

agenda

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM OCR / AUTUMN 2018



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‘Less admin and great support means I have more time working with my students’

CAMBRIDGE TECHNICALS – FULL TIME VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FOR 16-19 YEAR OLDS

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Welcome to the Autumn 2018 issue of **agenda**, OCR's magazine which offers a snapshot of our news and views.

We are focusing on improving the assessment support we provide to teachers delivering our qualifications. In this issue, you can read about our latest practice papers, new-style examiners' reports and the quicker turnaround of our exam papers.

Research plays an important part in everything we do. It helps us to design Functional Skills qualifications that are grounded in the real world and to ensure our sports qualifications are truly distinctive. Find out more on pages 6 and 7.

We're pleased to share a case study from a Gloucestershire school where the Cambridge National in Enterprise and Marketing is engaging young entrepreneurs and we've got feedback about the success of our innovative GCSE History topic on migration. On pages 10-11, Wayne Norrie, the Chief Executive of the Greenwood Academies Trust, reveals what he would be if he wasn't a teacher but concludes teaching 'is the most rewarding, challenging, frustrating but utterly wonderful job'.

I'm very excited to be joining OCR at a time when we are focused on improving support to teachers and ensuring your students get the results they deserve.

Please get in touch about anything you read here by emailing agenda@ocr.org.uk.

Jill Duffy

Chief Executive, OCR

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Better assessment support

Practice papers

Maths teachers may have spotted that we rolled out more free practice papers for A Level (including AS Level and Further Maths) at the beginning of the Autumn term. OCR's practice papers are produced by the same examiners as our live exam papers and are designed to help teachers prepare students for exams in newly reformed qualifications. For January 2019, more papers will be available to support anyone teaching Business Studies, Design and Technology, Classical Civilisation, Economics, Film Studies, Law, Media Studies and Psychology. Practice papers are stored on our secure website, Interchange, so they can be used as mocks.

ExamBuilder

ExamBuilder is OCR's free mock exam paper service which gives teachers the chance to create bespoke exam papers for their students. The platform allows teachers to use questions from different papers to build tests which focus on key topics. The mark schemes, examiners' reports and supplementary resources relevant to the questions are available for each test. When teachers have created a paper to suit their students' needs, they can give it a personalised cover to simulate real exam conditions. The service provides mock exam papers for GCSE and A Level PE, Computer Science, Maths and the Sciences. To support more teachers, we've recently added Cambridge Nationals (in Sport Science and Sport Studies, and in Health and Social Care) to ExamBuilder. The next GCSE and A Levels in the pipeline are English Language, English Literature, History, and Geography which we will start rolling out from Spring 2019.

OCR at your service

We know that providing a fast turnaround of marking reviews is important, particularly when university places may be at stake. OCR once again provided a prompt service for summer 2018. The average turnaround time for 'Priority' requests for A and AS Level papers was under 4 days.

Past paper availability

To better support teachers, we have made our exam papers available more quickly. You may have noticed that after every exam this summer, we uploaded papers to Interchange within two to ten days. Mark schemes followed onto Interchange on results days. The 2018 GCSE, AS and A Level exam papers will then be added to our public website in early May 2019 to help students prepare for their exams.

Winter exam timetable

And don't forget that timetables for exams taking place throughout the year are available via the homepage of our website, www.ocr.org.uk.

New-style examiners' reports

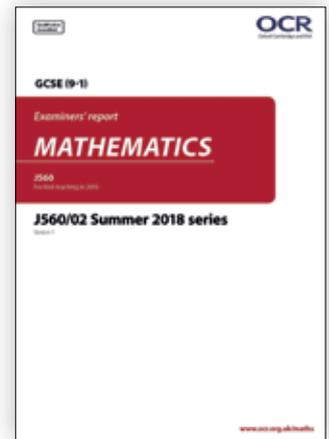
As part of a series of improvements to the way we support teachers delivering OCR qualifications, we published new-style examiners' reports in August 2018 to provide teachers with more constructive feedback on the summer exams.

They were also published on results day, a couple of months earlier than in previous years, on our secure website Interchange. In September alone, teachers downloaded over 11,500 reports, with GCSE Computer Science being the most popular.

Our new-style reports, written by senior examiners, provide an overview of how students performed, followed by a question by question analysis of responses. The reports highlight good performance and where performance could be improved.

Examples of real student responses and commentary on misconceptions also enhance their value, helping teachers in turn to prepare students more effectively for exams next year.

Examiners' reports on the 2018 exams will also be available on www.ocr.org.uk in early May 2019 to support students' exam preparation.



New Chief Executive for OCR

Jill Duffy joined OCR as Chief Executive in November 2018. Jill said: "I am delighted to join OCR. I appreciate fully the vital part that qualifications play in enabling learners to progress in their learning and lives."

Before joining OCR, Jill led the UK schools business at education company Pearson for five years, where she was responsible for more than 450 staff across product management and development, marketing and sales, spanning qualifications, digital and print learning services. Prior to joining Pearson, Jill spent 22 years in educational publishing.

She began her career in education as an editor at Oxford University Press and subsequently worked for publishers including Hodder & Stoughton, Harcourt, and Ginn. She has a Post Graduate Certificate in Education from Oxford University and a BA in English Literature from Trinity College, Oxford.

Supporting GCSE Computer Science

We've provided new support to help GCSE Computer Science teachers and students for the Programming Project this year.

2017/18 saw the Ofqual rule change which meant that the NEA no longer counted towards GCSE grades. We supported Computer Science teachers through those changes and we're committed to providing more support wherever we can.

For 2018/19, we've revised the look and feel of our Programming Project, in response to feedback, to make it as straightforward as possible to complete. We've also provided new resources for teachers to complement this including:

- a content mapping grid available within our specification which links the Project to the two components
- a 'time tracking sheet' to help teachers to track the 20 timetabled hours
- a new report template designed to help students structure their Programming Project findings
- a downloadable achievement certificate (Interchange access required) to recognise students' achievements when they complete the Programming Project
- a one page summary, the 'Top 3 reasons why the Programming Project matters', to motivate students. This summary includes the finding from Computing At School (CAS) that approximately 40% of the marks in the 2018 written exams were linked to knowledge, understanding and skills developed by the Programming Project.

We also have free webinars taking place throughout this term to answer teachers' questions on the Project.

Feedback about the changes we've made to the task and extra resources has been positive. Comments on the OCR Computer Science facebook group include: 'The tasks are much easier than last year' and 'this is a big breath of fresh air'. And 'I love the fact that OCR are giving time trackers away'.



The freedom to do the Project in Year 10, announced by Ofqual in September, is also described as a 'godsend' by teachers on facebook.

However you plan your teaching over the two year GCSE course, we hope that our improvements to the Programming Project help you and your students to prepare for exams as effectively as possible. And whatever the results of the new Ofqual consultation on how to assess programming skills as part of GCSE Computer Science, we will support you through any changes starting in 2020 onwards.

We offer a breadth of qualifications in Computing. As well as the GCSE, we offer an Entry Level qualification and an increasingly popular A Level. Our Cambridge National in Information Technologies and our Cambridge Technicals in IT provide a vocational alternative for schools too.

www.ocr.org.uk/computing

In brief

Teacher-friendly tweaks

As well as improving the assessment support we offer teachers, we're always looking for ways to make our reformed qualifications more teacher-friendly.

We constantly review our portfolio and respond to feedback by making minor changes wherever we can. For example, we've made the historic environment component of our Explaining the Modern World History GCSE A more straightforward for teachers to plan and teach by fixing the sites to be studied instead of changing them every year. We've provided a new form for GCSE Drama teachers to help them meet the requirement for live theatre and improved the way we arrange examined visits for the 2019 series. We updated the name of our Cambridge Technicals qualifications in science to better reflect curriculum delivery and progression.

We've also recently added 'A Christmas Carol' to the options on our set text list for GCSE English Literature, in response to popular demand. And even when the amends are small – such as a new administrative form – the aim is to make OCR qualifications more teacher-friendly.

T Levels are coming

T Levels are designed as a Level 3, two year study programme aimed at 16 to 18 year olds.

At 16, students will choose between an academic study programme (A Levels or Applied General Qualifications, such as OCR's Cambridge Technicals), or an occupational route (T Levels or work-based apprenticeships).

T Levels will train young people with the knowledge, skills and behaviours they need to enter skilled employment in a particular occupation, through both traditional classroom learning and an industry placement of at least 45 days.

A limited range of T Levels will be introduced by the government in 2020 for three pathways; Digital, Childcare and Education, and Construction. These are being collaboratively developed by the Department for Education (DfE), the Institute for Apprenticeships (IfA), education providers and employers. The DfE hopes all its intended pathways will be available for final assessments by 2024. For regular updates, including our T Levels e-newsletter, follow [@OCR_Policy](https://twitter.com/OCR_Policy) or visit www.ocr.org.uk/t-levels.

Research on OCR's distinctive Sport qualifications



As part of OCR's commitment to offer a wide range of qualifications for all kinds of student, we offer three qualifications in the area of sport for 14-16 year olds. Choices for students are the GCSE in Physical Education, and the Cambridge National in Sport Studies or Sport Science.

We conducted research through our parent organisation, Cambridge Assessment, to make sure that our qualifications are allowing students to develop the appropriate knowledge and skills. The recent study, conducted by Assessment Research and Development (ARD) researchers, Dr Simon Child and Dr Sylvia Vitello, compared OCR's GCSE and Cambridge National qualifications in sport-related subjects. The aim of the study

was to establish the extent to which the current qualifications were distinct from each other, focusing on three areas: content coverage; knowledge and skills demands, and the teaching decisions made relating to assessment and the student cohort.

The researchers used classification systems to evaluate the level of demand of different tasks in the qualifications (Marzano and Kendall, 2008; Hutchings

et al, 2013). They mapped assessment documentation across onto different types of knowledge and skills (such as analysis, knowledge recall, and reflection) identified by academic literature as relevant for the three OCR qualifications. This was supplemented by interviews that asked Sport teachers to reflect on their classroom practice when delivering the courses.

We found the content in the two Cambridge National qualifications overlapped with the content in the GCSE. Where there was content overlap however, it was assessed in different ways. This meant that the learning experience was often very distinct. The teachers we interviewed described many differences between the Cambridge Nationals and the GCSE in terms of their teaching approaches, assessment preparation, and student progression routes. The teachers linked the Cambridge Nationals with the continued enjoyment of sport for students, career progression, and the development of non-subject specific competencies (e.g. time management). Teachers associated the GCSE more directly with

the transition to A level and university study.

Overall, our research found that the three qualifications showed good coverage across the various types of knowledge and skills being compared in the study. Cambridge Nationals allow students to demonstrate the higher, more demanding levels of skills and knowledge (e.g. reflection and analysing personal motivation) through the interpersonal elements built into the courses (such as sports leadership). The GCSE also enables students to demonstrate higher levels through the use of assessment tasks that meant that developing high-level analytical skills was important. This was something that teachers recognised in the interviews.

Our researchers concluded that OCR's GCSE in PE and the two Cambridge Nationals in Sport qualifications were comparable in terms of demand, but achieved the high levels of the relevant skills and knowledge in different ways. The research finding that the three Sport qualifications are comparable but distinctive is a positive one for teachers and students.

Engaging examiners

Experience of marking and moderating offers exceptional benefits for teachers. A greater understanding of assessment leads to an increased understanding of what is expected of students during assessment, which helps those who teach to develop their teaching styles. As one OCR assessor told us: "it's the best professional development you will ever encounter".

The advice and guidance we provide to our community of examiners and assessors is increasingly digital, and we try hard to make our support interactive and engaging. Our assessor community can collaborate digitally through a platform called Yammer. This platform has proved popular with over 6,700 assessors who benefit from the opportunity to share their ideas and experiences with others. We also provide assessors with a regular podcast show, each episode of which focuses on a specific area of assessment. Blogs, which are aimed at existing and potential assessors and provide top tips for getting the most out of assessing, are now published on the OCR website. These are a good introduction to what it's like to mark or moderate for OCR. You can also learn more about what it's like to be an examiner for OCR, the benefits of assessment, and the opportunities available through our new Twitter account, @OCR_Assessors.



If you are interested in joining our community of examiners and assessors, follow us on Twitter or take a look at our website: www.ocr.org.uk/assessors.



Getting real with Functional Skills

Functional Skills qualifications (FSQs) in English and maths are being reformed. We look forward to introducing our new FSQs for first teaching in September 2019.

Functional Skills qualifications teach students how to apply practical English and maths skills to the workplace, further study and other real-life situations.

The Department for Education (DfE) reviewed existing FSQs and decided that new qualifications that better suited employer, provider and student needs were required. We are pleased to confirm that development of our new Functional Skills English and maths qualifications, based on the DfE's subject content, at Entry Level, Level 1 and Level 2, is well underway.

To inform the design of our new qualifications, researchers at Cambridge Assessment investigated the use of context in existing Functional Skills English and maths exam papers across a number of different awarding organisations.

Our research highlighted the need for Functional Skills context and exam questions to be based on purposeful tasks that are anchored in the real world and that enable students to use their subject knowledge meaningfully.

The research found that while existing Functional Skills exam

questions were inspired by the real world, many were not genuinely grounded in 'real life', for example, presenting students with three birds and asking them to choose the longest. These type of questions are 'school English/maths' rather than Functional English/maths as the only place a learner would actually encounter this type of question is in a classroom or an exam. In contrast, asking a student to calculate the size of a suitcase to check its suitability as hand luggage on a flight would help the learner to address a problem grounded in real life.

We've used these findings to influence the design of our new Functional Skills English and maths exam papers. Our new questions will allow students to consider and apply solutions to practical issues they may face in the 'real world'. They are also designed to be accessible to a wide range of students.

To find out more about our new Functional Skills qualifications, sign up for email updates or book onto a free online webinar, visit www.ocr.org.uk/fs.

Bursary boost for West Midlands students

Five fabulous students from across the West Midlands are now enjoying their first term at Cambridge University, supported by an OCR bursary.

Now in its 15th year, our bursary scheme has helped over 100 students make the most of their time at Cambridge by relieving some of the financial pressures. The bursary fund, which arises from OCR's historical association with the West Midlands Examinations Board, now gives students £3000 towards each year of their undergraduate course.

We celebrated the achievements of this year's high fliers at our Coventry offices in September. They had all gained outstanding A Level results at their schools; Thomas Alleyne's High School in Uttoxeter, Caludon Castle School in Coventry, Cardinal Griffin Catholic College in Cannock, Bishop Vesey's Grammar School, Sutton Coldfield, and King Edward VI Handsworth Grammar School for Boys in Birmingham.

The students are all the first in their families to go to university. On behalf of OCR, Janet Morris, our interim CEO, congratulated them on their success: "We are delighted to support these outstanding young people through the OCR bursary scheme. Celebrating with the students is one of our favourite days

in the year. "It's not only a chance to mark their success and wish them well on their next steps, it's also a privilege to meet them. They have not only excelled academically but they have pushed themselves in many other ways; volunteering in their local communities, competing in national sports events, being excellent representatives of their schools and, in some cases, having responsibilities as family carers."

One of this year's bursary students, Sam Johnston, said: "I am delighted to have been awarded the OCR bursary. It will allow me to fully engage with the academic and non-academic opportunities during my undergraduate studies."

Commenting on Sam, Caroline Waring, Deputy Head at Caludon Castle School, said: "Sam's academic achievements are stunning. He is extremely able and I truly believe that the chance to experience all that Cambridge University has to offer and study on a course about which he is passionate will be life changing."

Application forms for next year's OCR bursary will be available in Spring 2019. www.ocr.org.uk/bursaryscheme



Students pictured from left to right: Trudy Yates, Sam Johnston, Joseph Dulleston and Nickeal Sidhu.



Sam Johnston (centre) plus Caroline Waring (right).



CAMBRIDGE NATIONAL IN ENTERPRISE & MARKETING: TRIED AND TESTED

From popular YouTube stars to TV's *The Apprentice* and *Dragons' Den*, young people have never been so exposed to the world of entrepreneurs. It's no surprise therefore that OCR's new practical and accessible qualification on creating a successful business with a focus on enterprise and marketing is proving popular among 14 to 16 year olds.

Our Level 1/2 Cambridge National Certificate in Enterprise and Marketing has been developed in collaboration with teachers, employers and entrepreneurs to give the growing numbers of young people aspiring to start their own business the skills required, such as being able to work collaboratively and creatively, solve problems and have awareness of business and customers.

Teachers and students are attracted by the real world practical element of the course, with 50% of the qualification based on them using their own interests and ideas to create a product, make a business case and deliver and pitch their own business proposal. Introduced for first teaching in September 2017, the course appeals to students looking for a more practical alternative to GCSE Business that allows them to get to grips with all aspects of running a small business with particular focus on enterprise and marketing.

CASE STUDY

Students have really taken to the course at one Gloucestershire school, which has introduced the course in addition to GCSE Business. "Both staff and students are currently enjoying the course, both the content and the delivery," said Business Studies teacher, Stuart Langworthy of The Cotswold School in Bourton-on-the-Water, near Cheltenham.

Stuart (pictured above) holds the Queen's Award for Enterprise Promotion and is also the subject lead for enterprise with the EBEA (Economics and Business Education Association). The practical element of the course has gone down particularly well. He continued: "The students have responded well to this approach with the majority enjoying the challenge of having to present to others. This is all aimed at improving their confidence and helps them to develop their enterprise and employability skills."

It has also put the possibility of one day starting their own business into the minds of students: "It certainly raises the profile of small and self-employed businesses. I do not think this will necessarily be in the minds of students when they choose this as an option, but by the end of the course, there may well be more people who would consider self-employment."

The course has given the school the opportunity to use different teaching approaches. Two teachers deliver the course, one concentrating on the examined unit and one on the assignment.

"The delivery of the examined unit has been more formal with the use of case studies and exam style questions, whereas the assignment unit lends itself to more open-ended and longer, student-led tasks," said Stuart. "We have spent time preparing the students for the pitch, including some practice pitches and presentations."



The school has found OCR's resources on the website helpful and has also devised its own delivery schedule that has been shared with many other schools via Cambridge Nationals' online community. As well as the online community, schools have access to OCR's Subject Advisor, a series of helpful videos and live online training.

At the Cotswold School, and many others, teachers like the way the Cambridge National in Enterprise and Marketing puts them in control of delivery and assessment. The course is moderated by the school and can be done when the student's work is ready. "It puts the power back with the teacher," commented one, "I know my students and when they're ready for assessment." Others commented: "It's certainly much more user-friendly compared to similar courses" and "It puts the professional trust back with the teacher, which is what I like compared to other courses where you have to submit dates and stick to them. When you've assessed the work and think it is ready for moderation, you can submit it." Ease of admin has also encouraged some schools to make the switch, many liking the fact the processes are similar to what they are used to with GCSEs, so there's no steep learning curve. "You

can concentrate on the course rather than worrying about the administration, making the course fun and interesting without worrying about dates," was one comment. The fact that there is less pressure on the exam and that students can do a re-sit if required also appeals to many schools.

The Cambridge Nationals course is divided into three units, with students taught as a group but recognised for individual achievement. The first unit takes the students through the techniques business use to understand their market and develop products, investigate what makes a product viable and understand how business attract and retain customers. They also learn about key aspects of small businesses. This unit is externally assessed through OCR with a marked 1 hour 30 minutes exam. For Unit 2, students create a researched and costed business proposal, including conducting market research, presenting data, using idea generation tools, seeking and acting on feedback and costing proposals. In Unit 3, they prepare for and pitch the business proposal developed in Unit 2. This includes developing a brand identity, investigating how to best promote their product and then planning and preparing the pitch.

As with other Cambridge Nationals, the Cambridge National in Enterprise and Marketing is designed to fit into the curriculum as an equivalent to a GCSE and will form a key part of any student's Progress 8 and Attainment 8 approved subjects under the Technical Awards category.

While some students will go on to start their own business, the course has also been developed to offer students long term transferable skills for the world of higher education and work, including interview and communication skills. This is something that has made it particularly appealing to The Cotswold School. "More general business knowledge has been developed and alongside this, they have developed wider enterprise and employability skills," said Stuart. He continued: "Many of this group will not progress to traditional A Level courses. Some may well progress to more vocational courses run in school or at local colleges, and some may be interested in apprenticeships." His school also started teaching the Level 3 Cambridge Technicals in September 2018, to give students a vocational progression route.

Progression to Cambridge Technicals

"Our students are really enjoying the Cambridge Technicals L3 course – they like the mix of exams and coursework. The Unit 2 content is really interesting in terms of preparing students for a career in a business. We believe we have now got the pathways for all our students – those studying the L2 now have a vocational L3 course to progress to and those who have not studied Business before, but who prefer a more practical approach rather than 100% exams, have an interesting vocational course to study. We have 15 students in our first group and they seem to be really enjoying the course so far."

Stuart Langworthy

Whatever these Cambridge Nationals students decide to do, this post Millennium generation will be hitting the workplace full of entrepreneurial spirit, whether they be the next big YouTube stars (or whatever follows on from that), in a social enterprise, or really great employees.

Watch this space....

www.ocr.org.uk/cambridgenationals

Wayne Norrie is Chief Executive of the Greenwood Academies Trust (GAT). The 11th largest multi-academy trust in the country, GAT includes 23 primary academies, 8 secondary academies and 3 special schools, located in areas of high social deprivation in the East Midlands and the East of England.

Having held roles in local authorities, at the DfE and in Ofsted (as a senior HMI), as well as headships, he has over 20 years' senior management experience in the education sector.

Here, Wayne tells **agenda** about his own path into education and the challenges he faces in his role.



What has been your path into your current role?

I have been fortunate to have been a teacher since 1996. I took up my first headship in Nottingham City in 2005, moving on to working with the National Strategies, Sheffield Local Authority and as a Senior HMI with Ofsted. I was appointed as CEO of the Greenwood Academies Trust in January 2015.

What do you like about working in the field of education?

The opportunity to make a significant contribution to improving the life chances of children and young people; I believe that a great education allows young people the opportunity to be in a position to choose their future direction. A poor quality education can narrow the opportunities available to them in later life. I keep our pupils at the heart of the decisions I take as CEO of a large MAT. The best part of my job is visiting our academies, which I do on a regular basis, to speak to our pupils about the quality of the education we offer, what more we could do to support them and to learn about them as people. With over 17,000 children and young people in our Trust, they remain the most important people and it is a privilege to do the job I do.

Who do you admire in your field?

There are many people who have influenced my career in many ways. I worked for an inspirational headteacher very early in my career called Dave Binks. I learnt a great deal about leadership from Dave, and I still use those lessons today. Another person who I greatly admire is Vic Goddard from Educating Essex fame! I have had the pleasure to meet Vic recently and talk all things education. His passion and commitment to the children he serves is a positive lesson to us all.

Was your own experience of education a positive one and what lessons did you learn from it?

I had a very happy primary education with kind and caring teachers. I learnt the value of kindness and respect from all of my primary teachers but particularly from two teachers called Mrs Mawditt and Mrs Cranstone. Mrs Cranstone in particular taught me a valuable lesson, one which I carried into my own teaching career. Mrs Cranstone was the first teacher to say that if you had tried really hard and didn't understand something, it wasn't your fault; it was her job to teach you in a different way until you did understand it. I have found myself repeating these phrases to children in the classes I have taught.

Unfortunately my experience at secondary school was less successful, there were few teachers who inspired me and few moments that I look back on with fondness. I think I can best sum up my secondary experience with my Physics lessons. I chose Physics because I thought it would be exciting and give me the opportunity to take part in experiments. My two year Physics course consisted of copying out a text book in silence, from the first page to the last as the teacher walked up and down the rows of the lab ensuring we were on task. I left secondary school without any qualifications. The lesson I learnt from this experience was that nobody, whether a fellow pupil or teacher, has the right to waste the learning time you have at school; it is too precious!

What do you do when – if – you have time off?

Ha ha, good question! I have a young family with 3 children under 6 so my time off is spent with trips to the park, ballet lessons (not for myself I hasten to add), birthday parties etc. I love spending time with my own kids, they remind me of why I do what I do. I am also a huge Nottingham Forest fan, and enjoy the occasional night out down the pub!



“Schools are communities of people who need support, guidance and sometimes a gentle nudge in the right direction.”

If you weren't a teacher, what would you be?

I honestly don't know. When I was at school, I didn't really have any career aspirations. I think I'd like to be a presenter on Sky's Soccer Saturday programme, being paid to watch football! In all seriousness, if I had my time again, I wouldn't do anything differently with my career. It is the most rewarding, challenging, frustrating but utterly wonderful job. I recommend it to anybody looking for a career that makes you smile every day.

What are the greatest challenges faced by schools such as your own over the next five years?

There are lots of challenges faced by us from financial pressures, recruitment of teachers, the impact (or not) of Brexit on our staff and pupil numbers... However, I think the greatest pressure on the system is undoubtedly financial. I used to say 'we have to be twice as good for half the cost'. My mantra has changed to 'we have to be three times as good for a third of the cost'. As with most challenges in life, there is an opportunity to do things differently with the money we have. The bottom line is that we have to ensure that the quality of education for our pupils is first class, regardless of the income we receive.

As a headteacher, how do you know when you are doing a good job?

It isn't the Ofsted grade or the examination results which stick with me, it is the difference you can make to families. I remember when a parent of a child at the first school I was headteacher at came up to me and asked for my help. She told me that she felt she hadn't anybody else to turn to and trusted me as I had done such a great job with her son at settling him into school as he had been out of the school system for over a year. Schools aren't all about league tables, Ofsted grades, or examination results. They are communities of people who need support, guidance and sometimes a gentle nudge in the right direction. When I left the school, a parent said to me that they would miss me because I took time to understand the community I worked with.

What achievement are you proudest of?

My graduation day was a major achievement for me as I had struggled academically and emotionally at school. I had the most wonderful parents who supported me every step of the way and I could almost touch their sense of pride when I walked onto stage to be presented with my degree certificate (it's still hanging up in my

mum's house today!). It was a fight to go to university; but I was lucky that my parents supported me emotionally and pushed me to do it. Being the first person from my extended family to go to university was a huge achievement for me, especially as I was labelled as a 'failure' at secondary school.

If you were stuck in a lift with a government minister, what three things would you ask for on behalf of your school?

Good question!

1. To reconsider the funding given to schools.
2. To acknowledge that the academic only route, whilst right for a huge number of pupils, isn't right for every young person in the country.
3. To acknowledge that headteachers and teachers working in the most challenging of schools should be recognised for doing an amazing job.



MIGRATION MOVES INTO GCSE HISTORY

OCR championed the inclusion of migration on new History GCSEs. Thanks to the input of teachers, academics and subject experts, migration is an optional topic on both OCR's Explaining the Modern World History GCSE A and the Schools History Project (SHP) History GCSE B.

The topic is ideal for young historians as it allows them to consider fundamental historical concepts such as continuity, change and significance. It also makes a stimulating and enjoyable course for teachers and students alike.

Inspiring students

To enthuse GCSE History students studying migration, OCR ran a joint two year competition with the Migration Museum to design an exhibition on the topic. Shortlisted teams from four schools, Framingham Earl High School in Norwich, Aylesbury High School, Lady Margaret School in London and Tiffin Girls' School in Kingston upon Thames, presented their different approaches to the exhibition content and design at the finals at the Migration Museum.

Asher Goodenough, OCR Subject Advisor said: "Each team had prepared so carefully and thoughtfully for their presentations, and the teams gave the judges some serious thinking to do in their deliberations. I hope that the preparations for the competition final itself gave all the teams a chance to practise valuable skills that will serve them well in the future."

After probing questions from the judging panel, the Year 10 team from Aylesbury High School were chosen the winners for their very creative train carriage exhibit which told the story of migration. Their prize was a four-day trip to New York, including visits to Ellis Island and the Tenement Museum (pictured above) in July 2018.



The winning team from Aylesbury High School presenting their exhibition design. Photo: Hugo de la Rosa Paulet.



Emily Miller, Head of Learning and Partnerships at the Migration Museum, discussed the value of studying migration in an article in TES in September 2018. With kind permission from TES, we reproduce an extract from her article here:

Embedding themes of migration within the new curriculum enables pupils in our increasingly ethnically diverse schools to see themselves represented in what they are learning about – and as part of a more shared and inclusive national history and identity.

'Relevant and engaging'

As a student from Aylesbury High School – who is studying the new OCR migration modules in history – said: "This unit was great because I learned a lot about my own family. I had no idea about my grandfather's moving story before this."

A competition runner-up from Tiffin Girls' School said: "Our own parents are migrants who settled in England so a lot of what we study focuses on things they have experienced themselves, which is really surprising."

This level of relevance and interest has contributed to many schools opting for the new migration modules. Michael Riley, director of the Schools History Project, said that the organisation is really pleased with the uptake of the migration units and has heard lots from schools about how much the students are enjoying them.

Amid heated debate about what form and substance history teaching in schools should take – and amid concern at the large number of pupils choosing not to take history at GCSE – this long-overdue focus on such a relevant and engaging topic could not be more important, particularly against the backdrop of Brexit.

This is a point underlined by Michael Maddison, former national lead for history at Ofsted. "Sixty per cent of pupils give up history at the age of 13. What must they have studied before this point? This is a key question teachers must ask," he said during a recent meeting. "I'm increasingly convinced that one thing they must have covered in school is an understanding of migration history – the long story, the impact of migration over time. Too many do not yet have this opportunity."

At the Migration Museum, we are deepening our engagements and partnerships with schools, multi-academy trusts, exam boards, subject associations and other bodies, and engaging directly with more students through our workshops and teaching resources...

Over time, I want to ensure all UK pupils learn about our migration history – all our stories.

Feedback from summer 2018

The migration topic is proving popular with a wide range of schools around the country:

- 25% of schools taking our GCSE History A are studying the new migration option.
- Nearly 1500 students are taking migration as an optional topic on GCSE History B.

There's lots of positive feedback about the performance of students answering questions about migration in our Examiners' Reports.

Examiners' Report for GCSE History A

The overview in this report said "Candidates' responses, for the most part, demonstrated a good level of preparation for this component. Their answers appeared to reflect a breadth and depth of learning that stood them in good stead for undertaking the examination."

In answer to a 24 mark question such as 'Between 1500 and 2010, the main reason migrants came to Britain was because they wanted employment. How far do you agree with this statement?', the examiner wrote: "In general, this question seemed to be enjoyed by many candidates as its breadth allowed them to display their knowledge and understanding. Many candidates produced impressive responses and showed an understanding of 'push' and 'pull' factors."

Examiners' Report for GCSE History B

This report (which includes examples of top level responses from real students) stated in the overview: "It was especially pleasing to see how much knowledge candidates had of the new 'Migration to Britain' topic which elicited many excellent responses." And continued, "The deployment of relevant – and

Over 80 Year 11 and 40 Year 10 students at Villiers High School in Ealing, West London, are following OCR's GCSE History (Schools History Project) and are enjoying the migration topic.

"The migration course gives students the ability to study one of the most pressing political topics of our time. The course allows students to discover who has migrated to Britain over time, what life was like for the migrants and place the authorities' reaction to migration into its historical context. The students enjoy the powerful stories of the varied people who have made incredibly positive impacts on our country. It gives them the opportunity to consider Britain's history from a different perspective, one that reflects many of their own families' lives."

Clare Broomfield, Head of History

often specialist knowledge – was a pleasure to read and stronger candidates had clearly engaged with the specification. Centres should be congratulated for choosing this study and for the way they have prepared their candidates."

Next steps

In response to feedback, we fixed the site study for GCSE History A so it does not change every year. The support pack for the 2019 site study of Southfields is available on our website. Spitalfields is the fixed site for study from 2020 onwards and a new support pack will be available in Spring 2019.

OCR and the Migration Museum are delighted to confirm a second competition, to run over two years, to inspire GCSE History students taking the topic of migration. More details will be announced in December 2018.

www.ocr.org.uk/history

QUALIFICATIONS ON THE MOVE



PAUL STEER, OCR'S HEAD OF POLICY, LOOKS AT THE BIG TRENDS IN UK QUALIFICATIONS BASED ON THIS SUMMER'S RESULTS.

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The good news for the A Level is that the numbers of entries remain very stable. Allowing for the fact that the population of 18 year olds this summer was 3.5% smaller than in 2017, there has been a slight rise in the popularity of A Levels. AS Level entries, however, are anything but stable. Since the AS was decoupled from the A Level, AS entries have taken a pounding and the trend continues this summer with entries down a further 52%.

The A Level in Religious Studies stands out as having had a disappointing summer, with entries falling by 21%. There will be a range of factors leading to this, but clearly young people are making different choices. Some must be turning to the sciences which had yet another year of growth and is something to celebrate in the context of the Government's Industrial Strategy which makes STEM subjects a priority. Another indicator of the changing preferences of young people might be the modest rises in the popularity of Political Studies, Economics, Business Studies and Computing.

On paper, A Level Computing has had a bumper year with an impressive rise in uptake since 2017 of 23.9%. But we should note this rise is from a very low base. There were 10,286 candidates in total this summer, but it isn't up there with the top subjects – there were 59,708 Psychology entries this summer and the biggest of them all, A Level Maths, had 97,627 entries. And over 80% of the candidates that took the Computing A Level were male.

Interest in A Level Modern Foreign Languages continues to wane and for the first time there are more students taking Chinese A Level than German, albeit that the entries for both were very small.

In recent years we have seen the runaway success of the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ). Between 2016 and 2017, the numbers of students taking

the EPQ rose by 12.3%. We might have expected a further rise this year, but that isn't so. In fact, uptake has plateaued with growth of just 1.1%. So it may be that the EPQ has reached its limits. Nevertheless, it is striking that if the EPQ were an A Level, it would be the eighth most popular subject, tucked in behind Art and Design and pulling ahead of Physics and Geography.

The EPQ is often described as bringing breadth to an A Level programme. There is nothing new about this aim. Back in 1959, General Studies was introduced to address these very concerns. And now, almost 60 years later, General Studies is no more, with this summer marking the last entries in the UK.

Meanwhile, in the world of GCSEs, the headline story is that entries for EBacc subjects are up and non EBacc subjects are (mainly) down. Of the top ten most popular GCSE subjects, only 2 of them are non-EBacc subjects – Religious Studies and Art and Design.

Although not as steep as the decline at A Level, GCSE Religious Studies is down 10% falling from number 6 to number 7 in the chart of the top ten most popular GCSEs. Art and Design has shown modest growth, climbing one place to number 8 becoming the creative subject of choice at GCSE – and its good health is sometimes used to counter arguments that the EBacc is destroying creative subjects.

However, other creative subjects like Music, Performing Arts and Drama, which have always been low uptake subjects at GCSE, continue to bump along the bottom of the charts. The uptake of Performing Arts is down a striking 44.7%, joining, for the first time, those subjects that are taken by less than 2% of the candidate population. Music, which has been taken by less than 1% of the candidate population for years, suffered a drop in entries this summer of 8%.

But perhaps the creative subject at GCSE generating most concern is Design and Technology, which took a further drop of 23% this year, falling out of the top ten subjects for the first time in years. Back in 2007, it was the fifth most popular GCSE subject of all. It's easy to blame the EBacc for this but there will be many factors working together here, including funding, historical perceptions of the subject amongst parents and senior management, and changes to technology itself. But it is time that policymakers acknowledge this decline and decide what is to be done about it. With Government investing millions in Technical Education for 16-19 year olds, it is time to look at how Key Stage 4 can prepare pupils for post 16 choices.

If proof were needed that the EBacc isn't the only thing that drives GCSE choices, languages are a case in point. Despite being EBacc subjects, Modern Foreign Languages are showing only the slightest signs of growth. The EBacc continues to boost other subjects however, with more people taking History, Geography, a strong spike in the popularity of English Literature, and the continuing march of STEM subjects – and it is excellent to see these subjects thriving.

We should give a special thought to the 732 pupils who achieved seven or more straight GCSE grade 9s – given that the total cohort for GCSEs was 640,000 people, that's some achievement. Finally, it's important to remember that behind all these statistics are real young people, each with their own story to tell. Their achievements must be recognised and celebrated; and we must also recognise the achievements in vocational qualifications, for which national data is less readily available.

[Email your comments to agenda@ocr.org.uk](mailto:agenda@ocr.org.uk)

JOIN OCR AT THESE EXHIBITIONS AND CONFERENCES AUTUMN/WINTER 2018/9

NOVEMBER

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PiXL History Conference

Central Hall, Westminster, London SW1

Join us at this conference for heads of department, faculty leaders and teachers where we will be exhibiting and presenting GCSE and A Level breakout sessions. Delegates to the conference will be provided with a range of strategies and resources focused on raising achievement along with building more confident and skilled Historians.

www.pixl.org.uk

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PiXL Geography Conference

Central Hall, Westminster, London SW1

Come and hear our Subject Advisor for Geography deliver a workshop reflecting on the first exams in the new specifications. The conference is an exciting opportunity for GCSE and A Level teachers.

www.pixl.org.uk

DECEMBER

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PiXL Science Conference

Central Hall, Westminster, SW1

We are looking forward to exhibiting at this conference aimed at heads of departments and science teachers. Come and meet our Science Subject Advisors to find out how our science qualifications and support can help you and your learners.

www.pixl.org.uk

JANUARY

9-12

ASE Annual Conference

University of Birmingham

The ASE Annual Conference is a unique event for all teachers of science from NQTs to heads of department. The conference programme offers over 350 sessions, covering all phases and levels.

OCR will be exhibiting here and offering sessions to help teachers on their journey.

www.ase.org.uk

24-25

The Education Show

ExCel, London

A first for OCR to attend, The Education Show offers a one-stop shop for school leaders and practitioners who want to find the knowledge, resources and suppliers to make their schools more successful. It aims to tackle the key challenges facing these leaders, with a focus on how to manage change and improve efficiency.

www.education-show.com

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NATRE Strictly RE conference

Park Inn, London Heathrow

We are returning as exhibitors at this annual RE event organised by the National Association of Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE). Our Subject Advisor will be on hand at our exhibition stand to offer expert advice and answer your questions about our GCSE and A Level.

www.natre.org.uk

To join OCR at these events, visit www.ocr.org.uk/events to find out more



To find out about the wide range of online and face to face CPD events we are providing in 2018/9 to support the teaching of OCR's qualifications, take a look at www.cpdhub.ocr.org.uk.

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