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# GCSE Computing

## The Emmbrook School

Based in Wokingham in Berkshire, The Emmbrook School is a mixed comprehensive school for 11 to 16-year-olds, with around 1,200 students on roll and around 600 in its sixth form. In 2010 the school became a specialist Maths and Computing College, providing a range of ICT and Computing qualifications for its students.

**“We offer ICT qualifications such as GCSE for students who want to follow that route, but we also offer a more technical route which includes OCR’s GCSE Computing,” explains Lorna Panesar, Curriculum Leader for Computing at The Emmbrook School.**

“I chose OCR GCSE Computing because, in doing some research, I felt that the creators of the course were definitely thinking about the skills that our students need today for their future.

OCR’s GCSE Computing course is designed to provide students with an in-depth understanding of how computer technology works. Young students have grown up with the use of computers and other related technology so they are familiar with their use. The GCSE Computing course gives them more insight into what goes on ‘behind the scenes’, including computer programming and problem solving, which many students find absorbing.

The course helps students to develop critical thinking, analysis and problem-solving skills through the study of computer programming. These skills are transferable to other subjects and can be applied in day-to-day life. The course also provides preparation for higher study and employment in the field of computer science.



In Year 11 at The Emmbrook School, there are currently 18 students studying GCSE Computing, but the popularity of Computing is increasing, as Lorna outlines: “We have 31 in Year 10, and we have 91 students in Year 9 who have opted for Computing.

**“The subject is definitely becoming more popular among students, especially boys, because it satisfies their need for logical and technical development.”**

Lorna adds that GCSE Computing particularly meets the needs of students who lean towards maths and science. She explains: “They enjoy being able to develop solutions and understanding computer networking and how that works in their home environment as well as within a business environment.”

The content of the OCR GCSE Computing qualification is split between three modules: programming, research task, and theory.

The programming unit requires pupils to solve three programming tasks. For each task, pupils are required to produce an analysis, project diary and test plan, and working coded solution.

For their research assignment, pupils are required to work independently on a choice of assignments, one of which is an HTML and Javascript assignment, answering questions on a given piece of code and extending that code to produce a customised version.

The progression routes available to students taking OCR GCSE Computing vary according to their interest and ability.

Lorna explains: "Some go the technical route, with the CCNA (Cisco Certified Network Associate) qualification – or indeed any manufacturer's qualifications – or they take the academic route and study A Level Computing in the sixth form."

To help teachers understand and deliver GCSE Computing, there is plenty of assistance available from OCR.

"The support material I would recommend is Dynamic Learning (interactive digital resources that support teaching of OCR GCSE Computing)," says Lorna. "It is very useful, especially for the theory module."

**“There is also an OCR online Computing community. The creators of the course are really active on the forums and answer any questions you have. It’s a resource that is definitely worth using.”**

For other schools considering OCR GCSE Computing, Lorna has this advice: "Attend the OCR courses that are available as they will help you – they enable you to get to know the people who've developed the course and understand their thinking behind it."

For further information about OCR GCSE Computing, visit [www.ocr.org.uk/computing](http://www.ocr.org.uk/computing) or for events go to [www.eventbooker.org.uk](http://www.eventbooker.org.uk)



## Oliver – Year 11 student

**“What I like about GCSE Computing is the programming section, where you get a piece of code, annotate it, develop it and create your own software – it’s really fun. I also like learning about networks, because you use them at home with your broadband routers.”**

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