

Newsletter – Tuesday, February 25<sup>th</sup> 2008

## **Teaching firm looks to go global**

By Ian Graham

A SMALL Northern Ireland technology company which has developed a unique online system of teaching maths for the Province's schools is on the verge of going global.

Interest in Queen's University spin-out company Alta Systems' Maths for Schools teaching method has blossomed in the months since it was licensed to Ulster schools.

It has already been adopted by around a quarter of all schools in Northern Ireland since being made available to them in September after a series of trials.

Now the company is turning its mind to English and delivering the teaching of literacy through its system.

And the days of the expensive maths tutor may also be numbered – the firm has come up with a web-based companion product, Keys For Maths, that can be used from home by anyone with broadband for just £25 a year – about the price of one hour with a tutor.

Since launching the maths teaching system in England and Wales in January, a number of schools have signed contracts. It is being trialed by six Scottish education authorities and just last week the Western Isles signed a four-year contract.

Company director Barry Hagan said he was also in discussion with education authorities in Singapore, Spain and Finland.

Dr Hagan said: "This system builds a profile of the strengths and weaknesses of the pupil and demonstrably improves performance in mathematics and numeracy."