Maths Joins the Rolls-Royce Science Prize

The Rolls-Royce Science Prize was first implemented as an annual awards programme in 2004 as an incentive for teachers to enhance science teaching in their schools and colleges. There is a total of £120,000 to be won by schools each year. In 2014 Rolls-Royce, in partnership with the IMA and the NCETM, has extended the Prize to include mathematics teaching in addition to science. The Prize recognises and rewards excellence in Science and Mathematics teaching for all children, from those with special education needs to high ability pupils, and covers Primary, Secondary and post-16 age ranges. It promotes innovative and sustainable strategies for teaching science and mathematics and at the same time contributes to teachers’ continuing professional development.

There are two routes by which teachers can enter for the prize. Firstly, they may attend an ENTHUSE funded CPD Course at the National Science Learning Centre (NSLC) [1] York. The action plan they prepare as part of this course may be submitted for consideration. This plan should outline an idea for a science or mathematics teaching project that meets a need in their school or college. The project may be in any area of science or in the practical application of mathematics. Alternatively, they may enter the prize through one of the regional science learning centres (see [2] for a list of these centres).

This year, 60 schools will be initially selected from those that apply. Each of these will be awarded £1000. An external judging panel will whittle these down to a shortlist of 15; this is followed by the Rolls-Royce judging panel with help from the IMA and NCETM who will select up to nine finalists. The finalists will each receive £5000 to help implement their project and will be invited to attend the annual Rolls-Royce Science Prize dinner where they are in with a chance to be declared the overall winner for that year. More details may be found in [1]. Entry forms for mathematics teachers may be found at [3].

Alan Stevens CMath FIMA

Mathematics Teacher Training Scholarships

As you will be aware the application process for Mathematics Teacher Training Scholarships opened in October 2013 with the very ambitious targets of 1000 applications and 250 Scholarships each worth £25,000 plus membership and community benefits. The third of six application rounds closed on 3 March so it is an appropriate time to provide a progress report.

At the time of writing we have received 238 applications, significantly less than we would like at this stage but higher than in the first three application rounds last year. We also have 328 potential applicants who have registered their interest in the scheme (of which 56 are ineligible or have already applied) and one of our challenges is to ensure a significant proportion of these submit full applications.

We are working with DfE to raise the profile of the scheme by attending careers events and participating in online activities (you may have seen social media activity #teachmaths). We also have our own twitter account @Beamathsteacher, Facebook page: Maths Scholars, and soon will start a series of blog posts from Scholars and maths teachers. Our partners: LMS, RSS, and MEI are also working to publicise the scheme with their members and contacts and I would like thank University Departments and teacher training providers for their support.

141 candidates have progressed to the assessment centre stage with the remaining failing to meet the academic/residency requirements or the required standard in the initial maths test. A further 40 applications are currently being reviewed at this initial stage. Of the 86 who attended an assessment centre, 58 have (or will) progress to interview. 14 of the 23 interviewed so far have been recommended for a Scholarship.

I have had the pleasure of sitting in on a number of these interviews and have been impressed by the passion shown by candidates for mathematics and their desire to share this with pupils. One of our assessors has described Scholars as being ‘flag wavers for maths education’ and I have certainly met a number who will make a significant contribution to the future of teaching mathematics as well as inspiring pupils to learn and perhaps even love maths!

The current application round closes on 28 April and the next closes on 16 June so if you know any potential flag wavers please direct them to www.ima.org.uk/careers/teacher_scholarships.cfm

Dagmar Waller
Scholarship Scheme Project Manager