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'Remarkable' improvement for girl who never used to like maths



(Jack Hill/The Times)

The Samuels family practice their maths at home

Nicola Woolcock

Mae Samuels, aged 6, did not like maths, had no confidence in her ability to do sums, and was overshadowed by her twin sister Grace.

After two years in school Mae had not made much progress in numeracy lessons, so she was picked to take part in the Numbers Count pilot. Her maths age rose by 18 months in only 12 weeks.

She had individual tutoring for 30 minutes a day with a specialist teacher who used techniques such as playing with money and number-based board games.

These suited Mae's shy temperament and increased her maths age from six years (nine months below her actual age) to seven years and six months.

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Her mother Susan described the results as marvellous. Mrs Samuels said: "Mae has gained in confidence and is now excelling in everything else across the curriculum. She feels she can solve problems. Before, she doubted herself and would never put herself forward.

"Her confidence has soared and she now really wants to try. She puts her hand up in class. It's a remarkable difference."

Mae has brought board games to the family home in Southwark, South London, to play with her family. One has a money box and fake coins. When the player lands on a square, he or she has to put the allotted amount of money in the piggy bank.

Mrs Samuels, whose husband is a newsagent, said: "When we're out shopping Mae wants to handle the money."

She added: "Grace was ahead before but now Mae has caught up. Grace will do the programme next."