

Press release: Boost for maths education in the North for National Numeracy Day

Schools in the North of England will benefit from a £6 million investment to improve maths teaching across the region and help increase pupils' confidence in mathematics, School Standards Minister Nick Gibb has confirmed today (16 May).

To mark the first National Numeracy Day, Mr Gibb has confirmed that £1.75 million of funding will be used to create two new 'Hubs' in Central Lancashire and Cheshire to help spread best teaching practice and improve local pupils' knowledge, understanding and enjoyment of mathematics.

The remaining funding will support the expansion of a south Asian 'mastery' approach to teaching maths in the region. Some of the leading performers in maths in the world, including Shanghai, Singapore and Hong Kong use this teaching style.

The announcement today is part of the government's plans to raise academic standards across the country, helping more people to secure a good job, an apprenticeship or go on to further study or training.

There are already almost 387,000 more children in good or outstanding schools in the North of England than in 2010 and 87 per cent of schools in this region were rated as good or outstanding at their last inspection.

Minister for School Standards Nick Gibb said:

Thanks to our reforms and the hard work of teachers, standards are rising in our schools and the proportion of primary school pupils reaching the expected standards in reading, writing and maths went up 8 percentage points last year. We have also introduced a more rigorous maths curriculum and now have record numbers studying maths at A level.

But poor numeracy still costs the UK a staggering £20 billion every year and we want more pupils to feel confident using numbers as it can open up a wide range of options for future study, training and work.

Thanks to a £74 million investment there are already over 2,500 schools across the country involved in the Teaching for Mastery approach, and today's announcement will help ensure more children in the north have access to a world-class maths education.

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 modern Industrial Strategy, to increase the number of people understanding and studying maths, helping them to secure good jobs and boosting the UK economy.

The 'Maths Hubs' in Central Lancashire and Cheshire will initially be led by three schools in each region and will help to ensure more teachers in the area have the knowledge and skills to provide high quality maths teaching. School recruitment for involvement is now open and the programme aims to start running this Autumn.

Today's announcement is supported by a £70 million investment to boost school performance in the north as part of the Northern Powerhouse Schools Strategy. It also builds on a number of other measures to improve numeracy across the country, including:

- An increased emphasis on Teaching for Mastery, to ensure pupils master the basics of mathematics from an early age. Thanks to a £74 million investment there are already over 2,500 schools across the country involved in the Teaching for Mastery approach, and the additional funding announced in Autumn 2017 will expand the Teaching for Mastery programme to reach 11,000 primary and secondary schools in total by 2023;
- Introducing a new multiplication tables check for Year 4 to help ensure every child knows their times tables by heart, a fundamental skill for more complex mathematics;
- Allowing universities in England to apply to open specialist 16-19 Maths Schools to help more young people learn from the best mathematicians in the country. This is backed by £350,000 of funding each year to support outreach work with local schools and colleges, sharing their specialist skills;
- Fully funding maths up to GCSE level, so that adults of every age and background can take a course to get the skills they need for everyday life;
- Updating Functional Skills maths qualifications to improve their quality as well as their recognition amongst employers; and
- Embedding English and maths across all major strands of technical education, including traineeships, apprenticeships and future T levels.

National Numeracy Day is set to be an annual celebration of the importance of numbers in everyday life and will help to reframe attitudes to numeracy. The day aims to bring together individuals, employers, educators and supporters from across the UK to help improve numeracy levels.

The government will also create Assistant Maths Hub Leads in 17 regions across the Northern Powerhouse regions, which will see Maths Hubs recruit respected school leaders in low engagement areas for one year – tasked with developing better partnerships between local schools and their Maths Hub.

The educational attainment for children in areas that have faced long-term challenges is also being improved through the Department for Education's 12 Opportunity Areas – five of which are in the north.

Find out more about the Maths Hubs [here](#)