









Abacus sets high standards for maths teaching



School name:	 Westlea Primary School	School type:	 Primary School
Region:	 Wiltshire	Ofsted rating:	 Good
Area type:	 Town	Pupil premium %:	 10%
Number of pupils:	 310	EAL %:	 2%
Why Abacus?	Westlea Primary School had a good standard of maths teaching and wanted to implement a programme to ensure consistency in planning, which is why they opted for Abacus – a comprehensive planning tool with integrated resources. Sarah Sumner, the Deputy Head Teacher , has observed improved outcomes and a higher maths standard across the school.		

Key points to take away

- Abacus provides a **consistent planning tool that ensures curriculum coverage**.
- Abacus promotes a learning routine that **fosters good behaviour and improved attitudes**.
- The **lesson plans are easy to adapt and highlight prior knowledge requirements**.
- Abacus **sets very high standards for teachers and children while making maths accessible to all**.

Background

Before we purchased Abacus I had concerns about maths planning in our school, because we were using many different programmes. This gave us lots of objectives but no plans, and nothing teachers could really build on; everything was down to them. I wanted a foundation and a platform that had a consistent standard. After doing quite a bit of research, I settled on Abacus, which I felt confident would ensure coverage of the new curriculum.

Consistency for teachers and pupils

Since adopting Abacus, our teaching and planning has improved. One of the many strengths of Abacus is that it is consistent. For example, the way content is presented to children is the same across year groups. The teachers have given me good feedback, saying that they see a high degree of continuity, feel a lot more confident and really like it.

“The teachers see a high degree of continuity, feel a lot more confident and really like it.”

Every lesson has a similar flow, so when children enter a class they know what to expect. This lets them quickly settle into their routines. Children find security in routine and structure, and that familiarity builds confidence and fosters good behaviour. This, in turn, creates a really positive learning environment where the children are hungry for knowledge.

“Routine and structure... creates a really positive learning environment where the children are hungry for knowledge.”

Flexible lesson plans make targeted teaching easy

In our school, all teachers have been using Abacus for planning, and they feel it's a great starting point. The plans give us the prerequisites for each lesson or series, which is really important to know, and they have full curriculum coverage. We can then tweak bits and pieces – it's so much easier to adjust something than to create it from scratch.

The ability to tweak is important because the needs of each child are different – we do see that for the lower attaining children the progression can be a bit too quick.

So, when I do my monthly planning, I include the prerequisites so that my teaching partner can make sure that any prior learning is covered.

Likewise, for the high attaining children, progression can be too slow. I can begin with the extended group activities, but then I'll build on that and take them forward. I love the 'Think' activities in the textbooks – I use those to manipulate some of my extension activities.

High expectations for all children

The content and plans in Abacus set very high maths standards, but it's progressive and well structured, which makes maths accessible. This has really helped raise expectations in our school. Pupils have said that while the maths is challenging, "the teachers know how to push us without causing too much stress."

“The content and plans in Abacus set very high maths standards, but it's progressive and well structured, which makes maths accessible.”

Abacus is very number driven and there is a focus on repetition. There's always the danger that when new skills are introduced, the children forget what they've already learned. This makes the repetition a positive thing; you have to overlearn skills in maths – that way you become fluent.

A positive impact and improved outcomes

We've seen good outcomes from using Abacus. The majority of children are on track to meet age-related expectations, and there has especially been an impact on underachieving pupils. I doubt that would have happened if we hadn't adopted Abacus. Pupils' stamina has improved, along with their presentation and digit formation, and I'm seeing a new richness of mathematics vocabulary in every lesson.

“The majority of children are on track... and there has especially been an impact on underachieving pupils. I doubt that would have happened if we hadn't adopted Abacus.”



Imagery with thanks to St Paul's C of E Primary School

Abacus team feedback

One of the things we wanted to ensure when we developed Abacus was that the teachers could use it in different ways, and we're really excited to see how the teachers at Westlea are adapting the plans to meet the needs of their pupils. We are continuously developing Abacus based on the needs and feedback of our customers, so during autumn 2016 we are launching some supplementary printed materials to support teachers with extending learning for all children in maths, including their high achievers. We've also developed intervention resources to help children keep-up and catch-up. Take a look at our website to find out more – www.pearsonprimary.co.uk.

Your feedback matters!

If you've been using Abacus, we'd love to hear your feedback too, so we can keep making Abacus better and better – please tell us what you think by submitting feedback in ActiveLearn Primary.

Find out more

To contact your local Pearson Primary representative email primaryappointments@pearson.com or visit pearsonprimary.co.uk/impact to see more impact case studies.