

Han's* story



Han is of Chinese heritage and is learning English as an additional language. He began on the *Every Child Counts* intervention programme at the beginning of the 2008 summer term, aged 7 years and 2 months. At that time he was quiet during whole class teaching sessions, not participating or volunteering to answer the class teacher's questions. His maths work was often unfinished. Assessment showed him to be working at National Curriculum level 1a – not yet on track to achieve the level 2 or above expected of children his age.

Over the course of the term he received three half hour one-to-one lessons each week from a specialist teacher, and attended all 29 of the 29 sessions available to him. By the end of the term, he was attaining at above average levels for his age – level 2a on the NfER Maths Progress test 6. His class teacher commented that he was much more confident in class. He was now participating more in whole class maths sessions, and was using a range of strategies to complete set work.

The special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) administered the Key Stage 1 Maths SATs paper with Han, and noticed that he completed the questions with ease and confidence. In fact he used a strategy none of the other children did, choosing to answer a subtraction problem involving two-digit numbers with base 10 equipment. His specialist teacher had extensively used the base 10 equipment during the numeracy sessions for teaching place value, but not for teaching subtraction. Han was evidently applying his new-found skills independently. The SENCO was very impressed

Han's specialist teacher, Rita, describes the reasons for his good progress.

"It was highly important to build his confidence and self esteem in the area of numeracy but also in his school life in general. Thus I made a point of celebrating his achievements in our lessons with myself, but also in other areas, for example, in phonics and on Sports Day. His confidence did increase.

Because he is learning English as an additional language, I made sure that activities were practical and visual, and instructions were clear and short. I helped him build up a bank of numeracy-related words and these were regularly consolidated

Han responded very well to praise and to a one-to-one teaching relationship. He was a very quiet boy, not initiating much conversation, and I did not prompt him to engage in lots of dialogue, as I believed this would make him feel uncomfortable. He did respond to my questions appropriately and smile often when praised for his learning or when winning games! He appeared to feel secure in the small room environment with one adult, a context that suited him very well.



Some activities carried out in school were sent home, such as games and matching activities. Han had very supportive parents and an older sister who was a high achiever at school. I met with his father who spoke English quite well and had agreed to support his child at home with the activities I would send. Han also reported that his sister would play some of the games with him.

The positive class room environment and consistent good quality teaching Han was receiving also ensured he could make good progress during the numeracy intervention, and transfer this to class.”

Towards the end of his programme, Rita asked Han about how he felt about maths now. He said: *‘It is good. I understand it better.’*

The *Every Child Counts* intervention programme has given him a secure grasp of basic numeracy on which he can now build for the rest of his school career, and beyond.

