



Excellent Maths Teacher Programme Case Study

Study 1 - Michelle James, Holy Family RC Primary School, Tyldesley, Wigan

"I will be eternally grateful for the contacts and fabulous CPD I received on the Excellent Maths Teacher Programme. It was the best decision I have made in my teaching career and has certainly allowed me the opportunity to shine."

Context

Holy Family Roman Catholic Primary School, situated in Tyldesley, Wigan, has 209 pupils, of whom 14% qualify for Pupil Premium. There are 8 teachers and 9 Teaching Assistants.

It was one of the first schools to be inspected by Ofsted under the new framework in 2014 and was judged to be 'Good', although the current Headteacher (who was Deputy Headteacher at the time) considers that, in retrospect, it would have been fairer to rate it as 'Requires Improvement'. In February 2019 it was once again judged as 'Good' and the inspector commented that the Headteacher and Deputy (who were interviewed for this case study) "...are dynamic and form an effective team."

Interviewees – quoted in italics

Michelle James, Deputy Headteacher, Y6 teacher, English and Maths Coordinator, Holy Family RC Primary School, Tyldesley, Wigan

Clare Roberts, Headteacher, Holy Family RC Primary School, Tyldesley, Wigan

Background

Although the last two Ofsted inspections rated the school as 'Good', the Headteacher feels that there has been a huge improvement across all aspects of the school between the two inspections. This has also been recognised by the National Leader of Education who has been working with the school.

"The quality of our books and our whole school approach is a testament to the CPD we have received from the Maths Hub. That journey of progress started when we became involved with St Helens Teaching

School Alliance and North West Maths Hub 3. That was the first time as a school that we had really reached out beyond the walls of Holy Family.” Clare

In the final year of the previous Headteacher’s time at the school, 2015, Michelle decided to apply for a Mastery specialist role. She had been teaching at the school for 6 years and could not see where her future lay. She was unsuccessful because she had no experience of working beyond her school. However, following the interview, the Maths Hub Lead who had interviewed her said that she could see the passion she had for Maths and suggested that she apply to be included in the initial cohort of the Excellent Maths Teacher Programme (EMTP). This suggestion was supported by Michelle’s Headteacher.

The Programme

The programme consists of seven full day sessions in one school year, aimed at excellent maths teachers, subject leaders, Specialists Leaders of Education and Professional Development Leads who have the potential and drive to achieve excellence in maths practice and the ability to develop others.

It was as a result of taking part in the EMTP that Michelle, and then Clare, who was the Deputy Headteacher, began to realise what Teaching for Mastery was all about and what changes needed to be made to the way maths was being taught at Holy Family. So, with Clare’s support, Michelle began to introduce the Teaching for Mastery principles across the school.

“During my first year of headship (2016), while Michelle was doing EMTP, we both realised that the school wasn’t as good as the staff thought it was. We both had the same vision and we knew what we needed to do. We had to deliver that difficult message together to the staff. It’s been hard but we knew that we had to do it.

Michelle was coming back to school fired up with enthusiasm about maths and that was infectious. So we said - right let’s be brave, let’s have a go. The results can’t be any worse. It worked.” Clare

Every teacher accessed year group specific training. Then all Teaching Assistants were trained. Initially there was resistance from some staff but soon they were all won over and became much more confident in teaching maths.

Clare and Michelle feel that over recent years there have been cohorts of Newly Qualified Teachers who have not been taught what direct teaching and quality modelling look like. So that is one of the issues they have been working on as a result of Michelle’s learning through the Maths Hub.

“There are two teachers in the school now, one of whom was a supply teacher, the other an NQT, who really struggled at the beginning of this journey. But now they both have TLRs and will go further in a few years if they want to. That came from the Maths Hub via Michelle – it was like a domino effect.” Clare

Outcomes data for maths has consistently risen in recent years. Five years ago maths outcomes were very cohort specific. Clare and Michelle feel that they were caught out by the curriculum changes in 2014, as a result of which results took a significant dip. They acknowledge that the school is still on a journey. They are part of a Maths Hub Teacher Research Group (TRG) this year, with a view to leading one in the future.

“We’ve been amazed at how many teachers in the TRG have not yet understood what is required in respect of maths teaching since 2014. Some still call it ‘the new curriculum’.” Michelle

Are these the outcomes you expected from the Excellent Maths Teacher Programme?

Michelle was unsure what to expect. What she did not expect was the effect that the programme would have on her passion for teaching and her ability to lead.

“I’ve always liked teaching, but now I’d work 24/7 if I could because I love it so much. The Maths Hub has been my saviour. We’re part of a massive network based on the Hub, using social media for example which is making a huge difference to us. We learn from each other. The programme gave me a spark. Lisa Bradshaw (Director of St Helens TSA and NW Maths Hub 3 Lead) gave me a chance – she encouraged me to have a go. Now I love English as well.”

Both Michelle and Clare feel that the Teaching School and Maths Hub have impacted on leadership, management and English at the school. As a result they now turn to St Helens TSA for CPD because they are impressed with the quality and the results. They have also introduced Wigan headteachers to Maths Hub NW3.

Clare is sure that if Michelle had not done the Excellent Maths Teacher Programme she would not have become Deputy Headteacher at Holy Family. At that time she had not been a middle manager. She had assumed that she would need to move to another school to progress. Michelle says:

“Something changed in me following the training. What I began to pick up on from the Maths Hub trainers was the language of leadership and that made a massive difference to me. A lot of the people in Cohort 1 were people who had applied for the Mastery Specialist roles, who had been unsuccessful but showed potential and so were invited onto the programme. What it’s offered teachers is another route into leadership. That wasn’t there previously. I never saw myself as a Deputy here until I did the Excellent Maths Teacher Programme.”

Another unexpected outcome is that there has been a direct impact of the new style of teaching from maths to English. The leadership felt that some of the techniques they have used successfully in maths, for example reasoning, would be useful in English. They saw what had worked in maths, teachers understood the theory and the pedagogy behind the teaching of maths and are now seeing the impact in English. They are convinced that the recent improvements they have seen in reading are a direct result.

What Next?

Despite their enthusiasm for the progress already made, Clare and Michelle are aware that there still remains work to be done. They feel that some of their pupils do not yet have the resilience that they need for problem solving, so improving reasoning is their next focus. Michelle says “Some children struggle to wrestle with really difficult problems. They need stamina.”

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“Looking to the future what we need is for our data to catch up with the journey we are on. We are recruiting two new teachers and we feel confident to say to them that we can show them excellent teaching and lead them through maths and English. We’re looking for people who are passionate and brave. We love to develop them.” Clare

Michelle is considering applying to become a Mastery Specialist Teacher. However, she does not want to leave Holy Family as she enjoys the way everyone works well together and is excited by the next steps they need to take so that the school becomes Outstanding.

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Appendix 1 Outcomes

Key Stage 2 Results

Key Stage 2 results for the past 2 years show that Maths outcomes have improved from 60% to 79% and the number of children reaching Greater Depth has increased from 20% to 34%. The school feels that this is due to better teaching and allowing the Greater Depth children more opportunities to investigate and reason.

Key Stage 2 Results 2016/2017

School Performance Data % at Expected Standard		National Comparison %
R/W/M	50	61
Reading	63	71
Writing	60	76
Mathematics	60	75
GPS	60	77

School Performance Data % at Expected Standard		National Comparison %
Reading	102.7	104
Mathematics	102	104
GPS	101	106

School Performance Data % a High Standard		National Comparison %
Reading	26	24.5
Writing	16.7	17.7
Mathematics	20	22.6
GPS	101	106

2017/2018

Key Stage 2 Results 2018		
School Performance Data % at Expected Standard	National Comparison %	
R/W/M	62	64
Reading	79	75
Writing	86	78
Mathematics	79	76
GPS	69	78

Key Stage 2 Results 2018		
School Performance Data % at High Standard	National Comparison %	
Reading	14	28
Writing	10	20
Mathematics	34	24
GPS	10	34

School Performance Data Average Scaled Score	
Reading	105
Mathematics	106
GPS	101

Key Stage 1 Results

Key Stage 1 Results 2018		
School Performance Data % at Expected Standard	National Comparison %	
R/W/M	67	65
Reading	80	75
Writing	70	70
Mathematics	80	76

Key Stage 1 Results 2018		
School Performance Data % at High Standard	National Comparison %	
Reading	27	26
Writing	7	16
Mathematics	33	22

KS1 results are now consistently reaching 80%. It is hoped that this trend will show throughout KS2 as pupils have had consistent Mastery Teaching.

EYFS Results 2018	
Good Level of Development (GLD) %	
School	National
76	72