Accredited

eBacc recognised

GCSE Computing

Brynteg Comprehensive School

"OCR's GCSE Computing provides more of a holistic approach where students have to think and make their own decisions, including doing their own research; if they do good work then that is recognised," explains David Pearce, Head of ICT at Brynteg School.

Brynteg Comprehensive School is one of the largest secondary schools in Wales, educating more than 2,000 students aged 11–18.

The school offers a range of ICT and Computing qualifications, and in 2010 became the first school in Wales to pilot OCR's GCSE Computing qualification.

"What we didn't want was a tick-in-the-box qualification."

The course gives students an in-depth understanding of computers and how they operate. Most young people are familiar with how to use computers in their everyday lives – both at school and at home – but this GCSE gives them an insight into what goes on 'under the cover'.

The course is designed to help students develop critical thinking, analysis and problem-solving skills – skills that are transferable to other subjects. It also provides preparation for higher study and employment in the field of computer science.

David Pearce, Head of ICT

"Some like Computing because it's a subject they're generally interested in and others are keen on the technical side and would like to take their interest further. In fact, some students do their own programming at home."

David explains: "Several students have gone on to study A Level Computing and I'd expect this to be a trend with other students who are taking GCSE Computing now. I can easily foresee some going on to study Computing at a higher level, perhaps with a view to pursuing a career in computer sciences."

The content of the OCR GCSE Computing qualification is split between three modules: programming, research task, and theory. The programming unit requires students to solve three programming tasks. For each task, students are required to produce an analysis, project diary and test plan, and working coded solution.

"We chose Visual Basic as our preferred programming language but students also dabble with others such as Java, and I've introduced them to encryption. The qualification is challenging but students soon pick it up and enjoy it."

www.ocr.org.uk/computing/gcse

OCR

Examples of students' work include a program that converts different currencies, a simple phone book database application, and a check digit calculator for an ISBN number.

To help teachers deliver GCSE Computing, there's plenty of assistance available from OCR, including an online ICT community, as well as OCR's new Raspberry Pi resources.

For schools considering OCR GCSE Computing, David has this advice: "It's a great qualification. Computing is a growing subject and the number of students choosing the course at Brynteg has doubled over the past two years."

"If you wished, you could do the OCR GCSE Computing coursework on a Raspberry Pi."

The Raspberry Pi is a credit-card-sized computer that plugs into a TV and a keyboard. It can be used for many of the things that a PC does, such as spreadsheets, word-processing, games and playing high-definition video.

For further information about OCR GCSE Computing, visit **www.ocr.org.uk/computing** or for events go to **www.eventbooker.org.uk**

www.ocr.org.uk
OCR Customer Contact Centre

Vocational qualifications
Telephone 024 76 851509
Facsimile 024 76 851633
Email vocational.qualifications@ocr.org.uk

General qualifications
Telephone 01223 553998
Facsimile 01223 552627
Email general.qualifications@ocr.org.uk

A DIVISION OF CAMBRIDGE ASSESSMENT