

# Developing Counting at Brooklands Primary School

## A case study from Early Years



### Overview

Claire Johnson is one of the Reception Teachers and Director of Learning for Early Years at Brooklands Primary School. Claire took part in East Midlands West maths hub Counting Project in 2017/18. The Counting Project has had a very positive impact in the setting. She explained:

“Maths is a priority for our school, so we were thrilled to have the opportunity to take part in the Counting Project. It has had a huge impact on the way we teach counting and in helping our children to become confident Mathematicians. Progress can be seen throughout Reception. Even the children who were once quite reluctant to count are enthusiastic about using the Counting Collections and are eager to join in with counting activities”

#### 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 Brooklands Primary School

The initial day's training was superb and really helped us to refocus on the different skills that children need to have to be able to be confident counters. Two of our members of staff are new to Reception and the dissemination of the training helped us all to consolidate our understanding of how to support children in developing their early counting skills.

Initially we introduced the Counting Collections in Reception using guided activities. We introduced the counting collections, ten frames and a recording sheet altogether. The children had previously found recording their counting quite challenging, but they are now becoming more confident using different ways to record. There is also a growing understanding of the number system through the use of the ten frames and 'part-part-whole' activities.

When working with the children we were able to pinpoint exactly what their next steps in learning were because we could see which of their early counting skills needed consolidation through our observations of them counting.

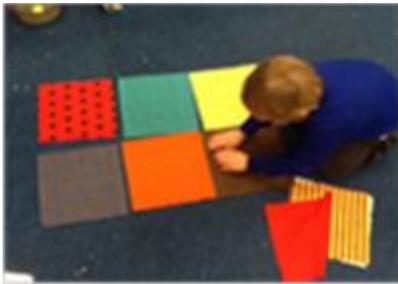
The ten frames and recording sheets and some Counting Collections have been added to the maths provision in the classroom alongside some of our own counting apparatus.

## What the children did...

The children love choosing which Counting Collection they want to use and they have become much more enthusiastic about counting activities. Some of the children have made their own Counting Collections with things they have found in the classroom or at home.

Lots of the children now choose to count and record their counting as part of their self chosen activity time.

The use of the ten frames helped some of the children to organise their counting. One example of this is a little boy who has shown good progress with his counting as part of the work we have done during the project. Prior to the delivery of the Project he was able to say the number names in order and say a number name after each object he counted, but he was struggling to organise the objects so that he counted each one only once. The ten frame gave him a strategy, other than lining them up, to give order to the things he was counting regardless of the size. He applied this strategy when counting the fabric swatches. During the activity he also talked about the number of 'spaces' he had which showed a deepening understanding of the numbers he was dealing with.



The children enjoy choosing their own Counting Collections and even if they constantly choose the same collection, the flexibility allows you to meet the needs of the individual children by adapting it to meet their next step or consolidate a skill where needed.

### Impact

The impact has been commented on by other members of the Reception Team. Mrs Perry (TA) has said "the introduction of the Counting Collections and Ten frames has really helped the children to gain a deeper understanding of the number system. They know that if their ten frame is full, they don't need to count from one, they can count on from ten. Some children are beginning to count in 10s to count the larger collections. The children use the recording sheets to help them to explain what they have done and to represent the numbers in different ways."

### Molly Counts...

Molly was proud that she had organised herself to get a collection, the ten frames she needed and her recording sheet. She came to find me to show me what she had counted and how she had recorded it. Molly had used pictures to record what the number of pom poms, drawing ten frames on her sheet. She then found the corresponding numeral. "I got the pom poms...and put them on here. I drew them like circles, look. I had to get two (tens frames) 'cos there was too many." I asked her how many she had counted and she answered confidently, pointing to her recording.

### Summary and next steps

Brooklands have developed the use of Counting Collections within Reception. All of the children have responded positively to the project and progress can be seen across all ability levels. We are continuing to develop our approach to teaching early maths by extending the Counting Collections project into Nursery. It has also been shared with colleagues in Year 1 to use with those children still developing their counting skills.

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

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