

Mathematical moment: Developing early maths talk with 4 & 5 year olds

Noticing Board

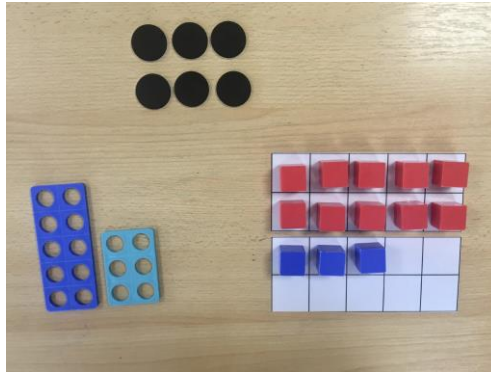


Valuing the role of language in enabling children to explore and make sense of key concepts in mathematics, Marie displayed some natural subitising images at the beginning of the year and asked the children what they noticed about them. The children were totally silent and there was a sea of blank faces. Realising that the children lacked both the experience and the mathematical language to describe what they were seeing, Marie and her colleagues introduced a Maths Noticing Board into their continuous provision to support the development of maths talk.

The Noticing Board displayed a different visual provocation each week, and was supported by a prompt card with suggested questions for adults to use to support learners. These included:

- What do you see?
- How do you see it?
- What do you wonder?
- What things are the same/different in the picture?
- Which one is different?
- Which one does not belong? Why?

Practitioners encouraged the idea that there were no 'wrong' things to notice and that everybody can notice something. After being available to consider and discuss in the provision for a week, on Fridays, they used the image to support a whole-class maths discussion. As the year progressed, the children's maths talk greatly improved and they often noticed aspects of the image that the adults had missed.



Teacher: Which number is different? Which number does not belong?

Child A: That one (pointing to the black dots). It doesn't have a 10 in it.

Teacher: Well done! Anyone else want to tell me anything else they have noticed?

Child B: This is 13 (pointing to the ten frames) and this is 16 (pointing to the Numicon). The number 6 doesn't belong here. Because it is only 6.

Teacher: Good!

Child B: The 6 is made of 2 and 2 and 2.

Child C: It is made of lines.

Teacher: And how many are in each line?

Child C: 3 and 3.

Teacher: Oh, that is interesting. (Child B) saw this number (gesturing to the black spots) as 2 and 2 and 2. But (Child C) saw it as 3 and 3. And they both make 6. That is two different ways to notice the number 6.

Child D: Or 6 ones!

Teacher: Yes, or 6 ones. Good! 6 ones do make 6. Good noticing!

Acknowledgement: Marie Birchall, Hillside Community Primary School.