

Pupils enjoy lessons in the MetroCentre

SCORES of schoolchildren will be descending on a shopping centre for a maths lesson with a difference.

Top Class's very own Dr Maths is holding a two-day event at the MetroCentre and is inviting schools from across our region to take part.

Maths in the Malls, which is taking place on January 31 and February 1, aims to show young people how maths is all around them in everyday life.

Classes of children will be given a special map of the centre which they will have to follow and complete a series of mathematical puzzles along the way.

A similar event was held last year and it proved to be a huge success. Dr Maths, aka Steve Humble, also holds big annual events outdoors during the summer.

Maths Shops

Last year's event took place along the Quayside and in 2006 he ran "Maths in the City", which saw more than 1,400 children tackling the tricky subject along Newcastle's Northumberland Street.

Dr Maths, who writes a column for Top Class every fortnight and challenges our readers to take part in a quiz, is the former head of mathematics at Newcastle College.

In 2006, however, he took on a demanding role as one of nine regional co-ordinators in the country to work for the National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics.

The centre is funded by the Department for Children, Schools and Families. It has been given £15m to spend over the next three years to look at how maths is taught and how it could be improved.

"Normally, if you say to someone that maths can be fun they look at you as if you're mad and it's that kind of thing we have to tackle to get more young people interested in the subject again."

Dr Maths hopes events like Maths in the Malls will help to engage people at a young age.

Schools that have already signed up to take part include Bill Quay, Brandling, Kells Lane, Lingey House primaries, in Gateshead, and Sacred Heart RC High School, in Fenham, Newcastle.

Dr Maths added: "Mention the MetroCentre and your first thoughts do not immediately turn to mathematics."

"However, teaching mathematical concepts in this way engages and reinforces learning."

"It puts the ideas learnt into a setting and allows time for those ideas to be



developed without any of the maths hang-ups which can occur in the classroom. By taking maths beyond the classroom, we can best illustrate the connections between the real world and what they are studying in school.

"In so doing, students and teachers alike are enthused by the wealth of resources they have all around them."

"The maths trail will remain in the

MetroCentre for everyone to try and copies of the trail are available at the Green Mall information desk."

To find out more about the event, or to sign up to take part, e-mail Dr Maths at drmaths@hotmail.co.uk

■ See next week's Top Class for the next Dr Maths column.