

MEI Media release 8 August 2011 - For immediate release

Carol Vorderman's review of mathematics education

The report of Carol Vorderman's review of mathematics education was published today.

Mathematics in Education and Industry (MEI) strongly welcomes this report. It highlights the key problems with mathematics education in England and, where they exist, presents clear examples of good practice to illustrate practical ways to address them.

Being comfortable with mathematics, able to use basic mathematics competently and with confidence, is vital for everyone. A fear of mathematics is a real handicap. Unfortunately the majority of young people leave school without the mathematics skills they need to fulfil their potential. Even those who do master the basics often drop mathematics at age 16 after GCSE and so are unable to learn vital concepts and techniques needed for higher education and employment. This is in stark contrast to our international economic competitors, where almost all young people study mathematics to age 18.

Key principles highlighted by the report are:

- Mathematics should be taught as a coherent subject to be understood and enjoyed, rather than as a set of complicated rules to be crammed for a test.
- Teachers at all levels, from primary school to sixth form, must have appropriate training.
- All young people should have access to mathematics courses and teaching appropriate to their needs and aspirations.
- It should be the norm for the vast majority of young people to study mathematics to age 18.

To meet the economic challenges we are facing, our education system must produce a numerate workforce that can meet the needs of a high-tech economy competing in international markets. This report shows very clearly that our current system of mathematics education is failing to do this.

MEI's work to improve teaching and learning in mathematics has shown that it is possible to bring about rapid positive improvement in mathematics education in a cost-effective way. We are proud that our 'Further Mathematic Support Programme' and 'Teaching Advanced Mathematics' initiatives have been included in the report as examples of successful interventions that are making a positive difference, and hope to build on this work to help make Britain's mathematics education system truly world-class.

Charlie Stripp

MEI Chief Executive

Notes for Editors

1. MEI is an independent charity that supports mathematics education. For further information about MEI, please see www.mei.org.uk.

2. The Further Mathematics Support Programme is a government-funded initiative, supported by the Department for Education and is managed by Mathematics in Education and Industry (MEI). For further information about the FMSP, please see www.furthermaths.org.uk.

3. The report, entitled 'A world-class mathematics education for ALL our young people' can be downloaded from:

http://www.conservatives.com/News/News_stories/2011/08/~media/Files/Downloadable%20Files/Vorderman%20maths%20report.ashx

4. For more information, please contact Janice Richards on 01225 774777 or by email at janice.richards@mei.org.uk.

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