



VALLEY INVICTA
ACADEMIES TRUST



Case Study

How We Raised the Profile of Maths at Valley Invicta Primary School

by

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The Personalised Learning Function within the Tutor is Ideal for our Students

Previously, we didn't really set maths homework, it was more of a lesson to 'tick off' the list in school. However, when I became maths lead, I was keen to raise the profile of the subject across the school by introducing a more holistic approach.

I first discovered the Maths-Whizz virtual tutor at a school Maths Conference in Kent and thought it could work. In 2020, before the first lockdown, we completed a six-week trial with our Year 2 students. We expanded this to Year 2 and then Year 6. The trial went well and now the whole school of 220 students have been using Maths-Whizz for a whole academic year.

The main benefit is the individual tutoring aspect of the solution which works at different levels. The children are all still doing maths and are engaged but are all working at different stages and at rate which suits them.



Initially, we used Maths-Whizz as a home learning tool with the target of three progressions or one hour time spent on the tutor as a target. A progression is one successfully completed lesson or unit of progress. Then after the first lockdown, we invested in iPads and teachers were able to block out time to use the iPads and access Maths-Whizz during lessons too. This could be for a Maths-Whizz lesson or some extension of a task, or some intervention in groups or individual attention on Maths-Whizz.

Older children find the formal language helpful as this is what they will become exposed to at secondary school. They also like the competition element to work to get higher than the class average. Progressions occur at their own speed.

Younger children really enjoy any lessons which they usually struggle with in class for example: place values. In class, we might use columns or numbers around the room, but on the iPad, numbers can be moved around and it's more of a game. It offers a different way of tackling the same subject and this is helpful.

The younger children also believe they are playing games on Maths-Whizz and love it because it's allowed! They must do 15 minutes of maths before they can choose their avatar or prizes, so this also keeps them engaged.

Progress in maths remained steady during the pandemic, in other subjects they slowed

In terms of results, obviously last year was a bit different with the restrictions and lockdowns. We saw our progression rates slow in a range of subjects due to the pandemic except maths, which remained steady, and this is due to the children's access to Maths-Whizz. It's been such a vital tool to be able to scaffold to their ability. It means they have been able to engage with maths learning at home, while their parents carry on with their lives.

While students have been able to attend school, 87% of our children are making accelerated progress when completing their recommended amount of Maths-Whizz. This means the children had advanced further than their chronological age compared with the number of weeks exposed to the virtual tutor.

For other schools considering implementing a virtual tutoring solution, I would say give it a go but buy into it fully and commit to a year to see results.

Motivation is key. Don't fall into a 'fad' trap and don't let the novelty wear off, keep it fresh. Add new elements like competitions or reveal new statistics to keep children motivated. I introduced a fortnightly award for the most progression across the class average with prizes such as 15 minutes extra play. It's about keeping it positive and encouraging practice to occur.

Most parents really appreciate the Maths-Whizz tutor

Engagement is also important. We organised a parents' workshop over zoom and recorded this and sent it to parents who couldn't attend. We explained all about the system and confirmed the goal was to achieve 3 progressions at home, if not then students need to attain these either in lessons or break times.

Most parents really appreciate the Maths-Whizz tutor as many are shocked 'how much maths has changed since they learned'. We can't always teach parents how to teach but Maths-Whizz has meant they can see stages of learning. It also means there is no 'guilt' seeing their children online as they know they are learning.

Training sessions for all staff so they can encourage engagement with the programme has also paid dividends. Whizz Education provides email updates, ideas and competitions to keep everyone involved. We also get data drops of most successful students, plus strengths and weaknesses for all individual classes so we can highlight and reward students.

Overall, as well as experiencing learning gains across our school during some of the most challenging times, Maths-Whizz has helped us raise the profile of maths at Valley Invicta and we are proud of the progress of our students.

To find out how your teachers, students and school can benefit from working with Whizz Education, contact us by emailing info@whizz.com