

Name of setting: Heathcoat Primary School

Date submitted: July 2017

Information supplied by: Carmen Butler

Title: Early Years Assistant/Maths Champion

Key points of your Maths Champions improvements

- We have made a start on areas listed on our action plans. Several of the Ta's on the program, have improved their confidence levels in maths, by completing the skills assessment and learning opportunities. As have I.
- We have also used our action plans to improve our resources and environment. It is something we hope to continue developing and improving over time.

Background detail

Heathcoat Primary School was established in September 1992 following the reorganisation of first and middle schools in the town. It is a larger than average primary school and is in the market town of Tiverton. The vast majority of the school has been newly built and older buildings have been refurbished so that all accommodation is well maintained and spacious. We have over 400 children at Heathcoat Primary School, catering for children between 3 and 11 years of age.

The nursery currently offers care for children between the hours of 09:00 – 15:00. In September 2017, we will be offering wrap around care from 07:45 – 18:00 with access to an early morning breakfast session and after school session, with a holiday club running in the holidays.

We have the capacity to have up to 36 children in each session. The nursery is led by a Class Teacher, with support from 1 Early Years Assistant and up to 2 Teaching Assistants. The staff have the role of a Key Person, with responsibilities for assessing and supporting a group of children. The nursery class is part of a Foundation Unit and links up with the two reception classes to share the outside area.

We began on the Maths Champion programme in September 2016 with the desire to improve our maths provision and environment. To hone our skills and that of the children.

Section 2

Highlights and lowlights of the programme so far

Having completed the audits to establish the resources, our skills, the environment and our relationships. We discovered which areas needed attention and devised our action plans. We then identified key things to begin to develop and explore from our action plans.

It was difficult to find the time to meet and organise ourselves to create and compile resources to improve our environment. We particularly wanted to improve the maths in our outdoor environment. We also wanted to enhance and improve what we already provided indoors.

We have added a number line to our outdoors, and included two big bead strings made from string and plastic balls, so that the children can use them to count and then refer to the number line, recognise and find numbers to match their counting. We have also begun to produce mathematical language and pictures of shapes and objects, for the children and adults to use to support the development of mathematical language and understanding, both inside and out.



One of the biggest difficulties with the programme is managing to find the time for meetings, the making of resources and studying the on-line courses, etc. Trying to fit it all in to a twelve-month time scale is challenging. I do think that we were quite unaware of how involved the programme was going to be, or of how much time it would take to facilitate it.

As the 'Maths Champion' one thing I found annoying, was that each time you completed a section, when you logged in, you had to keep scrolling down to find the section you were working on. The further you got, the further you had to scroll. I feel it would be beneficial to find that once you logged in, you could find yourself at the point you were currently working on.

Impact of the programme

We have used our audits and action plans to begin improving our environment, both inside and out. We hope to continue using the points raised in the action plans to further improve. I hope that we will continue to audit our environment to bring to action other areas that need improvement in the future.

I feel we have improved the areas we targeted in our action plan. We have displayed more mathematical language and created a story sack for 'The Hungry Caterpillar' Story, which the children thoroughly enjoyed during our minibeast topic.

The outside environment in particular, has been improved visually. We were inspired to create some bead strings with string and plastic balls to go with the number line we put up. This has encouraged the children to count the balls and then find the number on the number line. We also decided to create a water feature on the fence where the children could use different containers and follow the path of the water as it flowed down. We aim to add to this and make it into a larger feature. Around it we put up language linked to capacity and the resources used in the activity.

The final data for the year shows a lot of progress. Back in October 2016 we had 5 children working within 16-26 months and now there are none. We had 43 working within 22-36 months and now we have only one. We had 32 working within 30-50 months and now we have 36. In October, we did not have anyone working within 40-60 months and now we have 37 working within it. It shows that many of the children have made really good progress.

Did you achieve what you wanted from the programme? If so, how?

I feel that the programme has helped us to think about the areas that need work and has given us focus to make improvements in key areas. It has also highlighted other areas that we can address in the future.

With a busy working life, you can sit back and just saunter on doing what you always do, having to manage on the resources you have at hand. Doing audits and compiling action plans helps to identify and give focus to what could fill those gaps in your provision. Having direction helps you to improve the opportunities for the children's learning.

How has the programme helped you further develop your own practice?

Completing the online courses has given me the knowledge and confidence to facilitate and support the team with the changes we have made. Having accessed the GCSE course and I have become to realise I know a lot more than I thought I did and I have learnt a lot more besides. Having improved my knowledge I feel enthused to help the children in our care to improve their knowledge and understanding of maths.

Next steps

I hope that we will continue to monitor and revisit the audits and draw up new actions plans so that we can add to and improve the mathematical provision in the nursery. In our team meetings, we should regularly remind ourselves to be aware of the environment around us and encourage the children to explore it.

I also hope that the 'Home Learning Packs' become really successful and that over time we can develop them to support other areas of maths and different areas of the curriculum.

National Day Nurseries Association

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