









Confident teachers deliver great maths lessons!



School name:	 Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Multi Academy Trust (St Alban's Catholic Primary Academy and St Luke's Catholic Academy)	School type:	 Academies
Region:	 Essex	Ofsted rating:	 Good (March 2015)
Area type:	 Town	Pupil premium %:	 5.4% (St Alban's) 9.5% (St Luke's)
Number of pupils:	 205 (St Alban's) 199 (St Luke's)	EAL %:	 26.9% (St Alban's) 18.9% (St Luke's)

Why Abacus? With the introduction of the 2014 National Curriculum, Our Lady of Fatima Academy Trust decided to review how maths was taught, with a view to achieving consistency both within and across each school. As the Maths Coordinator, Anne-Marie Black evaluated lots of different schemes and chose Abacus.

Key points to take away

- Abacus supports teachers by providing everything needed to deliver great maths lessons.
- Abacus provides provision for children of all abilities by identifying prerequisite skills, allowing teachers to precision teach and close the gap.
- Abacus ensures maths is taught consistently across classes, year groups and schools.
- Staff and senior leaders have quick and easy access to assessment data, which can be used to inform teaching and learning.

Getting started with Abacus

When we heard there was going to be a new curriculum, I evaluated many different maths resources and schemes, but what I liked the most about Abacus on ActiveLearn Primary was that everything is all in one place and it is so easy to use! I thought it was really well thought out.

We really valued the initial Abacus Professional Development training as it was great for getting everybody on board. Everyone was excited to see the new curriculum planning in ActiveLearn and to see how all of the activities linked in. Teachers loved how easily they could launch an interactive resource, a model or an image directly from the planning area.

Confident teachers who enjoy teaching maths!

Since introducing Abacus as our sole maths programme across the two schools, we have seen a number of benefits. Teacher confidence has definitely increased, as teachers feel they have the resources they need to support the children in their class.

Staff now plan with confidence, knowing that everything is in one place, and easily accessible wherever they are. Because Abacus is web-based, we can be at school or home and still find everything easily.

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Teachers love that different plans are available such as yearly and medium-term overviews, as well as weekly and daily plans. All our teachers like to plan lessons in different ways, and Abacus gives the flexibility

to do that. Some teachers plan using the downloadable Word versions, saving copies in their own folders and then adding in notes to parts of the lessons as well as insights from previous lessons. Others are pleased to work directly from ActiveLearn.

“Staff now plan with confidence”

In Abacus, children are always working towards the same objective. The identification of prerequisite skills has been invaluable in supporting our planning and teaching. Teachers use the prerequisite tool all the time as it's so easy to click on a prerequisite, and to then tailor teaching to meet the needs of a class.



A new way of teaching maths

A profound change for us has been that teachers now embed problem solving into lessons, rather than it being a totally separate thing. The 'Think' questions within the textbooks are great, and we were able to highlight these to Ofsted during a recent inspection. Abacus gives us a springboard to work from, and also helps teachers to generate new ideas of their own. We often use ideas from the plans and encourage children to investigate maths in groups so that they talk and solve problems together. We capture the children's findings on large sheets of paper, and display their work throughout the school.

We're really pleased that Abacus now links out to NRich activities as well. We used these activities already, but now we don't need to search for them. They're great for extending learning in maths.

Using consistent models and images throughout the school has definitely had an impact. Children like it when they see a bead string on the board and a bead string in front of them. I know that EAL pupils particularly benefit from the models and images included in the planning. We also provide maths toolkits on each classroom table so that children have access to concrete objects which support their understanding.

The icing on the cake for us is the inclusion of homework, which children, teachers and parents love. Pupils also like the Quick Maths activities and the in-class interactive resources which allow them to come up to the board and explore their understanding during a lesson.

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Integrated assessment in Abacus

It's great to have the assessment integrated into Abacus. We use the new tests for both assessment and practice. It's also great that we can export all assessment data from ActiveLearn as this allows us to upload and store the data elsewhere and to report on specific pupil groups like Pupil Premium and EAL.

Parents are engaged too!

We've used the home-link support provided on the member site ([MyAbacus](#)) to introduce the Abacus toolkit to our parents. We have provided a lot of support for children to do their homework such as organising maths meetings and homework clubs and have even run an Abacus evening with parents. Everything has been running smoothly and parental engagement has been positive.

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Find out more

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