

Pupils get their maths brains in shape at the Numeracy Challenge 2018 Grand Final at Markel

Friday 25 May, 2018

Top scoring maths teams from Tower Hamlets primary schools battled in the Walkie Talkie building on Friday, to win the final round of Tower Hamlets Education Business Partnership's sixth annual Numeracy Challenge final.

Teams of finalists waited with bated breath as the winners of the Numeracy Challenge 2018 were announced at the end of the Grand Final.

After competing in a two hour-long maths challenge live at the final, the self-named 'The Mathsketeers' team from Thomas Buxton primary School were announced as the winners, followed by runners up 'Maths Brains' from Stewart Headlam Primary.

The final was hosted by international insurance company Markel International¹ on Friday 25th May at their offices in the famous Walkie Talkie building in the heart of the City.

Out of 36 participating teams from 14 Tower Hamlets schools that entered the competition in March, eight teams were invited to the final.

All the finalists will be rewarded with a trip to Brighton's University of Sussex in June to find out what it's like to be a student at a top university outside London and how maths is applied across all disciplines.

A year 5 from the winning team said that being crowned described the final as the "best day ever". She enjoyed "working as a team and competing against other people".

Andrew Green, head of Catastophe Management at Markel, coached the winning team in his voluntary role as a Number Partner at Thomas Buxton Primary School. He said "They challenge us more than we challenge them so it's really good fun."

A year six member of the 'Maths Brains' team reflected on the final round: "Some problems were hard and some were easy. There were a mixed variety of problems and you had to use logic."

Michael McCarthy, the school's maths coordinator, added: It brings out different skills. Some children would be better at the numerical aspect and some are better at the explanations. They draw on each other's skills to get the best solution to the problem."

The Numeracy Challenge is part of the Numbers Partners² programme, managed by Tower Hamlets Education Business Partnership (THEBP)³. The scheme pairs volunteers from the business community with 7-11 year old pupils for half an hour per week to play fun maths games, whilst simultaneously bringing young people into contact with role models from the world of work.

In 1997 only half of children in Tower Hamlets achieved a level four, the minimum expected level in maths, when they left primary school⁴. Twenty years later this trend has reversed. 81% of children in Tower Hamlets now achieve or exceed the expected standard, surpassing the National average of 75%.⁵

Number Partners gives children individualised support to help children achieve their potential and have the confidence to say "I love maths!"

In the Numeracy Challenge, volunteers help pupils to form teams and complete three rounds of stretching maths-related challenges, using problem-solving, logic and teamwork.

David Sawyer, Managing Director at Markel, said: "It's good to give something back to the local community. It's good to get the children's enthusiasm [for] maths. There's nothing better than working with children, seeing them smiling and getting them learning."

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