

Ben Bebbington, PGDipEd Mathematics (Secondary) 2 year SKE course, 2011

Current Role

George Dixon Academy, as an NQT Mathematics Teacher (also teaching Statistics)

What is the best thing about what you are doing now?

Working with children everyday who want to, and are determined to, succeed.

Why did you originally apply to Birmingham?

Having completed my undergraduate studies at POLSIS in 2007 I loved the emphasis which had been placed upon thinking critically and independently. Even before I entered the room for my private interview for the PGDipEd it had become clear that the School of Education was very similar in its emphasis on developing me as a critical thinker.

What are your fondest memories of the University?

Sitting in the maths room during the SKE portion watching dozens of aspects of mathematics unfold before us as we played with them. Then being so engaged with them that we would take the problems out of the room and continue doing them in the pub, cafe or train!

How did you grow as a person by coming to University?

I expected the SKE course to give me enough maths to be able to teach AS maths courses, but I developed mathematically to such an extent that I confidently describe myself as a mathematician and am willing to defend this identity based on what I did at Birmingham. The moment that I emphasised the learning experience which Sheffield Wednesday could take from a 4-1 home defeat by Watford was when I realise that I would now always be a teacher.

What did you think of the learning experience within the University?

In terms of preparing me for being a teacher I cannot recommend Birmingham highly enough. By encouraging me to think critically I am able to plan lessons which can be both fulfilling to myself and my pupils. Having spoken to colleagues about their ITT colleges I would recommend Birmingham to anyone who wishes to become the best teacher that they can, and always keep developing.

Did you find the degree programme at Birmingham challenging or easy?

Incredibly challenging, but there is a huge amount of value in being challenged about what you assume, and think, and do. Finding the solution to a problem was only ever the beginning of the discussion at Birmingham, as you discussed how to adapt and extend the mathematics from the perspective of being a learner and a teacher.

Did you find the University or your degree helpful to you in getting your first job?

The tutors were incredibly supportive as we were looking for schools, and would read our applications, comment on our lessons, and suggest which schools we may like to enter based upon the type of teacher that they had seen us develop into.

What advice would you give to current students studying on your degree programme?

If they are determined to become the best teacher that they can and want to help students develop as mathematicians and as young people, I can only ask them to visit Birmingham's School of Education for one day to find out how good it is. Everything else will follow.