News story: Top universities urged to open new maths schools

Top universities in England can now apply to open specialist 16-19 maths schools to help more young people learn from the best mathematicians in the country, School Standards Minister Nick Gibb announced today.

Maths is one of the most in-demand skills in the labour market and it is already the most popular subject at A level, with almost 25% of students choosing to study it. The government is determined, through its Industrial Strategy, to increase the number of young people studying maths, helping them to secure good jobs and boosting the UK economy.

Two maths schools – King's College London and Exeter Mathematics School – are already achieving outstanding results. In 2017 98% of King's mathematics students achieved an A or A* in A level mathematics, for Exeter this was 75%.

Ofsted has also singled out both schools for recruiting students from disadvantaged backgrounds who had not previously had the opportunity to fulfil their potential in mathematics.

To spread that excellence across the country, the government wants top universities to establish more of these specialist schools. It is providing £350,000 dedicated funding each year to existing and future schools to support outreach work with local schools and colleges, sharing their specialist skills, helping to raise standards and get more children studying maths.

School Standards Minister Nick Gibb said:

> We want more students to study maths as it can open up a wide range of options for future study, training and work.
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> Thanks to Government reforms and the hard work of teachers 1.9 million more pupils are in good or outstanding schools than in 2010. We have also introduced a more rigorous maths curriculum and now have record numbers studying maths at A level.
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> The success of existing maths schools shows the value of tapping into the expertise of our world-class universities. We now want more institutions to follow the lead of King's and Exeter and help our most talented students, regardless of background and gender.

Minister for the School System Lord Agnew said:

> I recently visited King's maths school and was humbled by the students I met there – their ambition and ability is inspiring. These innovative schools are giving the mathematicians of tomorrow – many from disadvantaged backgrounds – the opportunity to take their talents to the next level. We want more leading universities to open these schools and help encourage more young people across the country to study maths at A level and beyond.

King's College London Mathematics School has 140 pupils currently studying for A levels in maths and further maths as well as other maths related subjects. Last year's average A level result was A+. At Exeter Mathematics School, there are 120 pupils studying these qualifications and achieving excellent results. Both schools have close links to their universities which support the schools and provide teaching from their top mathematicians.

Professor the Baroness Alison Wolf, founding governor of King's College London Mathematics School said:

> Setting up the maths school has been a wonderful experience for King's. It has brought people together from right across the university, and enabled us to serve London and society in new ways. And we bask in reflected glory from the students' achievements.

Professor Janice Kay, who was instrumental in setting up Exeter Mathematics School said:

> Exeter Mathematics School has been a fantastic success story. The Ofsted rated 'Outstanding' school is also delivering outstanding results for its students: over 50% of its latest graduating cohort obtained places at Russell Group institutions.

> Promoting maths participation and skills development in the region, a strong social mobility focus, increasing the number of young women mathematicians and developing outreach are founding principles. University staff have been integrally involved and in partnership with the School, Exeter College and industry, we have been able to do more to nurture and inspire the next generation of mathematicians and scientists.

Charlie Stripp, Chief Executive of Mathematics in Education and Industry (MEI) Chief and Director of the National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics said:

> The expansion of the Maths Schools programme will extend opportunities to students with a passion and talent for

mathematics, whatever their background, to develop their potential and access the most prestigious maths-related university degree courses. Linking with the Maths Hubs and the Level 3 Maths Support Programme, and building on the success of the Exeter and King’s College Maths Schools, the new schools will enhance our national provision of maths education.