

The Maths Factor



Contact: themathsfactor.com

Reviewed by: John Dabell, Primary Teacher and trained Ofsted Inspector

I am always a tad cautious when a celebrity puts his or her name to a product or service, especially if it's an educational one. There is a danger the resource isn't the star of the show and the content and message can be swallowed up by someone's ego. On the other hand, when that person is actually good at what she does and promotes a curriculum subject because she loves it, then the picture changes.

Mathematics needs positive role models and if that means enrolling a maths A-lister, then go for it. We all know that Carol Vorderman has the maths factor. She makes the subject look effortless, natural, and instinctive, which for most learners it isn't. If she can help make maths a comfortable experience and pass on her understanding and passion for maths, so much the better.

The Maths Factor website acts as an online tutor. Children learn about maths using videos and examples, which are followed up by interactive games and test activities that reinforce learning. Essential feedback comes in the form of marbles and certificates, which are awarded on completion of the work. Parents get to know how well things are going via emails that are sent after each session, to show how the child has performed.

The course contains over 1,000 maths sessions within 32 topics, which are divided between Explorers (KS1), Adventurers (Lower KS2) and Pioneers (Upper KS2). Everything is matched to the new curriculum.

The key to unlocking maths confidence come via the videos. This is where Britain's number one maths guru explains the core principles as well as useful tricks and tips. These are fun and lively and can be viewed as many times as needed. You need to remember that Carol Vorderman isn't a trained teacher, but she has stacks of experience in front of a camera and does a sterling job at presenting the maths.

From a learner's point of view, the site is friendly, fun and engaging; it's a good mixture



of teaching and enjoyable activities, all embedded within colourful graphics. Children can personalise their own avatar and move through a delightful set of quality activities – although some of the warm-ups do seem a bit easy. From a teacher's perspective, there is a classroom management system already in place, and if you're already signed up to Pearson's Active Learn Primary platform you won't have to re-enter your class or cohort details.

One difference with this site is that there are additional learning clubs available. For example, every year on 1 July, 'Summer clubs' open to keep the momentum going and combat summer learning loss. There is also a fantastic revision club, an invaluable times tables catch-up club and a brilliant algebra club. This is excellent extra support. There is also a print and play section for learning away from the computer.

Whilst I think the Maths Factor is a cracking resource, it's worth considering that this site only covers Number and Algebra. Maths is far more than arithmetic, and hopefully future versions of the website will include data, shape, measures and problem solving.

The Maths Factor differs from other online maths sites because it focuses on teaching and practice. Some sites promote competition, which might help some learners to flourish, but here everyone can make progress with micro steps that build confidence. Playing games

means there's still an element of competition, but children compete with the computer and not each other. The Maths Factor is probably a better choice if you want children to achieve at their own pace in an environment free from the pressure of racing to be the best. Children won't be told what level they are, which removes the stigma many feel if they are constantly comparing themselves to their peers.

Verdict: The ideal resource for home and school

This proven online resource, road tested by children for children, will help all learners be number confident and number fit. The Maths Factor offers top-class maths provision that you can easily incorporate into your daily routine and ensure that children are not left behind by the time they are 11. It's the best home-school online maths resource I have seen because it focuses on actual teaching, meaningful practice and reinforces what really takes place in the classroom. Classy, fun and immersive, this is online maths learning with real credibility and acumen, fronted by a real maths star.

