

agenda

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM OCR / **SUMMER 2011**

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your service*

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RECOGNISING ACHIEVEMENT

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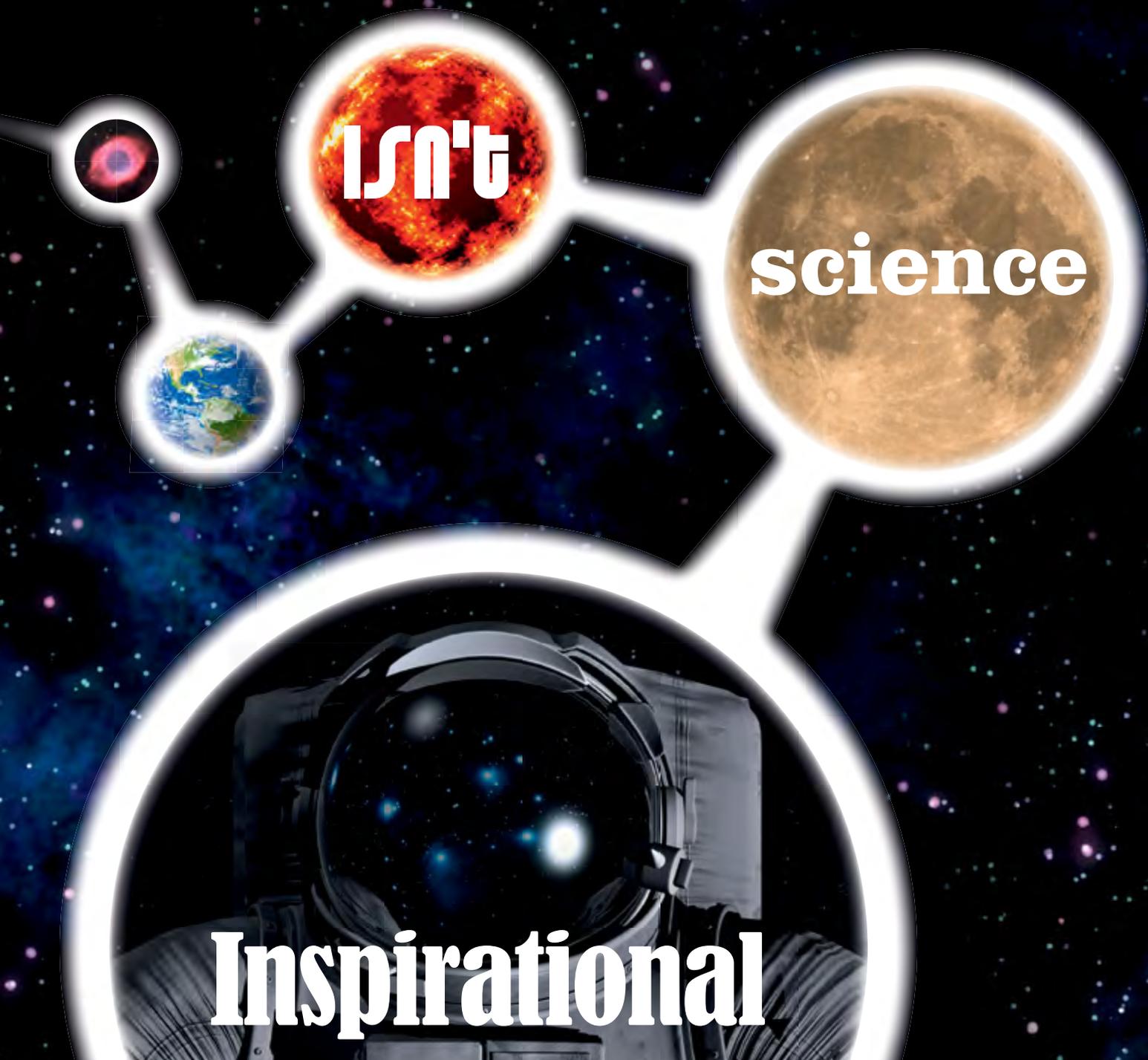
**'THAT'S ONE SMALL STEP FOR A MAN,
ONE GIANT LEAP FOR MANKIND'**

Neil Armstrong, 1969

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This issue of **agenda**, OCR's termly magazine, comes to you at the end of a busy and challenging exam season. May I wish you well for that much-needed summer break.

Over one million people sit our exams each summer, taking 800 different question papers and over 16,000 individual questions in total. Over 600 staff and more than 15,000 teachers work on designing and marking questions as well as setting grade boundaries. We all strive to make sure that our qualifications and our exams meet the expectations of all users of the system and recognise that even the smallest error can cause concern. I would like to reassure everyone that we are looking into yet further checks and we have systems in place to ensure no learner is disadvantaged.

In this issue, you can read on page 7 about the range of calls that come into our customer contact centre on a typical day during the exam season. There's a feature on technological changes in education you can't ignore, as well as our views on the implications of the Wolf Report. All this and a snapshot of OCR's news across England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

If you would like to get in touch about anything you read here, please email us at agenda@ocr.org.uk. And let us know if you would prefer to receive your copy of Agenda electronically.

Mark Dawe Chief Executive, OCR

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OCR supports UK's largest ever arts project

OCR is helping to spread the word in schools and colleges about the UK's largest ever art project, Face Britain, run by the Prince's Foundation for Children and the Arts.

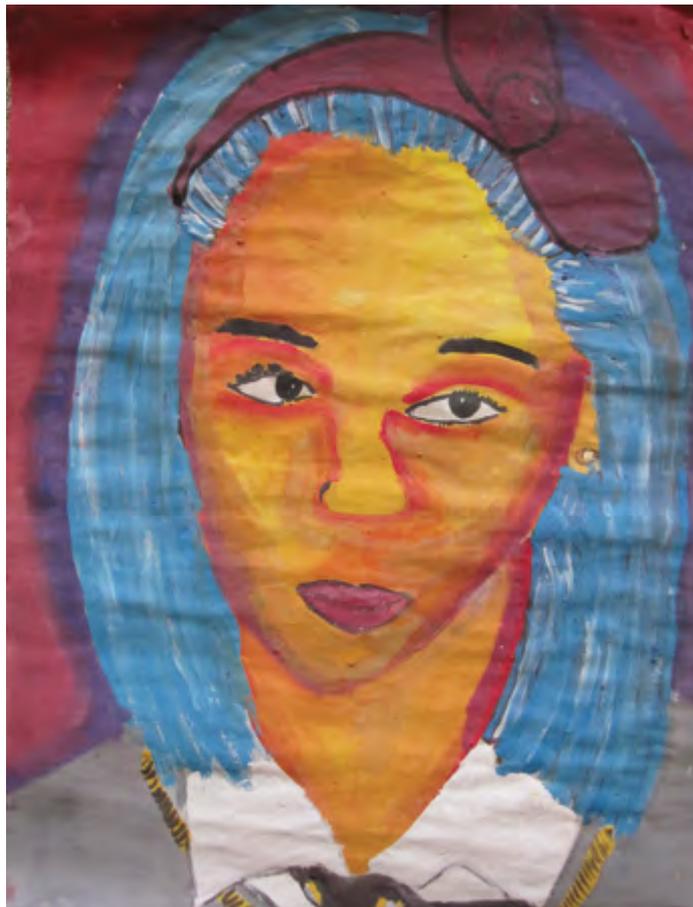
Announced this May to every school in the UK, Face Britain will run between September 2011 and March 2012.

Face Britain has been launched to increase access to and understanding of visual arts in UK schools. With the active support of HRH The Prince of Wales, Face Britain celebrates the nation's youth and future in the lead up to HM The Queen's Diamond Jubilee and London Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2012.

As well as encouraging every young person to create a self portrait – breaking a Guinness World Record in the process – the project complements a broader curriculum. OCR is supporting participation in the classroom by creating resource material for teachers suitable for all subject areas including History, Citizenship and ICT as well as Art and Design.

Mark Dawe, OCR Chief Executive, is enthusiastic: "We're excited about the opportunity to be involved with this project, which inspires young people to create something unique based on activities right across the curriculum."

Take a look at www.facebritain.org.uk



Ofqual update

It's now fourteen months since Ofqual became the new independent qualifications regulator.

During that time, it has consulted widely on how it should regulate. Its key principle is that awarding bodies will be accountable for the quality and standards of the qualifications they offer. In future, Ofqual will regulate awarding bodies, rather than individual qualifications, in a process called 'recognition'.

The new approach will mean big changes and challenges for all awarding bodies. We've been arguing for an approach that focuses on principles and high level outcomes for all qualification users, leading to greater flexibility and reduced costs. In the rapidly moving education sector, innovation and efficiency must drive the development of qualifications that meet learners' needs.

Ofqual published its General Conditions of Recognition on 16 May 2011. The conditions apply to all awarding bodies and set out what's required for Ofqual to recognise a body to award qualifications.

The conditions come into effect on 18 July 2011, although awarding bodies have until 18 May 2012 to say they are compliant.

We're busy looking at our business and processes so we can be confident that we meet the requirements. But we're also keeping a broader focus on Ofqual's developing approach.

OCR will continue to push hard for an approach that, in Ofqual's words, recognises 'qualifications are for learners'.

For further information on Ofqual's new regulatory approach, visit:

www.ofqual.gov.uk/for-awarding-organisations

As easy as A2C

A major new initiative to improve how exam information is shared is under way.

The 'A2C Project', led by the Joint Council for Qualifications, of which OCR is a member, will modernise the 20 year old 'Electronic Data Interchange' (EDI) system. (Those centres who wish to keep using awarding body extranets will not be affected.)

By modernising the way data is exchanged and the content of that data, schools, colleges and training providers will be able to use one standard for all qualifications – general and vocational – and for all JCQ awarding bodies, for the first time.

Currently exam data is sent between organisations and awarding bodies via a central hub (also known as VANS or carriers). As well as greater efficiency and flexibility, this new approach will save money for all parties by making the central hub obsolete.

There is a dedicated website – <http://a2c.jcq.org.uk> – to guide all exams officers, management information system (MIS) managers, teachers and senior managers through these changes.

Centres using EDI have up to December 2014 to migrate over to the new system. It's a two step process which kicks off this September. **Between September 2011 and August 2012**, centres will need to download a temporary migration tool. **From September 2012**, MIS suppliers will start integrating new improved data formats and processes, specified by the JCQ, and adapt them for centres' systems, by December 2014.

OCR, together with sister awarding board, University of Cambridge International Examinations, is working hard to make sure all our centres are supported through this process.

Ab initio

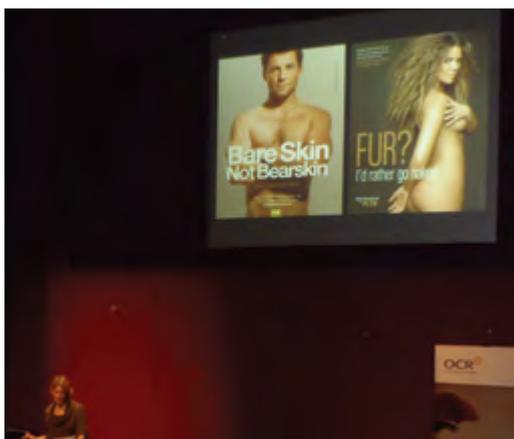
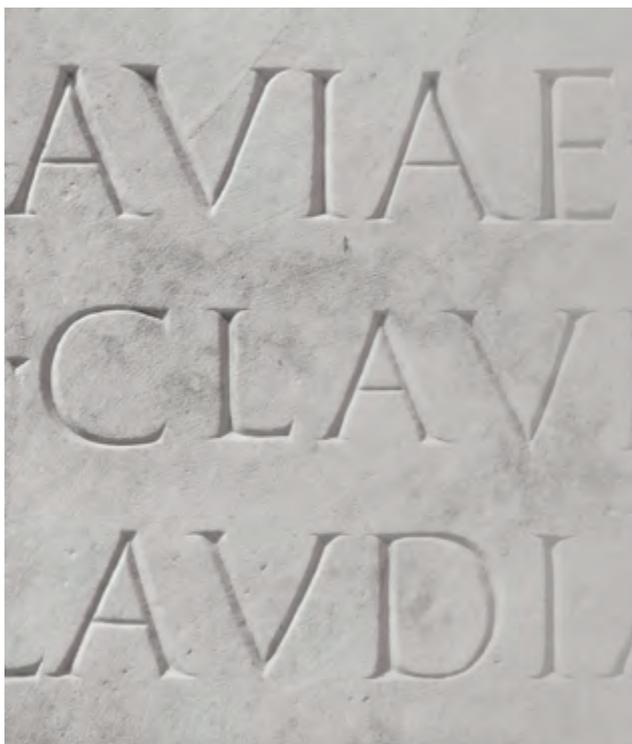
OCR's GCSE Latin is one of the language qualifications that counts towards the EBacc. And Latin is growing in popularity across all schools.

As a stepping stone to GCSE Latin (as well as a stand alone qualification), OCR introduced an Entry Level Latin qualification last year and the first exams were taken this June 2011.

Feedback from schools on Entry Level Latin has been promising. Annette Oliver at Read School, North Yorkshire, opted for the new qualification as she "contemplated the perennial problem of how to keep a Year 9 Latin class motivated as long as possible... I needed something very flexible. I have been quite amazed at the difference I have seen in many of the pupils once I sold them on the idea of a 'proper' Latin qualification."

The qualification helped to motivate across the entire ability range and Ms Oliver was delighted at the level of achievement among those children who previously struggled with grammar. "But perhaps the real bonus the Entry Level programme has delivered is a greater interest and uptake of Latin at GCSE."

More information on OCR's Latin qualifications is available at: www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/subjects/latin/index.html



Nudity and Roman Britain were just two of the compelling parts of a recent Classics CPD event at the British Museum.

Cambridge University's Dr Carrie Vout (left) gave a formal lecture on Nudity in Greek and Roman Art while Sam Moorhead, the Museum's National Finds Advisor and Archaeologist of the Year 2011, took delegates on a hands-on tour of the Roman British galleries.

For more high quality cpd events, visit www.ocr.org.uk/events/ocr_events



In partnership with FE

OCR is finding a new way of meeting the needs of Further Education colleges.

With over 350 FE colleges and more than 5000 registered FE providers in the UK, the sector educates nearly 5 million people every year who take a vast array of qualifications. OCR's initiative aims to provide better value for large colleges and FE networks which is good news for a sector currently experiencing a funding squeeze.

The new approach means colleges and providers can work with OCR to create bespoke packages of qualifications to suit their key programmes of learning, supported by resources such as the best publisher materials and IT, and tap into OCR's expertise in assessment to identify and deliver the most appropriate form of accreditation.

OCR is currently working in a pilot partnership scheme with three major FE networks centred on Westminster Kingsway College in London, North Hertfordshire College and Walsall College. Based on the success of this pilot which is part of a publicly funded SFA project, OCR is looking to go into partnership with more FE networks seeking to gain similar advantages from a customised qualification and support model.

FE colleges who would like to discuss the potential benefits of working in partnership, should contact Liam Sammon, Director of Strategy, via email at liam.sammon@ocr.org.uk or call 01223 553311.



OCR Chief Executive Mark Dawe, speaking at The Future of Further Education Forum 2011.

In brief

To EBacc or not to EBacc...

Following the announcement of the EBacc, the DfE's new performance measure recognising the gaining of GCSEs in English, Maths, Humanities, Science and Languages (Ancient or Modern), OCR conducted research into how schools were reacting.

A telephone survey of 400 schools was undertaken, suggesting that many schools were responding quickly to the new EBacc criteria with planned changes to curriculum on offer to 14 to 16 year olds from September 2011. For many, the EBacc is a welcome and wholly appropriate means of rewarding young people who have succeeded across a number of strong academic subjects.

We recognise the EBacc is an important entitlement for all learners but not a requirement. It isn't the right choice for all learners. There are many good reasons why a young person might choose a different mix of qualifications.

In our findings which we submitted to the parliamentary select committee, we also voiced concerns over the removal of breadth from student learning experience, especially in applied learning routes, as well as the exclusion of qualifications such as Asset Languages. Other performance indicators are needed to recognise achievement across a broad range of learners.

OCR is the only awarding body that offers every single GCSE qualification that can count towards the EBacc.

Analysing exam results

As results day approaches, make sure you are ready to take advantage of OCR's rapidly expanding results analysis service, Active Results.

It helps teachers and learners by drilling down exam performance, per candidate, per specification and per unit. You can also compare your school's performance against other schools across the country, including by factors such as gender, age, or SEN, using a unique filter.

It's available for a wide range of subjects at GCSE* and also for A Level Mathematics and Science for the first time this summer.

To access Active Results through OCR's secure exam website, Interchange, make sure you are set up as a 'tutor/teacher'. A centre administrator, normally an exams officer, can do this for colleagues.

** Available for GCSEs in Business, Design and Technology, English, Geography, History, ICT, Mathematics, Media Studies, Modern Foreign Languages, Physical Education, Religious Studies and Science*

www.ocr.org.uk/activeresults

activeresults



OCR's Ireland office now has its own dedicated website for the first time.

With an events calendar and specific information on topics such as the Entitlement Framework for schools in Northern Ireland, the website supports the needs of OCR's Ireland customers.

Visit www.ocr.org.uk/ireland

Coleg Gwent College wins major FE award sponsored by OCR Cymru

FE College Coleg Gwent won an OCR Cymru-sponsored award for capturing and responding to learner needs at the prestigious Annual Conference run by ColegauCymru.

The award was presented to Coleg Gwent on 26 May by Robin Hughes, National Manager of OCR Cymru, at a ceremony at the Hilton Hotel in Cardiff.

According to Robin, who also sat on the selection panel, the college won the innovation in responding to the learner voice category for the impressive opportunities it offers all its

learners to participate in the management of the college – quite a challenge because the college has five different campuses in diverse rural and inner city locations.

Robin explained: "The college goes to great efforts to get their learners engaged with decision making. They work with organisations like the NUS to encourage students

to be elected representatives on various forums so that students are actively involved in the college's policy-making. Encouraging learners to voice their opinions and needs is part of the inspection framework that applies to colleges and can contribute to their success, so OCR Cymru is delighted to be sponsoring this award."



From far left: Jeff Cuthbert, Welsh Deputy Minister For Skills, Jennie Richards, Mary Prescott (Student Union Rep), and Canon Dr Keith Denison of winning college Coleg Gwent and (far right) Robin Hughes, OCR Cymru's National Manager.

A day in the life of OCR's CUSTOMER CONTACT CENTRE



On the dot of 8am the phones start ringing at OCR's Customer Contact Centre in Coventry. It's the height of the summer exam season 2011, and GCSEs in Religious Studies, Psychology, Humanities and Home Economics, and AS Levels in History, Geography, Classical Civilisation et al are being taken by thousands of candidates around the country that day. About ten members of OCR staff are on alert for this early shift.

OCR's Lisa Hulm picks up the phone.

"Can you help me?" the first caller asks anxiously. He's a teacher from a Suffolk school. "I can't find the speaking tests that I recorded digitally for the English coursework. I think I've wiped everything."

Calmly, Lisa checks if the teacher has a record of the marks that he moderated. When he answers yes, she then tells him about the lost coursework form for this situation which he can get either from his own exams officer or from the Joint Council for Qualifications' (JCQ) website. The teacher is relieved to say the least.

The next call is from an exams officer from a school in Croydon. "Our exam scripts haven't arrived." Lisa establishes

immediately that this is for a GCSE in two week's time. She checks that there is no problem with the school's original exam entries and then check OCR's despatch centre. The 'missing' 15 papers are located with the couriers and Lisa confirms the school can expect them in the next 48 hours. "There's no problem with this delivery but get back to me by the end of the week if you haven't received them," she confirms. The caller is reassured.

Some call centres have a bit of a bad name but not OCR's. It's a hub of well-trained staff who have knowledge across OCR's 1000 plus qualifications. Calls come in every day from a broad spectrum of people; teachers, exams officers, candidates, parents, moderators, and local authority advisers, all players in the modern exam process.

Unlike conventional call centres, there is no limit on the amount of time each call takes. "Sometimes we stay on the phone for 30 to 40 minutes helping someone to sort out a problem," says Lisa. "We don't put people through to other departments and say goodbye. We are responsible for making sure the customer gets the answer they need in the end." In between calls, Lisa records the outcome of calls on a database



Lisa

so trails can be followed up by others if necessary

Lisa has been at the Customer Contact Centre (CCC) for 5 years. As well as answering general education and learning qualification queries, she has specialist subject knowledge on English. Other colleagues in the CCC are subject specialists in Maths, Science and ICT while another group deal with questions about skills and employment qualifications. At this time of year, a small number are dedicated to sorting out late entry applications for candidates to sit exams.



113 calls

By 8.45am, nearly a hundred calls about education and learning qualifications alone have been answered. 6 calls are on hold.

It's not all GCSE enquiries this morning. Lisa's next call is from a school wanting help with Functional Skills. Then someone wanting employment advice rings in. "I used to teach Key Skills and want to know if I can set up as an OCR centre." Lisa points the caller towards a form on the OCR website for all institutions wanting to deliver OCR qualifications. "You'll need to have run a business for 6 months to get a credit rating though." The caller decides to have a re-think.

One of the most common calls is from teachers and exams officer wanting advice about Interchange, OCR's secure website for all exam-related information. CCC staff know Interchange like the back of their hands, patiently helping each caller through a stumbling block, using a caller's details on the website if necessary to find out what their particular problem is.

Lisa picks up another call. This time it's from a teacher asking for an extended deadline to hand in Geography controlled

assessment work due to loss of school time over Easter holidays. After consulting the qualifications team, the caller's request is refused. There are opportunities for individual candidates to get extensions due to 'special requirements' but not for whole schools and colleges.

"We are responsible for making sure the customer gets the answer they need in the end"

Across the CCC office, another member of staff, John, receives a call from a teacher with a candidate who has just had their spleen removed and is on medication for an exam that afternoon. They want to know if the candidate can have 'special consideration'. John seems to attract these calls.

His next caller is a teacher with a candidate who broke three fingers on his right hand last week and will have to take this week's GCSE exams on a laptop. What should the school do? John explains about 'access arrangements' covering the use of readers, scribes or laptops in exams.



At 11.00 am, the phones are ringing non stop. At this time of day, there are about 30 full time members of staff answering calls, topped up by 5 more temporary staff covering this prime summer exam season.

Katrina Hart has worked at the CCC for nearly 18 months. As the calls come in, she investigates each problem on two large computer screens in front of her which provide access to numerous databases and websites. She is somehow able to talk sensibly to the person on the line

while at the same time typing something completely different in a database.

Her next call is from an ICT teacher in Southampton. "We're teaching another exam board's ICT AS course and would like to transfer the credits to OCR. Can we do it?" Katrina checks the list of transferable credits on the JCQ website but also speaks to a member of the ICT qualifications team. She explains to the teacher, "I'm sorry but because it's an Applied ICT you can't transfer." The teacher thanks her for clarifying the situation nonetheless.

In between calls, Katrina checks her emails. She follows up an enquiry from earlier in the morning about a candidate who needs to take her exams at home after having an operation. Enabling all learners to take their exams is a major part of the CCC's work during this season. "The other day a candidate rang in tears," Katrina recalled. "She was so ill she wasn't even sure she was going to be able to sit an exam."

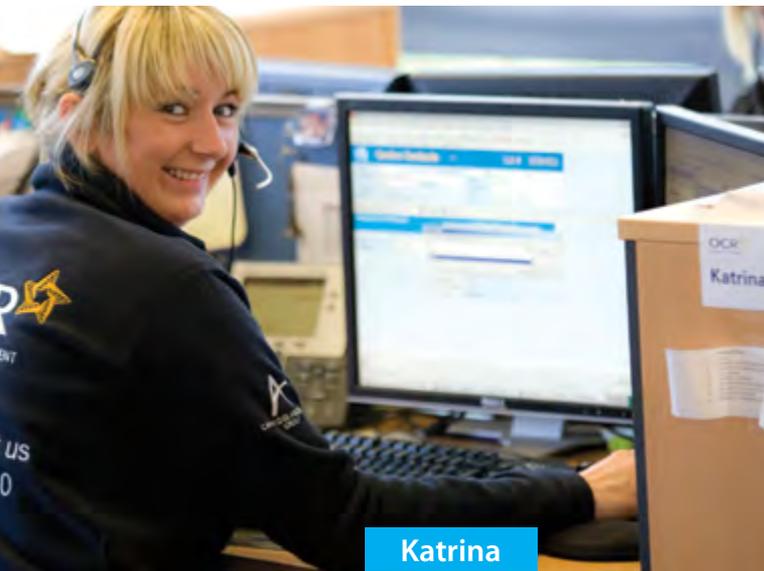
Katrina emails the school who had enquired about taking exams at home with a link about timetable deviations. There are other associated problems to be sorted out for a one-off location; who is going to ensure that the exam paper gets to a student's home and the exam is conducted properly?



850 calls

By 11.45am, the flat screen displays the latest call statistics; 850 calls answered so far, 688 on education and learning qualifications alone.

Katrina's next call is from one of OCR's army of on-screen markers. She's preparing to mark a GCSE Biology unit and can't find the mark scheme. Katrina establishes that the Biology exam takes place at the end of the week and explains that the mark scheme isn't made available to markers till



Katrina



Peter

just after the exam. In quick succession, two calls come in from assessors, chasing their expenses. Katrina sorts out a missing payment for one of them with OCR's finance department. The assessor is pleased.

A call comes in from a parent who has bought some GCSE History past papers for their son. They haven't arrived in the post so Katrina arranges for them to be emailed in time for some much-needed pre exam practice.

A teacher from a Nuneaton school rings. "I can't find the labels to send off the GCSE Music CDs." He needs to send off some CDs of candidates' coursework to a moderator. Katrina directs him to the 'emergency exam labels' section on Interchange.



1377 calls

At 2.00pm, the flat screen shows nearly 1400 calls have been answered.

At 2.45pm, Katrina gets a call from a teacher in a north London school with a student who has broken their arm that morning. "They are sitting an A Level Media paper now. Can they have extra time?"

Katrina establishes that they have managed to apply in advance for a scribe, so the candidate is not using the arm to write. But she confirms that the student can't be disturbed now and must complete the exam in the set time. She advises the school to make a retrospective 'special considerations' application instead. (This has a maximum impact of 5% on the final mark.)

John receives another emergency call during the afternoon. This time it's flooding at a school in the south west which began five minutes after the afternoon exam session began. There was a power cut but all candidates except one carried on with

no lighting. The candidate was taking the exam on a laptop. John advises them to submit a special consideration form for the candidate who needed to be taken to an alternative site with electricity – a nearby school. "You do need empathy as well as knowledge to do this job," John comments.

Meanwhile **Peter McCamphil**, one of the team who handles skills and employment qualification enquiries, is speaking to a caller about Road Passenger Transport qualifications. The issues tend to be different for adult learners. The RPT caller is facing the closure of his local training centre but he wants to carry on with his course. Can OCR help? Peter enquires with the relevant OCR qualifications team if this is possible and the customer is given an email address for support on a case study project. "That was a bit early," says Peter, "road transport calls usually come in after 4pm."

"It's so frustrating when you can't help someone"

Another call for Peter is from a training company in Bootle wanting to be updated about the online claims procedure for QCF qualifications. Peter talks them through the guide to this new process available on the OCR website. A college in Eastbourne rings next. The teacher is trying to complete a unit from the Administration Business Professional qualification and has a highly specific question. "Can you tell me if the students are allowed to submit double-sided laminates?" Peter tries in vain to sort out this out and in the end he can only pass on an urgent request for clarification from the qualifications team. "It's so frustrating when you can't help someone," Peter says.

One of the largest areas of Peter's expertise which generates lots of calls is OCR Nationals, taken by students of all ages.

University admissions tests, the STEP tests offered by OCR's parent, Cambridge Assessment, are another part of Peter's brief. "Very cyclical but fun," he says.



1923 calls

By 4.45pm, 1923 calls have been answered. Another call comes in from a prison asking anxiously about Entry Level Employability Skills results. "We've sent them off for moderation, but when will the results come through?" Peter knows that getting results on time are crucial for offender learning funding. He checks the prison's claim history and is able to confirm that the results went through yesterday. "You can access them tomorrow." The prison tutor is delighted and thanks him for his help.

There is no lull in the calls at 5pm. Peter is still answering questions about Nationals moderation and 'top ups'. The 'late entry' specialists are trying to make sure that schools and colleges who have put candidates in for exams at the last minute will get the exam scripts they need in the post tomorrow morning. If they don't arrive, they can be put on Interchange for schools to download for themselves.



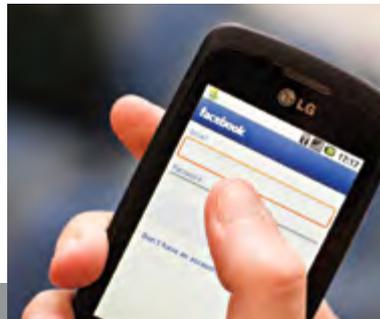
1984 calls!

At 5.30pm, there are still nearly 10 advisors working flat out to answer calls. When the clock hits 5.30pm, the answer machine kicks in, picking up new incoming calls. One by one, existing conversations tail off. It is quiet for the first time in nine hours. Staff stretch, pick up their bags, exchange a few words and leave in small groups. In just over 14 hours, it starts all over again.

IT landscape in schools



Industry expert **Paul Shoemith**, a director of IET Associates Limited, outlines the key features of new technology in education that you can't ignore.



In the last ten years, technology has become pervasive across the education system.

Through a wave of initiatives, including the National Grid for Learning and Harnessing Technology Strategy, most classrooms across the country now have internet connected computers, and many have projectors and interactive whiteboards. But technology doesn't stand still. So what will we see arriving in the next five years, and how will it have an impact in the classroom?

According to Gartner Inc., the top technology trends for 2011 include cloud computing, mobile applications and media tablets, and social communications and collaboration. Which of those might have relevance in schools?

There are lots of definitions of cloud computing, but I would describe it as technology that's not in your school, that you don't have to look after, and often that you don't even have to pay for, but which offers valuable services to you. Services like Google Mail or Google Apps for Education, and Microsoft's Live@edu, offer large scale solutions to problems that have previously required school based technology. They take away most of the administration and technical support, and deliver these services to you, currently at no cost. But it's not just about email. These services also offer online storage which can be used for homework and class assignments, collaboration services including voice and video conferencing, and online document collaboration. Imagine how powerful some of these tools can be if used in the classroom, or at home.

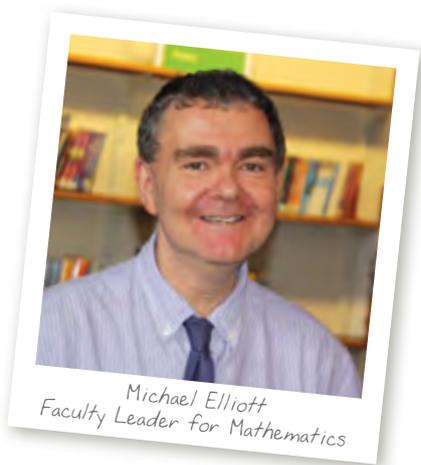
So what else might work well in a cloud computing environment? If you use a learning platform in your school, the chances are that it is being run for you "out in the cloud". Are there other services that could move there? Does every school need to have a management information system running locally? Many businesses run their core IT systems in the cloud, and schools are starting to do that too, with a number of management information systems now available that can be accessed through a web browser, without the need for a server in school.

Mobile devices and applications are also becoming more and more common. While some may see the number of smartphones in schools as a threat, particularly in terms of behaviour and discipline, many schools are now embracing these technologies and the benefits that they can bring to teaching and learning. A survey recently undertaken in a large secondary school revealed that students had access to over £1 million worth of technology. Why not find ways to make use of that technology by opening up access to the school network (in a secure way), making sure that online resources provided by the school work well on smartphones and tablets, and encouraging students to use these while learning, both inside and outside school?

Social communications and collaboration are also becoming more widespread. Many websites now carry the Facebook "Like" button, and the use of this and other social tools continues to grow. How might this affect tools used in the classroom? While Facebook might not be welcomed by some, driven by concerns over bullying and the use of these services by younger children,

CASE STUDY MATHS

Choosing the right Maths qualifications to suit its learners is working for a school in Leicester.



Michael Elliott
Faculty Leader for Mathematics

St Paul's Catholic School, a specialist Performing Arts school, situated to the East of Leicester, has just over 1000 students aged between 11 and 18 on roll. Students come largely from Catholic communities across a wide area of the city and the surrounding countryside but the school attracts students of all faiths and has a diverse ethnic mix.

"Mathematics is a good support subject for the sciences, psychology, geography and social sciences," says Michael Elliott, Faculty Leader for Mathematics at St Paul's.

In 2010, the school decided to become a pilot centre for OCR's new Linked Pair in GCSE Mathematics, having previously been involved with the OCR 'Double' GCSE Mathematics pilot. First certification will be this summer.

The Linked Pair comprises two qualifications – GCSE Applications of Mathematics and GCSE Methods in Mathematics – which between them cover all the Key Stage 4 Programme of Study for Mathematics and some additional content. Each GCSE is distinctive and the aim is to be inspiring, motivating and challenging for students.

St Paul's Catholic School decided to pilot the new OCR qualifications because of the opportunity to get involved with new GCSEs and the potential they offered for students of different abilities.

"We felt that, as with the Double GCSE, it presented all our students with two opportunities to achieve a GCSE Mathematics qualification," says Michael. "We also liked the style of the OCR papers. They are not as complicated as those

offered by the other exam bodies and are easier for students with middle ability to access as they assess real life skills."

The Linked Pair specification promotes the teaching and learning of Mathematics at Key Stage 4 in schools and also provides a suitable post-16 course. It has been designed to provide access to a Grade C in Mathematics for all learners.

"We are doing now what other schools may be doing in four or five years' time."

The specification aims to encourage students to develop knowledge, skills and understanding of mathematical and statistical methods, techniques and concepts. It is designed to help them acquire and use strategies for problem solving and modelling in context, understanding that there may be more than one way to solve a problem.

The OCR qualification also acts as a suitable basis for progression to further study in Mathematics or related subjects, or directly into employment.

The school also offers OCR's Free Standing Mathematics Qualification (FSMQ) in Additional Mathematics, designed to meet the needs of students who wish to continue their study of Mathematics beyond GCSE, but for whom AS level units may not be immediately appropriate. There are plans to offer FSMQ as a discrete course post 16 for students not wishing to follow a full AS course.

Four areas of Pure Mathematics are covered in the FSMQ: algebra, co-ordinate geometry, trigonometry and calculus. Each of these is used to support a topic from a recognized branch of Applied Mathematics. Some of the school's pupils complete their GCSE early and then study the OCR FSMQ as a bridging qualification between GCSE and AS level.

From Michael's perspective, students studying OCR's FSMQ have a head start over other students. He explains: "Our express groups do the OCR FSMQ which gives them a good grounding for further study, especially algebra and calculus which they will need at AS Level Mathematics.

"FSMQ has been really successful in terms of how it follows on and is very useful for those who've achieved their GCSEs early to keep them involved with Mathematics. If they are going on to study A Level Mathematics, they haven't lost a year or two idling."

The FSMQ qualification also gives students UCAS points at the end of year 11, "which is not what a lot of students will have by that stage," adds Michael.

"The school's results have improved significantly over the years and continue to rise steadily," reports Michael. "With the Mathematics pilot in place, St Paul's is at the forefront of Mathematics, especially in the Leicester area; we are doing now what other schools may be doing in four or five years' time."

www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/subjects/mathematics



Simon is a Year 11 student at St Paul's who completed his Double Mathematics GCSE early and plans to study A Level Mathematics and A Level Further Mathematics followed by Pure Mathematics at University: "I like doing Mathematics, particularly algebraic equations, because it helps me to problem-solve which will help me in my future career."

"I was comfortable taking the GCSE early. It is good to get a qualification early and out of the way so that you can concentrate on other exams. The fact that we can accomplish a GCSE in a year will hopefully be recognized by colleges and will benefit us. It also gave me the opportunity to continue Mathematics at a higher level, by taking the FSMQ, before starting AS Level."

CASE STUDY

ADVICE & GUIDANCE

OCR's new Advice and Guidance qualifications prove popular with national training company.



Martyn Pass (right)
Prospects' IAG Coordinator

Prospects (www.prospects.co.uk) delivers a range of careers, education, and training services to private and public sector customers nationwide, including adults and young people as well as employers and education providers.

Since its inception in 1996, the company has grown and diversified steadily, and now employs more than 1,600 staff across England. The business works in partnership with private businesses, local authorities, the Skills Funding Agency, government departments, local communities, colleges and schools.

Qualifications are delivered through centres around the country. Each centre provides a comprehensive programme of learning and support, including pre-course assessments, regular tutorial support – face-to-face, online and by phone – and individual assessment planning appropriate to each candidate's needs.

An area that Prospects takes very seriously is Advice and Guidance, particularly in the context of careers. It has become a leading national provider of Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) qualifications for young people, adults and employers, supported by OCR which provides the company with a range of qualifications for IAG practitioners at all levels. Prospects now manages and delivers careers and integrated youth support services for more than 350,000 young people in over 20 local authority areas. The company is also one of the largest providers of IAG for adults, including the Next Step careers programme.

"Advice and guidance applies to many professions, careers and sectors, from those working in administrative roles in the public sector, right up to individuals who

are delivering more intensive one-on-one services," explains Martyn Pass, Prospects' Coordinator for IAG qualifications.

"We've been working with OCR for more than ten years and have several OCR IAG qualifications to help train and assess internal staff as well as external customers. We set ourselves very high standards and regard OCR as an awarding body that sets equally high standards. We have a broad and diverse customer base with varying requirements and OCR provides a good range of qualifications to suit them. Recently I've had an influx of learners taking these qualifications from companies like The Exchange Group."

"OCR's qualifications provide learners with many facets for discovery and learning, which they can take into the workplace" says Martyn. "People are always on the look out for new jobs or wish to enhance their careers, and so it's important that we offer them a progression path which OCR's qualifications enable them to achieve. We often have customers coming back to us, having completed their NVQ2 or NVQ3, to tackle the next OCR IAG qualification."

"And they especially enjoy the workshop programme which not only gives them the opportunity to learn alongside others, they can also gain experience of interacting with people who are working in other organisations."

Martyn concludes: "OCR have really helped us tremendously and have become a beacon in the field of IAG qualifications. They are currently the only provider approved to deliver the CIAG related qualifications within the new QCF."

OCR provides IAG qualifications for individuals at all levels of their development and career.

OCR's new Advice and Guidance qualifications have been accredited onto the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF). This is a unit- and credit-based regulatory framework that replaces the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

The Certificate and Diploma in Advice & Guidance are generic qualifications, suitable for a very broad range of workers and employers in the sector (for example, those engaged in general community-based advice, housing, benefits and debt advisers, CAB staff, advocacy workers, employment & training advisers and placement officers).

The new OCR Level 4 Diploma in Career Information & Advice and OCR Level 6 Diploma in Career Guidance & Development have been designed for those whose focus is specifically around providing career-related IAG.

OCR's IAG qualifications provided by Prospects are:

OCR Level 4 Diploma in Career Information & Advice

OCR Level 6 Diploma in Career Guidance & Development

OCR Advice and Guidance Level 3 NVQ Certificate

OCR Advice and Guidance Level 4 NVQ Diploma

For further details of all OCR's Advice and Guidance qualifications, take a look on our website at www.ocr.org.uk/adviceandguidance

prospects



THE WOLF REPORT

PAUL STEER, OCR'S DIRECTOR OF PARTNERSHIPS, TAKES A LOOK AT ITS IMPACT.

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The government has accepted the Wolf Report in its entirety and is committed to turning its recommendations into reality at breakneck speed. What will the impact be?

Firstly, Wolf believes vocational learning is a good thing for 14-19 year olds and she goes out of her way to say this many times in her report. She argues, however, that it should form the smaller part of a young person's education. She also states that vocational qualifications must be challenging to learners and the DfE echoes this, stating they must be 'as stretching and challenging as any GCSE'. Changes to the design of vocational qualifications will follow – they will need to be relatively small to fit alongside the curriculum core, and they will, no doubt, include some form of external assessment.

Wolf argues that the large numbers of vocational qualifications taken in schools in recent years is partly due to the influence of school performance measures. New arrangements will ensure certain 'preferred' vocational qualifications count towards performance measures alongside GCSEs. Whether this will put them on an equal footing with GCSEs remains to be seen.

Wolf is critical of GCSE achievement at A*-C being used as a single performance measure, arguing it should be set alongside other measures of equal weight. The DfE has accepted this recommendation and we'll see a range of different measures brought in to show the achievements of the most and least able. In particular, she is keen that the new measures reduce the risk of schools spending all their effort on the EBacc measure or on pupils thought to be on the border between Grade C and D.

The changes Wolf offers for 16 – 19 vocational learners will also have a large impact. Funding will move from individual qualifications to payment for the delivery of programmes which adhere to a range of broad principles. This is fully aligned with OCR's own commitment to develop and support qualifications in the context of a wider curriculum. When we present our revised Nationals for this age group for first teaching in September 2012, we will be clear how they fit into programmes of study, what needs to sit alongside them and the kinds of progression routes they offer.

Maths and English will feature in many 16+ programmes of study. Elsewhere, this government has expressed reservations about multiple re-sitting of GCSEs, but when it comes to these two subjects, it advocates Wolf's view that post 16 learners who haven't achieved GCSE Maths and English should be encouraged to re-sit them many times, almost in the way that people retake their driving test.

We are sure this approach will not suit all learners and the DfE acknowledges that other qualifications will be needed in Maths and English, post 16, which are valued in their own right but can act as a staging post, taking people closer to GCSE achievement. The role such qualifications could play in the curriculum might also extend to preparation for GCSE at Key Stage 3.

With apprenticeships, the intention is to beef up the general educational requirements within them. This feels at odds with some of the messages from employers who are more focused on technical and job-related requirements. It seems that, despite being a major plank of the government's

skills policy, there is further work to be done on the structures of apprenticeships, and more changes to come.

Another significant change for schools is the proposed removal of work experience as a KS4 requirement. Wolf was right to point out that many schools have struggled to secure quality work experience and with the likely withdrawal of this statutory requirement, some schools will happily walk away from this commitment. But there are many other schools who recognise the benefits of having close links with local employers, even arguing that they will now have greater freedoms to develop these in ways which best suit their needs.

Wolf was also right that meaningful work experience for many 16-19 year olds on vocational programmes is critical to securing progression to employment. The importance of work-based learning is bound to feature in the principles being developed for post 16 vocational programmes. Colleges and providers with strong employer links will be best placed to step up to delivering these requirements.

Finally, we should recognise the potential impact of removing barriers to FE colleges seeking to recruit 14 year olds. The FE sector is well-placed to deliver quality vocational provision within a general education and Wolf is on record as describing them as a more scalable way of delivering technical education than the University Technical Colleges. This could lead to even greater competition amongst providers to recruit 14 year olds.

*Have your say.
Email your comments to agenda@ocr.org.uk*

JOIN OCR AT THESE EXHIBITIONS AND CONFERENCES SUMMER/AUTUMN 2011

JULY

1/3

ESTA (Earth Science Teachers' Association) Annual Conference

Durham University

OCR will be exhibiting at this popular science event where this year's theme is energy. OCR will be showcasing its popular World of Science digital game, which teaches schools and students about the nature of energy and a range of science topics.

www.esta-uk.net

JULY

6

Next Steps for Skills for Life and Functional Skills Conference

Westminster Studio, London

OCR's Chief Executive Mark Dawe will be a keynote speaker at this event on the theme of enhancing literacy and numeracy. Come and hear from sector leaders about funding, eligibilities and other changes for 2011/2012.

www.neilstewartassociates.com/jd245/

OCTOBER

5/8

World Skills London 2011

ExCeL, London

This event is the largest international vocational skills event, which this year comes to the UK. OCR will have a stand with a focus on Apprenticeships. Please do and come visit us on stand 247 and talk to our specialist advisors.

www.worldskillslondon2011.com

NOVEMBER

3/4

ICG Annual Conference

Thistle Hotel, Brighton

OCR will be participating in this important event for careers advisors. As well as hearing OCR's keynote speaker and coming to an OCR workshop, delegates are invited to come and talk to specialists on our stand.

www.icg-uk.org/annual_conference

5

Westminster Briefing: The Future of Vocational Education – Implications of the Wolf Report

Westminster, London

OCR's Chief Executive Mark Dawe will give his views on the Government's priorities for vocational education at this important event. The event allows delegates from all sectors of education to look at the implications of the Wolf Report and the future of vocational education in the UK.

www.westminster-briefing.com/home/event-detail/newsarticle/the-future-of-vocational-education-implications-of-the-wolf-report/

8/9

ALL Language World 2011

Imperial College, London

OCR will be exhibiting at this major event in the annual languages educational calendar. The theme is ALL together and focuses on the link between language and sport, especially with the upcoming London 2012 Olympics.

www.all-languages.org.uk/events/language_world/language_world_2011_all_together

8/10

Association for the Teaching of Psychology Annual Conference

University of Hertfordshire

OCR is pleased to continue our support of this annual conference for all teachers of psychology. This year Professor Elizabeth Loftus will take the stage as keynote speaker. OCR has drawn upon some of Professor Loftus' theories within our curriculum, so please come and see our stand where we shall be doing some exciting activities linked to the keynote address.

www.theatp.org

10/11

Wolfram: The Computer-Based Math Education Summit

Royal Institute, London

OCR is pleased to support this two day summit which aims to address the worldwide maths education crisis by answering the question, "In an era of ubiquitous computing, how should we rebuild maths education from the ground up, to keep pace with and drive progress in the real world?"

www.computerbasedmath.org/events/londonsummit2011/index.html

To join OCR at these events, visit
www.ocr.org.uk/events

OCR ITQ – a brighter choice

**Now's the time to switch to OCR ITQ
– the natural successor to CLAiT.**

OCR ITQ is packed with new features – giving individuals a qualification that fits their individual needs for their career in IT.

- New ITQ Level 2 Extended Certificate that attracts the same performance points as two GCSEs
- Availability of Adobe vendor certificates - Dreamweaver, Flash, Photoshop and Premiere can be used as evidence for ITQ units

And if you've been delivering CLAiT or NVQ for IT Users (iTQ), the transfer to OCR ITQ is simple.

For more information about delivering ITQ, visit www.ocr.org.uk/itq



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