

Maths Champions Case Study

Champion: Sharon Harney/Gemma Smith

Setting: Thornton Primary School

INTENT	
Introduction	<i>A little bit about your setting, why you joined the programme and what you wanted to achieve from it.</i>
	We are a school-based Nursery in Bradford. We take 3- and 4-year-old children, having an intake in September, one after Christmas and one after Easter. I am the class teacher (Gemma Smith) and Sharon is a level three Early years practitioner / cover supervisor. It was decided that Sharon would be the Champion for this project in order for her to develop her own confidence and skills with maths and that I would support her as the deputy. We were looking at developing maths within Nursery when the opportunity to be part of this project came along. We decided to take part as we thought it would give us the opportunity and support to allow us to do this to a good standard.
How did you decide what to do?	<i>What did the audits highlight, what changes did you consider and how did you identify the change/s to be made? Did the changes you considered come from the online training or resources etc?</i>
	We did the online training which was very informative, and Sharon in particular found them extremely useful for furthering her confidence and knowledge when it came to maths. We also really enjoyed the training on loose parts and decided that we definitely needed to add lots more loose parts into our provision. Following on from the audits it was decided that there was definitely a lot more we could be doing in terms of maths in our daily routines. It was also decided that we needed to start again from scratch with our maths area and think very carefully about the layout / storage / resources that were available. We also looked at particular members of staff who had said they weren't very confident when it came to maths and looked at different ways to support them and areas where many of us were least confident and looked at ways to support and improve on this. We spent a long time researching how we wanted our maths area to look / what storage and resources we needed to source and how we could incorporate maths more into different areas or provision / into our daily routines.
IMPLEMENTATION	
What did you change or implement?	<i>Outline a positive change, or changes, that have taken place as a result of being part of the Maths Champions programme. How did you plan for it and what did you do? How did you plan to assess the benefit of the change on staff practice and children's experiences?</i>
	The biggest changes that we have made are in terms of a big change in our maths area, addition of loose parts play and the labelling and templating that we have done around the different areas of our classroom. We began by looking at what we already had in our maths area and how the children were using it and found that there wasn't very much purposeful play going on in our maths areas. We decided to start again from scratch in this area. We stripped it right back, got rid of the table and chairs and added a low-down table with foam mats, different storage shelves and a section dedicated to loose parts. The area instantly looked more appealing to young children, and they immediately wanted to use this area. Adults spent long periods of time in this area observing, modelling and supporting the children and this has very quickly become one of our more popular areas in the classroom where the children are constantly engaged in what they are doing. We also looked at labelling and storage as a whole around Nursery and added numbered labels / templating in different areas to support the children with tidying up and to encourage mathematical language and learning during tidy up time. For staff members, Sharon cascaded her knowledge from the training to them and they were also able to watch activities etc. being modelled by myself during carpet times and in provision in order to build their confidence when working with the children in provision.

IMPACT	
The success and benefit of what you did:	
For children <i>What has been the impact of the changes on children's learning and development? How has being involved in the programme made a difference for children in your nursery?</i>	
By changing our maths area, we have found that it always has children in it. They enjoy using the resources and use them purposefully (this was not always the case previously). We hear a lot more mathematical language, and most members of staff are much more confident when it comes to having conversations about maths with the children. As a result of the labelling and templating that we have done, the children are much more independent when it comes to tidying away and you can hear the children counting out resources and telling others how many are missing. Overall, we have a lot more engagement and independence with maths equipment around our Nursery.	
For families <i>What has been the impact of the changes on families? How has being involved in the programme made a difference for families whose children attend your nursery?</i>	
This is an area that we are still working on and could do a lot better. I have had conversations with parents and have suggest activities that they can try at home to further their children's mathematical learning and we have sent a 'Maths at home booklet' with tips and ideas. We have discussed how we are going to include families more next year, in terms of activity ideas to do at home linked to what we are doing in school and weekly number rhymes posted on Tapestry.	
For staff <i>How has being involved in the programme made a difference to your staff team/individual practitioners? What has been the impact on their practice?</i>	
All members of staff have said that they feel more confident with maths in general. Staff members can be heard having lovely conversations with the children, including lots of mathematical language and encouraging the children's mathematical thinking. Staff members are much more confident at suggesting and adapting activities and there is a much more positive attitude towards maths in Nursery. There is also excitement around developing maths further in our outdoor area, with all staff members being involved in suggesting layouts / resources that are appropriate for this area.	
For the Maths Champion and Deputy Maths Champion <i>How has the programme helped you as Maths Champion and Deputy Maths Champion to develop your own practice? What has been the impact on your practice?</i>	
The courses have helped us to develop our own knowledge and understanding of maths and have made us think seriously about the areas that we needed to develop. It has made us step back and reflect on what we are doing and has allowed us the opportunity to identify and act on the areas where changes were needed. It has equipped us with the knowledge to be able to support other staff members who felt less confident about maths, and it has provided us with some lovely ideas for games and activities within Nursery.	

For the setting

What has been the impact on your environment?

We have lots more opportunities for maths all around Nursery in the different areas of provision. This encourages the children to use their mathematical language and skills in all areas and also encourages staff members to do this too. We have incorporated lots more maths into our daily routines so that it has become second nature. E.g. checking that there are the correct number of resources in each tub at tidy times, posing problems during snack time, counting the children in the line each time we line up etc. The labelling and templating have led to the children being much more independent with tidying up. We have a new maths area which is much more appealing and accessible and where there are always children using the equipment purposefully and having lovely conversations.

Next steps

What further improvements might you make and how will you continue to monitor the quality of maths opportunities within the setting?

We are continuing to develop our use of loose parts. We are continuing with the development of our outdoor area, thinking particularly about the storage, labelling, templating and accessibility of maths equipment. We are working on having more frequent communication with parents specifically linked to mathematical development by sending home weekly number rhymes / activities linked to what we are doing in school.

Thank you for taking part in the Maths Champions programme.