

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. 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 start 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. Supporting them with their homework is a good way of doing this, as is generally asking them 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 2 pupils use the number system more confidently. They move from counting reliably to calculating fluently with all four number operations in upper Key Stage 2. They always try to tackle a problem with mental methods before using any other approach. Pupils explore features of shape and space and develop their measuring skills in a range of contexts. They discuss and present their methods and reasoning using a wider range of mathematical language, diagrams and charts.

If your child requires support with their numeracy homework, but you are not quite sure how to do this, start by asking the child to explain the homework.

- Read any instructions out loud
- Talk it through with your child to try and put the tasks in order.
- Try to help your child in such a way that they feel they have done it for themselves.
- Take time to sit down and talk with your child about their homework. This may give them the confidence to do it with minimal support the next time. If your child has needed a lot of support it would be helpful for you to indicate this on the piece of work.
- If your child is still unable to complete the task write a note to the teacher so that the appropriate help can be given in school.
- If your child is not good at working things out in their head at first, don't worry! Be positive. Praise them for what they can do and keep on working with them.

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.