OCR
Oxford Cambridge and RSA

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 August 2016

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OCR REPORT TO CENTRES

Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools – 04465 - 04470

1. Overview:

The most popular qualification of the suite for 2015-2016 has been the Level 3 Diploma in Specialist Support for Teaching and Learning in Schools, as funding for this qualification through the Apprenticeship scheme and the availability of student loans makes for easier access. The Level 2 Certificate and the Level 3 Certificate in Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools remain popular with those candidates who are mainly volunteers within schools or who are new to the profession. The Level 2 Certificate in Supporting the Wider Curriculum in Schools has somewhat declined during the last twelve months, whereas the Level 3 Certificate in Cover Supervision in Schools has grown in popularity.

All EQA reports have been monitored demonstrating that assessment within centres is thorough and varied. Observation and professional discussion is used as primary evidence, especially for the optional units in order to evidence 'The able to' aspect of the Learning Outcomes. Candidates are visited by their assessors on a regular basis, usually at monthly intervals. An increasing number of centres are using e-portfolio rather than paper based evidence with the most popular being One File, Learning Assistant and Skillsure. The use of e-portfolio allows candidates to upload their evidence and have this assessed far easier and speedier than with the paper based version. Assessment reports are clear with SMART targets and clear feedback. A large number of centres have devised workbooks for the mandatory units which guide candidates through the Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria. Where recommendations have been written on EQA reports, these have been designed to aid centres improve on already satisfactory practices. Actions have only been issued when necessary and relevant and continue to be minimal.

2. General Comments

The EQA team have reported that centre teams carrying out the assessment and IQA activities within centres are suitably experienced and qualified. New assessors are carefully monitored by one of their more experienced counterparts and as many of the assessors and IQA's are former Teaching Assistants themselves, they are already familiar with the requirements. A wide range of assessment methods continues to be used – the mandatory units mainly by the use of assignments which have been carefully designed to ensure that candidates meet all the Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria. Evidence which has been produced as a result of research is clearly referenced using the Harvard system.

With regards to the optional units, the main form of assessment continues to be observation and professional discussion. EQA's have reported that the majority of these observations and professional discussions are holistic and have been written in detail stating when and where they took place.

Candidate feedback is mainly by telephone as it is not always possible for them to be released from their respective schools. Their comments are very encouraging in terms of support received from their respective assessors.

IQA activities are reported in detail, stating the assessment methods used. IQA planners are mainly in colour to denote planned and actual sampling activities. IQA reports (both formative and summative) tend to be placed in the front of each portfolio. A number of centres use colour coding as a method of monitoring trainee and newly qualified assessors more closely than their

experienced counterparts; green for experienced assessors, amber for those new to the centre or with minimal experience and red for those working towards their assessor qualification.

Copies of Assessor and IQA certificates together with CV's are kept within the centre's main file or online and updated as necessary.

Standardisation meetings tend to be on a termly basis and minutes are made available to the EQA.

There have been no queries relating to the standards by members of the EQA team. The only issues raised by centres this year have related to the extension dates for the qualifications and Level 2 ICT Functional Skills which is proving to be a barrier to some candidates achieving.

Resources:

A number of centres are now using e-portfolio the most popular are Learning Assistant and One File and Skillsure. Full training is given to both the assessors and candidates alike in the use of this method of recording evidence. There have been no issues with regards to Health and Safety within centres.

CPD records continue to be kept up to date by centre teams and are placed within the main centre file. Health and Safety and Safeguarding training tend to be updated annually. Larger centres use training rooms for groups of candidates on a weekly basis over half a day. These activities allow candidates to talk with their peers and discuss how to manage and resolve situations that may arise or have arisen within the classroom. EQA's report that they have been able to attend some of these sessions and speak to candidates about their experiences.

Comments on EQA reports include:

The accommodation is within a modern school building which is fully resourced for the purpose of assessment and tutorials

CPD records show the high level of competency within the centre team

There is clear evidence of updating the Safeguarding Policy and 'Prevent' training.

This is a strong team with excellent knowledge and understanding of the qualification. They have given clear guidance to their trainee assessors.

Candidate Support:

Many of the Level 2 and Level 3 Certificate candidates are volunteers or newly appointed Teaching Assistants.

EQA's report that candidates are well supported within their respective centres and are visited by their assessor on a regular basis. Candidates undergo an in-depth induction programme where they receive information on building a portfolio of evidence, types of evidence, and how to record this. At this time they are also introduced to their assessor and given copies of their respective programmes. An increasing number of candidates are using e-portfolio which they report is extremely useful as they can upload their evidence and email this to their assessor.

EQA's report that candidates are fully aware of the appeals procedure and have been given a copy during their induction which is placed in their portfolio. Candidates are able to contact their assessor easily by either text, telephone or email.

The use of a textbook which was written to help candidates work through the mandatory units is not being used as frequently as in the past due to an increasing number of centres writing their own assignments to address these units. Candidates report that these centre devised assignments guide them through the evidence requirements which for those new to the programme is highly beneficial.

EQA's report that there is good variety of evidence being used with observation and professional discussion being the primary form for the optional units. Witness Testimonies, generally written by the class teacher, give a concise report on the candidate's performance within the classroom. Evidence, produced as a result of research, is correctly referenced using the Harvard system.

Assessment plans demonstrate that candidates and assessors have sat down together to plan what and how the assessment criteria should be met and that all the targets are SMART.

Comments on EQA reports include:

xxxxxx said that she was using the qualification as a stepping stone towards teacher training

xxxxxx reported that although she had found the qualification very challenging, she found researching information extremely rewarding

The feedback I have been given by xxxxxx, my assessor, has been excellent. She is always available either by email or phone if I need help

The learner I spoke to explained how the assessment planning was carried out

Assessment Review:

EQA's continue to report that IQA activities are thorough with clear feedback given. Many centres use an IQA sampling plan per assessor and IQA sampling continues to show coverage of all assessors and units with colour coding being used on the sampling plans. Both formative and summative IQA activities take place on a regular basis.

Assessment plans give a clear timescale for completion and all targets are SMART.

Assessment and IQA activities are conducted by appropriately qualified and occupationally competent staff and where assessors and IQA's are working towards their respective qualifications, they are closely monitored until qualified. IQA's in a number of centres use a traffic light system as a means of monitoring their assessors – green for those who are experienced; amber for those relatively new to the centre or newly qualified; red for those currently training to become an assessor.

Standardisation meetings take place at regular intervals and involve the whole team. As the current standards have been in place for a number of years, there is less standardisation of specific units; instead team/standardisation meetings are based around types of assessment and its validity and sufficiency.

Any actions identified during EQA visits are discussed during the next team or standardisation meeting.

Comments regarding assessment include:

IQA records continue to be clearly and constructively completed

Assessors are observed annually and feedback given both verbally and in writing. The assessor monitoring forms were available at the visit

Regular standardisation meetings occur where both business and standardisation activities take place

The centre has a comprehensive IQA sampling spreadsheet showing all units sampled, all of which are uploaded on to the e-portfolios system.

Internal Verification Review:

There is evidence that senior management continue to support both the delivery and assessment of OCR's verified qualifications and give full support to both the assessment and IQA teams. Centre policies and procedures, which are maintained in the a central file are reviewed annually to ensure they remain fit for purpose and copies of Equal Opportunities and Access to Fair Assessment policies can be found within this file. Where the centre belongs to a Local Authority, then the LA's policies and procedures are adopted.

Also maintained within the central file are copies of assessor and IQA certificates, CV's and CPD records, together with sample signatures. Records of standardisation meetings demonstrate that there is clear and effective communication between team members.

An increasing number of centres have appointed a Lead IQA which has led to increased efficiency as regards allocation of candidates to assessors and the actual IQA activities being carried out which allows for more effective monitoring across both the assessment and the IQA team.

Conversations with both assessors and IQA's confirm that they have been given sufficient time to carry out their roles and the use of e-portfolios has greatly reduced the time spent in travelling to meet their respective candidates.

Centres maintain records of their candidates together with a list of their achievements and these records are readily available during EQA visits. Records are also stored for the required period of time.

The main query during the past year has been around the last certification date for each of the qualifications in the suite, giving concern to the registration of further candidates. Once an extension to the registration dates had been announced, centres felt more at ease.

Comments regarding internal verification review include:

The team fully understand their roles, responsibilities and access to fair assessment

There is excellent communication within the team which is professionally led by xxxxxxx

A new Access and Fair Responsibilities document has been created together with a new Roles and Responsibilities document. These are placed within the centre file

EQA visits are always well organised. Information, relating to candidate lists, is sent in sufficient time and all requests are readily met

3. Comments on Individual Units

The most popular optional units within the Level 2 Certificate are:

Unit 15 – Provide displays in schools
Unit 8 – Maintain and support relationships with children and young people
Unit 11 – Support children and young people's positive behaviour

The most popular optional units within the Level 3 Diploma are:

Unit 12 – Plan and deliver learning activities under the direction of the teacher
Unit 13 – Support literacy development
Unit 14 – Support numeracy development
Unit 15 – Support teaching and learning in a curricular area
Unit 20 – Support bilingual learners (mandatory under the rules of combination)
Unit 21 – Provide bilingual support for teaching and learning
Unit 22 – Support disabled children and young people and those with special educational needs
  (mandatory under the rules of combination)
Unit 23 – Support children and young people with behaviour, emotional and social development needs
Unit 24 – Support learners with cognition and learning needs
Unit 25 – Support learners with communication and interaction needs
Unit 26 – Support learners with sensory and/or physical needs
Unit 27 – Support individuals to meet personal care needs
Unit 45 – Supervise children and young people on journeys, visits and activities outside the setting

4. Sector Update

Now that the last entry date for registration for the all the qualifications within the current standards has been extended to 31 August 2017, centres are able to plan for the future. There have been no changes to the current standards and currently none are expected.

Schools, in particular the primary sector are now employing an increasing number of teaching assistants. Those working in special schools are supporting children and young people on a one-to-one basis and find the units within the Level 3 Diploma especially helpful. There are also an increasing number of Learning Support Assistants and Cover Supervisors being employed in the Secondary sector.

Ofsted reports continue to highlight the valuable contribution to classroom activities made by the teaching assistants and the high level of support they provide.

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