

## Primary Mastery Specialist Programme 2026/27 Cohort 12 – Information Sheet

### Overview

Following the success of the previous cohorts of the Primary Mastery Specialist Programme, the NCETM and Maths Hubs are now seeking to recruit a twelfth cohort of expert primary school teachers to develop as *Primary Mastery Specialists*. This document gives information about the programme and how teachers and their schools can apply to be involved. The closing date for applications is **23 April 2026**.

Since 2014, the NCETM and Maths Hubs have been working together to develop [approaches to teaching for mastery](#) within primary mathematics. This has been informed by the teaching of maths in high-performing South-East Asian jurisdictions. The first year in post is a training and development year, either establishing or embedding mastery in their own schools, with the support of the senior leadership team. In the second year the training focus shifts to develop Mastery Specialists in their role of working with other schools. In the second and subsequent years, specialists will engage in a variety of work, including leading Work Groups, which support schools to introduce and continue their approaches to teaching for mastery.

### What will participation in the programme involve?

The NCETM and Maths Hubs now want to recruit a twelfth cohort of teachers to develop and work as Primary Mastery Specialists, ensuring Maths Hubs to have the capacity needed to support schools using teaching for mastery approaches. 2026/27 will be the development year for Cohort 12 Primary Mastery Specialists, and in 2027/28 they will lead or co-lead Teaching for Mastery Work Groups for their Maths Hub. This is all subject to confirmation and continued funding from the DfE. It is expected that the Mastery Specialist's school will become a leading exponent of teaching for mastery in this time, so it must have the capacity and desire to take on and cultivate a teaching for mastery approach across the whole school. Before a teacher applies for the role, headteachers might find it useful to look at the NCETM website where there are [interviews with heads](#) who have led the introduction of teaching for mastery in their school. Also, [Mastery Specialists discuss the benefits of the role](#) for themselves, their schools and their pupils.

In their Specialist training year, 2026/27, participating teachers will:

- attend three two-day residential professional development events led by the NCETM, usually held in autumn 2026, spring 2027 and summer 2027 subject to confirmation
- broaden their own understanding of, and skills in, teaching maths for mastery in their own classroom
- work with colleagues, including the headteacher, to develop teaching for mastery approaches across their school, using a range of professional development activity
- facilitate regular workshops, with an expectation that collaborative lesson observation will be an integral part of these
- lead a pilot collaborative lesson observation workshop with teachers from interested local schools
- collaborate with the Maths Hub's leadership and the hub's other Mastery Specialists.
- further their understanding and experience of leading change in their school.

**This first year will require ten days' teacher release time and will be fully funded through the Maths Hubs.**

**The second year onwards will require teacher release time and will be fully funded through the Maths Hubs. The exact number of days will be discussed with the Maths Hub and depend on the nature of the work carried out by the Mastery Specialist.**

In 2026/27 and beyond (subject to DfE funding), the Mastery Specialists will:

- lead Work Groups to introduce and continue teaching for mastery in other schools in their Maths Hub
- continue to develop, embed, sustain and refine teaching for mastery approaches across their own school
- continue to collaborate with the Maths Hub's leadership and Mastery Specialists
- engage with additional professional development sessions and obtain NCETM PD Lead Accreditation, if not already achieved.

## What are the benefits of participating in this programme?

Participating in the programme provides the following benefits to the Mastery Specialist and their school:

- Mastery Specialists develop:
  - an understanding of the principles of mastery within the context of teaching maths
  - deep subject and pedagogical knowledge of primary maths to support teaching for mastery
  - skills in teaching, planning and assessment to effectively support pupils in developing a deep and sustainable understanding (i.e., mastery) of maths
  - professional development leadership skills to support teachers, within their own school and in other schools, to adopt a teaching for mastery approach, including leading Work Groups and facilitating high-quality lessons to be observed by participants.
- Mastery Specialists will have the opportunity to work closely with the NCETM central team and the national and local communities of Mastery Specialists.
- Mastery Specialists who are not already accredited NCETM PD Leads will be able to gain this accreditation after the initial year of the Mastery Specialist Programme has been successfully completed.
- The Mastery Specialist's school will benefit from high-quality and sustained support in embedding teaching for mastery across the school.

## Who should apply?

The table below shows the essential and desirable criteria for applicants to the programme. This should be evidenced in the application form.

<b>Essential</b>	<b>Desirable</b>
Qualified Teacher Status	Additional status, e.g., Mathematics SLE/MaST
Employed as a teacher in a primary/infant/junior/middle school, and regularly teaching maths to the same class of children	Mathematics subject leader
Able to fulfil the programme requirements and time commitment outlined above	

Good teaching skills in maths as evidenced by internal/external/Ofsted observation	A minimum of four years' teaching primary maths
Passion and enthusiasm for teaching for mastery	A desire to develop as a specialist teacher of primary maths
Ability to work collaboratively with others	
Successful track record of working effectively with other professionals within your own school	A successful track record of working effectively with other professionals across a group of schools
Excellent communication and interpersonal skills	The ability to grow leadership capacity in others
An understanding of what constitutes effective learning in maths and the ability and confidence to communicate this	
Desire to develop skills, both in the classroom and in working with others	
Working in a school where the headteacher understands the commitment required in the first year of training and beyond	

Maths Hubs will look to appoint Mastery Specialists so that they meet the criteria as set out above but also fit into the hub's strategic plan for developing teaching for mastery across the region.

## What are the expectations of participating schools?

- The headteacher and Mastery Specialist will commit to developing, continuing and refining teaching for mastery approaches in maths across the school, supported by professional development activity, including regular collaborative lesson observation and other collaborative professional development in their own school.
- The headteacher will commit to supporting the Mastery Specialist with their outreach work with other schools, ensuring that they are given appropriate release time to fulfil this.
- The Mastery Specialist will commit to developing their understanding and practice related to maths teaching for mastery including:
  - participating in the three two-day residentials (subject to final confirmation)
  - developing maths teaching for mastery within their own classroom
  - completing any assignments required as part of the development programme
  - developing their role as a leader of professional development.
- The Mastery Specialist will commit to all aspects of the role and the release time required; in 2026/27 this is ten days, subject to funding from DfE.
- The Mastery Specialist will commit to all aspects of the role and release time required in the subsequent years. This will be confirmed following discussion with the Maths Hub.

- The Mastery Specialist and headteacher will provide reports required by the Maths Hub and participate in any required evaluation processes.
- The headteacher will commit to support the Mastery Specialist, including:
  - supporting the specialist develop and embed teaching for mastery within the school
  - ensuring they receive the required release time.

## What is the funding for the programme?

In the development year, 2026/27 the Specialist's Maths Hub will fund the cost of ten days' release time for the Mastery Specialist's work. In 2026/27 and beyond (subject to DfE funding), the Specialist's Maths Hub will fund the cost of release time for the Specialist's work and the cost of travel for school support visits. The exact number of days is to be discussed with the Maths Hub.

## How to apply

An application form will be published on the [NCETM website](#) on **16 December 2025**, when the application window opens. Applicants, in conjunction with their headteacher, should complete and submit the application form by **23 April 2026**. The Maths Hub will contact applicants once the selection process has been completed.