



## Annual Equality Review 2009



Published: December 2009

Published by the Scottish Qualifications Authority  
The Optima Building, 58 Robertson Street, Glasgow G2 8DQ  
Ironmills Road, Dalkeith, Midlothian EH22 1LE

**[www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk)**

The information in this publication may be reproduced in support of SQA qualifications. If it is reproduced, SQA should be clearly acknowledged as the source. If it is to be used for any other purpose, then written permission must be obtained from the Publications Team at SQA. It must not be reproduced for trade or commercial purposes.

© Scottish Qualifications Authority 2009

This document can be produced, on request, in alternative formats, including large type, braille and numerous community languages. For further details telephone SQA's Customer Contact Centre on 0845 279 1000.

SQA is committed to using plain English. We will try to make our publications as easy and straightforward to understand as we can, and will try to avoid all unnecessary jargon. If there's any language in this document that you feel is hard to understand, or could be improved, please write to Editor, Publications Team, at the Glasgow address or e-mail: **[editor@sqa.org.uk](mailto:editor@sqa.org.uk)**.

# Contents

Foreword	4
About this review	5
Governance and responsibilities	5
Equality Project	6
Qualifications and assessment	7
SQA as an employer	13
Procurement	15
Communications and marketing	16
Contacting SQA	17

# Foreword

I am pleased to present SQA's Annual Equality Review 2009.

The three public sector equality duties, for race, disability and gender, place a positive duty on public bodies to promote equality of opportunity and eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment. These duties aim to ensure that public policies, practices and services take into account the different needs of ethnic groups, disabled people, and men and women, and make real improvements to people's lives.

SQA is fully committed to ensuring that fair practices and equality remain at the core of all our operations and activity. We aim to provide a working environment that is free from discrimination and unfair treatment.

This report highlights SQA's main achievements in promoting equality and implementing our equality action plans in the last year. It also acknowledges the areas that require more work to ensure SQA achieves the equality objectives set out its Race, Disability and Gender Equality Schemes.

The information presented in this review is available in alternative formats on request.

**Dr Janet Brown**

**Chief Executive**

## **About this review**

As part of SQA's equality duties, we have a statutory requirement to report annually on progress against our equality schemes. This review provides a summary of our equality and diversity achievements in 2009.

## **Governance and responsibilities**

SQA is a non-departmental public body established by the Scotland Education Act (1996). It is accountable to the Scottish Government.

SQA's Board of Management is fully committed to its duty to ensure compliance and take a governance role in the implementation of the race, disability and gender equality schemes, and their related action plans.

SQA's Chief Executive is accountable for the fulfilment of SQA's equality duties, and has delegated responsibility for the implementation of SQA's equality schemes.

SQA's Executive Team has responsibility for the approval of schemes, the Annual Equality Review and equality impact assessment reports, before submission for approval by SQA's Audit Committee. SQA's Board of Management receives the Annual Equality Review as a paper for noting.

SQA's Equality and Diversity Steering Group oversees the implementation of our equality strategy. SQA's Equalities Project Officer supports the business in meeting its equality objectives.

All members of staff have a duty to support and uphold the principles in SQA's Equality Mainstreaming Policy, other equality policies and the Code of Conduct for SQA Employees.

# Equality Project

## Equality and Diversity Steering Group

SQA's Equality and Diversity Steering Group is responsible for:

- ◆ monitoring and reporting to the Executive Management Team on the progress being made to mainstream equality into all areas of SQA's work
- ◆ reviewing, monitoring and reporting on equality action plans
- ◆ reviewing annual progress reports

During 2009, we devolved equality action plans more effectively across the organisation. Our Equality and Diversity Steering Group now meets twice a year instead of four times. Equality sub-groups have been formed to cover the areas of Qualifications, Human Resource and Appointee Management, Accreditation, Business Development, and Procurement. These groups will further the development and implementation of SQA's equality objectives and plans. They report to the Equality and Diversity Steering Group.

## Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs)

SQA's equality impact assessment process is being reviewed to take account of the changes in the business structure arising from the recent reorganisation. We have developed revised guidance and templates which we are currently piloting.

Work is also underway to conduct a review of all SQA policies and current processes for policy development and implementation. We plan to roll out the agreed approach to equality impact assessments across the organisation in 2010.

## Training and staff development

SQA continues to promote equality. We raise awareness of SQA's equality project to all new staff as part of the induction process. This is followed by equality awareness training sessions which also cover key HR policies and procedures.

# Qualifications and assessment

SQA is committed to ensuring that all candidates have access to qualifications and equality of opportunity, while safeguarding the integrity of qualifications.

## Curriculum for Excellence (CfE)

Curriculum for Excellence was launched by the Scottish Executive in November 2004. It is designed to provide a seamless education from ages 3 to 18 in Scotland. The Scottish Qualifications Authority is one of the four national partners — alongside the Scottish Government, Learning and Teaching Scotland, and Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools — in the Curriculum for Excellence programme of work. We are involved in all strands of activity. Our principal role is to contribute to work on design and policy for qualifications and assessment, a key strand of the programme.

## Accessible qualifications

SQA ensures that qualifications are designed to be as inclusive as possible with accessibility embedded in the development of qualifications. New qualifications being developed under the Curriculum for Excellence programme will be developed with full consideration given to ensuring that there are no unnecessary barriers to access for disabled candidates.

Staff training on issues around disability equality in qualifications and assessment is currently being provided to SQA's qualification development teams.

## More Choices, More Chances

SQA has an important role to play in the Government's More Choices, More Chances agenda.

Recently, SQA has been working alongside a range of learning providers to produce case studies highlighting the assessment and flexible delivery of SQA qualifications. We have also undertaken work to identify qualifications that can be used to complement programmes supporting vulnerable, hard-to-reach, and disengaged learners. This will help alert learning providers to the range of qualifications that can support More Choices, More Chances.

Activities we have taken part in include:

- ◆ three More Choices, More Chances events in Glasgow, Inverness and Ayr showcasing SQA centre activity and qualifications that can be used to re-engage learners
- ◆ supporting SQA centres to deliver a range of qualifications through action research projects
- ◆ identifying opportunities for third sector organisations to deliver SQA qualifications, including work with Barnardo's and GalGael Trust
- ◆ engaging with local authorities and other organisations to see how SQA qualifications can support new initiatives, such as 16+ Learning Choices and Inspiring Scotland

## Assessment arrangements (AA)

SQA policy on assessment arrangements for disabled candidates, and candidates identified as having additional support needs, allows for reasonable adjustments to be made to the published assessment arrangements for existing qualifications when candidates are placed at a substantial disadvantage. We work in partnership with centres to identify and deliver reasonable adjustments for candidates.

The total number of assessment arrangement requests for Diet 2009 was 45,612, submitted on behalf of 13,041 candidates. This is an increase of 5.8% on the previous year.

Year	Number of candidates requesting AA	Number of AA requests
2007	11,400	42,194
2008	12,284	44,356
2009	13,041	45,612

(Number of candidates and requests for assessment arrangements, 2007–2009)

The profile of AA requests by level is broadly the same as for previous years. More than half of the requests came from Standard Grade candidates. This proportion has continued to drop over the past few years. On the other hand, Intermediate 1 and 2 requests as a proportion of all requests have increased. This mirrors the changing profile of overall entry numbers.

Level	Assessment arrangement requests					
	2007		2008		2009	
Standard Grade	23,356	55.4%	23,945	54.0%	23,404	51.3%
Intermediate 1	4,297	10.2%	5,010	11.3%	5,403	11.8%
Intermediate 2	5,790	13.7%	6,481	14.6%	7,245	15.9%
Higher	7,995	18.9%	8,098	18.3%	8,758	19.2%
Advanced Higher	756	1.8%	822	1.9%	802	1.8%

(AA requests by level, 2007–2009)

SQA received AA requests from a total of 485 centres. The vast majority of these requests came from — secondary schools (87.0%).

Another important area of work is the advice and guidance we provide to centres on acceptable alternative approaches to assessment that meet the needs of the disabled candidate — but also ensure that the integrity of the assessment and qualification is maintained. Work is also currently underway to publish further exemplification of good practice on the use of sign in external examinations.

Over the last few years SQA has recorded an increase in enquiries related to appropriate provision for candidates who have language impairments and who experience difficulties accessing our assessments. A focus group has been set up to advise SQA on the relevant assessment issues, and how access could be improved for this group of candidates.

<b>Arrangement</b>	<b>No of AA requests</b>		
	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>
Adapted cert	94	181	119
Braille	32	57	31
Calculator	734	556	660
Coloured paper	1,468	1,523	2,050
Digital question papers	152	514	1,167
Enlarged print question papers	1064	1056	1,305
Extra time	33,285	34,530	35,636
Modified content	139	202	277
PA referral	996	781	540
Prompter	1,470	1,879	2,099
Reader	16,122	16,936	16,554
Rest period	1,077	1,517	1,434
Scribe	14,121	14,811	14,197
Separate accommodation	25,460	25,793	26,381
Transcription with correction	1,214	1,215	1,179
Transcription without correction	668	751	626
Use of ICT	3,560	4,741	6,253
Use of tape recorder for responses	34	30	37

(Analysis by arrangement)

## Using sign in assessments

SQA makes provision for candidates to access their assessments in National Qualifications using British Sign Language. Deaf candidates can request to have the content of their assessments signed to them, and may also respond in Sign. The table below shows the number of requests received over the last three years.

	2007	2008	2009
Number of requests for question papers to be signed to candidates	83	43	57
Number of requests for candidate responses to be signed	62	40	42

In January 2007, the Scottish Sensory Centre (SSC) and SQA held a joint event on support strategies for candidates who use sign in their SQA exams. Following that, a small working group was set up made up of members of SQA's Deaf Review Group, teachers of the deaf, and colleagues from the SCC and SQA. Its remit was to provide advice, templates and checklists, and to remind everyone of their responsibilities when using sign in examinations.

The working group published *Using Sign in SQA Exams*. The guide contains both SQA's mandatory guidelines for conducting exams and some further advice and examples of good practice. It is available to download from SQA's website.

## Adapted formats question papers (including digital format)

In 2009, SQA provided adapted format question papers for 4,588 entry requests (an increase of 1752 (38%) from 2008) in the following formats:

2008 Adapted question paper entries			
	2007	2008	2009
Braille	32	58	31
Large print	263	399	279
Colour copies	601	536	1346
A4 size on white	660	662	707
Adapted print	567	637	1028
Digital	274	514	1167
Total	2397	2806	4558

The number of requests for adapted question papers in digital format as an assessment arrangement for candidates with disabilities and/or additional support needs has grown significantly in 2009. The digital format allows candidates to insert answers directly onto the question/answer page onscreen, and to use speech technology to have the question read out. This table shows how uptake has increased over the last three years:

	<b>2006 (pilot)</b>	<b>2007(pilot)</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>
Number of centres	8	12	46	73
Number of candidates	34	80	204	425
Number of entries	65	274	514	1167

Interest in digital format papers continues to rise. Further seminars and workshops are being conducted in 2009 by CALL (Communication Aids for Language and Learning) Scotland, University of Edinburgh, with input from SQA. We anticipate that the number of requests will continue to rise in future years.

## **Physical Education**

In the last few years, SQA has recorded an increase in the number of enquiries from Physical Education (PE) departments concerned about how disabled candidates can be included in Courses in PE.

SQA Courses in PE are designed to be as inclusive as possible to allow access to all candidates. We recognise that there are often practical challenges in the delivery of the Course and in the assessment of candidates. With this in mind, SQA produced four case studies showing how centres met some of these challenges. We hope the case studies will provide examples of good practice, and showcase innovative approaches to help encourage centres to make these Courses more accessible.

The aim of each case study is to help challenge any preconceptions and artificial barriers which could deny disabled candidates the opportunity to undertake Courses in PE.

The case studies can be found on SQA's Physical Education webpage at [www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/36297.html](http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/36297.html). Appendix 1 to this report includes information on the case study at the Royal Blind School.

SQA is currently in the process of organising an event to exemplify good working practices and advise colleagues on the options available to them. This will help support those delivering PE Courses to disabled candidates. SQA's disability equality event for access to qualifications in PE will take place in January 2010.

## **Show Racism the Red Card**

SQA has been a supporter of the Show Racism the Red Card campaign since 2003. The campaign uses professional footballers as positive role models to promote an anti-racist message. The campaign is supported by the Scottish Government and the Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS).

Following detailed evaluation of the campaign, participation in the 2010 competition is being widened to include special schools and colleges. SQA has agreed to administer the competition as part of our corporate social responsibility activities. The 2010 competition launched during September 2009 with a marketing campaign designed by SQA and an online website — [www.sqa.org.uk/redcard](http://www.sqa.org.uk/redcard). Competition winners will be announced in April 2010 at Hampden Park, Glasgow.

# SQA as an employer

## Workforce equality monitoring

SQA has a specific statutory duty in relation to race to carry out monitoring in employment. In addition to our existing procedures to capture data from external applicants to advertised posts, we recently gathered and analysed staff-monitoring data, using a questionnaire.

SQA's employment-monitoring questionnaire covered all six strands of equality — for race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, age, religion, and belief. Staff were advised that data would be held confidentially, and only used for the purposes of monitoring, statutory reporting and policy improvement.

SQA produced its first workforce-monitoring report for the period April 2008–March 2009. The response rate to our request for monitoring data using the questionnaire was low and as a result we will need to develop ways of encouraging current employees and applicants to provide equality and diversity data so that reporting and analysis may be improved. We acknowledge that employment monitoring is not just about collecting data, and that further analysis of our workforce-monitoring information is important to help identify any disparities between groups.

As at 31 March 2009, SQA had 687 employees, which equates to 652.24 full time equivalent (FTE) posts. We recorded at this time 452 (66%) female staff and 235 (34%) male staff. During the financial year 2008–09, 1825 individuals applied for vacancies with the organisation. Of this total, 1125 (62%) were from females, 698 (38%) were from males, and 2 (0.11%) were not known.

The age profile of SQA staff is:

- ◆ 1 per cent under 20 years
- ◆ 18 per cent between 21–30 years
- ◆ 25 per cent between 31–40 years
- ◆ 29 per cent between 41–50 years
- ◆ 22 per cent 51–60 years
- ◆ 4 per cent between 61–65 years
- ◆ 1 per cent over 65 years

## Staff opinion survey

Each year, SQA conducts a staff opinion survey to provide an opportunity for all members of staff to express their views on working for SQA. The 2008–09 staff opinion survey received a response rate of 78%, with 533 members of staff participating. Results show an improvement in overall satisfaction.

The statements below on SQA's commitment to promoting equality and diversity had a positive response of 80% favourable.

- 1 I believe that SQA demonstrates it is an equal opportunities employer  
(16% did not know and 4% did not respond favourably)
- 2 I believe SQA demonstrates commitment to equality and diversity in its work  
(15 % did not know and 5% did not respond favourably)

## **Equal pay**

Each year, to meet our statutory requirements, SQA conducts an equal pay audit to identify any pay gaps that may exist between male and female employees. The Equal Opportunities Commission recommends that further investigation be carried out on any pay gaps which are + or -5%. SQA carried out its annual equal pay audit in December 2008 and the results were circulated in January 2009. It was confirmed that there are no equal pay issues across the organisation. The results of our next equal pay audit will be available in January 2010.

## **Childcare vouchers**

In response to a number of requests in relation to family-friendly policies, SQA launched its Childcare Voucher policy on 1 April 2008. This has enabled employees who are parents or have parental responsibilities to make tax and National Insurance savings on their childcare costs.

In the last year, there has been a good response to the Childcare Voucher policy. A total of 35 employees have now subscribed to the scheme.

## **Make a Change Group**

SQA's Make a Change (MAC) Group has been promoting health and lifestyle matters across the organisation for a number of years. Recent campaigns have included our Men's and Women's Health Days, Summer Health Campaign and Cancer Awareness Days, Breast Cancer Awareness, and Worlds Aids Day events.

In June 2009, SQA conducted its first MAC health survey to inform the strategy of our Make A Change (MAC) Group, and provide data on how SQA can work with its employees to improve their health. A questionnaire was circulated electronically to all SQA staff. In total, 477 responses were received, out of a total of 709 staff, giving an overall response rate of 67%. This is relatively high for a questionnaire of this nature. The questionnaire covered a range topics including awareness of SQA policies, health and safety, healthy eating, and mental health.

# Procurement

SQA is committed to ensuring that the way in which goods and services are purchased provides value for money and promotes equality and inclusion.

Our Procurement Team has recently reviewed SQA's procurement processes and procedures to implement a number of improvements.

In order to reach a wide range of suppliers, all new contract opportunities are advertised on the Public Contracts Scotland website to allow any interested suppliers to express an interest and bid for goods or services.

SQA's Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) requests that potential suppliers provide a copy of their equal opportunities policy or statement.

We have also developed procurement web pages on SQA's website at [www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/35871.1909.html](http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/35871.1909.html).

# Communications and marketing

## Plain English and Publishing Policies

In August 2009, SQA implemented its Plain English and Publishing Policies to meet actions set out in our Disability Equality Scheme. These policies affect what SQA staff write and the way this is published.

Our Plain English Policy requires everything we write — not only publications, but any communication such as letters, e-mails, and circulars — to be written using plain English.

SQA's new Publishing Policy sets out the process for publishing in SQA. Implementation of this policy will help ensure:

- ◆ all SQA publications go through our Publications Team
- ◆ SQA's website is adopted as the main medium for publishing
- ◆ publications follow SQA's house style guidelines

## Contacting SQA

We welcome your feedback and would be happy to receive your thoughts and concerns.

You can contact us by:

e-mail	<b><a href="mailto:equality@sqa.org.uk">equality@sqa.org.uk</a></b>
telephone	0845 213 5319
writing	Equalities Project Officer Legal Services Scottish Qualifications Authority The Optima Building 58 Robertson Street Glasgow G2 8DQ

# Appendix 1



# Accessing Physical Education Courses

## Case Study 4: Royal Blind School

### What are the challenges?

The Royal Blind School is a grant-aided special school offering residential and day provision for children and young people from Scotland and the North of England. All pupils have a visual impairment and many have additional disabilities. Physical Education Courses can be made accessible to young people with a visual impairment — indeed pupils attending the Royal Blind School have successfully achieved good results in both Intermediate 2 and Higher Physical Education.

The approaches and adaptations used at the Royal Blind School for pupils with a significant visual impairment may also be useful for delivering PE Courses to young people with other impairments.

### Visual Impairment

The level of visual impairment is determined by measuring visual acuity (distance vision) and visual field (area of vision), the most significant being total blindness with no light-perception. Some young people may suffer cognitive visual impairment — they may have good visual acuity and field, but are unable to interpret what they are seeing. For competition purposes, athletes are classified according to the severity of their visual impairment. A B1 classification is for those with no sight or only light-perception, with B2 and B3 having more functional vision. All B1 competitors have to wear eye shades or blacked-out goggles for competition. These are the classifications used in international competition, but there is also a partially sighted (PS) category in some competitions for those with greater functional vision than the B3 class.

Having a visual impairment can provide difficulties in accessing activities at the appropriate level, especially in a school setting. This is a major consideration, as SQA's Arrangement

Documents clearly state that ‘activities undertaken in extra-curricular time **only** cannot contribute to the unit assessment in performance’.

Whatever the level of visual impairment, it is not, in itself, a barrier to accessing the Physical Education Course. Provided the young person can achieve the required standard, the Analysis and Development unit can be adapted to allow them to successfully complete the course.

## **How do candidates access the Course in class?**

The teaching of the PE course to young people with a severe visual impairment requires adaptations to activities, support materials and teaching approaches.

Young people who are blind or visually impaired can access many physical activities that are regularly part of a physical education programme in most secondary schools. Games such as football and goalball can be played by the blind or visually impaired (and are played at Paralympics level). However, in the school setting it would be difficult to provide the opportunity to participate at the required level.

Basketball and badminton, activities for which course material is available, are not easily accessed. A shuttlecock is small and difficult to see, and does not provide audio cues; basketball at higher levels is a very fast-paced game, making it difficult for a person with visual impairment to participate. Many of the individual skills such as dribbling and shooting can, however, be taught successfully.

The required standard ‘to demonstrate effective performance in challenging contexts’ is most likely to be achieved in individual activities, such as swimming, gymnastics, dance and athletics with some adaptation. There are support materials for these activities, linked to some of the areas in the Analysis and Development unit. At the Royal Blind School, the Course at Intermediate 2 and Higher is based around swimming, gymnastics and athletics.

### **Swimming**

In swimming, the use of lane ropes and verbal cues can help with direction, and a ‘bopper’ can be used to indicate the end of the pool. The ‘bopper’ is used to tap the swimmer to initiate their

turn or the end of the race; this is an additional skill and requires practice from the swimmer and the person 'bopping' to get the timing right.

Teaching stroke technique is done with detailed verbal input or through guided movement, as observing and copying is not always possible.

Teaching of diving starts and turns requires a build-up of trust between coach/teacher and the swimmer, and is taught as for sighted pupils although it can take longer for the pupil to gain the confidence to perform successfully and consistently.

## **Athletics**

The adaptations in athletics may be minimal in track events, if the pupil has sufficient sight to see and follow the lines on the track. If this is not possible, it would be necessary to run with a sighted guide. The guide runs alongside the athlete attached by a tether, and runs in unison matching pace and stride. (However, the athlete must cross the finish line in front of the guide.) This technique takes a great deal of practice to get right, particularly when using sprint starts and running a bend.

Field events are adapted to suit the needs of the pupils and will vary according to the event and the level of disability.

Throwing events may require little adaptation except in teaching approach — as with swimming, detailed verbal description and guided movement are necessary. An audio cue may be required for direction, for example a call or clap in shot-putt. Health and safety has to be the main concern — some additional considerations include shortening the approach run in javelin to prevent loss of direction, and for safety reasons those with a severe visual impairment may opt to do a standing throw. In discus, orientation can be a problem, as with sighted pupils, and unless working on a one-to-one basis it is best taught in a netted area.

In long jump and triple jump, strides are counted for the approach run, and for B1 athletes a caller can stand in the pit and call for the jumper. The B1 jumper is permitted to take off from within a chalked box 1m in front of the take off board. The distance is measured from the actual take-off point.

## **Analysis and development of performance**

This unit requires the adaptation of course notes and support materials into the appropriate format — large print, Braille or audio. Current IT software can be very useful in helping young people access this Unit because information held in electronic form can be accessed using screen readers or enlargement programmes. At the Royal Blind School we use Supernova and Jaws.

The outcomes for this unit require candidates to analyse their performance in an activity that involves collecting data to identify strengths, weaknesses and development needs. For those with a visual impairment, this can be done using detailed timings and measurements and comparing them with model performances.

The use of observation schedules designed by the candidate and completed by staff, with results discussed verbally, can provide useful information. The use and understanding of internal feedback by the candidate is an extremely valuable tool in helping young people with visual impairment analyse their own performance. Encouraging candidates to describe how their performance feels, both good and bad, is an important part of skill acquisition and analysis. Keeping training diaries and notes on their performance allow candidates to monitor their programme of work. This is best done electronically, and may require adaptations such as in the layout of tables, allowing each candidate to use the most appropriate format to suit their individual needs.

In the Royal Blind School the course is based on the areas of Performance Appreciation, Preparation of the Body, and Skills and Techniques because for young people with visual impairment the most difficult area to access is Structures, Strategies and Composition. This tends to be a very visual area and is usually taught around games such as basketball. However this area has been covered successfully at Higher with a pupil who completed the Standard Grade course as a sighted candidate and had a working knowledge of structures, strategies and composition of games before losing their sight. For a young person with a severe or congenital visual impairment, this prior knowledge would not be available.

Accessing the principles of the Analysis and Development unit was mainly covered verbally either in classroom discussion or during practical lessons. The knowledge and understanding of key concepts required in performance appreciation, preparation of the body, and skills and

techniques are mainly taught verbally — through question and answer and discussion as part of the practical activities. Summarised notes (provided in the appropriate format) are useful for revision purposes, and electronically recording information such as training diaries and assessment results can cut down on the volume of material the candidate has to work with.

## **How are the candidates assessed?**

The challenges in assessing the candidates' practical performance in individual activities are mainly concerned with provision of challenging contexts. At the Royal Blind School assessment of performance in swimming and athletics occurs towards the end of the session and also makes use of results obtained at competition. Candidates undertaking the PE course at Intermediate 2 and Higher levels compete at the Scottish Disability Sports competition for visually impaired and physically disabled athletes and swimmers. They also compete in National Competitions organised by British Blinds Sports in swimming and athletics. These events provide the challenging contexts in which effective performance can be demonstrated.

In swimming, assessment is carried out using the same criteria used for sighted candidates for stroke technique, starts and turns with the use of a 'bopper' where required. Candidates are assessed over a variety of distances to demonstrate control and fluency and in competition with others of similar ability and disability.

In athletics candidates are assessed as far as possible using the same criteria as for sighted candidates with suitable adaptation where required as in the use of a guide runner or box jump as described above.

The NAB for the Analysis and Development of Performance unit is provided in large print or Braille and answers are entered on computer. Candidates are also given up to 50% extra time to complete the assessment with similar arrangements for the external examination.

## **How successful is the delivery of the course?**

Royal Blind School pupils have achieved good results at Intermediate 2 and Higher level and one has gone on to study Sports Science. One pupil has achieved the Advanced Higher Unit in Physical Education: Performance. This has led to an increased number of pupils interested in taking the course in the future.

The course has been successful because it is based around the most suitable activities for pupils with visual impairment and these activities were linked to the most appropriate areas of study. These areas could be adapted to allow the development of knowledge and understanding of the key concepts.

## **What advice would you give other teachers?**

For the Analysis and Development of Performance unit, consideration must be given to the volume of material required. For example, for a candidate using large print at N48 or Braille, it may not be possible to provide all the information available from the recommended textbooks. Summarised notes and selective texts are of benefit, as is the use of appropriate software to access the internet. Simplification of tables and diagrams can help with the collection of data.

Incorporating the knowledge and understanding aspects of the course into practical session is both more interesting and of greater significance for the candidates than discussion in a classroom. For young people with a significant visual impairment, experiential learning of concepts is much more relevant and memorable.