



The BAWB Collaboration
 Bainbridge, Askrigg, and West Burton Primary Schools
Mid-Dale Excellence in Education
 Executive Headteacher: Miss Charlotte L. Harper

Friday 5th December 2014

Dear parents and friends,

One of our curricular priorities this year is around improving achievement in maths, specifically developing children's mental mathematics skills (their instant recall). This week, we are launching new systematic approach to this across three schools:



Maths Passports: North Yorkshire Space Agency

Rationale

Instant recall is one important part of learning mathematics. It gives children a bank of knowledge from which they can draw to help them when working with maths in a range of situations:

Research shows that learning key facts 'by heart' enables children to concentrate on the calculation which helps them to develop calculation strategies. Using and applying strategies to work out answers helps children to acquire and so remember more facts. Many children who are not able to recall key facts often treat each calculation as a new one and have to return to first principles to work out the answer again. Once they have a secure knowledge of some key facts, and by selecting problems carefully, you can help children to appreciate that from the answer to one problem, other answers can be generated.

Teaching Children to Calculate Mentally, Department for Education, 2010

Overview

We are launching an 11 stage system of instant recall, each stage being represented by a planet (or 'astronaut selection' or 'launch pad' in the early stages). The aim is for children to work through the solar system, rigorously and systematically embedding their instant recall facts along the way. Your child's teacher will have assessed him / her to decide at which stage they will begin their journey.

The stages are as follows:

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Astronaut selection | 7. Jupiter |
| 2. Launch pad | 8. Saturn |
| 3. Mercury | 9. Uranus |
| 4. Venus | 10. Neptune |
| 5. Earth | 11. The Milky Way |
| 6. Mars | |

In school, children have their own record and work through the system at their own pace, directed by their teacher. In other words, the system is not linked to year-group or age, but allows a child to progress onto the next stage when facts in their current stage are firmly embedded. At each stage they have a range of targets to be working on at any one time but do not move onto the next stage until they have completed all of the targets within each stage.

Children will be given opportunities at school to practice their instant recall facts with some systematic and challenging approaches.

PTO

Definition of instant recall

For the purposes of this system, instant recall is defined as being able to recall any fact within 3 seconds. Therefore it is reasonably expected to be able to recall 10 facts within 30 seconds and so on. Children will be assessed three times against each target to ensure that the facts are embedded over time and have not just been stored in the short-term memory. They are required to score 100% on each assessment for the fact to be fully embedded. You will appreciate that this requires children to work hard to embed facts, and there are many ways in which you can help them at home:

How you can help...

Today your child will have come home with two documents:

1. A 'Target Sheet' (on a picture of a planet) stuck into their home-school link book with all their current targets listed (a copy of this is also stuck in the back of their maths book).
2. A 'Prompt Sheet for Parents' (which contains some information about how you might support their learning at home).

These targets will also form part of your discussion with your child's class teacher at parents' evenings. You will receive both of these each time your child moves onto the next stage (planet).

Timescale

Some children will move through the stages more quickly than others, especially as we are focussing on really embedding these facts rather than holding them to memory for a short time. It may take many months, even years for some children to move on, but the learning taking place during the process will be invaluable. The quickest you could ever expect anyone to move through one stage would be 6 weeks, but this would mean simultaneously learning all the facts for that stage and completing flawless assessments over that time (in other words, it is highly unlikely).

Like any system, the consistency and rigour of its application will be key to its success and we appreciate your support with this at home. If you have any questions about these targets, please do not hesitate to contact me or your child's class teacher.

Many thanks for your continued support with your child's learning,



Charlotte Harper
Headteacher and Maths Subject Leader

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