

NUS High School's first graduation

Inaugural batch of 88 students is the first to bypass O- and A-levels

The first 88 students at the National University of Singapore (NUS) High School of Mathematics and Science graduated yesterday, with some having already secured places at Imperial College, University College London and the University of Michigan.

Principal Hang Kim Hoo said he was confident that all 88 would be admitted into universities here or overseas. They have applied and are waiting for answers.

At the graduating ceremony, Dr Hang said the students' achievements, deserved tribute because they took a risk to be the first in Singapore to embark on a high school programme specializing in mathematics and science.

NUS High School was conceived as a nurturing ground for students with an aptitude for these two subjects.

Instead of the O- or A-levels, the school offers a six-year programme, starting at age 13, which ends in a diploma recognized by universities here and overseas, including top

institution such as Cambridge and Oxford.

The first students came in at age 15. In three years, they were exposed to a broad-based education not only in maths and science subjects, but also in humanities and the fine arts.

Learning went beyond the classroom via links with external organizations. Students worked with mentors from institutes such as the Agency for Science, Technology and Research, and the Defence Science Technology Agency on research projects.

Gifted students were also given opportunities to reach their potential, with 19 taking up university-level modules at NUS.

They also shone in competitions. Seven out of the 15 winners from Singapore at this year's international maths and science Olympiads were from NUS High School.

The student with top marks, Ms Zhao Ye, 19, came from China nine years ago and is now a citizen. She said she was grateful for the research opportunities provided by the school. "Throughout the



All of the 88 National University of Singapore (NUS) High School graduates will get places in universities here or overseas. -- ST PHOTO: NG SOR LUAN

projects, I also found that I am interested in academia. I hope to be a physics professor and mentor other young people who are interested in physics."

Minister of Education Ng Eng Hen, the guest-of-honour yesterday, said NUS High School's teachers and NUS mentors have been key in developing the school into a fertile ground for breeding young researchers.

This year, its 900 students produced 200 research projects supported by 90 university faculty members.

Dr Hang said the school plans to build ties with schools overseas to facilitate student and staff exchanges. He also said: "What we have achieved in these three years is beyond expectations. From a school with no track record we have become one with a diploma that is recognized by universities here and overseas."