

Numeracy at BSM

Throughout the primary school we teach mathematics using the Numeracy Strategy as our framework. Many parents were able to attend the presentation on the format of a typical numeracy lesson in October 2005, and the follow up parent workshops gave the opportunity to actually attend a numeracy lesson and watch your children being taught. I have included a brief summary of the main points from those events to help set the scene for the information and activities in the booklet.

All children in KS1 and KS2 (Years 1 to 6) have a daily numeracy lesson. The lesson usually begins with an oral session where the children practise their mental recall and develop their mental skills. It is vital that children are confident with mental calculations, before they progress onto formal written methods. This is why the school has introduced the Numeracy Passport, to put a real focus on mental recall. One of the most effective ways you can help your child at home with maths is to support them in learning and meeting their specific targets from the passport. It is also important to maintain mental maths skills at the same time as developing written methods. Practice of mental skills at home and school will help your child to succeed and enjoy the subject.

In the Foundation and Key Stage One there is a great emphasis on practical activities and developing an ability to solve problems mentally, using jottings. In Key Stage Two, children continue to develop their rapid recall of number facts and learn an increasing number of mental strategies, ultimately being able to select the one they feel most comfortable with. They continue to use jottings to aid their mental calculations, before progressing onto more formal written methods of calculation.

When faced with a maths question children should be thinking:

- Can I do this in my head?
- Could I do this in my head with drawings or jottings to help me?
- Do I need to use a written method?
- Should I use a calculator?

Your involvement as parents is very important in raising the achievement level of your child. The most important thing for you to do is to TALK and LISTEN to them about their work in numeracy. Ask your child to show you something they learnt or practised in their numeracy lesson that day. I have also included some details of activities you could do with your child.

During key stage 1 pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of mathematics through practical activity, exploration and discussion. They learn to count, read, write and order numbers to 100 and beyond. They develop a range of mental calculation skills and use these confidently in different settings. They learn about shape and space through practical activities which build on their understanding of their immediate environment. They begin to grasp mathematical language, using it to talk about their methods and explain their reasoning when solving problems.

Remember if you are helping your child at home, to do "a little and often" – they work hard at school, so watch for your child becoming tired.