

Friday 4th October 2019

Dear Parents,

I am writing to introduce myself as the new Mathematics Curriculum Leader at Thrapston Primary School. I have worked at Thrapston Primary for 5 years in total so far and I am looking forward to the new challenges this role will bring.

As you may be aware, in 2020 the government will be implementing a compulsory Times Tables test for Year 4 pupils to assess their ability to fluently recall a range of times tables. In this test, children will be tested using an on-screen check, where they will answer multiplication questions against the clock. Children will have 6 seconds to answer each question in a series of 25. Each question will be worth one mark and will be presented to the child in the format $a \times b = \underline{\quad}$. Questions will be selected from the 121 number facts that make up the multiplication tables from 2 to 12, with a particular focus on the 6, 7, 8, 9 and 12 times tables as they are considered the most challenging. There will be a 3 second pause between each question.

In light of this, and to ensure children have the best opportunity to access this test at the best of their ability, I have decided to adapt the way Times Tables are taught and tested at Thrapston. It is vital that our whole approach to times tables is consistent throughout your child's learning journey and develops each year, taking in to account the year group expectations of multiplication facts.

Therefore, I propose that children in Years 2, 3 and 4 will be tested once a week on 25 questions in 2 minutes and 30 seconds. The children will receive a sticker in their reading record explaining the times tables that they need to practise ready for the following week. All of the times tables are printed in the back of the school Reading Record. Tests will be completed on paper but children in Year 4 will be given opportunities throughout the year to practise using the online tool provided by the government.

Until children are confident and fluent on their multiplication facts, they will not be tested on their division facts. Division will continue to be taught in class and links will be made to inverse operations. You are also welcome to practise division facts with your child at home if you feel it is appropriate.

Children will complete tests in the following order:

1. 10x	5. 3x	9. 9x	12. 6x
2. 5x	6. 4x	10. 11x	13. 7x
3. 2x	7. 8x	11. Mixed 10x, 5x, 2x, 3x, 4x, 8x,	14. 12x
4. Mixed 10x, 5x, 2x	8. Mixed 10x, 5x, 2x, 3x, 4x, 8x	9x, 11x	15. Mixed all tables

Children will need to score 25/25 in order to progress to the next times tables. They will receive a certificate when they score full marks in each test. Children will be given a personal score card to help them keep track of their progress through the times table system.

Once the children have successfully achieved all of their certificates and can confidently recall all multiplication facts, they will move onto missing number problems (e.g. $8 \times \underline{\quad} = 56$), beginning again with the 10x table.

In Year 1, the children are encouraged to recall their number facts accurately and quickly. To help them do this, they are initially asked to learn at home the number facts of 1-5 (e.g. the number bonds of 4 are: $0+4=4$, $1+3=4$, $2+2=4$, $3+1=4$, $4+0=4$). They then have a timed session of 5 minutes to answer a range of addition number sentences using these facts, which are referred to as 'maths challenges' in school. Each fortnight, they are asked to improve on their previous score so they are only ever competing against themselves. Once they have mastered this skill, they are tested on the subtraction facts and then a mix of addition and subtraction. The next stage is then to learn the number bond facts to 10 and a similar system is followed. Year 1 children start this after Christmas and alternate the test weeks with spellings so that at this young age, the children only have one area to focus on each week. The reasoning behind these maths challenges is to make sure that the children have these facts in their head for easy support when calculating in class.

In Years 5 and 6, the children have started Rockstar Tables which incorporates both multiplication and division facts. The children practise every morning in school and are tested once a week.

Thank you for your support with this. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact your child's class teacher.

Yours sincerely

Mr Liam Crook