

Information for teachers about the primary cohort study

We are inviting all children in Year 1 at your school to take part in research into how children learn mathematics at school. We did the same when these children were in Reception last year. The study will support our knowledge of children's feelings about maths and how they experience learning maths at school. The primary cohort study is following this cohort of pupils from Reception to Year 6 in 174 schools. This sheet tells you about the study. When we ask you to participate in specific activities, such as a survey, then you will receive information about it in advance.

Who is conducting the study?

The Observatory for Mathematical Education is based in the School of Education at the University of Nottingham. It identifies trends in mathematics learning, experiences and attitudes from Reception to university mathematics.

Why are we doing the study?

In education, we appreciate the importance of pupils succeeding in mathematics at school. It lays important foundations for their future success in further education, employment and in life in general. Knowing about pupils' enjoyment, attitudes, experiences, and attainment in mathematics as well as when changes in these tend to occur and for which pupils, will provide crucial evidence for educators, leaders, and policy makers about how we can best support all children to be successful in mathematics. To do this, we need to take a long view so the primary cohort study is running for the whole of their time in primary school, collecting data in every school year for one cohort of pupils.

How does the study work?

All Reception pupils in 2024-25 were asked to complete a paper survey of multiple-choice questions about their experience of learning maths at school. This is being repeated this year in Year 1 and will be repeated once per year until these children are in Year 6.

For Reception (2024-5), year 1 (2025-6) and year 2 (2026-7) of the study, a teaching assistant (or other adult working in school) will complete the survey for each child, asking them questions about how they learn maths and marking the answers on the survey sheet. For years 3 to 6, class teachers will give the class the sheets to complete

themselves. The survey and screening test will take up to 10 minutes for each child. The survey contains questions about how children feel about learning maths and about their maths learning. The school will receive a class pack of named pupil survey papers (but none for those withdrawn by their parent/guardian). The pack will include instructions for the teaching assistant.

What data is being collected?

Children

The school will share a list of children in Year 1 with us. Each child's name, date of birth, unique pupil number and school class will be on this list so that we can send the surveys in class packs printed with their names and so that we can make links to existing records about pupils in England. There will be a barcode on the surveys to help us track them and avoid surveys getting mixed up. The school's completed surveys will be sent via courier to a data scanning company to record the answers before shredding the surveys. This means that the survey answers can be sent to us digitally and securely.

Parents/guardians

Parents/guardians may choose for their child not to participate in the research using a short form sent out on a letter by the school.

Teachers

Teachers of the cohort (Year 1 for 2025-26) will be asked to complete a 10-minute online survey about their teaching. This will ask questions about curriculum resources, lesson structure and teaching strategies used with these children.

Schools will provide a list of teachers, which year group(s) they teach and their school email addresses in order to be able to send these surveys directly to teachers via email.

What happens to the information collected for the study?

We store the data securely in a dedicated SharePoint site that is only accessible to members of the research team. Data will be deleted as soon as possible after it is no longer needed and each participant is given a numeric code so that the data they provide is stored anonymously. Data will be stored for a minimum of 14 years and then deleted if no longer in use.



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How are we ensuring GDPR compliance?

We are processing personal data based on Article 6(1)(e) of UK GDPR in which processing is legal as it has a basis in public interest. Further details of how we ensure compliance with GDPR are provided in the [privacy notice](#).

Where will the research be published?

We will publish the research in reports, articles, and presentations. No child, teacher or school names will be included in these publications.

Where can I find out more information?

If you have questions about the research, contact mathsobservatory@nottingham.ac.uk