

Fully funded EEF trial

Mastering Number at Reception and KS1

Supporting pupils to develop good number sense

A national programme now in its fifth year

What is involved?

This programme focuses on the key knowledge and understanding needed in Reception, and progression through KS1. Lead Teachers in participating schools will receive training and will be part of an online community, to share practice and engage in critical reflection. Teaching materials will be provided for four short sessions each week, aimed at developing children's fluency and flexibility with number.

Who can take part?

Lead participants from Work Group schools will be three teachers – one each from Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 – known as Lead Teachers. Some support will also be given to subject leaders and headteachers. Where appropriate, Lead Teachers are expected to support the other teachers in their year group.

This programme and its Work Groups are open to all schools that have not yet engaged with the Mastering Number Programme.



Find out more

Search **mastering number at reception and KS1** online or visit:

ncetm.org.uk/mastering-number/reception-ks1

Some hubs in the network are offering this programme as part of an EEF trial in 2025/26. Your hub has been chosen to be part of the trial. For more information, see the **School Information Sheet** on the following pages.

Programme benefits

- Your pupils will develop and demonstrate good number sense
- You will develop teaching strategies to help **all** children build firm mathematical foundations

The **Work Groups** are fully funded by the Maths Hubs Programme, so are **free** to participating schools.

Trial benefits

- Over half of the schools in England have participated in an EEF trial
- Participating schools, working with their local Maths Hub, will be contributing to the evidence base for teaching approaches aiming to address children's early mathematics development



School Information Sheet for the Mastering Number at Reception and KS1 (Reception focus) EEF Trial 2025/26

Overview

The National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics (NCETM) is partnering with the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) and the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) to evaluate the Mastering Number at Reception and KS1 programme in the 2025/26 academic year.

This is an exciting opportunity for your school to engage with a highly-regarded programme that aims to secure firm foundations in the development of good number sense for all children from Reception through to Year 1 and Year 2. The aim over time is that children will leave KS1 with fluency in calculation and a confidence and flexibility with number. Attention will be given to the key knowledge and understanding needed in Reception classes, and progression through KS1 to support success in the future.

The trial will assess the impact of Mastering Number on **Reception pupils and their teachers**.

Who is running the project?

Designed by the NCETM and funded by the DfE, Mastering Number will be delivered nationally by the NCETM and locally by accredited local leaders of mathematics education, through Maths Hubs. NFER is running an independent evaluation of the Mastering Number Programme, with funding from the EEF. The evaluation will examine the impact of the programme on pupils and teachers, alongside its implementation in schools.

What does the programme involve?

Schools joining the Mastering Number Programme will use the 31 weeks of teaching materials in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 classes for four short sessions each week, aimed at developing children's fluency and flexibility with number. Schools will receive rekenreks (a bead frame, similar to an abacus, which supports the development of number sense) for use in the sessions.

In Reception, Mastering Number should be the main maths lesson for number-based work, but in KS1 it is a short extra session for the whole class in addition to the main lesson. Suggestions for small-group intervention work are provided in the weekly teacher guides, and these can be used by teachers and/or teaching assistants with pupils at risk of falling behind. In Reception classes, teachers also incorporate Mastering Number into the class's continuous provision and routines.

One teacher from Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 will attend a termly national online training session with the NCETM. These half-day events are made up of three consecutive sessions, each focused on one of Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 (each lasting 1 hour 10 minutes). Teachers attend the session(s) relevant to their year group, so teachers of mixed-age classes should attend all sessions that are relevant to them. The same teachers should attend each time. Across the year, these teachers also receive local support from their Maths Hub in the form of online or in-person events (the local support is in the region of 1.5 days). These teachers will act as 'Lead Teachers' for Mastering Number. Lead Teachers are expected to contribute to a Maths Hub online community to share practice and engage in critical reflection with colleagues from other schools. Lead Teachers also support any other teachers in their year group to understand and implement Mastering Number.

The year begins with a half-hour online launch event for all Lead Teachers, maths subject leads and headteachers. To further support implementation, the NCETM team offers two hour-long online workshops for headteachers. The first is in the autumn term, and the second is in the summer term.

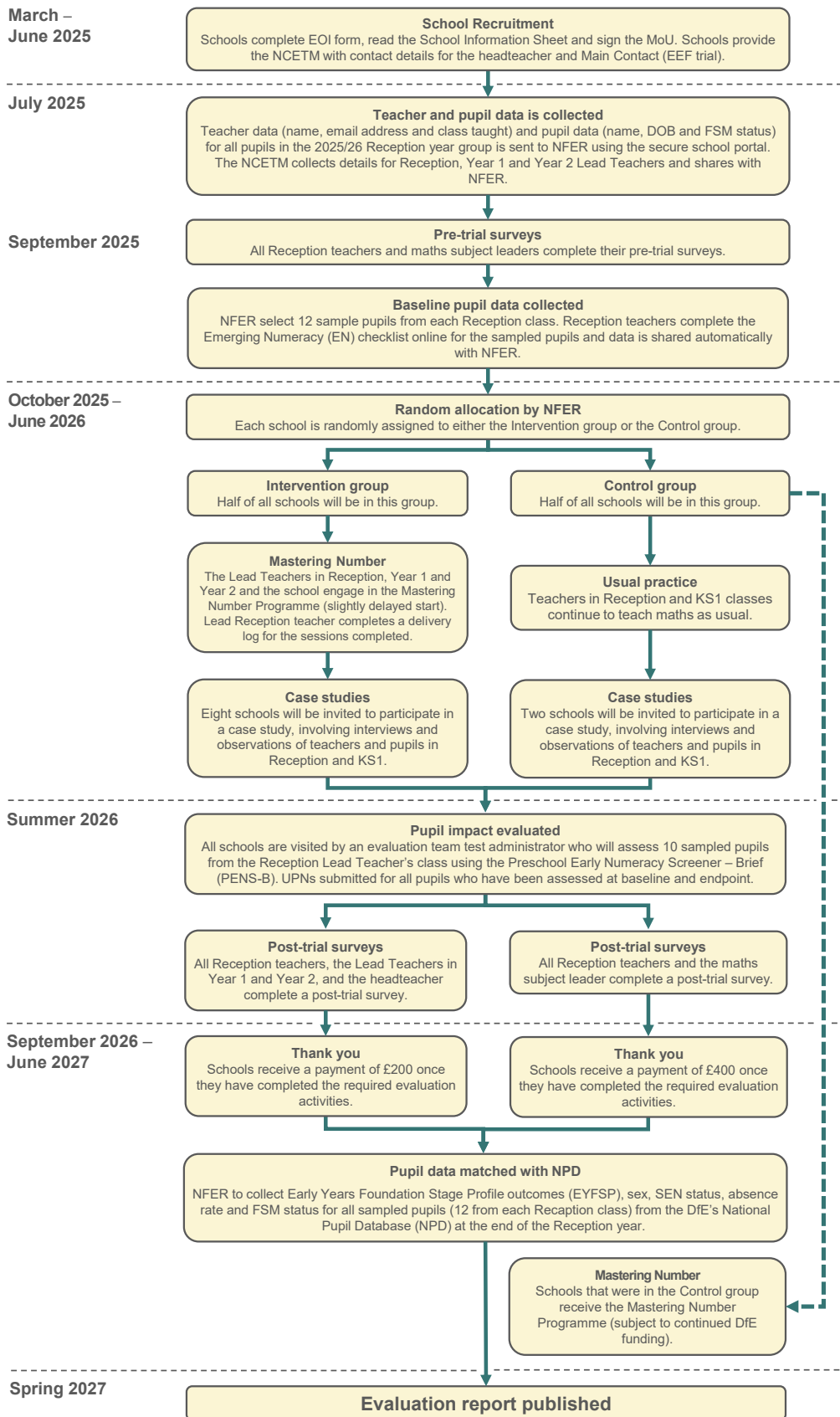
How will the trial work? What are the timelines?

The purpose of the trial will be to evaluate the effectiveness of the Mastering Number Programme in Reception. It will examine the impact of the programme on Reception pupils' fluency and flexibility with number. The trial will use a randomised controlled trial (RCT) design to assess the impact of the Mastering Number Programme. Participating schools will be randomly allocated to one of two groups:

- The intervention group, which will engage with the Mastering Number Programme activities including training from September 2025 through to June 2026.
- The control group, which will not engage with the Mastering Number Programme and will continue to deliver their usual practice during the academic year 2025/26.

A sample of Reception pupils in each school will be assessed at baseline using the Early Numeracy checklist and at endpoint using the Preschool Early Numeracy Screener – Brief (PENS-B).

Timeline



Eligibility

To participate, schools must meet the following criteria:

- The school must be a state-funded primary or infant school within a participating Maths Hub region in England
- The school must not have previously engaged with Mastering Number training and delivery
- The school must not be involved in other EEF-funded Reception or Early Maths trials in 2025/26
- None of the school's Reception teachers will have previously been the Lead Teacher in Reception for the Mastering Number Programme in any school.

What are the benefits of participating?

The Mastering Number Programme aims to improve teachers' understanding of progression in early number, and how to teach it. As a result of accessing four Mastering Number lessons per week, Reception pupils' fluency and flexibility with number improves, as does their willingness and ability to talk about mathematical relationships. Pupils are more confident and competent, and Reception pupils are mathematically well-prepared for Year 1.

Over half of the schools in England have participated in an EEF trial. Participating schools, working with their local Maths Hub, will be contributing to the evidence base for teaching approaches aiming to address children's early mathematics development.

As a thank you for taking part in the trial, all schools will receive a payment once the required evaluation activities have been completed. An overview of the pupil-outcome data gathered by the evaluation team will also be provided.

Are there any costs involved?

The programme is fully funded by the DfE through the Maths Hubs Programme. Schools will need to ensure that there is staff cover for a Lead Teacher from Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 to attend the equivalent of three days of training.

How will data be used?

- The NCETM and NFER will treat all data securely, confidentially and in accordance with data protection law.
- Personal data will be collected and used to conduct the evaluation, with pseudonymised data being shared for archiving and further research at the end of the project.
- Your school, staff, and pupils will not be identified in any report arising from the research.

For further information, see the privacy notices via the links below:

- Tribal Group:
tribalgroup.com/privacy-policy
- NFER:
nfer.ac.uk/for-schools/participate-in-research/participate-in-research-projects/effectiveness-trial-of-mastering-number-2025-26

Interested in participating?

Search **mastering number at reception and KS1** online or visit:

ncetm.org.uk/mastering-number/reception-ks1

More information and to register for an online information event:

ncetm.org.uk/maths-hubs/about-maths-hubs/evaluating-our-programmes-in-202526

Find your hub and ask a question:

ncetm.org.uk/maths-hubs/find-your-hub

Express your interest:

[EOI form](#)

The Maths Hubs Network

15 Maths Hubs are participating in the trial:

North

Abacus, Archimedes NE, Cheshire and Wirral, Great North, North North West, South Yorkshire, and Turing NW

Midlands

Central, East Midlands South, and Matrix

South

CODE, London Central and NW, London North East, North-East Hants and Surrey, and Sussex

