

Vocational Qualifications (QCF, NVQ, NQF)

Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools

Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools Level 2 Certificate - **04465**

Supporting the Wider Curriculum in Schools Level 2 Certificate - **04466**

Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools Level 3 Certificate - **04468**

Cover Supervision of Pupils in Schools Level 3 Certificate - **04469**

Specialist Support for Teaching and Learning in Schools Level 3 Diploma - **04470**

OCR Report to Centres September 2017

OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA) is a leading UK awarding body, providing a wide range of qualifications to meet the needs of candidates of all ages and abilities. OCR qualifications include AS/A Levels, Diplomas, GCSEs, Cambridge Nationals, Cambridge Technicals, Functional Skills, Key Skills, Entry Level qualifications, NVQs and vocational qualifications in areas such as IT, business, languages, teaching/training, administration and secretarial skills.

It is also responsible for developing new specifications to meet national requirements and the needs of students and teachers. OCR is a not-for-profit organisation; any surplus made is invested back into the establishment to help towards the development of qualifications and support, which keep pace with the changing needs of today's society.

This report on the examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the specification content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the examination.

OCR will not enter into any discussion or correspondence in connection with this report.

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Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools – 04465 – 04470

1. Overview:

During 2016-2017 the level 3 Diploma remained the most popular option for learners. Its large number of optional units meant learners in a variety of settings could prove their competence. The overall number of learners on all schemes reduced from the previous year and a small number of centres were considering dropping the qualifications because of funding or other issues. Nevertheless the qualifications continued to equip learners with levels of knowledge and understanding and workplace skills that are highly valued by schools.

Centre support for learners

External Quality Assurance reports during the year often highlighted two outstanding areas of support. The first was the provision of support during initial contact, initial assessment and induction. Based on interviews with learners and examination of procedures, these were described by EQAs as, for example, “thorough”, “full”, “comprehensive” and “rigorous”. The second area was assessor support to individual learners. Positive comments from learners were too numerous to record in full. A few were: “amazing”, “outstanding support”, “can’t praise enough”, “prompt support”, “immediate replies”, “excellent guidance”, “flexible approach”, “I always had a clear plan”. There were very few exceptions to this trend. Even where learners had found certain topics “challenging”, they still reported satisfactory learning outcomes and attributed these to the support received from assessors and tutors.

The one or two exceptions arose where establishments had undergone major reorganisation and there had been a pause in normal service whilst new assessment teams were put in place.

E Portfolios

An increasing number of centres were using e portfolios. Some issues were raised by EQAs, including: recording of assessment methods and management of IQA sampling dates; access to certain data and making feedback to learners more individual. Their reports included recommendations for centres, to ensure that OCR’s assessment recording requirements can continue to be met using the electronic format.

Paper Portfolios

A larger proportion of learners still presented paper evidence. One or two centres offered a choice between paper and electronic. Some centres had good success in improving their holistic approach to evidence assessment, and as a result portfolios were slimmer. Centres and learners should always aim for quality not quantity.

2. General Comments

During the year learners were successful at both levels, with many level 2 completers progressing to level 3 and a few going further, on to the foundation teaching degree. External quality assurance did not find that learners at one level performed any better than those at the other. Assessment decisions sampled by EQAs at both levels were agreed with virtually no exceptions.

For both levels many centres again provided assignments/workbooks/written questions for learners to complete as evidence for knowledge units. Learners often included examples of their work experience to show links between theories and practice and thus prove their understanding. This added value and credibility to learners' work and centres should continue to encourage them to do this. Overall a good variety of assessment methods was used, in accordance with OCR's requirements.

There are a small number of generic assessment issues, at both levels, which centres need to remember in order to maintain high standards and continue meeting requirements. These are:

- 1) Instruct learners always to use "I" in case studies and statements, not "we".
- 2) Ensure professional discussions are carried out according to OCR's requirements set out in their handbook. These are in depth 1:1 discussions between one learner and one assessor. They require detailed preparation by the learner.
- 3) Ensure witness testimonies record what the learner was seen doing; it is not acceptable to re-word criteria. Testimonies should be written in the style of assessor observations.
- 4) All evidence record sheets must show assessment methods beside each piece of evidence logged.

Summary

Overall External Quality Assurance showed that centres demonstrated very good assessment practice during the year. In the one or two cases where this was not the case, centres had either been disrupted due to reorganisation, or internal communications had failed.

Centres are reminded that they need to be conversant with the following OCR documents: Centre Handbooks for the schemes, Criteria for Verified Qualifications and Command Verbs booklet. All these are available on OCR's website www.ocr.org.uk.

3. Comments on Individual Units

Level 2 Mandatory Units

External Quality Assurance during the year revealed only two specific issues with learners' evidence for these units:

- 1) Evidence for LO1 in Unit 2 Safeguarding the welfare of children and young people should include reference to Prevent strategies/procedures/policies.
- 2) Evidence for LO2 in Unit 10 Support children and young people's positive behaviour should always focus on positive behaviour and not negative.

Level 2 Optional Units

No specific issues were raised.

Based on information on OCR's Interchange, the most popular units taken were:

Unit 14 Prepare and maintain learning environments

Unit 15 Provide displays in schools

Unit 20 Support children and young people's travel outside the setting

The next most popular choices were:

Unit 18 Support children and young people with disabilities and special educational needs

Unit 19 Support children and young people's play and leisure.

Level 3 Mandatory Units

External Quality Assurance during the year found the following issues with learner's evidence:

- 1) Evidence for LO3 in Unit 2 Schools as organisations asks learners to give a personal explanation of how ethos and aims etc. work in practice, and then a personal evaluation of methods for communicating those things. Learners therefore need to describe real examples from their schools and make judgements on how well they consider the methods work. Some evidence seen was not rooted in learners' own evaluations.
- 2) Evidence for Unit 4 Understand how to safeguard the wellbeing of children and young people should now include reference to Prevent strategies. EQAs had reminded several centres about this.
- 3) Evidence for LO1 AC1.5 in Unit 8 Promote equality, diversity and inclusion in work with children and young people, must be performance evidence. Learners must have been observed by the assessor or other competent witness demonstrating the relevant principles in their work with children and young people. The evidence can take the form of an observation report, witness testimony (oral or written) or an authenticated personal statement. Some evidence seen was not rooted in performance.

Level 3 Optional Units

External Quality Assurance during the year found the following issues with learners' evidence:

- 1) In one case evidence for LO2 and LO3 in Unit 15 Support teaching and learning in a curriculum area was a little weak. Learners need to provide solid evidence that they have reflected carefully on their performance and knowledge in a specific curriculum area – themed work or a specific subject for example – and then worked to improve them. They then need to show how they have incorporated the improvements into their practice with children and young people in the particular work or subject, and add a brief description of outcomes.
- 2) LO5 AC5.3 in Unit 22 Support disabled children and young people and those with special educational needs requires learners to review and improve, with others, the experiences offered to children and young people. In one case evidence for this was rooted in short informal interactions with colleagues and the child concerned. Evidence should show more than one example of working with others, and contain evidence that experiences have been improved as a result, i.e. description of outcomes.
- 3) In evidence seen for LO4 in Unit 28 Support children and young people during transitions in their lives a learner's support was being given in a general sense and not related specifically to transitions as described in the unit. Centres need to ensure that evidence is clearly rooted in support during transitions.

Based on information on OCR's Interchange, the most popular optional units taken were:

Unit 13 Support literacy development

Unit 14 Support numeracy development

followed by:

Unit 22 Support disabled children and young people and those with special educational needs

Unit 52 Team working.

Summary

Centres are now very familiar with the standards and overall learners are presenting evidence at both levels which meets standards. This is reflected in the small number of evidence issues appearing in EQA reports.

4. Sector Update

There were no changes to the standards in these qualifications and in July this year OCR announced a review date for them of 31/08/2018. Centres have welcomed this news as it enables them to plan their delivery. Learners can therefore be registered until 31/08/2018 and OCR will continue to certificate until 31/08/2020.

Schools at all stages, and catering for learners with the complete spectrum of needs, continue to value and employ teaching assistants. Volunteers in schools who complete these qualifications invariably obtain employment in the sector, and others use it as a stepping stone into the teaching profession.

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