

'Keep up,
not catch up'

Case Study of a pre-teach intervention model for Maths

SCHOOL: Overseal Primary TEACHER: Laila Riggott YEAR GROUP: 5



1 School background

Overseal Primary, South Derbyshire, is a single form entry school with 210 pupils on roll. It is in a growing village with a mixed socio-economic population. KS1 and KS2 SATS results are consistently above national. Numbers of pupils in receipt of FSM or on the SEND register are roughly in line with national and the percentage of EAL pupils is significantly lower than national.

2 What I hoped to achieve?

Year on year, as a school, we are faced with a number of pupils who receive 'catch-up' intervention programmes for maths. Often, the same group of pupils take part in these programmes each academic year, always needing 'extra' support in order to 'close the attainment gap' between themselves and their peers to meet ARE for maths. Sometimes, the same programmes were being re-taught. Although some pupils would 'close the attainment gap', many didn't quite meet ARE and the following academic year, support was needed again.

This is clearly not ideal and it asks the question as to whether 'catch-up' intervention programmes are effective and value for money. (This could of course be for any number of reasons: staff leading the programmes, pupils taking part, the programme itself etc.)

In trialling the 'pre-teach' model, it was hoped that we can arm our pupils who struggle to meet ARE with the skills, knowledge and understanding needed to 'keep-up' with their peers within lessons and therefore avoid the need for 'catch-up' interventions.

3 Characteristics of the children in interventions groups in my school

There were three Year 5 children who took part in the pre-teach trial.

All three of these pupils have been in receipt of post-teach interventions since Year 3. They were all 2b children for maths at KS1 yet progress has slowed for them. All were not on track to be secure and meet ARE for maths at the end of Year 5.

Within lessons two of them are vocal and appear confident and happy and one of them is much less confident and happy within maths lessons.

None of the children however, were consistently meeting lesson learning objectives and they were failing to keep up with their peers, working at a much slower pace. This meant that they were often in need of Wave 2 or 3 support to keep up with the day's learning as well as needing to 'close the gap' for prior learning.

4 What I did in the pre-teach group

Knowing this, we planned for two pre-teach sessions per week. There were three children and one teacher (this was not their class teacher). The time of day varied depending on the schedule of both staff and pupils but they were always held the day prior to the class lesson being taught and where at all possible, the children were not removed from other lessons.

The class teacher would share the week's planning with the pre-teach teacher and a brief discussion would highlight the needs, attitudes and gaps in learning of the pupils for that particular topic or area of learning.

In sessions, the teacher focused not on the main learning objective for the class lesson, but on the background skills, knowledge and understanding that the children might need in order to access the class lesson in a way that would allow them to 'keep-up' and meet the learning objective by the end of lesson, rather than needing 'post-teach' catch-up support.

For example, one class lesson focused on converting units of measurement (capacity). In the pre-teach session, the children used practical equipment and physically measured amounts of water using a variety of containers, all with different scales and divisions. The discussions focused initially on volume and the children's perception of 'how much' the different containers held using different units e.g. milliliters and liters.

As in all schools towards the end of the Summer term and around SATs, time was limited and it was difficult to be consistent in the delivery of these sessions.

The teacher was able to ascertain that none of the three pupils were aware of volumes, either hugely over or under-estimating how much water each container held and that they did not have an awareness of the relationship between milliliters and liters.

This meant that the teacher could address this issue and when the children entered the classroom the next day, they were aware of how milliliters and liters relate and therefore have more of an understanding of what a 'sensible' conversion of units would be.

All pre-teach sessions were informal: children worked on whiteboards or in a journal; they were practical and hands-on where applicable; children were encouraged to have a go and no answers or questions were 'daft'.

5 Impact on children

Of the three children involved in the group, all agreed that they looked forward to the sessions and enjoyed them. They felt that they entered the class lessons the next day feeling more confident and their overall enthusiasm for maths has grown.

In discussions with the class teacher, what stood out in particular, was the behavior of these children, which, whilst never a significant problem, consisted of low level disruption and distraction. In those lessons which followed a pre-teach session, their behavior was markedly improved – much more on-task and focused., completing a higher volume of work and offering answers in class.

Interestingly, none of the children in the group met end of year ARE for maths. This however, may not be a reflection of how successful the pre-teach model is, merely an indication that these children have been struggling to 'keep-up' for several years and that there are gaps in their learning.

We feel confident that the pre-teach model has potential to be an effective method of supporting our lower/middle attaining pupils. The responses from the pupils and staff involved have been overwhelmingly positive and we are introducing it across the school as a part of our SIP from September 2018.

6 Advice for other teachers or schools

Some learning points we have taken from this trial:

- Timetable in slots to help ensure they happen consistently
- If possible, have the class teacher lead the sessions
- Have a specific room/place to use (we struggled to find space)
- Keep the groups to no more than 6 pupils
- Keep it 'fun' and unthreatening
- Give the pupils tasks for the next class lesson e.g. answer at least one question; show me in our next session how you applied what we did today