

At 14 my son visited a local FE College which ran a couple of BTEC IT courses he thought he might be interested in. From this we established what and how many exams were required.

I contacted the college to find out if they would accept Adult Literacy/Numeracy for maths and English which they confirmed they would. He opted for Adult Literacy at a local Learn Direct Centre which cost £40. He used the Move On website to do a few practices then we booked the exam, he turned up took it and immediately was given the result (just before his 15th birthday).

He decided on GCSE maths as he'd already covered most of the foundation content. We found a listing on the Home Ed Yahoo Exams site which gave details of places who had previously accepted private candidates and discovered a local secondary who were accommodating.

The whole process was very simple, we contacted the school, filled a form in and paid a fee of £65 for GCSE higher maths and turned up on the specified days/times. He took this one over his 15th birthday.

We bought a GCSE higher maths Edexcel workbook from W H Smith at minimal cost and worked through this approx 4 weeks before the exam date. He did a variety of AQA and Edexcel practice papers we found free and downloaded from the Net (including the Edexcel site).

He then opted for IGCSE Physics (to avoid the assessment problem), again at the same school but increased cost £72 for IGCSEs, exactly the same process, bought a workbook, worked through the chapters then a few practice papers.

Started in September 2011, taking the exam in May 2012 at 15. Results to date 98% adult literacy, and an A in Maths and Physics.

He is half way through a drama GCSE, he attends a fortnightly home ed drama group in a local hall with a tutor who is registered to moderate the practical aspects of the exam and will then be entered for the written part at 16 next year.

He is also opting for another IGCSE in IT (again to avoid the practical assessment problem) which he intends to start this September, taking the exam via the same method next year at 16. So minimal cost in terms of exam preparation, just the actual cost of exams at around £250 for the five qualifications.