

**Press release** 

### 26-27 April 2012

# Bridging the gap between education research and practice

Second conference of the Fibonacci Project

University of Leicester, UK

## **Conference in English**

# Education experts from across Europe meet at Leicester to explore new ways of improving science and mathematics teaching.

Fibonacci Inquiry-based approach pioneered at Leicester and in other European cities to be discussed.

New ways to improve science and mathematics education in schools are to be explored by experts from across Europe meeting at the University of Leicester.

The University is already pioneering exciting new methods of mathematics and science teaching in primary and secondary schools.

The University of Leicester is the only centre in England to have been chosen to participate in the EU-funded Fibonacci Project – a major European scheme aimed at encouraging relevant and practical learning.

The Fibonacci project brings together the teaching of mathematics and science through inquiry-based approaches that pupils will find relevant, interesting and engaging while at the same time demonstrating that the two subjects are naturally linked.

The Fibonacci Project European Conference from 26-27 April is organised by the School of Education, in cooperation with the Fibonacci European coordination team (*La main à la pâte*, France). Sessions will present the innovative work being undertaken through the Fibonacci Project in over 30 organisations in more than 20 European countries as well as have presentations on other projects focused on research and/or developing high quality inquiry-based practice.

Professor Janet Ainley, Director of Leicester's School of Education, said the project had two main goals: to raise standards in schools by improving teacher education and to raise the profile of mathematics and science among students.

"We work with teachers to look at how themes arising in the science curriculum can be developed in a cross-curricular way," she said.

"It is based on teachers and pupils posing and exploring questions through investigation and practical approaches."

A lesson using the Fibonacci method might, for example, focus on flight and the use of parachutes. Pupils can design parachutes, test which shapes are the safest and which fabric is the most effective.

"As well as science, there is a lot of maths going on with pupils looking at shapes, taking measurements and collecting and analysing data," Professor Ainley explained. "It is real science and real mathematics, and very hands-on and relevant."

The conference takes place at the University of Leicester Halls of Residence, John Foster Hall.

Conference info: http://fibonacci.uni-bayreuth.de/leicester/

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For more information, please contact: Professor Janet Ainley on 0116 252 3690, janet.ainley@le.ac.uk

### NOTES FOR EDITORS

**The Fibonacci Project** is a major European project based on two previous successful international educational projects: *Pollen* for sciences and *Sinus* for mathematics. Funded by the European Union under the 7<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme (for research and technological development), and supervised by a high level scientific committee, it aims at a large dissemination of inquiry-based science and mathematics education in Europe, through the tutoring of institutions in progress (universities, teachers training centres, research institutions, etc.), by institutions with high recognition in science and mathematics education. The Fibonacci Project will result in a blueprint for a transfer methodology valid for building further Reference Centres in Europe. The project began in January 2010 and will last 3 years, until February 2013. In the end, 60 tertiary education institutions throughout Europe will be involved, reaching a minimum of 2,500 teachers and 45,000 students.