

The Willows Catholic  
Primary School



Mathematics Policy

Updated: Summer 2021

## **Intent**

At The Willows, through a positive, caring environment, we strive to develop a love of all things mathematical. Every child is equally important and so our children are fully supported to enable them to develop at a level that is appropriate to them. As well as engaging our children in activities, our lessons focus on developing deeper thinking, rehearsing methods and learning new facts. Through challenging word problems, missing number tasks and open-ended problem solving where they explain their understanding, we challenge children to become masters of the subject. Children explain their answers rather than just giving a numerical answer and are encouraged to challenge others if they disagree and argue their case if they are convinced that they are correct.

- Pupils are expected to move through the programs of study at broadly the same pace.
- Pupils who grasp concepts rapidly are challenged through being offered rich and sophisticated problems before any acceleration through new content.
- Those who are not sufficiently fluent with earlier material consolidate their understanding.

Our aim is that our children:

- develop a positive attitude and approach to maths.
- become fluent in the fundamentals of mathematics so that they develop conceptual understanding and the ability to recall and apply knowledge rapidly and accurately.
- are competent and confident in taking risks to apply mathematical knowledge, concepts and skills.
- are able to solve problems, reason mathematically and think logically and systematically using the correct mathematical language and vocabulary.
- can follow a line of enquiry, develop and present a justification, argument or proof using mathematical language.
- are able to work independently and in cooperation with others.
- challenge and are challenged by others in a safe environment.
- appreciate that maths is fundamental to all areas of the curriculum and the real world, and understand the application of mathematics in real life contexts and scenarios.
- develop a secure understanding of the objectives being taught.

## **Implementation**

### Our Mastery Journey

We strongly believe that a mastery approach is the best way for our children to learn maths. We feel that every child can achieve in maths and is able to develop a secure knowledge and understanding of the many areas covered in this subject. By striving to master maths, children will develop a deep, secure and adaptable understanding, feeling confident to problem solve and face new situations independently, without immediately needing adult support.

We use the White Rose Small Steps to begin or learning journeys and implement them with documentation from the NCETM website. Staff plan their learning journeys in a way that is relevant to the class of children that they are teaching. Learning does not move on until staff believe that the children have a sound and secure understanding of a concept.

Children who struggle with a concept are supported through practical resources and adult support. Children who quickly grasp a concept are challenged to think deeply and reason about their learning.

The mastery approach applies the five big ideas to the teaching of maths and our staff are currently working hard to implement these ideas into their delivery. We are undergoing training through our Maths Hub and are excited to see our children develop and grow in confidence and ability.

### The Five Big Ideas

The Five Big Ideas, drawn from research evidence, underpin teaching for mastery.

- **Coherence**  
Lessons are broken down into small connected steps that gradually unfold the concept, providing access for all children and leading to a generalisation of the concept and the ability to apply the concept to a range of contexts.
- **Representation and Structure**  
Representations used in lessons are used to support the children in building up mathematical understanding and allowing them to apply their learning to a range of contexts and models. The overall aim is that children will eventually (when they are ready) use abstract ideas to solve their maths.
- **Mathematical Thinking**  
Children need to work hard to develop an understanding through reasoning, discussing with others, explaining their thinking and trying out new things.
- **Fluency**  
Quick and efficient recall of facts and procedures will ensure that children are not hindered by the simple mathematical knowledge such as times tables and bonds of numbers.
- **Variation**  
Variation is twofold. It is firstly about how the teacher represents the concept being taught, often in more than one way, to draw attention to critical aspects, and to develop deep and holistic understanding. It is also about the sequencing of the episodes, activities and exercises used within a lesson and follow up practice, paying attention to what is kept the same and what changes, to connect the mathematics and draw attention to mathematical relationships and structure.

### **Our lessons**

Each class teacher is responsible for the mathematics in their class in consultation with and with guidance from the mathematics subject leader following a mastery approach, supported with key documents from White Rose.

The approach to the teaching of mathematics within the school is based on three key principles:

- a mathematics lesson every day.
- a clear focus on direct, instructional teaching and interactive oral work with the whole class and group.

- an emphasis on mental calculation and fluency.

Each lesson consists of:

- a definite phase of learning and consolidating times tables.
- a definite section that revisits or consolidates key concepts/fluency needed for the objective of the lesson.
- quality teaching and learning of an objective through guided learning, modelling and independent work.

The whole class is taught mathematics together expecting every child to master the key concept.

Repetition is used to consolidate a concept or embed knowledge of a fact.

Precise mathematical language is used by teachers so that mathematical ideas are conveyed with clarity and precision. Children are supported to use accurate mathematical language through the use of sentence structures that form part of the lesson. (These are called STEM sentences by White Rose).

Sufficient time is spent on key concepts to ensure learning is well developed and deeply embedded before moving on.

When introduced to a new concept, pupils are given the opportunity to build competency through the following approach:

Concrete – children have the opportunity to use concrete objects and manipulatives to help them understand what they are doing.

Pictorial – pupils then build on this concrete approach by using pictorial representations. These representations can then be used to reason and solve problems.

Abstract – with the foundations firmly laid, learners move to an abstract approach using numbers and key concepts with confidence.

Differentiation in our school takes on many forms:

- Children are seated in mixed ability groups, doing the same work at the same time, with there being no differentiation by acceleration to new content. Children are encouraged to support each other's learning and challenge their thinking throughout the lesson. This is done through giving them short bursts of time to discuss with others, and allowing them to 'teach' each other during the lesson.
- Although practical resources are used regularly throughout all lessons, all children have access to resources at any time that they can freely choose to use. Practical equipment is seen as supporting understanding and is not just used for lower ability children.
- A wide range of models are used to help children to understand and explain a concept.
- Some children need more time to calculate and this is given in an appropriate way during a lesson, where it is necessary.
- Higher ability children are challenged to respond to more demanding problems, which deepen their knowledge of the same content. They are also supported to make links within their thinking (such as finding more efficient methods, or explaining how the concept relates to everyday life).
- Further differentiation can be seen through targeted questioning and the feedback and scaffolding individual pupils receive in class, as they work through problems.

- Depth of understanding and readiness for the next stage (whether it is the next lesson, next unit of work, year or key stage) is prioritised, alongside high expectations of every child.

### **Cross Curricular Issues**

Throughout the whole curriculum opportunities exist to extend and promote mathematics. Teachers seek to take advantage of all opportunities. We have mathematical days, where there is a clear mathematical focus around a theme or idea, such as, Mathemagical Day – maths is magic, Mathemartical Day – arty maths, Mathletics Day – maths in PE. Strong links are made with ICT, Science and Geography.

### **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities**

Within the daily mathematics lesson, all children are seen as able to succeed with maths and are given equal opportunities to do so.

Children with SEND are taught within the daily mathematics lesson and are part of the lesson with all of the children, apart from where extreme circumstances show that it is better for small groups and 1 to 1 teaching. Staff consider whether the class teacher or teaching assistant has the greater knowledge and ability to support SEND children and higher ability children.

Where applicable, children's IEPs incorporate suitable objectives from the Revised Primary Framework and teachers keep these objectives in mind when planning work.

### **Equal Opportunities**

We incorporate mathematics into a wide range of cross-curricular subjects and seek to take advantage of multi-cultural aspects of mathematics.

In the daily mathematics lesson we support children with English as an additional language in a variety of ways.

e.g. repeating instructions, speaking clearly, emphasising key words, using picture cues, playing mathematical games, encouraging children to join in counting, chanting, finger games, rhymes etc

Additional information can be found in the EAL Policy.

### **Pupils Records of their Work**

The WALT (We are learning to) and date are clearly written before the work carried out, or are on a sticker put on the appropriate page.

There are occasions when it is both quick and convenient to carry out written calculations. It is also important to record aspects of mathematical investigations. Children are taught a variety of methods for recording their work and they are encouraged and helped to use the most appropriate and convenient method of recording.

Children are encouraged to use mental strategies before resorting to a written algorithm.

### **Exercise Books for Recording**

It can be seen in the presentation policy that the following pattern is used:

- EYFS: Various papers, plain, squared, lined, malleable etc.
- KS1: 2 cm squares
- Year 3: 1 cm squares
- Year 4: 1 cm squares
- Year 5: 7 mm squares
- Year 6: 7 mm squares

All children are encouraged to work tidily and neatly when recording their work. When using squares, one square should be used for each digit. When involved in routine practice of calculations the children are encouraged to fold a page in half creating two columns for answers.

## **Impact**

### **Marking and Feedback**

Work in mathematics can generate a great deal of marking and it is recognised that it is not always necessary to mark every piece of work. The children themselves often mark exercises which involve routine practice with support and guidance from the teacher. Where appropriate children in Years 5 and 6 may check computational exercises with a calculator. We believe that this approach provides instant feedback to the children so that they can see where they have made an error and where they need to improve. It can also foster independence in the children, who can seek help if they are unable to locate and correct their errors. Children are supported in being honest in our school and admit mistakes that they have made, knowing that this will enable them to improve.

More detail can be found in the School Marking Policy.

### **Assessment and Record Keeping**

Teachers are expected to make regular assessment of each child's progress and to record these systematically. The following is the school policy for assessment in mathematics:

#### **Informal Assessment**

Teachers are allowed to make their own use of informal assessment to guide their judgements and support or raise questions about termly formal assessments. Each class carries out a weekly times tables test based on the table that has been focused on for that week. This is also set as homework.

#### **Formal Assessment**

One per term, the children are formally assessed as part of the School's Assessment Policy.

This involves an arithmetic test and a reasoning test that links to the objectives taught in that term. Year 2 and Year 6 may be given more tests to support the teacher in ensuring that their learning is on track.

### **Reporting to Parents**

Reports on progress are completed once per term. There is opportunity for a comment to be made about a child's mathematical progress in Autumn and Spring, but there is a dedicated comment and achievement section on the Summer term report.

Parents are given the opportunity to discuss their child's progress on two separate occasions at Parent's Consultation Meetings and once in the summer in the form of a drop in session.

Teachers use the information gathered from their daily informal assessment and termly formal assessments to help them comment on individual children's progress.

Other information is gathered from:

- end of Foundation Stage Assessments.
- results from the Termly Assessments.
- end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 SATs.

### **Parental Involvement**

- Parents are invited into school twice yearly to look at their children's work.
- An open evening is held once a year.
- When significant changes have been/are made to the mathematics curriculum parents are invited to a meeting or sent information via the half termly newsletter.
- Parents are welcomed into school to work alongside teachers in the daily mathematics lesson or after school for sessions in how to learn a mathematical concept.
- Our website contains lots of videos to support parents with the methods that we use.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The mathematics subject leader is released regularly from his/her classroom in order to work alongside other teachers. This time is used to monitor and evaluate the quality and standards of mathematics throughout the school and enables the subject leader to support teachers in their own classrooms.

Opportunities for teachers to review the framework, policy and published materials are given on a regular basis during staff meetings and PPA time.

## **Resources**

Due to the nature of the Mastery approach, resources are used as much as possible to support the understanding of the mathematical concepts. Children are encouraged to use resources to support their learning whenever they require them and are given access to them without questions. Resources are not seen as something to be used by low ability children.

## **Times tables**

Times tables are fundamental to many aspects of mathematics and it is therefore very important for children to work hard to learn their times tables. Times tables form an integral part of the learning in our maths lessons.

The Government has set out the following times tables that children should know in each year group.

Year 1 – count in multiples of 2, 5 and 10.

Year 2 – recall and use multiplication and division facts for the 2, 5 and 10 times tables.

Year 3 – recall and use multiplication and division facts for the 3, 4 and 8 times tables.

Years 4, 5 and 6 – recall and use multiplication and division facts for all times tables up to  $12 \times 12$ .

The Government has requested that all pupils in Year 4 take a Times Tables Check to determine whether children can recall their times tables.

## **Homework**

Our aim with mathematical homework is to give the children chance to consolidate a skill or facts through repetitive, fun games and activities or through practicing calculation strategies. We use Seesaw – an online learning platform – so that we can support children with their learning at home and communication with parents when necessary.

Homework builds up throughout the year alternating weeks in Years 2 and 4 until regular weekly maths homework is set in Years 5 and 6.

Another way of the ways that homework is sometimes set is through Activelearn Abacus because of the interactive games and the rewards that the children get for completing their homework.

What is ActiveLearn Abacus?

Abacus is a unique maths toolkit that's carefully crafted to inspire a genuine love of maths and help every child master the national curriculum.

Abacus is written for the New Primary National Curriculum in England and built on evidence and research into what makes outstanding teaching and learning.

Importantly, Abacus has been built by a team of expert authors and teaching practitioners who understand the realities of teaching and learning in a UK classroom.