

Focus of visit A group of governors visited school to find out about Maths teaching and learning.	Date 24 November 2016
What did we do? First we had a meeting with Mrs Baker, AHT and Maths co-ordinator. She explained the reasons behind the decision to change from Maths Makes Sense to Abacus, following a trial use of the new programme. She explained that MMS was pitched high as is the new curriculum but in some areas MMS lacked the repetition of learning that had been a feature of the Numeracy strategy. During 2015–16 staff had started to review MMS and make changes to Maths teaching and learning. She also gave us an information pack that included: changes in Maths since September; planned actions for Spring and Summer 2017; Maths strand information from the School Improvement plan; KS2 Maths data from 2014–2016, showing progress and attainment and including data on different groups of learners; intervention programme for this year; current data from Years 1-6 for July 2016 and November 2016. We then visited two classes to see Maths. Year 2 were using number grids following an example on the board. Year 5 were learning about circles and were measuring the radius, diameter and circumference of paper circles and recording their results on a chart. Both classes had additional adults supporting the children. We looked at a sample of Maths books from Years 1, 4 and 6.	
What did we learn? There is a new calculations policy but this might need further revision to fit with the new Abacus programme. The new scheme covers every curriculum objective. Some elements of MMS have been retained. All year 6 children have a weekly additional Maths intervention lesson after school. Four teachers are involved in this, each working with a particular ability group. The starting point for the intervention was a SATS paper from 2016. All the children have signed up for it with parental support. Siblings can do an after-school activity if this makes it easier for parents to pick up the children together; students from Newcastle College work with these children. A former pupil (a good mathematician), who collects his Yr 6 sibling, joins the high-ability intervention group as extra support. We learned that the tests in summer were more demanding and that children who would have progressed from L2B to Level 4B in the past did not do so this year. Intervention for the higher group was successful but intervention for the working towards could have been started earlier. In year 6 this year interventions have started earlier. The school has also introduced key skills booklets in Maths for regular practice of different areas.	
Positive comments about the visit All the information we were given was very useful. We were able to gain a better understanding of why Maths is a key issue in the school improvement plan and what is being done to improve attainment in Maths. The discussion was informative and challenging. The children were engaged with their Maths and were able to explain what they were doing and answer our questions confidently.	
Any questions? We asked about why MMS had been discontinued and about the concerns around MMS not matching the new curriculum sufficiently. (<i>See above</i>) We asked about interventions (see above for year 6). Other groups from year 3 upwards have interventions. Years 1 and 2 have additional support in lessons. We asked about preparing children for the test and we were informed that the exemplar test material had come out very late. We asked the children about the marking in their books; they could explain the marking policy. We also asked them about what they did if they finished their work (it would be useful to discuss this at committee), what they did if they were stuck and what homework they had in Maths.	
Ideas for future visits It would be useful to find out more about Abacus and see it in classes. We would be interested in coming to the Parents' open day for Maths, planned for later in the year.	
Any other comments The school has carefully reviewed provision for Maths following last year's results and has made changes in the following areas: staffing (new co-ordinator); provision and intervention; LT monitoring of Maths teaching and learning.	
Links to school improvement plan Key Issue 1: improve attainment in Maths across the whole school Key issue 5: improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils through out the school	