

Developing Counting at Crescent Primary

A case study from Early Years



Overview

Kerri Baker is the Early Years Leader at Crescent Primary School. Kerri took part in East Midlands West Maths Hub Counting Project in 2017/18. She has implemented 'counting collections' as part of continuous provision to develop children's exploration of number and counting during child-initiated play.

She explained: "The children are really motivated to count the collections and love counting them. They are working independently but also collaboratively to problem solve and are working with bigger numbers."

The Counting Project at East Midlands West maths hub

The project aimed for practitioners to develop provision for counting in Early Years mathematics within their school/setting environment. It was intended that the children in the project settings would display higher levels of involvement in counting activities and communicate their counting strategies in a way that is observable by adults. It was hoped that project settings would develop practice underpinned by a clear knowledge of counting principles (particularly related to cardinality) and that setting practitioners would feel more confident in how to support children's early counting.

What we did at Crescent Primary School

The children in the Reception classes at Crescent are motivated and engaged during whole class and group counting activities. The children are becoming increasingly confident when counting forwards and backwards and counting in 2s and 10s. We have always been keen to provide a range of resources for children to count, not only in the maths area, but also throughout the environment when working independently, but this has been difficult as the resources provided generally ended up in pans and handbags in the home corner. Without an adult to support and encourage counting the children would often use the resources to support their imaginative play, but there was little in the way of independent counting. Following working with the Maths Hub and feeding back to the team, we decided to enhance provision by establishing an area for the children to have continuous access to the collections with resources to hand to support counting and recording.

We used the tens frames during whole class teaching and when working with groups, demonstrating how to use the pots for the groups of 10 and how to count in tens and ones to find the total. The frames are also used for self-registration and working out how many children are here / away, etc.

What the children did...

The children quickly understood how to use the ten frame and what to do when they had filled it (and made the set of 10). We did lots of reinforcing when to count in tens and when to count in ones and they got used to this very quickly, applying their rote counting skills when counting in tens. To support this, we added actions when counting the groups as when counting in tens we 'flash out' the fingers on both hands, which we encouraged them to do over each pot as they counted the tens. They then used the 'pointy finger' to count the ones left on the tens frame.

After a few lessons and opportunities to work in small groups, the free choice area was set up and shared with the children. Resources are available to support counting, such as tens frames, pots and containers to put the counted sets of 10 into, a display with 10s numbers and a 100 square, whiteboard, pens, clipboards and sheets, and an I-pad to photograph their counting. This is an extremely popular area and children are becoming competent when counting larger sets and applying taught skills when talking about and recording their findings. This area is now buzzing with language, with children supporting each other and explaining their counting to their peers and adults.



Kerri said:

"This has been a fantastic way to encourage our children to be more engaged when counting independently. They are counting larger sets now and support each other when working. Many are now using the Numicon to count in 10s and are beginning to use the Numicon 2s spontaneously."

"Look, it's 100. 10, 20, 30, 40, 50, 60, 70, 80, 90, 100!"



Summary and next steps

Crescent Primary School developed children's engagement when counting independently during child-initiated activities.

Crescent Primary School are continuing to develop their approach to teaching early maths by extending the counting collection area, by exploring using Numicon, sticks and bundles of 10, tens rods and ones, and money to develop representations of children's counting.

If you are interested in engaging in similar work with East Midlands West maths hub...

Contact us:

[Twitter.com/EM_mathshub](https://twitter.com/EM_mathshub)

mathshub@george-spencer.notts.sch.uk