



“Cambridge OCR actually removes barriers and allows all students to achieve”

Staff and students from Brockenhurst College describe how Cambridge OCR's clear question design, flexible qualifications and supportive resources help remove unnecessary barriers so students can demonstrate what they know and achieve their potential.

Brockenhurst College is a diverse and inclusive further education setting, supporting a wide range of students with different abilities, confidence levels and accessibility needs.

At Brockenhurst College, accessibility is about more than adjustments; it's about ensuring every student has the opportunity to succeed and find their voice.

For English teachers **Mia Khalif** and **Owen Brophy**, that means helping students engage with learning and assessment without unnecessary barriers. For students Raven and Rosie, it means having the confidence to focus on their knowledge rather than worrying about how to interpret a question.



Understanding accessibility in practice

“You’re getting tested on how you answer the question – not your understanding of the question.”

“Cambridge OCR actually removes barriers and allows all students to achieve,” says Mia.

“Through clear phrasing, consistency in exam questions and scaffolded questions, students can focus on the assessment objectives needed to answer.”

This consistency helps students engage with the task itself, rather than struggling to interpret it.

For students like Raven, that clarity makes a real difference in the exam experience:

“You know you’re getting tested on how you answer the question and not your understanding of the question.”



Finding a passion for learning

“They found their niche through English literature and went on to study it at university.”

For teaching staff, accessibility is closely linked to how well students can connect with the subject.

Owen highlights the flexibility within Cambridge OCR qualifications:

“There’s great scope for students’ interests – whether that’s genre fiction, creative writing, or a specific novel they enjoy. They can incorporate that into their coursework and exam assessment.”

This is particularly powerful for neurodivergent students.

“It allows them to bring their special interests into their learning journey,” he explains.

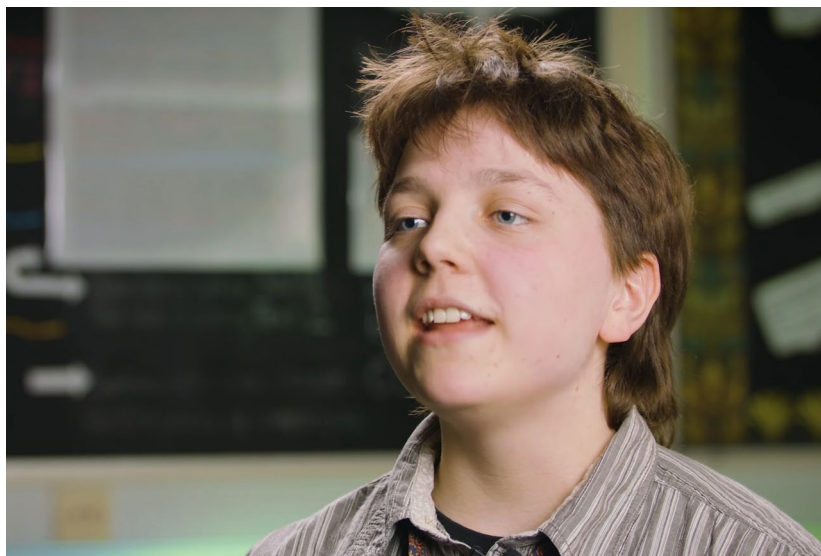
Mia has seen this impact first-hand with students who might otherwise have struggled to engage.

“I had two non-speaking students who found their niche through English literature,” she says. “They connected with the texts, gained confidence, and went on to produce amazing work.”

Both students went on to study English literature at university – an outcome that speaks to the long-term impact of accessible learning.

Supporting different ways of learning

At Brockenhurst, accessibility means adapting both the learning experience and the assessment environment.



For Raven, that includes practical adjustments:

“For my exams, I’m given a separate room and headphones because I find other people’s noises distracting. That means I get the same opportunity as everyone else.”



For Rosie, who has dyslexia, time is key:

“As someone who processes things slower, extra time gives me the opportunity to put all my thoughts down. It makes it much more accessible for students like me.”

But accessibility doesn’t just happen through arrangements; it’s also built into the design of assessments.

“The consistency in Cambridge OCR questions means I’m not scared by something unexpected,” Raven adds. “I know how long to spend on each question, and there’s plenty of time to do my best.”

Clarity that builds confidence

“The booklet makes me feel confident because I can practise lots of questions before the exam.”

Clear structures and resources play a crucial role in building student confidence over time.

Raven describes how practice materials proved helpful when preparing for one of the more challenging elements of the course:

“For the American unseen question, the booklet makes me feel confident because I can practise lots of questions before the exam.”

Seeing a range of texts also strengthens understanding:

“Those different excerpts help us build a wider knowledge to use in the exam.”

Rosie highlights the importance of feedback tools:

“Examiner reports help us understand strengths and weaknesses and common slip-ups, so we know how to improve.”



Fairness inside and beyond the exam

For Mia, accessible assessment isn't just about the exam paper; it's about giving students different ways to demonstrate their strengths.

"The mark schemes are very clear and help students understand exactly what they need to do," she explains.

Importantly, the inclusion of non-exam assessment (NEA) provides another pathway:

"Exams are not for everyone. The NEA gives students the opportunity to do well outside of the exam experience."

This balance reduces pressure and allows students to succeed in different ways.

"I feel like I'm being tested on my understanding and not my written ability," Raven adds. "The coursework module takes the pressure off."

Why Cambridge OCR is the right fit

For both staff and students, clarity is a defining feature of the Cambridge OCR experience.

"You have that sense of diversity and inclusivity," says Mia. "And every time you need help, the support is there."

Owen agrees, pointing to both assessment design and flexibility:

"The clarity of questioning and the ability to integrate student interests makes the courses accessible for a wide range of learners."

Ultimately, accessibility is not about a single adjustment – it's about a system that works together to support every young person.

Making assessment straightforward, for every student

The experience at Brockenhurst College highlights what accessible assessment looks like when it's working well:

- clear, consistent questions that reduce uncertainty
- flexible topics that reflect student interests
- structured support that builds confidence over time
- a balance between exams and coursework
- adjustments that level the playing field.

At Cambridge OCR, this is what making assessment straightforward means.

It's about removing unnecessary barriers so students can focus on what really matters: demonstrating their knowledge, building confidence and achieving their potential.

As the students at Brockenhurst show, when assessment is clear and accessible, confidence grows – and outcomes follow.



Find out more

If you want to make assessment more accessible for your students:

[Explore our accessibility approach](#)

[Speak to the team](#)

Because when assessment is straightforward, every student has the opportunity to succeed.