

City University London
Math Project
Categories: School Achievement

The Maths Project provides support in mathematics for students at The City of London Academy Islington, initially a yearlong pilot, now in its third year has progressed massively - working with over 250 students.

The project has adopted a unique and effective style of building on students numerical skills; firstly by supporting their classroom work but more importantly by showing students the importance of mathematics outside of the classroom. By demonstrating how mathematics is used in the working world, students are kept motivated and are consistently reflecting upon their future goals throughout the academic year.

Unlike many other tutoring initiatives that focus on a particular year group or a specific set of students; the Math Project works with borderline students who need the support to achieve a grade C at GCSE as well as high achieving students that are already on track to achieve A's. This well rounded and impartial approach promotes equality of learning throughout The Academy.

Support and development is offered to students as well as staff members in The Academy. The project aims to provide academic support for mathematic teaching staff and practitioners to develop teaching staff expertise, practice and reflection.

Students from City University are also provided with the opportunity to give back to the local community by supporting Islington schools. Working as student tutors for the project, student mathematicians are able to enhance their skills and make a significant contribution to education within local communities whilst gaining experience to enhance their CV's.

The Math Project initially ran as a pilot for the academic year 2012/13, its success has enabled it to grow and develop through to 2014/15 where the project will now be embedded into The Academy curriculum.

Before the project began The Academy were delivering disappointing GCSE results; in 2011 only 31% of students passed (A* - C) with 5 GCSE's including math and English – where grades below C in maths were pulling down the overall statistics. After three short years the project has had a massive impact and results for 2014 were 80% of students passing with an A* - C including maths and English – where mathematics has improved massively allowing for far higher statistics. The work of the math project shows a 50% increase in numbers from 2011– 2014, boasting an average increase in grades climbing at 16% per year.

59% of students felt more confident when their City Tutors were present in the classroom during their math lessons, 44% felt that they had direct impact on their learning and 45% felt they completed more work than usual. These figures indicate the important role the tutors played in boosting student attainment within the classroom. 80% of students would prefer a City Tutor in class as they were encouraged to achieve and 77% felt more motivated to understand math.

Leaners across all year groups reported positively about the scheme and 100% of students said that their tutors provided them with extra support which had a direct effect on their learning.

The Academy population are primarily students from a widening participation background; 58.5% are eligible for free school meals, 50% do not have English as their first language and 1/3 of The Academy are from an ethnic minority. Working with students, who do not necessarily have educational role models and are therefore somewhat ignorant to the opportunities that become available to them after education, supports equal opportunities to students, regardless of their background whilst sending a positive message to students and the local community.

The Math Project's success hopes to be replicated with The Academy's English department; x120 Academy students that struggle with spelling, punctuation and grammar and have a lower than average reading age will receive City Tutors to assist them with the accelerated reading programme that currently runs at The Academy. Students will therefore receive an hour of one to one reading time with a City Tutor whom they can build a rapport with throughout the academic year. The aim of this project is to improve reading ages by six months.

In addition to these attainment initiatives, City also offers The Academy a bespoke outreach programme that focusses on widening participation in higher education. There are x14 outreach activities that Academy students from all age groups are able to participate in including University Visit Days, Taster Weeks and Careers Interviews. City University supports The Academy in a range of ways to prepare and inform its students for the world of Higher Education.

If you would like to learn more about the Math Project or if you would like to contact City University London, please get in touch with Michael Naughton on Michael.naughton@londonhigher.ac.uk