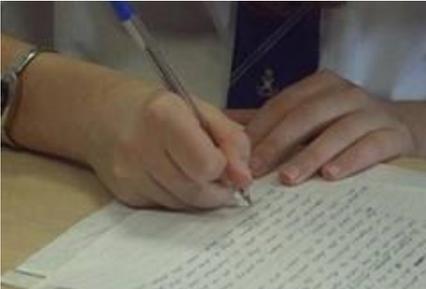


Pupils who fail maths face two extra years of study

Jessica Shepherd



Thousands of pupils who fail to achieve a good GCSE in English and maths will be made to study the subjects for another two years or take high-quality alternative qualifications until they leave school at 18, the education secretary has said. Michael Gove was responding to a government-commissioned review of vocational qualifications, published in March, which criticised the number of pupils leaving school without a basic grasp of English or maths.

Last summer, 45% of 16-year-olds missed a C grade in the subjects.

From 2015, teenagers will have to stay in education or training until they reach 18. The review, conducted by Professor Alison Wolf, an expert in public policy at King's College London, also found that up to 400,000 teenagers were wasting their time on college courses that did not lead to jobs or further training. Gove said the government wanted to ensure that all young people studied maths and English until they got a good qualification. Ideally, that would be a C or better at GCSE, but high-quality alternatives will be identified following a consultation this summer.

He also told MPs a host of vocational courses would no longer count in league tables in order to dissuade schools from entering pupils for courses that were not of a high quality.

"For too long, the vocational education system has been devalued by attempts to pretend that all qualifications are intrinsically the same," he said. "Young people have taken courses that have led nowhere.

"We will reform league tables, the funding system and regulation so children are given honest information and take the right courses. We will make sure that employers are more involved in the system. We will encourage them to offer more high-quality apprenticeships." The government will consult with employers, schools, colleges and universities to define what criteria the best vocational courses must meet, the education secretary said.

The number of vocational qualifications has boomed over the last decade, and many fear that some courses are of poor quality. One of the biggest exam boards, Edexcel, said the number of students studying its vocational courses had risen from 66,000 in 2003 to more than 700,000. However, Andy Burnham, the shadow education secretary, told MPs that the introduction of the English baccalaureate into school league tables devalued vocational courses.

The bac measures the proportion of pupils achieving at least a C grade in English, maths, two sciences, a humanities and a modern or ancient language. Mary Bousted, the general secretary of the Association of Teachers and Lecturers, said the bac would "isolate and demoralise" less academic students. Brian Lightman, the general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, said the key to improving qualifications was not

to scrap some, but to provide young people with better careers advice. Meanwhile, a survey by the public sector union Unison has found almost all local authorities in England are going to make cuts to their career services this year.

The survey of 85 local authorities shows some Connexions services, such as in East Sussex and Lewisham in south London, will close completely. Overall, at least 8,000 advisers will lose their jobs.

Adapted from The Independent



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**Popular Lecture 2011
See page 2**

MCWC DEADLINE & SOCIAL

MCWC Deadline is on the 26th May (In case you had forgotten). To celebrate the submission of another assignment there will be a social in the Students Union. Head straight down after submitting your work for a bite to eat (food not provided!), a catch up and a drink if you fancy. Would be good to see as many faces as possible. If you can't make this social, do not worry, there will be more (exciting) socials organized on our return to uni! Good luck with the work! Amanda

LATEST JOBS:

- Hatch End High School
- St Olave's Grammar School
- Crown Woods College
- Elthorne Park High School
- Teddington School
- Vyners School
- Bacon's College
- Ashcroft Academy
- Edenham High School

London Mathematical Society Popular Lecture 2011

Date: 29.06.11

Time: 7.00pm – 9.30pm

Venue: Institute of Education



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The London Mathematical Society Popular Lectures present exciting topics in mathematics (and its applications) to a wide audience. Each year, the LMS Popular Lectures feature two lecturers, who have been chosen for their mathematical distinction. Usually, there is one pure mathematician and one applied mathematician.

The lectures are suitable for all who have an interest in mathematics. They are particularly useful for students taking A-Level Mathematics and would be of interest to more able students in other years.

This year's speakers are:

Dr Colva Roney-Dougal, St. Andrews University - 'Symmetry, Chance & Determinism'

Dr Hilary Weller, University of Reading - 'How climate models work and could they be better?'

Cost: The event is free to attend, with ticket.

<http://www.lms.ac.uk/content/popular-lectures>

Schools forced to focus on polar achievers

William Stewart

League table measures aim to prevent high and low attainers being ignored

New league table measures aimed at ensuring that teachers pay attention to high and low-attaining pupils are being introduced by ministers this year. They are being designed to discourage a concentration of resources on borderline C/D GCSE grade or primary level 3/4 pupils by schools trying to maximise their scores on the main performance indicators.

The plan was unveiled yesterday in the Government's response to the Wolf review of vocational education. The report's author, Professor Alison Wolf, had called on ministers to use several performance measures because "if a single measure is dominant, it invites gaming or worse". If this strategy was not adopted there was a "serious risk that schools will simply ignore their less academically successful pupils" and "neglect those at the top of the attainment range", her report said. Many other critics of league tables have made the same point.

Ministers have followed the report's recommendation. A Government source said: "From 2011, the performance tables will show for each school the variation in performance of low-attaining pupils, high-attaining pupils and those performing as expected." An indicator focusing on the whole distribution of performance within a school, including those at the top and bottom ends, would be introduced. "Under Labour the league-table system encouraged schools to focus on a small number of pupils on the C/D borderline to the neglect of those really struggling and those who could excel," the source said.

"Our new measures will reward schools for doing a good job for children of all abilities." But Brian Lightman, ASCL Leaders general secretary, said: "Every time they add new measures it seems to have a perverse effect."

Christine Blower, NUT general secretary, said: "No amount of tweaking alters the fact that league tables have a distorting effect on pupils' learning."

The Government will also comply with the Wolf review by requiring all young people who fail GCSE maths and English to continue studying the subjects if they stay on in education. Ideally, this means they will continue to aim for GCSEs. But for those unable to achieve them, the Government intends to identify alternative "high-quality" qualifications. Ministers will not enforce the Wolf review's suggestion that school pupils should spend no more than a fifth of their timetable on vocational qualifications. But they are seeking to follow her recommendation and remove the statutory duty for schools to provide every key stage 4 pupil with "work-related learning". Professor Wolf argued this would allow schools to concentrate on supplying "genuine work experience" and "long internships" for 16 to 18-year-olds, reflecting the fact that "almost no young people move into full-time employment at 16". The Department for Education said schools will be able to continue organising work experience at KS4 if they wanted to. Schools, colleges, employers and universities are to be consulted this summer on what criteria should be used to decide which vocational qualifications continue to count for GCSE league tables. **TES**

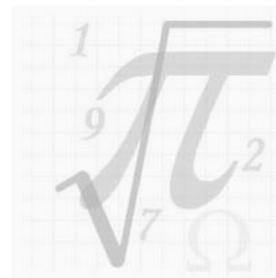
PUZZLE –



The circumference of the Earth is approximately 40,000 km. If we made a circle of wire around the globe, that is only 10 meters (0.01 km) longer than the circumference of the globe, could a flea, a mouse, or even a man creep under it?

ISSUE 10 SOLUTION: 204

NOTES:



"There are 10 types of people in this world: those who understand binary and those who don't" - Unknown