

Maths At WIS

Can anyone be good at maths?

YES! At WIS we know that no one is bad at maths and that there is no such thing as a maths brain. Maths is the same as every other subject. If you work at it and, crucially, you enjoy it, you will get better at it. Historically, we have valued speed in maths in a way that we don't tend to value knowledge recall in any other subject. We equate being good at maths as being quick. Focusing on speed can make children anxious. If you find yourself focusing on speed in maths, consider this: we would never ask a young child to read or spell a word and put a time pressure on it so why would we do this in maths? Instead, at WIS, you will see children slowing down and noticing what is happening in an equation before they get started. The children take their time, talk and discuss their maths. You will often hear teachers asking, 'Did anyone make a mistake?' This is because we value mistakes at WIS. You will hear the children happily discussing and sharing their mistakes. You will hear teachers say, 'If you have made that mistake, so will others.' We tell the children that, 'Mistakes make your brain grow'. Children who talk about and share their mistakes are praised and recognised for 'being brave'.

How do we develop confidence?

Maths teaching and learning at WIS is different to other schools. Our lessons are designed in a very special way to develop the children's confidence and enjoyment of maths. The following key ideas underpin each lesson:

- Slowing down and noticing: the children talk about what they notice before they get started on any maths work.
- Valuing mistakes and being brave: we share where we went wrong because we know that 'mistakes make our brain grow'.
- Using our learning powers and being stuck: we expect to be stuck sometimes and we use our resilience learning power to help us.
- Talking about maths: we regularly work in thinking threes or fab fours to discuss our ideas.
- Proving ideas and convincing each other: we always show our deep understanding by proving what we know and convincing our friends.

What happens in a lesson?

The main elements of each lesson are as follows:

- **The WIS quiz:** we go over key knowledge at the start of every lesson in a relaxed and fun way.
- **Noticing:** we slow down and talk about what we notice before we get started.
- **Guided Practice:** the teacher guides the children through a lesson, taking very small steps to develop the children's understanding.
- **Reciprocal Practice:** the children work on a set of 'learning challenges' with their friends.
- **Learning challenges:** these challenges start at bronze and move on to silver, gold and sometimes even platinum. Every child works their way through the challenges from bronze up and they all expect to be stuck. The bronze challenge usually involves the children working on their fluency in a mathematical concept. The silver, gold and platinum challenges involve a variation of the mathematical idea and often involve open questions where there could be more than one answer. The challenges are open to every child. We never put a ceiling on what they can do. We call this low floor, high ceiling.
- **Be brave:** we think about who has been especially brave in the maths lesson and who has made their brain grow.

How can you support?

Always make maths FUN!

It is crucial that you never say the following:

- Oh well, I wasn't any good at maths.
- Maths is really hard.
- My child just doesn't get maths.
- Maths is a different way of thinking.
- You're good at English.

Instead, say one of these:

- We are going to use our 'resilience' learning power.
- Mistakes make our brains grow.
- We might not have this yet, but we will get it if we stick at it.

Slow down and notice the maths before you get started.

Prove what you know.

Talk about maths and ask your child to prove you wrong.

Share your mistakes with your child.