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GCSE Computing

Twyford Church of England School

Based in the London Borough of Ealing, Twyford Church of England School is a mixed comprehensive school that has on roll just under 1,400 students aged 11–18.

The school has been providing Computing courses for the past five years, and two years ago became a pilot for OCR's GCSE Computing qualification.

The school's decision to choose OCR's GCSE Computing qualification arose because certain students were not being challenged by their ICT studies.

“We offer A Level Computing, GCSE Computing, and a Computing unit in Year 9 that prepares students for GCSE Computing at Key Stage 4,” explains Chris Wiggins, the school's Head of ICT and Computing.

Chris explains: “We noticed that some of our higher-ability students were not engaging with the ICT curriculum as well as they had previously; they wanted to be challenged in a more technical way. It was time for us to introduce a GCSE Computing qualification and OCR was the first and only exam board offering GCSE Computing.”

OCR GCSE Computing has been designed to provide learners with an in-depth understanding of how computer technology works and a look at what goes on 'behind the scenes'.



Omar – Year 11 student

“I like the fact that Computing is challenging. For the first year, in Year 10, we looked at programming and how to code, and in the second year we learned about the theory of how computers work and aspects such as hardware, binary code and data representation.”

The qualification has three units: a theory unit – worth 40% of the overall mark – that focuses on how computers work; and two controlled coursework assessment units – each worth 30% – that are a practical investigation into a computing issue and a programming project.

Chris says: “The theory content is extremely relevant to students wanting to learn more about computers.

“The part of the course they find most enjoyable is the programming. Currently we teach the programming language Java, but schools aren't restricted because OCR allows you to teach various different programming languages – you have a choice.”

“We have spent two years running the OCR GCSE Computing course, and we’re very happy with it.”

“Until the OCR GCSE Computing qualification came along, there wasn’t much around to help students understand how these devices actually work,” says Chris. “They very much enjoy learning, for instance, how a program is executed on a computer. The programming element of the course enables them to write their own programs, solve problems and learn new skills they see as being relevant to them.”

For Chris it’s a learning partnership that enables him to develop “a really nice atmosphere” with the school’s GCSE Computing students. “It’s great when they say to me that they wish to continue their Computing studies at a higher level, such as Computer Science at university.

“Our students can go on to study A Level Computing and the OCR GCSE Computing qualification is very good preparation for that,” explains Chris.

To help schools such as Twyford deliver GCSE Computing, OCR provides a range of support, including an OCR community, materials and direct assistance.

Chris finds the OCR community for GCSE particularly useful.

He says: “We’ve been signed up to the community since first starting the course. It’s excellent to see that other people are experiencing the same issues that you have. Sometimes I receive emails that raise issues I hadn’t considered and sometimes they re-affirm that the approach you’re taking is the correct one.”



Kareem – Year 11 student

“I like GCSE Computing because it’s challenging. I most enjoyed the programming section of the course because it allowed us to write our own programs, such as calculators and conversion devices.”

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

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