



## Involving parents at Bankside Primary School

Bankside Primary in Leeds is a three-form entry school with 621 children on roll, serving an area of social deprivation. 27% of children are eligible for Free School Meals. 98% are from Black and Minority Ethnic groups and 92% have English as an additional language.

Bankside is very much a community school, committed to working in partnership with families. The school shares two Parent Support Adviser with the Extended Schools Cluster (CHESS) and offers a range of workshops for parents and carers: the STEPS self empowerment programme, Webster Stratton Incredible Years parenting groups and 'Chit-Chat' drop-ins.

Bankside became involved in Every Child Counts in September 2008. Kauser Jan, the school's Numbers Count teacher and Assistant Head of the middle phase, met the parents of children who were going to take part and was struck by what she learned about their attitudes to mathematics. 'It was a revelation,' Kauser says. 'If I talked about literacy they were animated and described reading and writing activities at home. They were confident. But not in maths – they would say 'I'm no good at maths', or 'I was useless at maths at school.' Kauser explained what she would be doing with the children and that week by week she would be sending home a bag of simple, fun activities for parents/carers to do with their children. They still seemed hesitant, and Kauser realised that they needed to be shown that they know much more about maths than they think they do – that maths is all around us and part of everyday life. She also realised she might need to use the same sort of strategies with parents/carers as she does with the children she teaches, strategies that would empower them and give self-belief.



Kauser tries to ensure she is out in the playground before and after school to chat to families. She shows them where her office is and makes clear they can come in at any time to watch a Numbers Count lesson or talk to her. Her aim is to get parents/carers in to watch a lesson at least twice, and more often if they would like to. This means being flexible – for example, moving a child's lesson to first thing in the morning so the parent does not have to go home then come back after dropping off their child.



Many parents/carers have come in to observe their child in the one-to-one sessions, with noticeable effects on the child's confidence. Children were asked who they would like to come and see their

good progress. In one case mother, father, grandfather and an older sibling all visited, and the lesson became a family event.

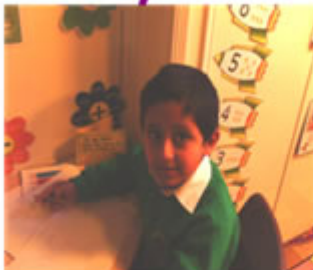
Sending activities home was also powerful. Children are often asked to choose their take-home activities: 'What would you most like to take home to help you learn?' One very popular choice is Kauser's magic pen box that 'will help you form your numbers correctly' – a box of rubber pens, gel pens, biro and feather pens. One child took 1-10 number cards home and reported back the next day 'My granddad came. He told me he was a teacher in Bangladesh. He was saying the numbers in English and also in Bengali'. Kauser asked 'What can we do to learn the numbers in Bengali?' and the child suggested he take a card home for granddad to write on. He chose the colour and size of card, bringing it back proudly next day to show how his granddad had written the Bengali numbers on one side on the other side transcribed them phonetically.

The next step for Kauser was to send home personalised Every Child Counts newsletters to parents/carers every two or three weeks. The newsletters describe what the child has been working on and include comments from observations of lessons by the family or other visitors to the school.

Date 18/12/08

## Every Child Counts News...

### Every Child Counts!!!



**WOW NEWS**

Observation news!!!

Owais was observed by Dr Paul Sharp who is one of the Governors of our school. Dr Sharp was very impressed with Owais. He said 'I can see that Owais enjoys doing his maths in the Maths Zone and I like the way that Owais used his thinking time to work out calculations'

**WELL DONE Owais I ☺ keep this up!**

Owais said...

"I now know how to count in twos from any number. I can count forwards or backwards!"



Dr Paul Sharp said...

Owais has been learning how to ...

- Count back in twos from any 2 or 3 digit number

- Double numbers up to 20

- Learn about halving

- Complete missing number sentences

We will be having a graduation assembly for the Owais because he has almost completed his 12 weeks for Every Child Counts. We will be sending you an invitation after the holidays.

### OWAIS'S LEARNING...

Owais has been given some maths work to do over the holidays. Can you please work with him for 5 or 10 minutes a day. See you after the holidays Owais!

How you can help Owais...

Please ask Owais about his work that he has done in the Magical Maths Zone.

Questions such as...

What have you done?

What was your best bit of maths today?

What homework have you got in your homework book?

Have you learnt any new maths words?

Kauser also wanted to find a way to celebrate families' contribution and hard work. She decided that parents/carers, as well as children, would have a graduation ceremony and receive a certificate thanking them for the help they had given their child. The ceremony takes place at a whole-school assembly.

Afterwards Kauser takes parents/carers into the Numbers Count room and shows them examples of what the child could do ‘before’ and ‘after’ their programme. The children had made huge gains, often a thirteen month gain in number age over a three month period. These gains are discussed with the family, and the next steps – exit plans, three and six monthly follow up assessments – are outlined.

Having build parent/carer confidence, a natural progression was to develop maths workshops to build their skills. Kauser and Gemma Scholes, a Numbers Count teacher from another school and Kauser’s Numbers Count Learning Partner, have developed a series of five, weekly parent workshops covering Numbers, Counting, Models and Images and Addition and Subtraction. There is also a set of leaflets such as things to do with number cards, and things to do with a number line.



An example of a workshop plan is shown below.

Date	Workshop Number	Theme	Activities	Resources	Evaluation
	2	Counting	The importance of counting – Brainstorm /discussion.		
			Counting must be efficient.- count piles of objects	Counters cubes	
			Counting /forwards/ backwards. Make a 0-20 number line	number lines Blank 0-20 Felt pens Laminators Prompt sheet	
			Songs – one two three four five Ten green bottles	Number song booklet Talking maths CD	
			Making number cards to 20 Discussion of prompt sheet of how to use number cards/ number lines	Blank card cut to size Felt pens Laminators Prompt sheet	

In a challenging context, Bankside has succeeded in involving **every** parent/carer of children involved in Numbers Count. The secret, Kauser feels, is ‘making parents feel comfortable, having face-to-face contact and using a translator where necessary.’ Persistence is often called for. When she had not succeeded in making contact with one family, Kauser spoke to a



Family Support Team Mentor who lives in their community and asked the worker to pop round to the house and invite the family in to school.

Also vital is making families feel valued. The message to parents/carers is that the Numbers Count programme would not work without them – that as parents/carers they deserve thanks. It is this sense of

genuine, equal partnership that, more than anything, accounts for Bankside’s success.