

# SEND News - numeracy special



Hello everyone,

I hope you have had a good week and that the routines are still running as smoothly as they possibly can. This week, we've focussed on maths and numeracy difficulties. This affects quite a number of our school population. Hopefully, some of the thoughts and ideas below will be of help.

All good wishes, Sue Fulbrook (SEND Director)



## What is dyscalculia?

Dyscalculia is a developmental learning difference which is thought to affect around 5% of the school population. It is a specific and persistent difficulty in understanding number which can lead to a diverse range of difficulties with maths. It occurs across the full range of abilities and is often unexpected in relation to other skills of the child. Many children experience some problems in understanding maths. It needs to be thought of as a continuum with those with the most severe difficulties in number sense having dyscalculia or traits of this. (Jarrett 2019)

It is difficult to diagnose dyscalculia using tests, though there are some online and paper based assessments. Experts recommend combining outcomes from such tests with knowledge of the child and addressing key weaknesses on a personalised approach.

Number difficulties on the dyscalculia spectrum include:

- Difficulty counting backwards
- Difficulty recalling basic number facts
- Slow to perform calculations
- Weak mental arithmetic skills
- Poor sense of number or estimation
- Difficulty in understanding place value
- Maths anxiety



Top inclusive strategies for numeracy difficulties:

- Give additional thinking time.
- Use visuals and physical resources – number lines and squares, cubes, counters, cards.
- Use highlighters for word problems.
- Use images to support, e.g. pictures of base ten rods and cubes, visuals of fractions...
- Support memory – model how to record parts of answers, use scrap paper for notes, reminder cards for key functions, use visuals.
- Over-learn – use software, online games, card games, board games, look for numbers when out for a walk, cook, measure things in the house, Sudoku, posters, rhymes and songs, flashcards, count money, use clocks and timers...
- Practise sequencing – colour code, shapes – look for shapes and patterns.
- Teach key maths vocabulary.



A few links for ideas for supporting dyscalculia/numeracy difficulties:

- Sumdog - <https://pages.sumdog.com/>
- 10 ticks - <https://www.10ticks.co.uk/>
- Prodigy maths - <https://www.prodigygame.com/>
- Numeracy ninjas - <https://www.numeracyninjas.org/>
- Doodlemaths and doodletables – apps
- Maths rocks - app