The wave model

Personalising provision within mathematics

The form of support offered to pupils who are falling behind should be responsive to their needs and circumstances. The wave model described below is often used to help illustrate a spectrum of responses. It provides a useful tool to support efficient curriculum planning, inclusive teaching and personalised approaches to address diverse needs. It provides a common language that emphasises a curriculum response that can reduce the need for highly individualised strategies.

Wave 1 – Tailored teaching in classes

High quality inclusive teaching supported by effective whole-school policies and frameworks, clearly targeted on all pupils' needs and prior learning. This needs to be based in planning and schemes of work that are designed to move all pupils from where they are to where they need to be. Wave 1 teaching anticipates the needs of pupils based on effective use of yearly transition data and information.

Examples in mathematics include the teacher responding to the identified needs of a whole class by adapting their planning as illustrated, for example, in the use of the Sample medium-term plan (intervention) or by the integration of specific resources, e.g. T5 Snappers to reinforce areas of weakness.

Wave 2 – Wave 1 plus additional, time-limited, tailored intervention support programmes

Wave 2 is designed to increase rates of progress and secure learning for groups of pupils, putting them back on course to meet or exceed national expectations. This takes the form of a tight, structured programme of small group support, carefully targeted and delivered by teachers or appropriately skilled teaching assistants to help pupils achieve their learning objectives. This can occur outside (but in addition to) whole class lessons, or, more commonly, be built into mainstream lessons as part of guided work. Critically, intervention support needs to help pupils apply their learning in mainstream lessons.

Examples in mathematics include, for example, the use of item analysis to show that a particular group have specific issues such as difficulty in adding two two-digit numbers. Part of the solution could include the use of a teaching assistant working with the group in the class using relevant resources from 'Targeting Level 4 in Year 7.'

Wave 3 – Wave 2 plus increasingly individualised programmes, based on independent evidence of what works

Wave 3 will accelerate and maximise progress and minimise performance gaps. This will involve one-to-one or very small group support via a specialist teacher, highly trained teaching assistant or academic mentor, to support pupils towards the achievement of very specific targets.

Examples in mathematics include teachers or teaching assistants working with individuals or pairs of pupils outside lessons to target particular, identified, short-term needs, for example, weak understanding of place value. Materials to support this approach include Mathematics Challenge, the 10-4-10 materials or the Wave 3 Primary materials – Supporting children with gaps in their understanding.

0460-2006DCL-EN