



How can a school take advantage of the opportunities offered by the Maths Hub?

Sunbury Manor school has been involved in NEHS Maths Hub since 2018, and teachers have participated in a number of work groups.

Find out about how the school has enabled this to happen and the impact.

How and why did Sunbury Manor first become involved in the Maths Hub?

The school applied and took part in the Secondary Developing Teaching for Mastery programme in the 2018-9 academic year. They had started to think about curriculum development, and felt they needed support with this to do it alongside the principles of Teaching for Mastery. They wanted to learn more about mastery given that it was starting to become a focus in all CPD staff were attending. Becoming involved in the Maths Hub, to Sunbury Manor, appeared to be an effective way to share good ideas with other maths teachers across the network.

Alongside the Teaching for Mastery work groups, the school has also been involved in other work groups: NQT Subject Knowledge, parental engagement at transition, years 5-8 continuity, understanding the characteristics of SEND. What was the strategy of engagement for this? Did it depend on individual teacher need/interest, or was there a wider departmental or school strategy?

Ultimately, Sunbury Manor wanted to develop consistency across lessons so felt they needed all members of the team to participate in Maths Hub workgroups. By doing so, all the team developed their individual practice and pedagogy, as well as their understanding of mastery.

For the Teaching for Mastery programmes, it was the same two teachers (mastery advocates) that attended for the first two years. Once Sunbury Manor transitioned into the Sustaining phase, different members of the team attended each session so that knowledge cascaded throughout the department.

The school became involved in the NQT Subject Knowledge group (now called ECT Subject Knowledge), Years 5-8 Continuity and SEND work groups due to individual interests, and release time was always given for them to be fully involved in the sessions so that their professional development was supported.

Which work groups have had the most impact and why?

The Head of Maths attended the Years 5-8 Continuity work group. She said the group, long with the Teaching for Mastery programme, was highly effective in helping her and the team to rewrite their curriculum plan and think carefully about sequencing.

Thinking about the Teaching for Mastery Work Groups, what did the Embedding Year Support do well that enabled you to transition into the Sustaining phase?

The Embedding Year Support work group involves a mastery specialist working closely with the department and providing bespoke support through termly school visits.

The Head of Department spoke specifically about the impact of these visits, recalling that previous task design of 'bronze, silver and gold' was removed and replaced with tasks that were developed with careful variation in mind. The mastery specialist provided follow-up visits that helped to refine the focus and discuss ways to develop and cascade even further.

How have the work groups impacted students in your school?

The time engaging and participating with Maths Hub Work Groups has enabled the department to develop different ways of supporting students. Rather than the traditional 'differentiation' which often left some students behind, the department have now developed tools to challenge high attaining students whilst supporting lower attaining students. The department have moved towards mixed attainment grouping as they feel better equipped to support individual needs within lessons.

How have the work groups impacted departmental practice, such as planning?

The department use regular meeting time to share best practice, develop sequences of work collaboratively and focus on aspects that help to develop learning and teaching such as misconceptions.

Following a Maths Hub session, individual teachers trial new ideas across different classes and then they come back together as a team to review and refine before implementing new approaches more consistently across the department.

It's important to ensure that the professional development offered by the Maths Hub has a wider impact than just the participating teachers and it seems that this model of try-review-refine used in the department is an effective way of upskilling all teachers and getting all on board with the principles of Teaching for Mastery.

Have there been any barriers to your involvement in the Maths Hub work groups? How have you overcome these barriers?

As is very common across secondary schools, the Head of Department cited staffing issues as been a barrier to Maths Hub involvement. For some academic years, the department has been understaffed and therefore, releasing staff for work groups can be a challenge. That said, the Head of Department clearly prioritises staff development and research has shown that investing in CPD not only has a high impact on student outcomes, but also on teacher satisfaction and retention.

The Head of Department did recall that initially, there was some reluctance for staff to buy into Teaching for Mastery. It was felt by some teachers that there was 'a set way' that each department must teach and therefore there was a sense that there was an implication of all the 'other ways' of teaching must be scrapped. However, the more the Head of Department spent time with the team unpicking the key principles and overarching themes of Teaching for Mastery, it soon became apparent that departments are free (and should!) to adapt these elements to suit their own context. Teaching for Mastery is not a 'blueprint' and many schools see that it's a phrase to describe outstanding Maths teaching that is already happening!

What does a typical Maths lesson look like in your department?

The Head of Department listed some common features of a typical Maths lesson in the department:

- *Retrieval starter*
- *Share 'steps to mastery' so students can see the learning journey for the lesson*
- *Teacher modelling*
- *Students attempt some questions together*
- *A task consisting of variation, fluency and reasoning*
- *AfL checks to identify students that need additional support*

What advice would you give a middle or senior leader who is on the fence about getting involved in their local Maths Hub?

The Head of Department commented on how they have always felt supported by the Maths Hub and that the network offers a way to connect with other schools and maths teachers. A range of opportunities are available every year and Heads of Department should use them for their individual staff CPD – it's important to allow staff to also feel part of a wider community.