# Norfolk teacher urges early investment as government funds maths and AI education reforms



A primary school teacher in Norfolk has expressed cautious optimism about new initiatives aimed at increasing the participation of girls in mathematics. However, Scott Lyons, who also represents the National Education Union in the region, has underscored the necessity for additional funding to ensure these plans translate into meaningful change.

The UK government has pledged over £8 million for "targeted support" within education, which officials assert will assist thousands of young people in overcoming obstacles to opportunity. Lyons argues that for such initiatives to succeed, efforts must begin early. “In Secondary school, it’s usually quite late to spark a passion for maths in any pupil,” he stated, emphasizing that primary education is where the foundations must be laid.

This funding promise includes student enrichment programmes and pilot teacher training designed to benefit 450 students and 360 teachers when implemented this September. The government highlights that currently, female students represent about a third of A-level maths candidates, with women making up approximately 22% of the workforce in AI-related roles. Education Secretary Bridget Phillipson remarked on the pressing need for diverse talent in the field, stating, "Today's brightest maths minds are tomorrow's AI pioneers," and asserting that the government is committed to broadening access to these opportunities.

In tandem with these educational reforms, the government has allocated £1 million to 16 developers to create AI tools aimed at assisting teachers in their instructional roles. This initiative is part of a broader strategy to integrate AI into public services, ultimately enhancing educational standards while alleviating some of the burdens faced by educators. The project, which is projected for completion by April 2025, seeks to provide tailored feedback to students and streamline grading processes.

Despite these efforts, there is underlying concern that recent funding cuts could hinder progress. The Advanced Mathematics Support Programme, which has been vital for state schools since 2018, faces budget reductions as the government grapples with public finance deficits. This decision has raised alarms among educational charities, who fear that limiting resources will disproportionately affect students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, restricting their access to high-tier universities and advanced careers in areas such as AI and digital technologies.

Echoing these concerns, the Royal Society has called for sweeping reforms in maths education, advocating for an integrated curriculum that encompasses mathematics, statistics, and data science—essential skills in today's job market. Their recommendations include leveraging digital technologies in classrooms and adopting assessment methods that reflect real-world data applications. The Society is urging the government to establish a task force to implement these changes by early 2025.

While the government appears to have ambitious plans for reshaping education to meet the demands of the future, the execution of these initiatives will require sustained investment and strategic focus. As technology sectors increasingly rely on robust mathematical foundations, the necessity for urgent educational reforms becomes all the more pressing.

Engagement and commitment from the education community, as well as the government, will be vital in harnessing the potential of the next generation of learners, ensuring they are well-equipped to navigate and contribute to an AI-driven future.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraph 1: [[1]](https://hellorayo.co.uk/greatest-hits/west-norfolk/news/norfolk-teacher-new-maths-plans-extra-funding/)
2. Paragraph 2: [[1]](https://hellorayo.co.uk/greatest-hits/west-norfolk/news/norfolk-teacher-new-maths-plans-extra-funding/)
3. Paragraph 3: [[1]](https://hellorayo.co.uk/greatest-hits/west-norfolk/news/norfolk-teacher-new-maths-plans-extra-funding/)
4. Paragraph 4: [[1]](https://hellorayo.co.uk/greatest-hits/west-norfolk/news/norfolk-teacher-new-maths-plans-extra-funding/)
5. Paragraph 5: [[2]](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ai-teacher-tools-set-to-break-down-barriers-to-opportunity)
6. Paragraph 6: [[6]](https://www.ft.com/content/aca9722c-27f7-44f6-9c67-81a33629a481)
7. Paragraph 7: [[4]](https://www.royalsociety.org/news/2024/09/royal-society-calls-for-radical-reform-of-maths-education/)
8. Paragraph 8: [[7]](https://www.ft.com/content/4ed64525-95b4-41d6-a7eb-b3295ebf4a77)

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## Bibliography

* <https://hellorayo.co.uk/greatest-hits/west-norfolk/news/norfolk-teacher-new-maths-plans-extra-funding/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
* <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ai-teacher-tools-set-to-break-down-barriers-to-opportunity> - The UK government has allocated £1 million to 16 developers to create AI tools aimed at assisting teachers with marking and providing tailored feedback to students. This initiative is part of the government's broader plan to integrate AI into public services, enhancing educational standards and breaking down barriers to opportunity. The tools are designed to save teachers time, allowing them to focus more on delivering quality lessons. The project is expected to be completed by April 2025, with the AI tools being targeted at specific age groups and subjects.
* <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/news-blog-and-events/press-and-media/ofs-confirms-81-million-boost-for-postgraduate-ai-conversion-courses-as-evaluation-finds-promising-signs-of-increase-in-diversity-of-graduates/> - The Office for Students (OfS) has confirmed an additional £8.1 million funding for postgraduate AI and data science conversion courses, aiming to increase diversity in these fields. Since April 2020, £18.1 million has been allocated to universities, resulting in 1,818 scholarships. The new funding will support up to 818 more students, with a focus on underrepresented groups, including women, Black students, disabled students, and those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. An evaluation report indicates promising signs of increased diversity among graduates from these courses.
* <https://www.royalsociety.org/news/2024/09/royal-society-calls-for-radical-reform-of-maths-education/> - The Royal Society has called for a radical reform of maths education in England to address the growing need for data skills in the workplace and everyday life. The proposed 'mathematical and data education' approach integrates mathematics, statistics, and data science, underpinned by digital technologies. Recommendations include a curriculum that coherently combines these elements, wider use of digital technologies in classrooms, and assessment methods that reflect real-world applications. The Society urges the government to establish an independent task force to implement these changes by early 2025.
* <https://www.open.ac.uk/blogs/news/around-ou/university-news/the-open-university-and-department-for-education-launch-3m-ai-initiative-to-improve-educational-tools/> - The Open University, in partnership with the Department for Education, has launched a £3 million initiative to develop AI-powered educational tools. The project aims to create an optimised content store comprising teaching standards, guidelines, and lesson plans to train generative AI, making these resources more reliable for teachers in England. The initiative seeks to reduce teachers' out-of-hours work and increase time spent teaching students. The project is expected to be completed by April 2025, with the AI tools being targeted at specific age groups and subjects.
* <https://www.ft.com/content/aca9722c-27f7-44f6-9c67-81a33629a481> - The UK government has decided to cut the budget for the Advanced Mathematics Support Programme (AMSP), which has supported state schools in England since 2018 in teaching A-level maths, further maths, and core maths skills essential for life. This decision arises as the government addresses a significant deficit in public finances. The response to this decision has been one of dismay among educational charities and campaigners, who warn it could negatively impact students, especially those from poorer areas, by limiting their access to high-tier universities and advanced careers, particularly in AI and digital technology sectors.
* <https://www.ft.com/content/4ed64525-95b4-41d6-a7eb-b3295ebf4a77> - The UK government’s aspiration to lead in artificial intelligence is jeopardized by its approach to mathematics education. A robust maths foundation is crucial for AI development, which fundamentally relies on algorithms. Despite its importance, maths is undervalued and taken for granted, even as it is essential for everyday functions like encryption, technology, and national security. The recent decision to cut funding for the Advanced Mathematics Support Programme, which aids maths teaching in state schools, is particularly troubling. There is a chronic shortage of specialized maths teachers, and fewer students are pursuing mathematical sciences at the undergraduate level.