

Mastering Number at Reception and KS1

A programme to secure firm foundations in the development of good number sense for all children

What does the latest 2023 Ofsted report, 'Coordinating Mathematical Success' say about Mastering Number?

The NCETM's Mastering Number Programme was particularly helpful [in schools where the curriculum emphasised both understanding and quick recall of addition facts]. In these schools, pupils were successful and received lots of praise. They were learning how to subitise (recognise a number of objects without having to count), understand numerical concepts and recall addition facts.

Primary section, paragraph 10

Other organisations should offer the Mastering Number Programme to all schools as an example of good practice in early mathematics.

Recommendations section

'Choral response' [pupils responding in unison] is a key feature of the NCETM's Mastering Number Programme for younger pupils. A 'my turn your turn' approach to modelling and reciting stem sentences helps pupils to learn new mathematical language and understand important concepts.

Primary section, paragraph 47



Spotlight

Newlathes Primary School in Carlisle has been involved in Mastering Number since the start of the programme. Year 2 teacher and maths lead, Nathan Pow, explains why the programme is so successful.

What impact have you seen from using the Mastering Number Programme?

It develops precise mathematical language. Our children arrive with weaker language skills, so the way the programme uses stem sentences is great. The vocabulary used in the sessions is transferable into maths lessons.

How has it benefitted your pupils?

I am confident that I am now sending children up to junior school as mathematicians. They don't just know how to answer a question, but understand the underpinning structures and relationships.



Spotlight

Whixall C of E Primary School in Shropshire joined the Mastering Number Programme in 2021. Michael Hares, assistant headteacher and maths lead, shares what appealed to him and his school about the programme.

Why did you choose Mastering Number for Whixall?

It has a systematic approach and clear progression through Reception to Year 2, which suited our children, and especially our mixed-age classes. We also liked that it supports pupils to understand the relationships between numbers – to develop their 'number sense'.

How has it improved pupils' mathematical understanding?

It's had a positive impact on all pupils, and especially those who were previously less confident in maths. They can see that they're working through things at the same pace as the other children, which has been a real positive for them. Children are talking more confidently about numbers, how they 'fit together'.

How has it benefitted staff?

Mastering Number has had a really positive impact on staff subject knowledge. The materials couldn't be any more supportive, and the teacher guides are especially useful. Being part of the programme has resulted in increased discussion between staff about maths teaching.

Schools engaged in Mastering Number at Reception and KS1 to date:

Over 8,000

What do participants say?

The use of mathematical language is so impressive. Parents are amazed!

Lead Teacher in the programme

We've had a 13% rise in pupil outcomes in EYFS and KS1, which is significant. Teachers were hesitant of change, but the pupil outcomes reflect the success of what we have put in place.

Primary headteacher