

ADVICE SHEET



Effective Support for Difficulties with Maths

1) Teach for understanding first

Many concepts in maths, including number, are abstract. Making the concepts real/concrete is essential or they hold no meaning for the CYP. Securing understanding of concepts needs to be achieved before any rote learning, for CYP who have difficulties with maths. The use of visuals and equipment, such as number tracks and then number lines, is crucial (beware of numicon in the early stages of teaching number, as the tiles don't promote easy recognition of dot patterns and doubles and near doubles.) Language can be a barrier to understanding maths. Again, the terms and symbols are abstract and doing some vocabulary training with visuals and discussions is key. Also, word problems support understanding.

2) A structured teaching programme is very important for CYP who have difficulties with maths. They frequently become confused if work proceeds too quickly and are likely to forget work, that it was felt, had been mastered.

- **The teaching programme needs to proceed at the pace of the CYP**
- **The teaching programme needs to provide a very large amount of practice, overlearning and repetition**
- **Ensure the CYP has secure understanding of digits first – numeral recognition, dot pattern recognition, counting (sets as well as individual objects and counting in any order), ordering, estimating, use of number tracks, use of their fingers as a number line**

Please note: If a CYP cannot accurately estimate numbers to five, please inform your SENCo who will investigate further

3) Ensure the active participation of the CYP in the lessons and that it's a positive experience

CYP who have difficulties with maths can quickly disengage with the learning and maths anxiety can have a huge effect on, not just childhood, but adulthood as well. Understanding numbers is a key life skill. CYP should be encouraged to actively participate and the lessons should be as multi-sensory as possible. Also encourage the CYP to say what's in their heads about the maths, so you can understand and guide their thinking.

Acknowledge frustration/other feelings, when they are present and explain that you are going to work with them to find the best strategies. Praise for effort first and then personal bests. Scaffold for independence as much as possible, once the understanding of the concept has been secured.