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Children at the camp held by the new NUS High School had to catch insects and solve problems. They had to show their aptitude in maths and science in a bid to gain a place in the school.

360 kids vie for places in NUS High

FOR two days, dozens of 12-year-olds from across Singapore tackled a range of mathematics and science experiments.

In all, 360 Primary 6 pupils showed up for the camp in a bid to get a place in the NUS High School that will start in January next year. They were divided into two groups, with the camp for the second group ending today.

Each group had to complete six activities to demonstrate their aptitude in mathematics and science.

These two areas are the focus of the new school, set up by the National University of Singapore. It is offering a six-year diploma programme in which students will not take the conventional O- and A-level examinations.

The new high school is one of eight institutions moving away from this standard examination track as the Education Ministry introduces more diversity in Singapore's education system.

The camp, held at Singapore

Science Centre, required the pupils to catch insects as biological specimens and create an airtight pipe with a mound of crumpled paper, plastic bags and sticky tape. The pipe experiment was adapted from the movie *Apollo 13* about astronauts lost in space.

Of the 360 pupils, 70 have been offered places at the school, which will take in about 125. The school, however, will not comment on the number of places left because those offered a place

could turn them down and they are flexible when it comes to admitting good candidates.

Judging from the smiling faces at the camp yesterday, many of the youngsters were not overly worried about the competition.

Said 12-year-old Cheston Ow of St Stephen's School: "My chances are as good as anyone else's. I'm just enjoying the experiments which I can't do at home because my mum will scold me for making a mess."