

Croft Community School

Croft Community School have been engaged with Archimedes NE Maths hub since 2023. They hope to improve their students' experience and outcomes in maths, and to upskill their teachers of maths.

School context



Croft Community School is a mixed special educational needs (SEN) school in Stanley, County Durham. It caters for pupils aged 4 to 16 with moderate learning difficulties (MLD) and Autism Spectrum Conditions (ASC).

316 pupils on roll, 61% free school meals, all pupils have an EHCP.

Key Initiatives and their Impact



Croft Community School has taken part in the Y5-8 Continuity Work Group, Special Schools Community, the Securing Foundations Work Group and they have a Secondary Mastery Specialist in training.

- Teaching and Pedagogy

Increased use of CPA (Concrete-Pictorial-Abstract) approaches, supporting accessibility for learners with SEND.

Greater emphasis on mathematical talk, sentence structures, and communication.

Improved consistency in small-step lesson design, allowing pupils to build secure understanding.

More deliberate use of variation and representation to expose structure.

- Curriculum and Planning

Curriculum adaptations that prioritise depth over pace, particularly for learners with significant gaps.

Stronger alignment between KS2 and KS3 content through participation in the Y5-8 continuity Work Group.

Increased focus on foundational concepts such as place value, additive and multiplicative structures.

Use of diagnostic assessment to inform targeted teaching.

- Pupils

Improved confidence and engagement in maths, particularly for pupils with prior low attainment.

Greater ability to explain reasoning using structured language.

Strengthened number sense and fluency, especially through the Securing Firm Foundations Work Group.

More pupils able to access and succeed with conceptually rich maths, rather than procedural tasks.

- Staff Development

Increased teacher confidence in adapting Teaching for Mastery for learners with SEND.

Development of a shared understanding of what effective maths teaching looks like in a special school context.

Strengthened collaborative practice, including discussion of representations, misconceptions, and task design.

Leadership capacity developed through the Secondary Mastery Specialist programme.

- Whole-School

A more coherent and consistent approach to maths teaching across KS3 and KS4.

Improved alignment with national Teaching for Mastery approaches while remaining responsive to SEND needs.

Embedding a culture where understanding is prioritised over coverage.

Stronger links with the wider Maths Hub community, keeping practice research informed



Why Should Other Leaders Get Involved with the Maths Hub?

- At Croft, our engagement with the Maths Hub has been a key driver in improving both teaching and learning in mathematics. Through sustained, evidence informed professional development, we have deepened our understanding of how our pupils learn maths, moving beyond isolated strategies to a more coherent mastery approach.
- Work Groups have helped us strengthen curriculum progression, address gaps in prior learning, and prioritise secure number sense and conceptual understanding. This has led to increased confidence and engagement from our pupils, alongside a greater ability to reason and communicate mathematically.
- For staff, involvement in these programmes, including the Secondary Mastery Specialist pathway, has built subject knowledge, pedagogical confidence, and leadership capacity, creating a shared vision of high-quality maths teaching across the school. Perhaps most importantly, being part of the Maths Hub community has connected us with other professionals, reducing isolation and supporting meaningful professional collaboration with practitioners from a range of different settings.

Next Steps



- For Croft Community School, the next steps are having a focus on sustaining Teaching for Mastery while building staff expertise. We will refine our use of diagnostic assessment and continue to secure key foundational concepts through the securing foundations programme.
- A key priority is to engage more staff in Maths Hub Work Groups, strengthening consistency and developing those shared approaches across the team to ensure equity of experience for pupils. We hope to build on our work within the Special Schools Community to develop SEND-informed practice, while using the Secondary Mastery Specialist pathway to support coaching and collaboration for our department lead.
- We will also continue to strengthen curriculum coherence at KS3 through our Y5-8 Continuity work, ensuring a well-sequenced and connected learning journey for all pupils.