



## Hear from our Sumdog schools: Brian Elsegood at West SILC, Leeds, UK

Brian Elsegood is Director of Maths at West SILC in Leeds, UK and has been at the school since September 2023. Prior to that he has delivered alternative provision and taught both secondary and primary school mathematics.

### About the school

The West SILC offers provision for students from reception to age 19. Classes vary in size dependent upon need, but larger classes have around 12 students. Students at West SILC have a range of needs including ADHD, PLD, PMLD and other barriers to learning and mobility.

### Engagement is key

Originally introduced by the leaders of our Post-16 setting, Powerhouse, Sumdog's use has been extended across many of our settings at West SILC. For us, it is all about finding things that are engaging for the students. For many of our students' needs, short activities with a break away from the learning is key, so finding a platform that includes a game-play element has been important. We wanted something that asks a few questions, then invites them to take part in the game so that the two are combined rather than two separate activities. For those with ADHD, regular usage of Sumdog is especially appealing. We are also seeing students with autism, and for those where focusing is a challenge, really benefit from 20-minutes of low-intensity maths practice that offers little rewards and achievements throughout.

### Supporting student needs

For those who struggle to focus for any meaningful length of time, it can be hard to get them into anything as their individual circumstances, mood

and what has happened throughout the day can really impact negatively on their attitude and behaviour. We used to find that on a morning, students would come into the classroom and it would be quite a disruptive, rowdy environment. However, since using Sumdog as a morning activity, they now come in, sit down and log onto Sumdog for 15-20 minutes and complete some maths learning. In recent weeks they have also started engaging with the spelling and grammar modules as well. We have found it to be a calming and settling activity for these students. We can easily set up Sumdog for the students to complete independent learning as it does not require the same level of adult supervision and the students can revise and recap skills that have previously been covered.

### The impact we have seen

Some of our students, when we have tried to introduce other learning sites, would not go anywhere near them as they found the interfaces to be too childish and aimed at reception/primary. The children have found Sumdog to be much more age appropriate and are fascinated by many of the games. We found that one student with autistic traits, would not do any online maths practice at all and would only complete paper-based learning. However, with Sumdog, he is absolutely flying – engaging every morning and is excited by the games, he can talk forever about them!

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