

# Achieve

Spring 2015



CAMBRIDGE ASSESSMENT



## Welcome to *Achieve*

The latest news from Cambridge Assessment, the University's international exams group.



## Turning principles into practice

Teachers explore inspiring teaching and learning. see page 7



## Group's research expertise recognised

Tim Oates is honoured with a CBE. see page 2

## Cambridge collaborators to "take back ownership of maths"

Teachers, academics and the wider maths community need to wrestle back ownership of the subject, Cambridge Assessment's Group Chief Executive has told a conference about the future of maths.

Simon Lebus was speaking at the launch of Cambridge Mathematics, a five-year project to develop a framework that will help support world-class mathematics education for students aged from five to 19. The project is a cross-University collaboration involving the Faculty of Maths, Cambridge University Press (CUP), the Faculty of Education, and Cambridge Assessment. The maths education community both internationally and in the UK is being called upon to contribute to the project.

"The framework is about providing a neutral but structured idiom in which discussion about the shape and requirements of maths education can take place," Simon Lebus said.

"There has been a lot of talk at today's event about politics and how maths education can be influenced by policy makers. I think part of our responsibility as a professional community, as educators and also for those

*continued on page 3*



The launch of the Cambridge Mathematics framework was divided up into lively debates around the framework itself, professional development, support resources, and assessment. In the afternoon, CUP's Managing Director of Education Hanri Pieterse (right) chaired the session on support resources.



## Tackling the basics with a broader curriculum



Andy Whittall –  
Chairman, Educore

Here in Zambia the literacy rate stands at just 71 per cent; 25th out of 54 countries in Africa and 142nd out of 193 countries worldwide. Of this number, only 43 per cent can read with fluency on leaving primary school. It is easy to imagine the knock-on effect statistics like these have on a country's economic development.

At Educore Services, a Zambia-based education organisation, we believe how our country tackles these statistics and gives our students the crucial tools they need to succeed is of paramount importance. The Zambian education system has historically emphasised theory over practice, but over the last academic year we have found the Cambridge curriculum content (taught in five out of six of our schools) particularly useful in our context. This is because it enables children to use and apply skills rather than teaching skills in isolation; last year the children in one of our Primaries achieved 77 per cent accelerated progress in reading. The biggest success story was Nenji: three years and four months' progress in one year and three months. He is now reading above his reading age. The impact innovative teaching and good curriculum design can have is demonstrated in these results.

Improved reading and writing is not however the panacea for Southern Africa's rising generations. On leaving our schools, these young people will have to grapple to find a foothold in a swiftly changing employment market. The gap between the knowledge taught in schools and the skills required in the workplace is growing wider, and high levels of unemployment (25 per cent of working age Zambians are wholly economically inactive) clearly demonstrate to us the need to prepare our students with the practical skills and theory they will need to gain access to meaningful work.

To combat this growing skills gap, we are exploring with UK exam board Oxford, Cambridge and RSA the development of curricula in our schools to include alternative vocational and technical programmes, coupled with more traditional pathways. Specialist subjects tailored to meet the needs of the Southern African job market are intrinsic to the future success of the children in our care, and indeed to the ongoing development of the region.

While the worth and growing popularity of vocational and technical qualifications is clear, the provision of these as part of a traditional education remains a contentious subject. If we are to properly equip these young people for their future, it is clear to us that they must be able to learn specialist expertise and practical skills – yet in our schools we also always remember the literacy statistics at the top of this column. There is little to gain in broadening the curriculum beyond traditional subjects unless this learning is underpinned by the highest expectations from our students in literacy and numeracy. For us, technical training will always go hand in hand with rigorous core education.

*Educore Services is a Zambia-based education organisation engaged in setting up and running all-through schools at three levels of affordability. The company has also founded Zambia's first practice-based teacher training academy and is working to improve educational outcomes through outstanding teaching and training, with the aim of changing the face of education in the region.*

### NEWS IN BRIEF

## Group's research expertise recognised

Cambridge Assessment's Group Director of Assessment Research and Development has been appointed Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE). The award recognises Tim Oates' services to Education.

Tim, who chaired the 2010 National Curriculum review, has advised the UK Government for many



Tim Oates, Cambridge Assessment's Group Director of Assessment Research and Development

years on both practical matters and assessment policy. He has been with Cambridge Assessment since May 2006.

"I am pleased to receive this honour; I would like to thank all those at Cambridge Assessment who enabled me to make this contribution to improving our education system," Tim said.

Simon Lebus, Group Chief Executive of Cambridge Assessment, said: "We are all delighted that Tim has been so honoured; it is a signal recognition of the body of work he continues to produce as a Group Director at Cambridge Assessment."

The Order of the British Empire was established by King George V on 4 June 1917 and is conferred for important services rendered to the Crown. It is awarded to both men and women, and it consists of five classes including Commander.

## Australia widens English pool

Australia's Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP) is to accept *Cambridge English: Advanced* scores as proof of English language ability under a range of visa categories.

The test has been accepted by Australia for student visa programmes since 2011 but now it will also be

recognised for Temporary Graduate, Skilled, Former Resident and Work and Holiday visa programmes. Daniel Yuen, Regional Manager, Australia and New Zealand, said: "This new acceptance by the DIBP is really good news and shows the importance it places on high-level English language skills."



## Cultural exchange

A group of teachers and students from Vietnam has been finding out how a Danish school implements the Cambridge IGCSE curriculum.

SKALs Efterskole International Boarding School played host to 26 students and teachers from Nguyen Sieu Private Primary and Secondary School in Vietnam. They joined classes in a range of subjects such as English as a Second Language, Maths, Science and Global Perspectives.

At weekends, the students stayed with local families to experience Danish culture.

Danish teacher Tina Serup said: "Inter-cultural competence has been developed, English language skills have improved and international friendships have been established." Vietnamese teacher Lien Kim Dinh said: "My two weeks in Denmark couldn't have been better. I have learned a lot."

Danish students and teachers are paying a return visit to the school in Hanoi in April.

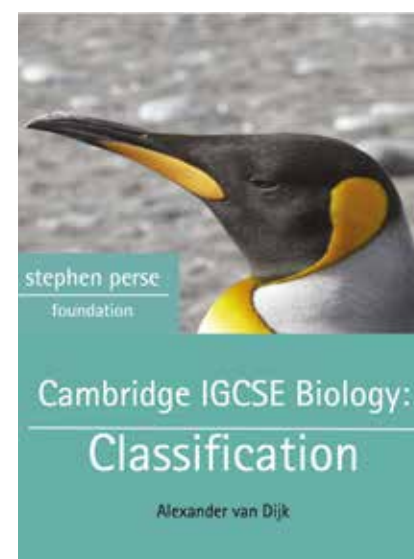
## Praise for a technology first

The Secretary of State for Education in England has praised an initiative in which multimedia textbooks for a Cambridge IGCSE are published for free online.

In a keynote speech to the BETT educational technology show in London, Nicky Morgan MP had warm words for a project under which the Stephen Perse Foundation in Cambridge is publishing 12 textbooks which support Cambridge IGCSE Biology. The books, written by teacher Alexander van Dijk and produced by digital curator Aisling Brown, are free to download through Apple's iBooks store. The school is believed to be the first in the UK to publish free online textbooks covering an entire exam syllabus.

Mrs Morgan told the event that there had "never been a more exciting time to think about the way in which emerging technologies can transform the world of education".

She praised the Stephen Perse Foundation for making the multimedia textbooks available online for all to use, saying such things "helped spread good practice from school to school".



The Cambridge IGCSE Biology course is taken by around 500,000 students in 160 countries worldwide. Cambridge International Examinations' Chief Executive Michael O'Sullivan welcomed the Education Secretary's comments.

"The English Secretary of State for Education is surely right to foresee an ever-growing role for such digital technology in teaching, learning and assessment," he said.



## Cambridge collaborators to "take back ownership of maths"

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Above: Professor Margaret Brown, King's College London, and Lynne McClure, Director, Cambridge Mathematics.

who are mathematicians, is to take ownership of the public discourse about maths and make sure we have an idiom that we own, and which recognises and captures the complex nature of the subject and the extent of the landscape in which we need to operate in order to make improvements."

Mr Lebus called upon everyone to engage with the consultation about the framework, including business.

"One of the big frustrations we often have is that business people come and say 'Oh, people coming into our industry, they don't know anything about maths,'" he said.

"But when you say 'Can you tell us what specific mathematical skills you want us to focus on?' they can't specify."

The framework will lie at the heart of Cambridge Mathematics and will have 'can do' statements associated with different skill levels and domains so that businesses can better identify the skills they need job applicants to demonstrate. The idea underpinning the framework is the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) which helps to shape curricula, resources and professional development in the field of English language learning.

Earlier in the day Lynne McClure, the director of the project, set out the aims of Cambridge Mathematics.

"Frameworks of course come and go, so what is different about this? It's an amazing opportunity to take time to reflect, to make good use of the resources of the university, to take time to produce something which is driven by the professional communities rather than policy makers' timelines," she said.



Birgit Pepin, Professor of Mathematics Education at Høgskolen i Sør-Trøndelag, Norway, asks a question.



Lynne McClure, Director, Cambridge Mathematics.



The day allowed plenty of time for delegates to interact and debate the ideas raised.

"We want the name of Cambridge Mathematics to be associated with a guarantee of an evidence-based curriculum and assessment; something that's respected both nationally and internationally. It would be fantastic if you would come along on the journey with us," she said.

The day was divided up into lively debates around the framework itself, professional development, support resources, and assessment. It began with a video presentation by Professor Sir Leszek Borysiewicz, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cambridge.

He said mathematics is "absolutely fundamental to the world of tomorrow", adding: "we owe it to our young people to make sure that they are provided with the best tools and to help teachers get the very best out of their students". He said while "conversations can sometimes drift" Cambridge Mathematics was different because it had a very clear goal – to deliver the best maths education.

• You can join the Cambridge Mathematics consultation on the dedicated website here: [www.cambridgemaths.org/consultation](http://www.cambridgemaths.org/consultation).

## "Join us on our journey"

**It promises to be an amazing journey – and all those interested in maths are encouraged to join it.**

The first draft of the Cambridge Mathematics framework has been created by a team which is headed up by renowned maths educator Lynne McClure. The idea underpinning it is the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) which helps to shape curricula, resources and professional development in the field of English language learning.

Now the ambition is for the maths education community both internationally and in the UK to contribute to subsequent drafts and so help perfect the framework.

- Please join the Cambridge Mathematics consultation on the dedicated website here: [www.cambridgemaths.org/consultation](http://www.cambridgemaths.org/consultation).

## UK changes immigration rules

**Tests from only two exam boards will be accepted by the UK government as evidence of visa applicants' English language proficiency.**

The changes to the rules around immigration come after an extensive government review. As a result, from 5 April only *IELTS* (International English Language Testing System) and Trinity College London will be approved providers of the Secure English Language Tests (SELTs) used for visa applications.

The move reflects the UK Home Office's confidence in *IELTS*, which has a 25-year pedigree and is recognised by more than 9,000 organisations worldwide. *IELTS*, which is jointly owned by Cambridge English Language Assessment, the British Council and IDP: IELTS Australia, is the only SELT that will be available worldwide.

Under the changes, there will be new requirements for the way the tests are administered. A network of test centres across the UK and the rest of the world is being set up by *IELTS* to meet all the new conditions. A new *IELTS* Life Skills test will also be introduced for people who need to prove their speaking and listening skills at level A1 or B1 of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR).

Cambridge English exams other than *IELTS* will not be included on the UK government's SELT list, but they will remain valid for other visa and immigration purposes. The changes do not affect the use of Cambridge English exams or *IELTS* by people from the European Union, European Economic Area or Switzerland.

# IELTS™



## British students to examine UK migration history

**Fourteen-to-16-year-olds in the UK look set to be able to study the history of migration into Britain since Roman times.**

Two new GCSEs have been developed by UK exam board Oxford, Cambridge and RSA for first teaching in 2016, one on the Modern World and the other in conjunction with the Schools History Project (SHP). Both will include migration as an optional new topic.

Students will be required to demonstrate that they understand the reasons people migrated to Britain, the experience of migrants in Britain and their impact on Britain. They also need to be able to explain the roles played by factors such as Britain's connections with the wider world, beliefs, attitudes and values, governments, economic forces and communications.

Mike Goddard, Head of History at OCR, said: "Migration is an ideal history topic for GCSE students to study, allowing them to consider fundamental concepts such as continuity, change and significance. Doing this through the lens of the movement of diverse groups of people has the added benefit of contemporary relevance and will make for a rigorous, stimulating and enjoyable course."

He continued: "Migration has been a constant and, in many important ways, a defining feature of our history. Tracking it thematically over time makes for a complex and fascinating study, will build on recent academic research, and will reveal many new and enlightening aspects of our past."

Both draft GCSEs are being submitted for accreditation to the England exams regulator Ofqual.

## Baking a pathway to employment

**A programme that helps vulnerable women get ready for employment is being supported by UK exam board Oxford, Cambridge and RSA.**

The Luminary Bakery in London is running a six-month programme that helps vulnerable women from backgrounds of domestic abuse, prison, prostitution, drug addiction and homelessness get ready for employment by learning to bake. OCR is providing support in the form of relevant qualifications and guidance on approaches to teaching and learning.

The 'myLife' course includes identifying what an 'employable' baker looks like (pictured below), undertaking a food hygiene qualification and working towards OCR's (Level 2) Life and Living Skills qualification.

The artisan baked goods created by the trainees are sold in the Kahaila Cafe on Brick Lane, east London, with all the profit re-invested back into the charity.



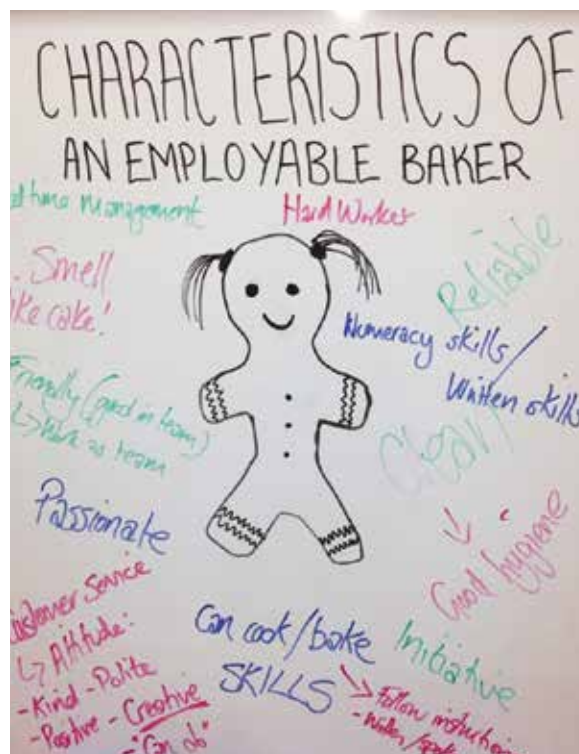
One of the women on the training programme told London's *Evening Standard* newspaper (which supports the project through its Dispossessed Fund): "Being inside has made it hard for me to get work – this is a chance to start a new life for me and my son."

OCR staff are also advising the team running the project on teaching and learning approaches within their programme delivery, and will be supporting them to contextualise English and maths alongside employability skills.

Luminary Bakery Project Manager, Alice Boyle, said: "OCR has been really forward thinking in the way they support us and our learners. The Life and Living Skills qualification suits this course as it is exactly what these women need at a point where they are looking to change the direction of their life, enhance their CV and get into the world of work."

There is already a waiting list for the programme and the bakery team is moving into its own premises later this year.

OCR Director of Skills and Employment, Charlotte Bosworth, said: "It is fantastic to see the impact the project is already having and we are really proud to be supporting the work of the Luminary Bakery team and trainees. OCR is increasingly looking to work with socially responsible projects like this."



The course includes identifying some of the characteristics of an employable baker.

## Teaching the teachers

**Non-native English language teachers are set to benefit from a new programme of online training courses.**

The Cambridge English *Language for Teaching* courses are designed to improve the skills of teachers already working in the classroom, giving them the language they need to teach English with confidence. They are aimed at primary and secondary level teachers working for national or regional ministries of education, or for language school chains.

Andrew Nye, Assistant Director Stakeholders at Cambridge English Language Assessment, said the courses were responding to a need:

"English is now a huge priority for many national and regional governments and this has been the driving force behind the new courses.

"We've designed a practical way to raise English language teaching standards across school systems by enabling teachers to develop their English language skills and confidently use more English with their students. The courses support professional and personal development by developing the language skills needed inside and outside the classroom."

The three courses are each made up of 120 hours of online study, with optional tutored material which can be delivered either face to face or virtually. The courses help teachers progress through levels A1 to A2, A2 to B1 and B1 to B2 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages – an internationally recognised framework of language ability.





## Responding to an SOS

Vulnerable families in Spain are to benefit from a partnership with the world's largest charity for orphaned and abandoned children.

Cambridge English Language Assessment in Spain and Portugal has signed an agreement with Aldeas Infantiles SOS to help provide funding to the charity, which helps vulnerable families care for their children.

As part of the agreement the organisation becomes a 'Present Builder' which means it will be contributing to the funding of projects run by the charity. The Cambridge English sponsorship will focus on a day-care centre for children in Zaragoza, where the organisation also has an SOS Children's village.

Elaine Blaus, Regional Director for Cambridge English in Spain and Portugal, said: "As an educational institution we have a commitment to the ongoing development of children and young people which makes us really proud to be supporting such an important initiative. The work of SOS enables children, youth and families at risk of exclusion to become active and valuable members of society."

Cambridge English has created the Twitter hashtag #ColaboracionAldeasInfantiles to report back on the project as it progresses.



Cambridge English Language Assessment in Spain and Portugal signing an agreement with Aldeas Infantiles SOS.

## China looks forward

The question of how to build a curriculum that equips learners for the future has been debated at a conference in China.

Over 200 Chinese school leaders and guests attended the event in Beijing which was opened by Sir Sebastian Wood, Britain's Ambassador to China. The morning included contributions from Simon Lebus, Group Chief Executive, Cambridge Assessment, and Michael O'Sullivan, Chief Executive of its international exam board.

Simon Lebus talked about the close relationship between the University of Cambridge and China, while Michael O'Sullivan took a closer look at his board's qualifications, examining in detail how they prepare students to be successful in higher education.

Val Sismey, Head of Recognitions for the board, led the afternoon session. She looked at why an increasing number of universities in the USA are using Cambridge qualifications in their admissions processes, valuing them as evidence of outstanding academic achievement.

In his speech, Michael O'Sullivan said: "Our International A Level syllabuses help students develop a deep understanding of subjects, as well as independent learning and constructive thinking skills which are valued by universities."



More than 200 Chinese school leaders and guests attended a Beijing conference on how to build a curriculum that equips learners for the future.

## New direction in UK practical science

A new model for the assessment of A Level practical science in the UK has been launched by exam board Oxford, Cambridge and RSA.



Oxford, Cambridge and RSA Chief Executive Mark Dawe addresses the event.

Under changes set out by the England exams regulator Ofqual, practical work will no longer contribute to a student's final grade in new science A Levels. Instead, students will be given a pass or fail as part of a separate endorsement.

The heated issue of practical assessment in science in the UK is something OCR has long campaigned about – including commissioning research from parent body Cambridge Assessment on the subject in 2013.

OCR believes the new endorsement approach will improve the current system, as it is supported by an approach that increases the amount of practical work undertaken by students and engenders a deeper understanding of science through greater experimentation.

The launch of OCR's new model for assessing practicals at the Royal Institution in London in February followed a successful joint trial by four exam boards of the new criteria for assessing practical work. A Level teachers and students from 22 schools and colleges around the country who took part in the cross-board trial responded enthusiastically. A video of trial feedback is available at [www.ocr.org.uk/PositiveAboutPractical](http://www.ocr.org.uk/PositiveAboutPractical).

Dr Steve Evans, Head of GQ Reform at OCR, is responsible for the development of OCR's new science qualifications. He said: "It's making experiments truly experimental again. Learning from mistakes is a key path to knowledge. As Albert Einstein asserted, 'a person who never made a mistake never tried anything new!'"

From September 2015, students will keep a personal log, allowing teachers to see their thought processes but also helping students revise for questions about practical work, which will make up 15 per cent of the end-of-course examinations. The logbook will also be of use for admitting prospective students to higher education.

Emeritus Professor of Science Education at the University of York, Robin Millar, said: "Many teachers that I speak to think the new approach can lead to more, and better, practical work being carried out during the A-level course. Students will gain direct experience of a range of equipment and methods that give them a better understanding of how observation and measurement are used in the sciences to develop and support explanations, and build up their confidence in working in a laboratory environment."



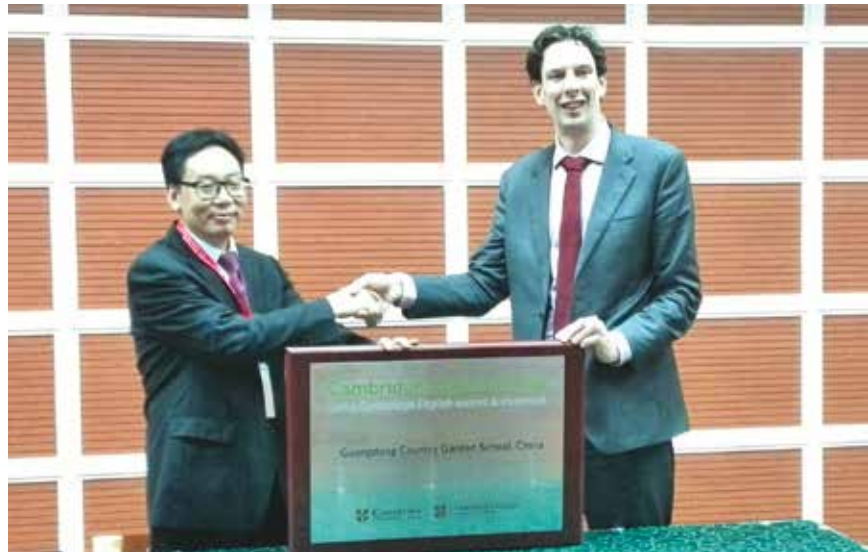
## Chinese schools blaze English trail

Four schools have become the first in China to join a global programme to help them raise standards of English language learning.

Guangdong Country Garden School, Guangzhou Huamei International School, South Foreign Language School of Songshan Lake and Phoenix City International School have joined the Cambridge English Schools programme, an initiative run by Cambridge English Language Assessment and Cambridge University Press.

The programme was launched at an event held in Guangzhou Province, where the four schools are based.

Around 100 representatives from local schools and training centres across the province attended the launch event, which included a seminar on the impact of testing, jointly presented by Steven Miller, Cambridge English Regional Director, East Asia, and Dr Lillian Huang of the Guangdong Department of Education. There was also a panel discussion on best practice in English teaching and assessment, featuring representatives of the four schools.



Four schools from China's Guangzhou Province have become the first in the country to join the Cambridge English Schools programme.

## Commissioner Charlotte

Charlotte Bosworth, UK exam board OCR's Director of Skills & Employment, has accepted an invitation to become a permanent Commissioner for the UK Parliamentary Skills Commission, an independent body comprising leading figures from across the education sector.



Charlotte Bosworth, OCR's Director of Skills & Employment.

"I'm delighted to have been invited to become a Commissioner," Charlotte said.

"By continuing to work closely with the Skills Commission, OCR is striving to ensure that the right skills policy is developed, with the learner placed at the heart of a broader curriculum. It is vital that we are more flexible in how we recognise and record learners' progress in developing new skills."

The Commission is co-chaired by Barry Sheerman MP and Dame Ruth Silver. Members include parliamentarians from all the main parties, and highly experienced practitioners from across the skills sector. With support from the UK education foundation, Edge, the Commission carries out a range of research and makes recommendations for skills policy reform.

School in Hertfordshire, where head teacher Dame Alison Peacock presented the teachers with a copy of her book *Learning without Limits* and gave them free rein to visit the classrooms. The second visit was to a local primary school, Fulbourn Primary, where the teachers again found evidence of the benefits of formative assessment in practice.

Jill Grimshaw, Network Senior Manager, said: "We were delighted to welcome the delegation to Cambridge.

"As always, the teachers were incredibly hard working and enthusiastic and keen to take as much advantage as possible of the time they spent in Cambridge. It was a great experience for all concerned."

## A window on 21st century formative assessment

Primary school teachers from Singapore have been exploring the art of formative assessment on a tailor-made course.

The programme, designed by the Cambridge Assessment Network, included a review of the principles and purposes of assessment as well as key topics such as dialogic teaching, oracy and digital literacy.

It was developed in partnership with the Curriculum Planning division of the Singapore Ministry of Education and designed to align with competencies identified by the Ministry as increasingly important in the 21st

century, such as critical and inventive thinking. Training was delivered in the form of discussions, practical workshops and lectures by Network consultants and guest speakers from the Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge.

An essential part of the course was to visit some local primary schools, to see the principles of formative assessment in action. The group went to Wroxham



Primary school teachers from Singapore explored the art of formative assessment on a tailor-made course.



## How to turn principles into practice

Practical ideas about how teachers and school leaders can turn principles into practice have been discussed at a major conference in Sri Lanka.

More than 350 principals and teachers from 30 countries attended the Cambridge Schools Conference.

Held at the Northshore College of Business and Technology in Colombo, the conference explored the theme of 'inspiring teaching, inspiring learning'. The busy two-day programme included keynote speakers, panel discussions and workshops, and was designed to provide practical ideas that teachers and school leaders could take away with them. Tristian Stobie, Director, Education, at Cambridge International Examinations explained in his opening address: "This is a conference about turning principles into practice."

Other speakers included Dr Norbert Pachler from the Institute of Education in London and education consultant C J Simister. Dr Pachler, who was involved in the creation of new Cambridge Professional Development Qualifications, spoke about the value of

teaching that is informed by evidence, while C J Simister's address explored a range of strategies that teachers can use to give their students opportunities to acquire essential skills.

Fariha Faisal, from Roots Ivy International School in Pakistan, wrote on the conference app: "Thank you so much Team Cambridge for sharing your knowledge with us. I've already started implementing your ideas in my institution."

This year, Cambridge Schools Conferences will take place in Cambridge and Dubai. Conference highlights can be viewed at [www.cie.org.uk](http://www.cie.org.uk).



More than 350 principals and teachers from 30 countries attended the Sri Lanka conference.



## Cambridge–Macedonia partnership blooms

The first stage of work to introduce new maths and science curricula in all Macedonian state primary schools has been successful.



Macedonia's capital city, Skopje.

Teachers started implementing the new curricula for Grades 1–3 in September 2014. Following the success of this stage of the project, Cambridge Assessment's international exam board is working with the government and teachers in Macedonia on the introduction of new maths and science curricula for Grades 4–6.

Michael O'Sullivan, the Chief Executive of Cambridge International Examinations, visited Macedonia to mark the next phase of the work, which is the result of a partnership with the Ministry of Education and Science and the Education Development Bureau in Macedonia. He toured an elementary school in Skopje with Spiro Ristovski, Deputy Minister of Education and Science, seeing teachers and pupils working on the new curriculum.



Spiro Ristovski, right, meets pupils working on maths and science at Grades 1–3. With him are Vesna Horvatovikj, Director, Bureau for Development of Education, left, and Abdilaqim Ademi, Minister of Education and Science.



## Leading the way

A new course that is tailor-made for leaders in assessment is being held in Cambridge in September. The latest professional development programme from the Cambridge Assessment Network, 'Leadership in National Assessment' looks at assessment, education and society from a global perspective. It is specially designed for senior managers in examination boards, policy makers and ministry officials who want to understand the intricacies involved in the planning and implementation of complex educational reforms.

Being held over the week beginning 21 September, the course will examine different ways to measure system performance and will include expert commentaries on alternative reform processes. The role and use of international surveys such as PISA and TIMSS will be at the core of the programme. For more information and to register visit: [www.canetwork.org.uk/leadership](http://www.canetwork.org.uk/leadership).



A 'Leadership in National Assessment' course takes place in Cambridge in September.

## CONTACT US

Please feel free to phone, write or email at any time:

**Bene't Steinberg** or **Hilary Fletcher**

Public Affairs

1 Regent Street

Cambridge

CB2 1GG

Tel: +44 (0)1223 556018 (direct)

[public.affairs@cambridgeassessment.org.uk](mailto:public.affairs@cambridgeassessment.org.uk)



**CAMBRIDGE ASSESSMENT**

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## The place to be for education

The largest gathering of education and skills ministers in the world has been taking place – with Cambridge playing a key part.

More than 80 international education ministers gathered in London for the Education World Forum 2015, which was opened by Secretary of State for Education in England Nicky Morgan MP. Delegates shared the education system challenges they face, the solutions they have found and the successes they have achieved.

Under the Cambridge brand, Cambridge International Examinations, Cambridge English Language Assessment and Cambridge University Press were Platinum Partners for the event.

Representing the partners, Michael O'Sullivan gave a talk on the subject of 'Accelerating Teaching Quality Improvement'. He told the conference that "nothing matters more than good teaching in education". But he warned that "no amount of effort or expenditure directed at teacher training will yield good results



unless essential factors beyond the control of teachers are in the right place".

He said these three factors were curriculum, assessment and environment. A good curriculum, he said, needed to present opportunities for subjects to be studied in depth as well as breadth. He then turned to assessment, which he said should strike a balance between testing knowledge and skills, while high-stakes exams and tests should be used sparingly. Lastly he turned to environment, focusing on a recent paper on textbooks by Cambridge Assessment's Group Director of Research and Development Tim Oates. He said the best textbooks can provide teachers with a supportive environment in which to work.

You can read the full text of Michael O'Sullivan's speech as well as a live blog he authored on the Cambridge Assessment website at [www.cambridgeassessment.org.uk](http://www.cambridgeassessment.org.uk).

## UK vocational offer goes international

UK exam board Oxford, Cambridge and RSA is making strides in delivering vocational qualifications worldwide.

At the start of the year, Cambridge Technical vocational qualifications were successfully introduced in Mauritius. Now Level 3 Cambridge Technicals in IT and Sport, as well as the Level 3 Cambridge Technical Introductory Diploma in IT, are being introduced at one of OCR's international pilot schools – St John's Educational Trust in Harare, Zimbabwe.

The pilot has enabled the exam board to develop an innovative approach to moderation which overcomes the difficulties posed by geographical location. The remote process is facilitated by an e-portfolio system, and offers a huge amount of flexibility to users in managing and submitting student work. In addition to being a digital repository, the system provides a user-friendly network-style interface which allows students to communicate with teachers, and enables



UK exam board OCR's Level 3 Cambridge Technicals in Sport are being piloted in Zimbabwe.

teachers to comment and mark on-screen, as well as submit work for moderation. Teachers at St John's are also using OCR's e-community network to share best practice with fellow schools in the UK.

## National test put to the test

An appraisal of a national test taken by university-bound school leavers in Ukraine has been carried out in the first phase of a project of reform.



The Ukrainian Center for Educational Quality Assessment has signed an agreement to work closely with Cambridge English Language Assessment on the project. The first phase saw staff from Cambridge English advise on Common European Framework of Reference for Languages level as well as content and context validity.

Pictured from left to right are Arek Jaworski, Head of Marketing Northern Europe, Gillian Horton-Krueger, Head of Assessment Services in Northern Europe, Ihor Likarchuk, Director of the Ukrainian Center for Educational Quality Assessment and Daryna Sizhuk, Consultant in Ukraine.