

'Keep up,
not catch up'

Case Study of a pre-teach intervention model for Maths

SCHOOL: Portland
Spencer

TEACHER:
Miss

YEAR GROUP:3



1 School background

Portland Spencer Academy is a city school with a high level of pupil premium. It is a diverse, multi-cultural school. It is in the bottom 2% of deprivation in the country. The school has an average level of EAL pupils and slightly below SEN levels.

4 What I did in the pre-teach group

Most pre teach sessions took place during morning activities, straight before the Maths lesson, although occasionally took place the afternoon before.

All the sessions were small group sessions with the teacher. These were all short sessions, a maximum of 15 minutes. On average, the children received 2-3 pre teach sessions a week (although due to other school commitments, sometimes this was more or less). All of the sessions took place on the carpet whilst the rest of the class remained in the classroom completing another unrelated task.

The focus children were a part of the group most of the time, but AfL was used to determine whether they needed to be in the group or not. Some of the time, other children from the class would be invited to join the session, and sometimes other members of the class would opt in to the session after being told the objective of the pre teach. Lots of children, including the focus children, independently assessed their own need for the session.

The content of the pre teach was not necessarily planned in advance as the Maths lesson would be. The pre teach would address the needs of the children at that particular time. This might include pre teaching vocabulary that would be used in the upcoming lesson, addressing common misconceptions related to that concept, or addressing misconceptions from the previous lesson to unlock access to learning in the upcoming lesson. Children sometimes completed a short task on whiteboards, sometimes the session focused just on discussion and other times children used manipulatives. Throughout all the sessions, children applied their learning but in a guided fashion, led by the teacher. Much emphasis in all of the sessions focused on discussion and talk and encouraged children to use new vocabulary and challenge them to prove their thinking. Any misconceptions were addressed at that time. Most sessions also included teaching a 'way in' to accessing the first part of the whole class lesson, with a view to ensuring that they could answer some whole class questions, in turn meaning the rest of the class could note their competence. The sessions did not simply run through the upcoming lesson – the pre teach mostly involved equipping the pre teach children with the basic skills needed to be able to access to upcoming lesson.

2 What I hoped to achieve?

Throughout this project, I hoped to raise the confidence and self esteem of the focus children in my group. I also hoped to change the group's perception of Maths as a difficult subject, and something to be feared and anxious of. I wanted to change the rest of the class's perceptions of this group of children, in order for the focus children to be viewed by their peers no longer as a group who struggled with Maths, but as a group who would have the skills and confidence to participate and even teach others in the class.

3 Characteristics of the children in interventions groups in my school

The group included a mix of girls and boys, one of whom has SEND. All the children in this group were working below ARE, although not significantly below. All children were working on year 3 objectives.

5 Impact on children

I noted that all of the focus children's attitude towards Maths seem to have shifted from anxious towards enjoying Maths. All of the children, although 2 in particular have had a marked improvement in their confidence levels and how they perceive their own Maths ability. Where previously the children would have automatically opted for the easiest task, some of the children were independently challenging themselves and chose trickier work. One child was heard saying "I'm a Maths master!"

Another change I noted was the willingness of the children to answer questions during whole class discussions. Their body language also indicated that they had improved in confidence.

The pre teach children seemed particularly impressed when they were able to help others in the class due to the pre teach. It was clear to see that they enjoyed this role and this gave them added confidence in their own Maths ability.

There was an improvement in results from some children in the group, although not all.

6 Advice for other teachers or schools

What went well included having the pre teach straight before the whole class lesson. This meant that the children were able to retain many of the concepts and use them in the lesson to consolidate.

Small group teaching (maximum 8 children in the group) enabled misconceptions to be addressed straight away and allowed focused discussion.

Mixing the groups according to need – not just having the same meant that the pre teach was always targeted, but also that the children did not perceive themselves as simply the children that always need extra support.

The limitations on the pre teach model that was followed was that children were receiving the pre teach in front of the rest of the class. I felt that at times, this dampened the children's confidence as the rest of the class perceived them as having 'prior help'. I feel the model would have worked better had the sessions not taken place whilst the rest of the class were present e.g. during assembly time.

