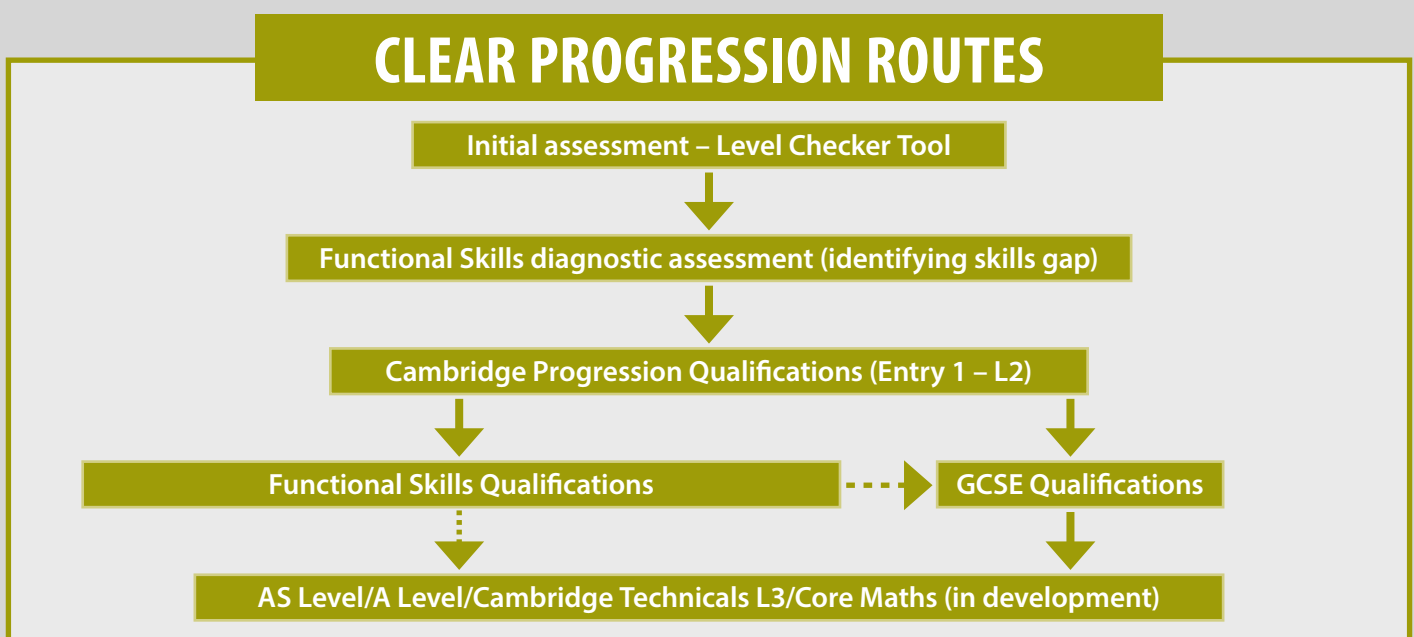
# SUPPORT FOR DELIVERY OF OCR'S ENGLISH AND MATHS QUALIFICATIONS

## Diagnostic Assessment Tool

Our free Diagnostic Assessment Tool can be used for English and maths at both Entry Level 1 and Level 2. It provides rigorous diagnostic assessment and helps identify skills gaps within each level. Tutors can use this information to target those skills that their learners need, using units from the Cambridge Progression suite.

The Diagnostic Assessment Tool assesses both English and maths underpinning skills, together with the process skills that learners need to succeed in their vocational and academic programmes.

OCR centres can access the online Level Checker and the Diagnostic Assessment Tool through the secure website, Interchange, upon approval. [ocr.org.uk/qualifications/by-type/functional-skills/support-materials](https://ocr.org.uk/qualifications/by-type/functional-skills/support-materials)



# Putting it in to context: The need for vocational English and maths

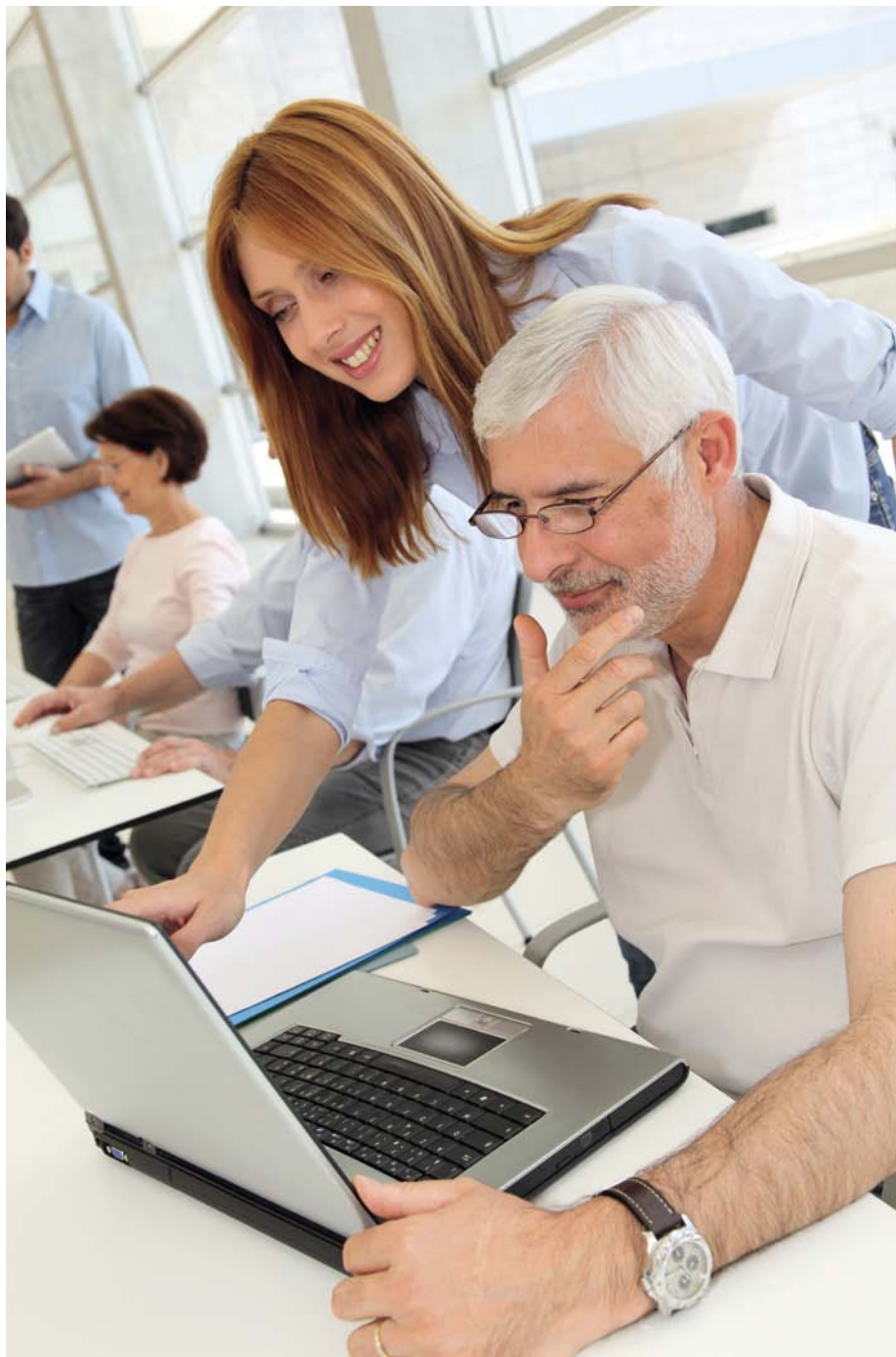
**In a stark message to Britain's Chambers of Commerce in April 2014, the Secretary of State for Education stated that the inability to read or understand basic maths is a "blight" on life chances.**

This position is also backed by a large body of research. The 2013 OECD Survey of Adult Skills Report highlights that the UK has a high proportion of adults with poor numeracy skills, with almost one in four adults scoring Level 1 in numeracy or below.

A report by the National Research and Development Centre for Adult Literacy and Numeracy found that vocational courses which embedded the delivery of literacy, language and numeracy had higher retention, success rates and achievement levels in literacy and numeracy qualifications.

At OCR, we appreciate the varying abilities and needs of learners, so our range of English and maths qualifications include not only GCSE and A Level, but also bite-sized qualifications such as Functional Skills and Cambridge Progression, where English and maths is embedded within the learning.

One of our key messages when talking to Government is that contextualised learning can provide motivation and better understanding for those who feel disengaged or are better suited to learning 'on the job'.



If you would like to receive further information about our vocational English and maths qualifications, please call 02476 851509 or email [vocational.qualifications@ocr.org.uk](mailto:vocational.qualifications@ocr.org.uk)