

## Centre Support Update

Issue 10: February 2009

Welcome to the latest edition of the Asset Languages *Centre Support Update*. Hope you have all had a good half-term break.



Join us at stand no 7 at the Primary Languages Show

### *In this issue...*

*At the Primary Languages Show*

*Look out for a new face at Asset*

*We've got UCAS points*

*Spring training dates*

*New World of Work samples*

### *A strong start to 2008/9*

Teacher Assessment Packs continue to grow in popularity. In the first five months of the academic year 2008/9, orders for Packs averaged over **230** per month.

The number of entries for our externally-assessed tests in November 2008 and January 2009 was up by over **70%** compared to the figures for the same test windows in 2007/8.



## ***Join us at the Primary Languages Show in Liverpool***

Come and visit us at **stand no 7** at CILT's Primary Languages Show on 6 and 7 March 2009. In the Show's 13<sup>th</sup> year, we are also sponsoring the early evening reception from 5 to 6.30pm on Friday 6 March, so please take the opportunity to join us and catch up with friends and colleagues over a drink. The Show is being held at the landmark ACC Liverpool building, next to Albert Dock.

At the reception and at our stand, we will be giving away samples of our new primary languages support material. The material, developed in conjunction with CILT, is designed to help teachers and advisors using the KS2 Framework to evaluate pupils' progression, with reference to the DCSF Languages Ladder. The sample material, aimed at the third term of Year 3, is based on the KS2 Framework and exemplified by Unit 5 of the QCA Scheme of Work.

The new Asset support material will be distributed on handy memory sticks. Further materials developed by Asset and CILT will be made available from September 2009 for Years 3 and 4, and from September 2010 for Years 5 and 6. Vivienne May, Asset Qualification Group Manager and Kati Szeless of CILT will be basing a workshop, Making and Marking Progress, on the new taster material on both Friday and Saturday.

## ***A new face putting the customer first***

At the Primary Languages Show in Liverpool and at other events when Asset goes out on the road, you may spot a new face. The Asset team now has the support of OCR's new Curriculum Manager for MFL, **Claire Robinson**. Claire has worked for the awarding body for many years, most recently in the North East and has lots of experience of working with centres delivering OCR qualifications.

As part of a more holistic approach to languages as a subject, Claire is responsible for understanding issues in MFL, identifying customer needs more clearly and making sure the right resources are available to support customers. She works closely with external partners such as CiLT, SSAT, ALL and local authorities. This holistic approach is relevant to language qualifications where HoDs may be considering a range of options to motivate different groups of learners. OCR has the widest range of language qualifications of all the major exam boards covering Asset Languages, NVQ Language Units and CBLCs, as well as GCSEs, AS and A levels, offering assessment in 27 different languages in total.

For further information on the support Claire can provide, please call OCR on 01223 553998.



*Claire Robinson (left) presenting Asset's 100,000th award to a pupil at King Edward VI School in Morpeth*

## UCAS points for Advanced Stage

An exciting development for those using our Advanced Stage qualifications is the news that learners will now earn UCAS tariff points for their success. The points are relevant for students entering higher education from 2010 onwards. The table below shows the UCAS points that have been allocated to each of the four skills at Advanced Stage.

Advanced Stage	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
Speaking	12	20	28
Listening	11	18	25
Reading	11	18	25
Writing	11	18	25
<b>UCAS points for Advanced Asset Languages (four skills)</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>103</b>

Asset Advanced Stage qualifications were used by more than 50 schools and colleges who made over 1500 entries in 2007/8. Qualifications at this level are now available for learners of **Arabic, Chinese – Cantonese and Mandarin, Modern Greek, Italian, Japanese, Polish, Portuguese, Russian and Turkish**, as well as **French, German and Spanish**. They are being used alongside AS/A Level courses, as part of short immersion style language courses, for subsidiary language learning, or with Year 11 pupils who have been fast tracked through a language GCSE. To find out more about UCAS points in general, visit [www.ucas.ac.uk](http://www.ucas.ac.uk).

An example of a school using Advanced for fast-tracked pupils in KS4 is Seaton Burn Community College in North Tyneside, where a group of eight Year 11 pupils learning French were entered for Advanced Stage tests of their speaking skills last summer.

Katherine Storey, Head of Modern Languages, said *“The students passed their GCSE exam in French at the end of Year 10. In Year 11, they followed a course which laid the foundations for A Level French. We decided to enter them for the Asset qualification because it gave us the flexibility to prepare the students for a level 3 examination in just one skill.*”

*The students were really motivated by their experience and six out of eight of them chose to continue with their French studies in the sixth form. Whilst the remaining two students decided to follow a different pathway in the sixth form, they have an additional qualification which complements the subject which they chose to study and they are delighted that it has now been recognised by the universities and will provide them with UCAS points.”*

## **Training and support for Asset users**

### **New training dates for Spring 2009**

A series of training events aimed at centres getting started with Asset has been scheduled for this Spring. If this would be of interest to you, the dates and locations are as follows:

<b>05 March - <i>Cambridge</i></b>	<b>20 March - <i>Manchester</i></b>
<b>06 March - <i>York</i></b>	<b>25 March - <i>Nottingham</i></b>
<b>13 March - <i>Newcastle</i></b>	<b>01 April - <i>Bristol</i></b>
<b>13 March - <i>London</i></b>	<b>08 April - <i>London</i></b>
<b>16 March - <i>Birmingham</i></b>	

These single training days outline the philosophy behind the assessment scheme and the different methods of assessment with Asset external and/or teacher assessment. Delegates receive guidance on preparing candidates for Asset's externally-assessed exams and information on what support and resources are available from OCR. The training also explains administrative procedures. As of January 2009, a standard charge of £130 applies for these 'Get Started' training events.

If you need a copy of the booking form, just let us know via [assetlanguages@ocr.org.uk](mailto:assetlanguages@ocr.org.uk), giving your centre number.

### ***Spreading the word about Asset***

Nick Brown, Head of Languages at Lincoln Christ's Hospital School reports back on some of his networking activities:

***"This Saturday I going into my school to co host an event with our local complementary Arabic School. They are a fantastic, enthusiastic group, working in our school on weekends, to support young people from all around the local area to value their language and that of their parents - Arabic.***

***Asset Languages are coming along to the event to support us in ensuring that these students get recognition and motivation for their skills in this language. As the Asset portfolio continues to grow, I foresee using the qualification increasingly in schools to***

*ensure our young people achieve and value their language skills. We were particularly delighted by the recent news that advanced now attracts UCAS points! Ace!*

*My school is one using Asset languages to motivate young people. The beauty of the scheme being it's relevant to the people I teach and flexible to use as there are varying windows for assessment. Lots of other schools have looked into this and though the geography of my area is immense, I've been able to visit several schools to support them setting up the qualification. This is excellent for networking but as the hub develops it will, we hope, provide further opportunities for sharing good practice and ideas. The difficulty in my area is sheer size and thus schools I work with are in ones or twos. But once the word spreads..."*

## **Share your brilliant ideas**

One of the issues discussed at a recent cluster group meeting was how to make the most of some of the brilliant Asset Languages classroom resources developed by group members. The mflresources forum is a great way for teachers to freely share materials they have created with one another.

The volunteer team who run the mflresources group and website have said that they would be very happy for teachers to upload content with an Asset Languages theme - whether its worksheets, adapted teacher assessment tasks or something new.

The website [www.mflresources.org.uk](http://www.mflresources.org.uk), links to the Yahoo Group, to which you can subscribe. You may want to contribute some of your own resources or download those developed by others. All the resources are free. The content on the site will not be checked or endorsed by OCR.

## **Don't forget cluster support groups**

Whether you are a complete novice or have had considerable experience using Asset, joining a cluster support group in your area is another way of learning more about the assessment scheme. If you would like to know more about your local Group, contact Jenny Jones at [Jones.J@ocr.org.uk](mailto:Jones.J@ocr.org.uk).

## Essential Admin

### Change to format of listening tests from May 2009

A small change is being made to Preliminary and Intermediate listening tests in French, German and Spanish only. With effect from the May 2009 series, the format of Part 3 will be a multiple choice task. The change only affects the format of the task. There is no change to the vocabulary, structures or functions that are tested. The type of text candidates hear and the sort of information they are listening for will remain exactly the same. You can compare existing and new Part 3 formats by looking at the sample listening paper at:

[www.assetlanguages.org.uk/UserFiles/File/samples/English%20Preliminary%20sample%20papers%200109.pdf](http://www.assetlanguages.org.uk/UserFiles/File/samples/English%20Preliminary%20sample%20papers%200109.pdf)

### Dates and deadlines

The final deadline for entries for the May window is **23 March 2009**.

The external assessment dates for the rest of 2008/9 are:

Series	Estimated entry deadline	Final entry deadline	Speaking test return deadline	Testing window begins (Listening, Reading and Writing)	Testing window ends	Results issue (all skills)	Certificate issue (all skills)
November 2008	06/10/08 (or within 3 weeks of receipt of entry form)	20/10/08	17/11/08	17/11/08	12/12/08	29/01/09	12/02/09
January 2009		08/12/08	21/01/09	21/01/09	11/02/09	12/03/09	02/04/09
March 2009		26/01/09	02/03/09	02/03/09	25/03/09	30/04/09	21/05/09
May 2009		23/03/09	29/04/09	29/04/09	20/05/09	25/06/09	09/07/09
June 2009		04/05/09	15/06/09	15/06/09	10/07/09	27/08/09	24/09/09

A printable version of these dates is provided on our website at

[www.assetlanguages.org.uk/exams/officers/scheduling.aspx](http://www.assetlanguages.org.uk/exams/officers/scheduling.aspx)

Please note that there is a separate timetable given for the **Proficiency** and **Mastery** Stages, which are only available in the June 2009 series.



**NB If you intend to enter candidates for speaking tests this academic year, remember to make estimated entries, as well as final entries, as soon as possible. You will NOT receive speaking test material unless you make estimated entries. Speaking test material is sent out at regular intervals every 2-3 weeks after estimated entries are made.**

## *Date for your diary*

### **03 and 04 April - *Language World Conference***

We will be exhibiting at the Association for Language Learning's 2009 Conference, 'Grasping the Nettle', on Friday 3 and Saturday 4 April, at the University of Leicester.

## *What's new on the website?*

### *Asset for the World of Work*

If you are interested in the Asset Languages *World of Work* qualification, there are new samples for French and German learners on the website at

[www.assetlanguages.org.uk/about/wow.aspx](http://www.assetlanguages.org.uk/about/wow.aspx). As well as Spanish Preliminary and Intermediate tests which became available last summer, tests at the same levels in French and German World of Work will be available for the first time in May 2009.



## *Latest FAQs*

### *Do I have to keep a record of performance in speaking tests?*

**Yes!** We have introduced a requirement that you keep a separate record of your learners' performance in speaking tests. This information should be kept by you and not returned to OCR. We will send you a copy of a new internal mark form for this purpose, at the same time as we despatch your official mark sheets. This internal mark form can also be downloaded from the speaking test page of the website ([www.assetlanguages.org.uk/centres/speakingtests.aspx](http://www.assetlanguages.org.uk/centres/speakingtests.aspx)).

If you have suggestions for FAQs or any other content for the next edition of *Centre Support Update*, please let us know via [assetlanguages@ocr.org.uk](mailto:assetlanguages@ocr.org.uk). Earlier editions of this newsletter can be found at [www.assetlanguages.org.uk/centres/support.aspx](http://www.assetlanguages.org.uk/centres/support.aspx).

Regards from  
The Asset Languages Team

