

'Keep up,
not catch up'

Case Study of a pre-teach intervention model for Maths

SCHOOL: Barlborough Primary School TEACHER: Rachel Biggin YEAR GROUP: 5



1 School background

Barlborough is a one form entry primary school. The proportion of children eligible for free school meals is below average as is the proportion of children from a minority ethnic background and children who speak English as an additional language. Children have been taught in mixed age classes but from next year will be taught in single age classes.

2 What I hoped to achieve?

By taking part in this workgroup, I hoped that we could support our lower attaining pupils to stay working within their year group. We have found that, in the past, the gap has widened between our lower and higher attainers, particularly through Key Stage 2. This has resulted in groups of pupils not being able to access their year group's objectives. We hope that with the implementation of mastery throughout the school and the children being taught in single age classes, this should be lessening. However, I hope that the pre-teach model will support our pupils who may find it difficult to access the year group's objectives.

3 Characteristics of the children in interventions groups in my school

The group that I worked with were in Year 5 and just below age related expectations - the lowest being Year 5 emerging at the beginning of the intervention. There were 4 boys in the group and 1 girl. None of the children in the group had special educational needs. The children were generally enthusiastic in their maths lessons and behaviour was very good. They all said that they were happy in maths lessons and only some of them said that they were sometimes worried in maths lessons or didn't understand. They were all keen and enthusiastic to attend the pre teach sessions and were a pleasure to teach. I was not the class teacher of the group so I liaised with the teacher and used her planning to plan my sessions.

4 What I did in the pre-teach group

The pre teach sessions took place during morning assembly and lasted about 15 minutes. Each session was taken by a teacher with a group of 5 pupils. The daily maths lesson follows playtime which takes place after the assembly so the children were back doing maths within 20 minutes of the pre teach. Sessions took place twice a week.

Before each of the sessions, I looked carefully at the lesson's objectives and tried to determine the pre knowledge that the children would need. To help with this, I looked at the Year 4 objectives to see what knowledge they should already have. I would then structure my session around this pre knowledge. Sometimes this was about children knowing specific vocabulary, sometimes it was whether they could carry out a process and sometimes it was using visual representations to support their understanding.

In the sessions, I would give the children a short task to see what they could already do. This would lead on to any teaching points. For example when asking the children to translate shapes, I could quickly see that some of them were just counting the empty squares between the 2 shapes rather than translating each of the points of the shape so this became a clear teaching point. At the end of the session, if time, I would give each child a chance to show what they had learned as the group loved coming to the board. In a session on writing numbers to 1 million, each child came to the board to write the numbers that I read to them.

5 Impact on children

The children have all made expected progress since the Spring term and one has made accelerated progress. Their enthusiasm and behavior was already positive but I would say that confidence was the area where they showed the greatest change. They all said that the pre teach session “sometimes” gave them more confidence in lessons three of the five children said that it definitely helped them understand the lessons more. In addition, the class teacher noticed that the children were willing to put their hands up and seemed to enjoy the familiarity of the subject when she started to teach. One child said that he sometimes felt scared when a teacher asked him a question but he felt more confident if he had just covered the work in the pre teach.

One of the children was already pretty confident in his maths lessons. However, he has a tendency to rush his work and not always recognise that he hasn't fully understood the concept. I think that the pre teach sessions have helped him to slow down a little and is beginning to make him see that he does have some gaps that need filling in – without denting his confidence.

6 Advice for other teachers or schools

The best thing about the pre teach has been the enthusiasm of the children. They all wanted to do it and never complained about coming. I think that doing it during assembly helped with this as they didn't feel that they were missing another curriculum area, which can sometimes happen with interventions.

Having said that, the biggest challenge has been finding a time that works. Although, in theory, assembly is a good time, in practice, assemblies are cancelled, I'm sometimes asked to take assembly at the last minute and there have been all sorts of school trips and events during this busy term. I hope that, in September, things will be a little simpler and we will be able to have 2 sessions a week without too much disruption. Another challenge is breaking down what the pre knowledge is that the children require before the lesson. I've found that it just takes a bit of time to think about the various stages of the learning. I think that it helps when you have taught the subject before and maybe can anticipate any misconceptions.

