

EARLY NUMBER SENSE

For many people the subject of Mathematics has negative connotations – memories of experiences that want to be forgotten or difficult lessons that have resulted in feelings of confusion or inadequacy. Adults are often heard saying things such as ‘I can’t do Maths’ or ‘I hated Maths’. The message that these phrases give to our children is that Maths is something too difficult and that they may also not be able to ‘do’ it. In reality, Maths is something that everyone can enjoy and a subject that everyone can learn. At Overchurch Infants (like many schools in the UK) we use the government recommended White Rose Maths scheme. It is based on years of research from countries such as Singapore. Their strap line is ‘everyone can do maths’.



Their website explains,

Everyone can

Together, we’re building a whole new culture of deep understanding, confidence and competence in maths – a culture that produces strong, secure learning and real progress. No matter what their starting points, we help teachers and learners everywhere to achieve excellence.

Our mantra is simple:

EVERYONE CAN DO MATHS:

EVERYONE CAN!

As we prove this to pupils and teachers alike, we’re shaping assured, happy and resilient mathematicians who relish the challenge of maths. They become independent, reflective thinkers, whose skills not only liberate them in maths but also support them across the curriculum.

We’re committed to working together to be and give the very best, and to make a difference to every pupil.

In Maths it is believed that children need to reach a level of mastery, by which they have achieved a deep understanding of a concept. As such they can use their knowledge to explain to others and to use it to solve other problems. In the words of the NCETM (National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics)

Mastering maths means pupils acquiring a deep, long-term, secure and adaptable understanding of the subject.

The phrase ‘teaching for mastery’ describes the elements of classroom practice and school organisation that combine to give pupils the best chances of mastering maths.

Achieving mastery means acquiring a solid enough understanding of the maths that’s been taught to enable pupils to move on to more advanced material.

As such, in line with National Curriculum guidance, a mastery approach ensures that children are not rushed through concepts and knowledge e.g. jumping to larger numbers. Rather they are shown how to explore numbers and concepts carefully to gain a thorough understanding- an understanding that can then be used across other concepts. For example – it is not enough to know that a 5 is a 5. To fully understand what 5 is, a child needs to explore and see that it can be $5+0$ or $0+5$, it can also be $4+1$ or $1+4$, $2+3$ or $3+2$. In turn it can be used to subtract, multiply and divide to give knowledge that way. It can then be something that is added on to 10s numbers to create 15, 25, 35 etc. The list of ongoing concepts is huge, but without that initial understanding of the ‘fiveness of five’ children will not have the secure foundations by which to progress.

The following ‘Early Number Sense’ video link, is an extremely useful explanation about the importance of early mathematical understanding. It will give you a clear insight into the basics of how young children learn Mathematics and indeed into why your child is so tired each day from seemingly ‘playing’!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Ow8vEmh8IA>

Further extremely useful videos can be found using the link below. ‘Maths with Michael’ has been developed to provide parents with an understanding of some of the newer methods and resources used in schools, such as tens frames, part whole models and place value counters. The videos are organised into concepts e.g. place value, subtraction, multiplication etc.

<https://whiterosemaths.com/maths-with-michael>

As always, if you have any questions about how your child is learning, your class teacher or I will be more than happy to explain.

Mrs Wilson

(Maths subject leader).

