

Zina's story

Zina is a determined little girl who is always cheerful, despite a curvature of the spine that sometimes makes life uncomfortable.



After two and a half full years in school she had made very little progress in maths. Although she always tried hard in class, at the start of her one-to-one Numbers Count lessons in January she was only just working at National Curriculum level 1C and relied heavily on a teaching assistant for help in class. When interviewed, she said she found numeracy "a bit hard". Tests showed that the biggest problem for her was understanding and using mathematics language; she scored only one out of a possible fourteen points on this area of the Sandwell Early Numeracy test.

Initially, in a one-to-one situation Zina was unsure and hesitant, often not wanting to have a go. Her lack of understanding of language was a definite barrier to her learning, and she struggled to explain her thinking. Rachel, her Numbers Count teacher, planned lessons to focus on talk and as a result Zina's Sandwell scores have now gone up to thirteen out of fourteen. Notably, her scores on all the other areas of the test have gone up too, showing the fundamental importance of good language development.

Zina has blossomed as a result of her lessons. She is now a self-reliant girl who frequently says "I know.....". Her results are testament to the fact that it is possible for the lowest achieving children to make the most progress and reach age-related levels. In July she achieved a National Curriculum level 2B, a five sublevel improvement over the year. Her Number Age has gone up from 5y6m to 7y7m, a gain of over two years in six months. Her class teacher commented on how much progress she has made across all subjects, with her reading also coming on in leaps and bounds and how she has "... now completely caught up with others in the class".