



## Hear from our Sumdog schools: Karen Evans at Ysgol Y Ddwylan, Carmarthenshire, Wales

Karen Evans is a Year 4/5 Classroom Teacher, Literacy Lead and a member of the Numeracy Team at Ysgol Y Ddwylan in Carmarthenshire, Wales. Karen has been teaching for 30 years.

### About the school

Ysgol Y Ddwylan is a mixed primary school located in Carmarthenshire, Wales. The school serves the small market town of Newcastle Emlyn as well as the neighbouring villages of Adpar and Llandyfyriog. With a pupil population of around 296, Ysgol Y Ddwylan provides education for children between the ages of 4-11. The school has been using Sumdog since December 2020 as part of its approach to numeracy and literacy learning.

### Finding the right tool to support pupils

When we were looking for a new solution, we wanted a structured and consistent learning experience across all classrooms - ensuring that every pupil had access to the same high-quality resources and opportunities to develop their numeracy skills. Before using Sumdog, we primarily relied on hands-on materials to teach mathematical concepts, particularly in place value, addition, and subtraction. These tools were effective for building foundational understanding, but we found that they had limitations in terms of tracking individual progress over time and adapting to different learning speeds.

We needed a digital tool that could seamlessly integrate with our existing methods while providing deeper insights into pupil performance. It was important for us to have a platform that not only

reinforced key mathematical concepts but also offered a level of personalisation, allowing teachers to tailor activities to suit each child's needs. Additionally, we wanted a resource that would engage pupils in a way that traditional methods sometimes struggled to, making learning more interactive, enjoyable, and accessible for all abilities. Sumdog emerged as the ideal solution, bridging the gap between hands-on learning and digital assessment while ensuring that every pupil could progress at their own pace.

### Personalised learning for every child

At Ysgol Y Ddwylan, Sumdog has become an essential part of our numeracy and literacy strategy. Before starting a new unit, pupils complete a Sumdog assessment to gauge their understanding. At the end of the unit, they retake the assessment to measure progress. Teachers can assign custom tests to individual pupils based on their learning levels. For example, some children may work on basic number work while others focus on higher-level addition and subtraction.

We also use Sumdog's spelling lists, assigning work based on diagnostic results. Every Friday, pupils complete a spelling test, and many even remind me if the test has not been set! Students frequently choose to log into Sumdog after completing other tasks, demonstrating high levels of engagement across the board.

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## Transforming attitudes towards numeracy and literacy

Sumdog's interactive platform and maths contests are key motivators for our pupils. Children love the variety of games, with Powerboat, Rollercoaster and Basketball being strong favourites that keep pupils engaged. Many participate in cross-class competitions and even continue playing Sumdog at home, reinforcing their learning outside the classroom. This approach has had a clear impact on student engagement and learning outcomes. I've seen children who once struggled with or disliked maths become more enthusiastic through Sumdog's interactive games and activities. Parents have also noticed improvements in their children's numeracy and literacy skills and appreciate the interactive approach to learning.

A parent from our PTA shared:

*"My eldest loves Sumdog and always wants to go on it at home. It has really helped her learning with maths as she struggled last year. Therefore, it's a great asset to the teaching you already do in school."*

## Empowering teachers with data-driven insights

On the teacher's side, Sumdog's instant feedback provides valuable insights into each pupil's

progress, allowing me to quickly identify areas where they are struggling and adjust my teaching accordingly. The diagnostic and assessment tools help track individual and class-wide performance, making it easy to spot gaps in knowledge and tailor lessons to meet students' needs. The ability to set custom tests ensures that every child is working at an appropriate level, whether they need extra support with basic number skills or more challenging problems. Additionally, Sumdog's automated marking saves time, enabling me to focus more on targeted instruction and support.

Sumdog has greatly enhanced our approach to numeracy and literacy at Ysgol Y Ddwylan, providing a dynamic and interactive learning experience that keeps pupils motivated and engaged. By incorporating personalised learning pathways, adaptive assessments, and gamified challenges, Sumdog has enabled us to cater to a wide range of abilities, ensuring that each pupil can progress at their own pace. The platform has not only made learning more enjoyable but has also strengthened the effectiveness of our teaching strategies, allowing us to track progress more accurately and provide targeted support where needed. Since introducing Sumdog, our students have developed greater confidence in their mathematical and literacy skills, and we have seen a noticeable improvement in both engagement and attainment across the school.

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