

National Curriculum Textbooks



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Billingborough Primary School, near Sleaford in south Lincolnshire, has been using Scholastic’s comprehensive range of maths textbooks since November 2016 as part of a school-wide response to the new National Curriculum.

The school, rated ‘Outstanding’ by Ofsted in July 2012, aims to ensure that all pupils become fluent with the fundamentals of maths. This involves the frequent practice of a range of increasingly complex problems, developing children’s conceptual understanding. Pupils are also supported to reason mathematically so they are equipped to manage the challenges that ‘real life’ maths will throw at them, and be able to solve problems by applying their skills learnt in lessons and breaking them down into small steps.

Billingborough commissioned the following Scholastic resources to support teachers and children with the new curriculum: National Curriculum Planning and Assessment Guides (Year 2-6); Curriculum Textbooks (Year 2-6); National Curriculum SATs Tests (Year 2-6); National Curriculum SATs Tests: Results Tracker; 100 Maths Lessons for the New Curriculum (Year 4-5); and 100 Practical Activities: National Curriculum Maths Practice Book (Year 3-6).

Frances Reeder, the school’s maths co-ordinator and Year 5/6 teacher, said investment in additional learning resources was a priority for Billingborough. “The 2015-16 academic year was challenging for us in terms of maths progress and attainment so we needed to develop and invest as a school to avoid further decline,” she explained. “We were looking for resources that complement our teaching, and our style of teaching, rather than being too prescriptive.

Those we can use and adapt without being too expensive, which we are always mindful of. In the past 12 months we have come on leaps and bounds, both in terms of our test scores and in the day-to-day impact we are seeking in the school.”

The Scholastic maths textbooks and guides are being used by different teachers in different ways. “The flexibility is their real value,” Frances said. “Our Year 1 teacher takes ideas from the Year 2 books to create her own worksheets, and looks at what objectives need to be met after Year 1 to inform her own teaching. Our Year 3-4 teacher dips in and out of the textbooks for planning ideas and resources, and to provide practice in certain areas. He particularly values the fact that the resources are interactive and editable. My fellow Year 5-6 teacher uses the resources far more extensively. Providing information pages for pupils to read and digest, a concept to discuss, completing activities and problems, or sometimes taking an idea from the book and adapting it. She really likes the problem-solving challenges and Brain Teaser/Brain Twister features alongside more straightforward questions, and the overall concept of learn, tips, talk, activities and problems for every topic.”

Frances enthused that the Talk Maths feature of the resources was her personal favourite. “It’s just brilliant – I love it, and it’s perfect for the Year 5-6 mix,” she said. “The textbooks and guides offer practice in all areas with links to ‘real life’ situations, information pages which act as a reference point for the children, and opportunities for us as teachers to either use the text for the lesson or adapt the ideas provided. The children like them – they complement our other activities on a day-to-day basis – and for staff they have been incredibly useful because the new curriculum just bamboozles teachers.”

Maths will continue to be an integral focus of Billingborough’s school improvement plan. “Our focus in school has traditionally been on reading and writing and the new curriculum means we were always going to go through a period of adjustment,” Frances said. “However, the Scholastic resources have helped us to grasp what is required for each year group as well as informing the whole-school approach. We’ve worked with Scholastic for many years and really value their personal and non-salesy approach.”

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