



Hear from our Sumdog schools: Ruth Davies-McHugh at YGG Cynwyd Sant in Bridgend, Wales

Ruth Davies-McHugh is the Maths Coordinator at YGG Cynwyd Sant in Bridgend, South Wales. Ruth has been teaching for over 28 years and leads on maths development across the school.

About the school

YGG Cynwyd Sant is a Welsh-medium primary school based in Bridgend, South Wales. The school serves a diverse and vibrant community and places a strong focus on promoting bilingual education and positive attitudes towards learning. With a growing pupil roll and an emphasis on developing numeracy across the curriculum, YGG Cynwyd Sant aims to make maths meaningful and accessible to all learners. The school has been using Sumdog since March 2023 to support maths learning across Key Stage 2 and beyond.

Making maths meaningful and fun for every learner

As a maths coordinator with over 28 years of experience, I've taught almost every year group and seen how attitudes towards maths can really vary, especially among pupils (and even their parents). For some, maths can be intimidating. At our school we wanted to change that. We wanted our children to enjoy maths, feel confident in their learning and understand how it connects to the world around them.

When we introduced Sumdog in March 2023 it quickly became a key part of how we approached maths in the classroom. I love that it feels like a

game to the children, they're having fun but they're also learning without even realising it. That sense of enjoyment is so important in building positive attitudes.

Making learning personal and empowering pupils

We use Sumdog regularly across the school, mainly from Years 3 to 6 but some of our Year 2s get involved as well. We have a great team of "maths leaders" in Years 5 and 6 who support the younger pupils. They help them log in, use the platform and stay motivated. It's been lovely to see older children take on that mentoring role.

Each Monday our pupils do a Big Maths test then write their personal targets for the week. I'll set Sumdog tasks linked to those targets so the practice is really focused. The children know they can go to their "maths menu" at any time, which includes a list of trusted websites, but Sumdog is always at the top.

I also use the diagnostics regularly. They give us such clear insight into what each child needs to work on and the teachers love how easy it is to differentiate. You can assign a Year 2 topic to a Year 5 pupil if that's where they are and no one feels singled out or behind.

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Fueling motivation through competition

Our pupils absolutely love the competitions. They talk about Sumdog all the time, on the playground, in the corridor and even at home. It creates a real buzz. One of their favourite games is Stepping Stones because it earns the most points and they're constantly sharing tips on how to win.

We run regular competitions between classes and reward a "Mathematician of the Week" every Friday where their activity on Sumdog plays a big part. There's healthy competition and lots of enthusiasm. It's fun, it's engaging and it brings a bit of excitement to maths lessons.

Changing attitudes at school and at home

Since using Sumdog the difference in pupil engagement has been incredible. The children are so enthusiastic and confident. They'll stop me in the corridor to tell me where they are on the leaderboard or which games they're playing. Maths has become something they enjoy and look forward to. Parents have noticed the change too. They've told us how often their children

choose to play Sumdog at home and when we extended access to more classes it was because of feedback from families who didn't want to miss out.

What I love most is how inclusive Sumdog is. Some of our pupils with additional needs, including those on the autistic spectrum, find it hard to engage with traditional lessons but when it's time for Sumdog they're ready and eager. It gives them a way to access learning in a format that works for them.

Rooted in our daily practice

Sumdog is now embedded into our school routine. It's not just an add-on, it's part of how we do maths. It's interactive, visual and modern, which is exactly what today's learners need. It's making a real impact.

For us it's not just about covering the curriculum. It's about helping children develop confidence, curiosity and a love of learning. Sumdog helps us do that and we wouldn't be without it. We didn't have these kinds of tools when we were in school but it's amazing to see how they can completely change attitudes towards maths. We'd love to carry on using Sumdog, it's such a big part of our school now.

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