Catch Up Numeracy

This page covers the first (efficacy) trial of Catch Up® Numeracy, which tested whether it could work in schools under best possible conditions. To read about the second (effectiveness) trial - testing a scalable model under everyday conditions in a large number of schools - click here.

Catch Up Numeracy© is a one to one intervention for learners who are struggling with numeracy. It is delivered by Teaching Assistants and consists of two 15-minute sessions per week.

EEF Summary

There is evidence that Teaching Assistants are more likely to have a positive impact when delivering structured interventions than as general classroom support. The EEF funded Catch Up® Numeracy because it is a structured intervention that has some evidence of promise from previous evaluations.

The first trial was designed to find out if the programme worked in developer led conditions and found that pupils receiving the intervention made additional progress in comparison to pupils receiving standard provision. The study also found a positive impact for providing pupils with the same amount of structured one to one support without using the specific Catch Up® Numeracy materials. This suggested that it was the additional one to one support, rather than Catch Up® Numeracy itself, which led to improved outcomes.

The EEF funded a second evaluation which compared two ways of supporting large numbers of schools to deliver structured one-to-one TA support. It compared pupils receiving Catch Up® Numeracy with pupils receiving equivalent TA support based on best practice guidance in the EEF’s guidance report on TA deployment. The study provides no evidence that Catch Up® Numeracy had an impact on pupils’ maths outcomes compared to the alternative. Catch Up Numeracy pupils ever eligible for free school meals made 2 months’ less progress than similar pupils receiving other TA provision.

Schools may choose to implement their own structured TA intervention, which is likely to have a similar impact for all pupils, and might be more suitable for those eligible for free school meals. The EEF has no plans for another trial of Catch Up® Numeracy and the programme will be removed from our Promising Project list.
Research Results

1. Within this trial, one-to-one support by TAs led to a significant gain in numeracy skills.
2. Catch Up makes similar significant gains, but there is little evidence that Catch Up Numeracy provided any
additional gains in numeracy outcomes over and above those from one to one teaching itself.

3. Schools can find it challenging to run two 15 minutes sessions per week, due to timetabling and other issues.

4. Structured interventions, such as Catch Up Numeracy, should be planned into the timetable from the start of the new school year to ensure they are given priority and status.