



SHAPING SUCCESS ACTION RESEARCH PROJECTS

**FINAL REPORT ON THE SHAPING SUCCESS AR PROJECT –
WORKBOOKS DESIGNED ESPECIALLY FOR WOMEN PRISONERS
ENABLE LEARNERS TO BECOME MORE INDEPENDENT
LTE Novus**

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For further information regarding the Shaping Success Action Research programme and this project go to <https://ccpathways.co.uk/practitioner-research/otla-7/>.

The programme was delivered on behalf of the Education and Training Foundation by -



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Final report - Workbooks designed especially for women prisoners enable learners to become more independent

LTE Novus

We carefully designed workbooks to enable women prisoners to work independently on their underlying maths skills. The workbooks were designed to encourage a conversation about maths learning between learner and tutor. All learners can become more independent but it is easier for the higher level ones. Good workbooks make a difference, but in-person contact is essential.

Summary

Novus (part of The Manchester College) provides prison education to nearly 50 establishments and three out of the five Youth Offender Institutions (YOI's) around the country.

Initially the project was focused on finding ways to improve the success rates of the new Functional Skills reform qualifications (4748). However, in March 2020 education and the way it was delivered changed overnight in the UK and we faced more challenges than most...

We had to maintain a progressive learning environment and fulfil contractual obligations but without any face-to-face delivery, learner access to technology and whilst working from home. It was a daunting time and we quickly had to adapt to a learning model that would suit the situation.

Prison tutors from across the country were put into teams and, working from home, produced a catalogue of in-cell work packs to support qualifications both new and old. The Women's Estate (North), HMP Low Newton, HMP Styal, HMP Newhall and HMP Askham Grange collaborated as a working group and developed adaptable, blended learning workbooks to make maths accessible and support learners via in-cell learning.

Rationale

A large proportion of our learners struggle to achieve a Level 1 maths qualification in the allocated learning hours (55hrs). Many factors contribute to this, including: low literacy levels; a lack of confidence in their abilities; a negative attitude to maths. For some this may be a result of previous schooling experiences or a reluctance to disclose educational difficulties, whilst for others the environment in which they grew up may have had a detrimental effect on their outlook to education. *'If someone in your surroundings has manipulated you from a young age and you've learnt this is normal, you are only able to change it if you act differently'* (Bandura, 1977). The aim of the project was to enable learners to act differently with maths.

In September 2020 we decided to introduce a new set of maths qualifications to run in conjunction with the existing Functional Skills (FS) courses. These were City & Guilds Entry Level 3 'Bitesize' units, which covered 55 core skills areas across all levels.

We chose to focus on six core skill units which were selected because we thought they would be the easiest to access independently. Each unit focused on a narrow set of maths concepts and skills, which provide the scaffolding of knowledge required to progress to either a full FS maths qualification or enrol onto a vocational course with maths as a prerequisite. The Bitesize model with its individual units could also be used for short sentence learners, learners with a skills gap, and for those who would struggle on a lengthier programme (Appendix 4).

Approach

- Learners were assessed through initial assessment and maths diagnostics to identify common 'gaps' in mathematical skills/knowledge and understanding.

We chose the Bitesize Units that would address these gaps:

- Addition and subtraction
 - Multiplication
 - Division
 - Decimal numbers (including place value)
 - Money
 - Fractions
- The team came from four female prisons across the North-West and comprised of seven tutors, four were maths specialists and three who had experience in either quality assurance or digital support. We formed sub-groups and, working remotely but collaboratively, produced materials suitable for supporting Bitesize learners.
 - We attended virtual workshops which included: blended learning approaches, supporting SEND and writing effective assessments.
 - The team worked remotely and collaboratively on workbooks, not only for Bitesize, but for FS across all levels and produced over 50 in-cell booklets. Consideration had to be given to the following areas:
 - No personal contact with tutors
 - Limited 'quiet' space for learners to complete work
 - Security restrictions on maths equipment such as calculators
 - Prisoner's mental/physical health and educational needs (Appendix 2)
 - Once quality checked, the materials (see figure 1) were trialled with a small number of learners who had been pre-selected according to skill set, motivation and a desire to improve their maths skills whilst in custody.

- Learners were encouraged to provide feedback (Appendix 5) throughout the workbooks and we used this to inform our amendments.
- We had to be flexible as we encountered difficulties such as: a slow turnaround of work due to quarantine; an inability to authenticate learners' work as their own and an outbreak of Covid 19.
- In-cell phones were installed in November 2020 which allowed for verbal support and feedback between tutor and learner. This allowed for a more personal approach to teaching and also gave us an opportunity to 'tailor' supplementary work if it was required.
- A digital blended learning tracker incorporating an individual learning plan (ILP) was introduced to allow us to centrally monitor quality of work, turnaround times and feedback of learners and tutors.

Professional learning: Evidence of changes in teaching, learning and assessment practices

To help us meet the diverse needs of all the learners in a remote setting, we were encouraged to attend a series of virtual workshops and webinars promoting blended learning, supporting SEND and effective assessments. Four of the team also completed a Level 2 qualification in Hidden Difficulties which enabled us to use an appropriate sequence of teaching and a flexible range of strategies to engage the high percentage of learners who had disclosed an additional support need (Appendix 2).

The workbooks were developed using a national template and the framework of content for each unit used both existing strategies and creative approaches to challenge and stimulate the learner throughout the unit (Figure 1). Consideration was given to the inclusion of diversity, equality and British values through careful planning.

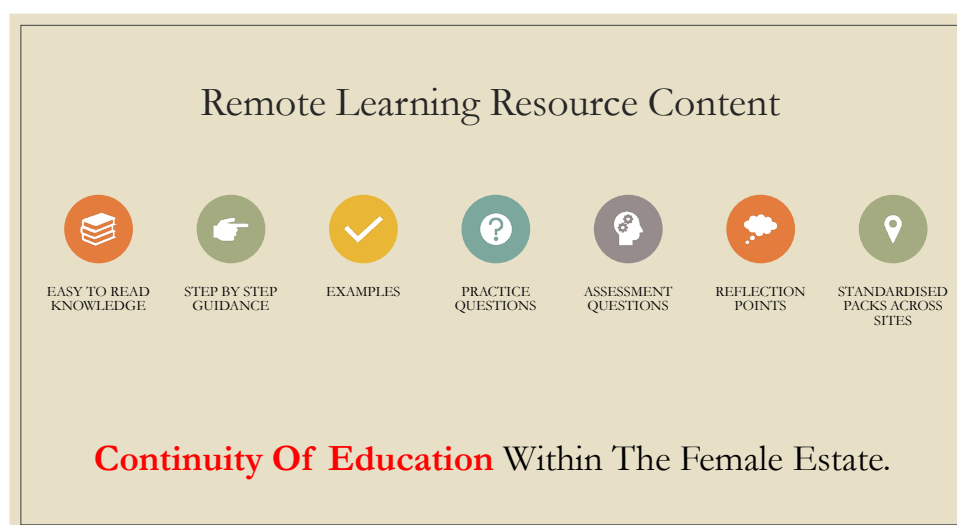


Figure 1

We encouraged learners to be autonomous by:

- setting themselves personal and developmental goals
- reflecting on their progress
- submitting learner feedback
- completing end of course reviews

Learner-focused reflection helped us to identify areas for development and review the pace, approach and teaching method in each unit. With this information we were able to adapt and refine the work as we went along so as to produce a set of clear and differentiated workbooks with suitable pedagogical strategies which supported the needs of the learner (Figure 2).

What is multiplication?
 Multiplication is like repeated addition, which means adding multiple copies of the same number.
 For example

This is the same as $5 + 5$ (Two Fives)
 It's also the same as $2 + 2 + 2 + 2 + 2$ (Five Twos)
 5×2

This is the same as $6 + 6 + 6 + 6$ (Four Sixes)
 It's also the same as $4 + 4 + 4 + 4 + 4 + 4$ (Six Fours)
 4×6

Multiplication relies on your knowledge of times tables:
 One two is 2
 Two twos are 4
 Three twos are 6 etc...

Practicing these for all the numbers up to 15 is **beneficial**, even if you have to use your fingers

Try these multiplication problems

Task 8

1. $8 \times 4 =$ _____
2. $6 \times 7 =$ _____
3. $9 \times 5 =$ _____
4. $3 \times 8 =$ _____
5. $7 \times 4 =$ _____

What do the symbols in this booklet mean?

	Where you see this symbol there is Skills practice or activity for you to complete
	Information, explanations, and case studies are shown with this icon.
	This shows you there is a glossary or word bank with the meaning and correct spelling of key words.
	When you see this icon, it will show feedback sections for you to make your own comments and notes to your tutor
	This symbol lets you know there are some key points to remember.

Figure 2

We were unable to conduct any FS exams during lockdown but we were able to gather portfolio-based assessment material which supported the Bitesize qualifications once we resumed classroom-based activities. Authentication of work was essential to ensure we were adhering to City & Guilds guidance; however this proved difficult in some of the establishments due to the housing arrangements of the learners. A decision was made to defer assessment until authentication of work could be guaranteed.

Evidence of improved collaboration and changes in organisational practices

Prior to the pandemic, there had been little opportunity for inter-site collaboration due to staffing requirements and location. With the transition to home working and an introduction to digital networking via Teams and Zoom calls, we suddenly had the opportunity to easily exchange best practices, skills and discuss problems we were facing. Close, collaborative and fruitful working relationships developed.

During the initial lockdown March 2020 to July 2020, we were reliant on a combination of FS and topic-based workbooks being distributed by prison officers and marking being done at home via secure DPD delivery. Offenders were frustrated at being 'locked up' for long periods of time and 'requested' workbooks but there was no way of assessing how suitable the workbook was for the learner. We found ourselves dealing with a large proportion of returns which were at the wrong level for the individual. The diversity of prior attainment in the prison population meant it was impossible to cater for all.

Learners who had enrolled prior to lockdown were encouraged to continue working towards their qualification on a remote basis. However this was met with a mixed response. Some had been affected by Covid-19 themselves; some had had friends or family affected, whilst others had seen their mental health deteriorate with the changes in regime.

We returned to site on a limited basis in July 2020, with guidance from both Ministry of Justice and Novus and with a directive that we should only be on site for marking and administration. This allowed us to work collectively, whilst focusing on our own subject areas and with access to personal information on each learner.

Individual assessments (IA's) were reintroduced in the form of paper based BKSB which allowed us to allocate learners to a suitable course and provide appropriate workbooks.

Blended learning trackers were created which enabled us to track and monitor learners' progression and log any feedback received or sent out. This feedback was used to inform us of any support requirements and also an aid in 'tailoring' the work the learners might be sent in addition to the workbooks.

Approximately one month after the introduction of the Bitesize qualifications, in-cell telephones were installed, which allowed direct contact between learner and tutor. This was hugely beneficial to both learner and tutors as it allowed verbal feedback to be given and the opportunity for learners to voice any concerns they were having with their work.

Evidence of improvement in learners' achievements, retention and progression

Bitesize is a new qualification with a new delivery model and the data provided is the initial data. With not being able to authenticate learners' work and the limited learning support available to our learners during the pandemic, final assessments were completed when learners returned to face to face classroom delivery.

Some learners who had never worked independently began to do so with the new workbooks, " thank you, I've just got work on Friday night 24th Oct 2020, I would Like a pen and Scrap Paper to Practise first, I am happy with my achievements up to now, I'll get this work done this week." The higher level students often thrived on being able to work at their own pace, supported by phone or written feedback.

It may be that some lower prior achievement learners find working independently difficult because they are working at the wrong level. For example, one Entry Level 3 learner worked very quietly in lessons. She skimmed through workbooks completing as little as 20% even though she had help with reading and further explanations in class. She did not return homework. During the learner's weekly review we both agreed to enrol her on Entry Level 2 and that workbooks would be sent as homework to read prior to lesson enabling the learner to read and process information and concepts of maths topics prior to the next lesson. She worked independently on the Entry Level 2 workbooks in her cell and subsequently worked more independently in class. She passed her Entry Level 2 with 83% and progressed to the Entry Level 3 with much more confidence.

About twenty seven learners started the Bitesize qualification and thirteen learners achieved (48%). Two learners continued on the programme and were on target to achieve, increasing the success rate to 56%. 12/27 (44%) learners were released from prison before evidence could be collated due to the 72hr quarantine.

Learning from this project

Well designed and attractive workbooks make a difference.

Higher level, more able learners thrive when they can work independently: for some of the more confident learners, the remote in-cell model gave them the opportunity to work independently and at their own speed. They engaged with the weekly telephone support and used the learner feedback within the booklets to voice any concerns or support needs they may have had.

Collaboration between sites benefits everyone: all establishments worked positively, supporting each other, sharing ideas and working with the strengths of each individual producing standardised resources for both new and old qualification for a bended learning model of delivery.

Assessing learners' maths level correctly at the start of a programme is very important.

The new standardised workbooks and trackers support continuity of learning: they enable learners to continue with learning when transferred to a different prison. Learners can pick up where they left off and not have to start over again. Tutors can liaise with each other and share learners' progress trackers/work.

In-cell telephones make a big difference: tutors can contact learners and talk through any misconceptions. Tutor and learner can discuss concerns and provide further support.

Prisoners need quiet spaces to study: some of the prison wings can be very loud, and learners struggle to concentrate or even complete work sent. Learners living in a house could be sharing rooms with up to four other people, and communal space is often noisy and distracting.

Learners give useful feedback when given the opportunity: great feedback received from learners which allowed tutors to identify additional support requirements, make amendments to teaching, encourage learner's engagement etc.

Low level learners face significant barriers to independent working: 65% of learners in English and 77% in Maths were Entry Level 3 or below which was identified at induction though initial assessment results. 66% of these learners disclosed at induction that they have mental health issues and/or learning disability with associated learning difficulties (Appendix 2). This means that blended learning may not be suitable for everyone due to their lack of confidence and basic literacy and numerical skills. As suggested by Stankov, Morony & Ping (2011) 'Confidence is a much better predictor of learners' achievements than any other non-cognitive measure'.

Learning related to the pandemic:

Limitations to remote delivery (staff absences, reliance on Prison Officers): staff not on site, incorrect work handed to learner, no marking or feedback to learners, unsure if learners are receiving work.

Difficulties substantiating authenticity of work: Unsure if the learners have received support from others or if someone had completed work for them. Not all establishments have only single or double cells. This is another potential problem with blended learning.

Turn-around of work due to quarantine: 72 hrs quarantine for all work impacted on the time taken for work to be sent, returned to be marked. Once feedback had been sent alongside with guidance and the next steps the process could take up to 3 weeks.

References

Bandura, A. (1977) *Social Learning Theory*. Englewood Cliffs. N.J: Prentice Hall,

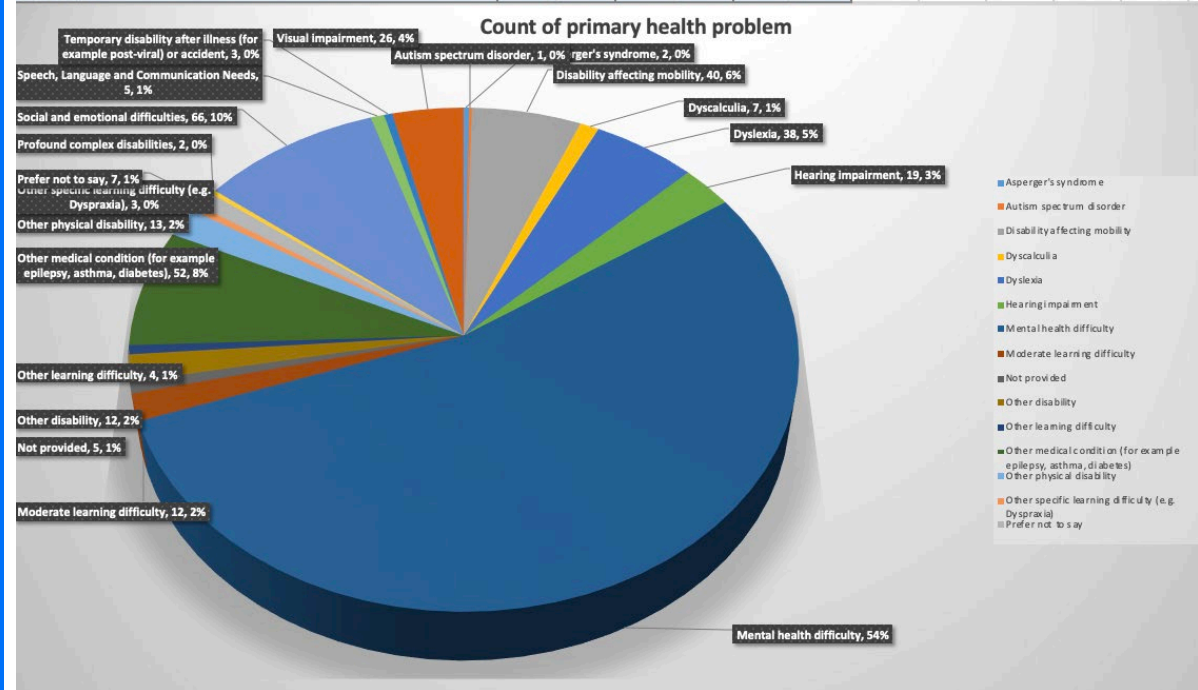
Stankov, I., Morony, S., and Ping, I. (2011). *Strong Links between Self-Confidence and Math Performance*. Available at: <https://singteach.nie.edu.sg/issue29-mathed/>
Accessed 12 May 2021

Appendix 1 – The project team

Project Role	Name	Job Role
Project Lead	Gillian Greenlaw	Maths Tutor Low Newton
Project Lead	Nicola Masterson	Maths Tutor HMP Styal
Project team	Zoe Gilbert	Hub manager at HMP Low Newton
	Mick Clarke	HMP New Hall
	Louise Gibbons	Education Manager Styal
	Iris Jones	HMP Styal
	Dave Karrick	Supply Tutor HMP Newall
	Sally Kinally	Maths Tutor Askan Grange
	Lisa Manion	HMP Styal
	Anthony Ronaldson	HMP Styal
Project Mentor	Sarah Richards (ccConsultancy)	
Research Group Lead	Gail Lydon (ccConsultancy)	

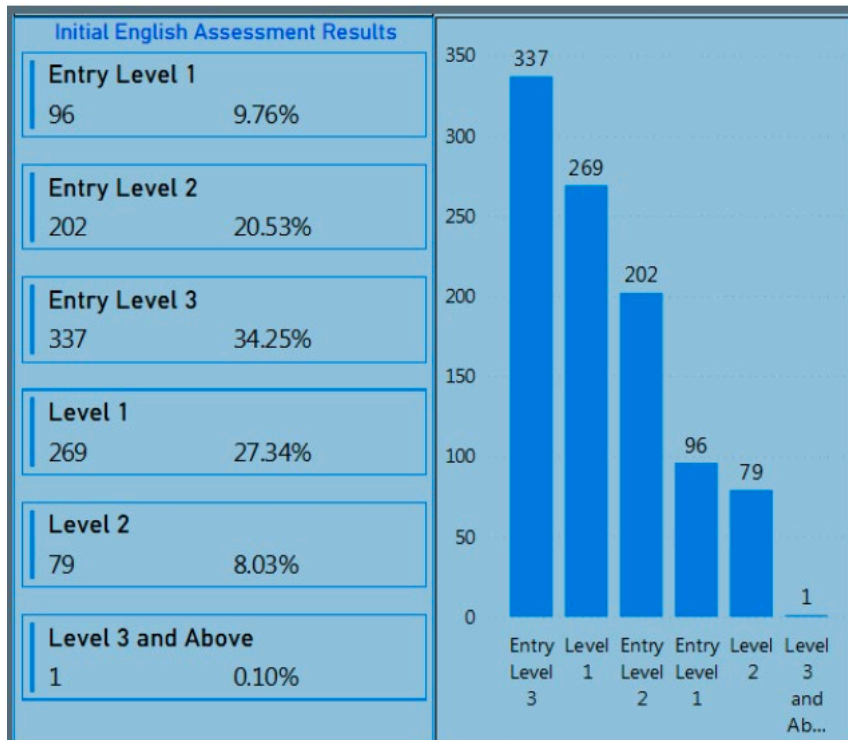
Appendix 2 - Disclosed LDD from Induction

Row Labels	Primary Count of primary health problem	Secondary Count of Sum of other Learning Difficulty	Secondary Count of Sum of mental Health Difficulty
Asperger's syndrome	2		
Autism spectrum disorder	1		1
Disability affecting mobility	40		
Dyscalculia	7		3
Dyslexia	38		8
Hearing impairment	19	1	1
Mental health difficulty	374	3	
Moderate learning difficulty	12		7
Not provided	5	1	
Other disability	12		1
Other learning difficulty	4		
Other medical condition (for example epilepsy, asthma, diabetes)	52	1	1
Other physical disability	13		2
Other specific learning difficulty (e.g. Dyspraxia)	3		1
Prefer not to say	7		
Profound complex disabilities	2		
Social and emotional difficulties	66	1	35
Speech, Language and Communication Needs	5		1
Temporary disability after illness (for example post-viral) or accident	3		
Visual impairment	26	1	
Grand Total	691	8	61

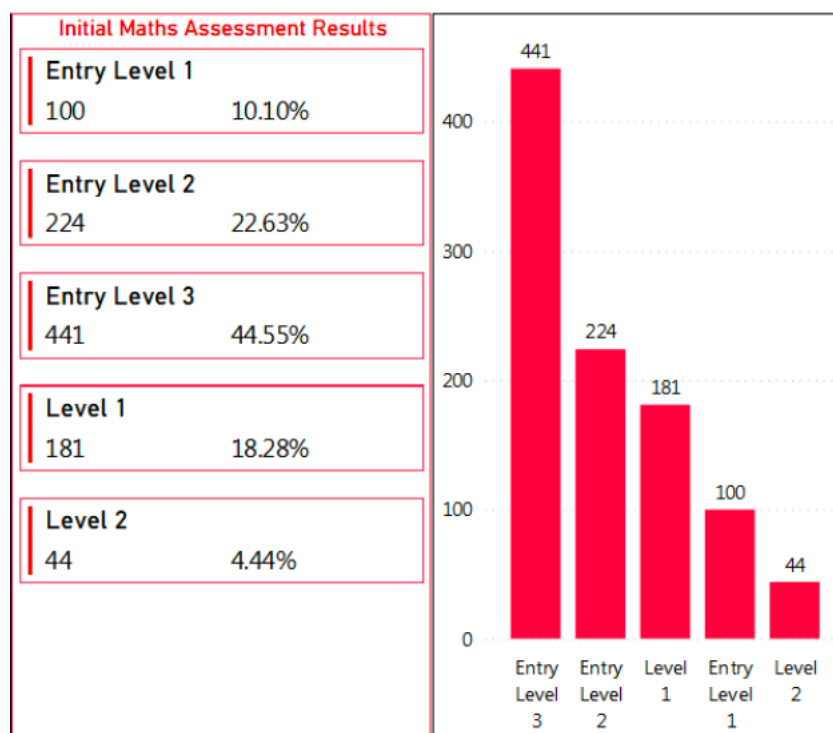


Appendix 3 – English and maths Initial assessment results

English Initial assessment results

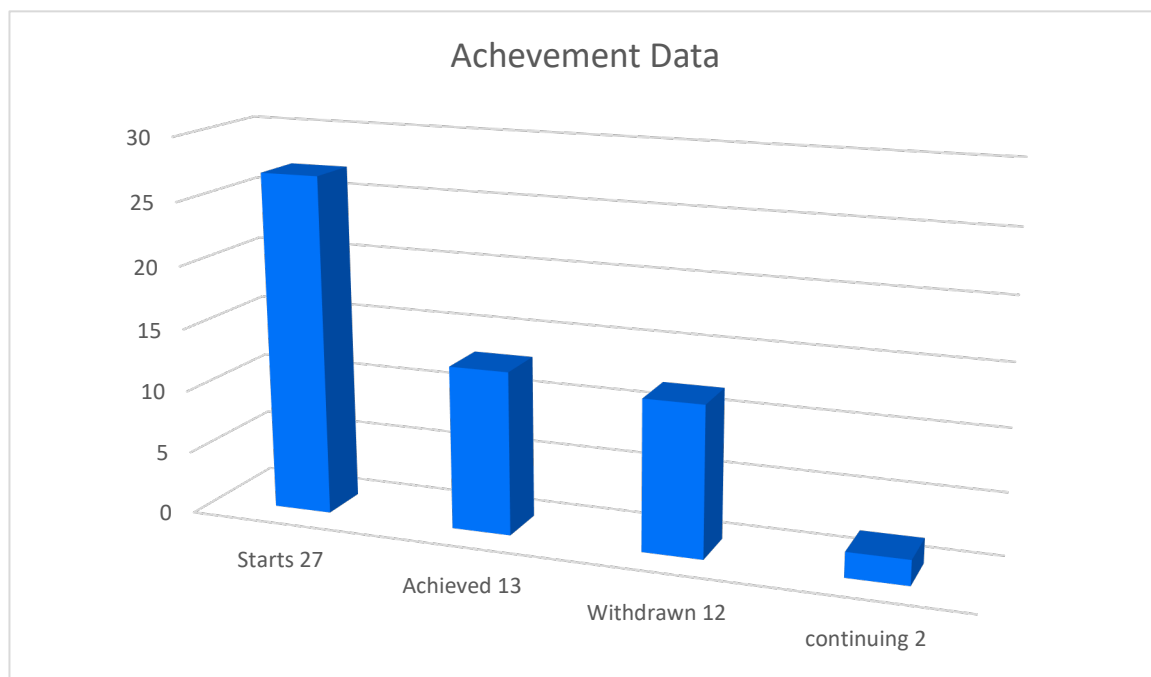


Maths Initial Assessment results



Appendix 4 – Student Progression

Claimed assessment



One establishment

27 starts on Bitesize

13 learners achieved

12 learners withdrawn either released or transferred to a different prison

2 learners continuing with course and are on target to achieve with the correct learning support now in place.

Appendix 5 - Learner Feedback

Learner feedback from In-cell workbooks (Copied as learners wrote their feedback)

"I feel I am able to do Some I am able to do all Now with me having Conserving Problems "

"If its quiet around me I am able to sit down And start studying "

"I found it a little har But do know deep Down I'am able to do it Jst feel, little bit help this could make me look at it diffrently"

"Found it that I did need more time to go over a few times as was loosing consentrating. When its quite I am able to study better"

"I use my hands to count and rite lines down to add the remainin over. Iam better if I had counter's like time's Table would make it bit Easier."

"thank you, I've just got work on Friday night 24th Oct 2020, I would Like a pen and Scrap PaPer to Practise first, I am happy with my achivements up to not, I'll get this work done this week."

"Most of it was quite easy once explained, untill I got to page 12. I struggled on the last two sequence. Don't think I need more time. Just could not work them last two out."

"Very Easy I Found magic Squares quite difficult to understand No just on the Magic squares. No Extra time needed"

"I Found this quite easyand don't need anymore extra help with this"

"It was good to wake up my Brain"

"im going blind here abit im guessing on how its worked out"

"even better if it was in a class with help"

"I Found the place value difficult to understand due to notdoing this since I was in school 23 yeARS AGO I was IN top set for maths And maths was my favourite Subject, So Back then I was very good at this But need to catch up on this But can only understand it when told face to face"

"I found this Booklet very difficult I'm struggling with pages 16 & 17 Im not veryt good with Fractions unless it is on a pie chart just hop this hasnt failed my intelligenence on the rest of the maths."

"I really don't understand sorry"

"I can't do it the method goes in my head then I completely forget im very sorry"

"I dint understand I try and do it but can't im really struggling to remember and process the Method I need some more help please be patient with me once I learn it I will be ok"

"Struggled abit with fractions most things Need Extra time "

OUR PARTNERS



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