

BIG Maths: General Information

How BIG Maths works

The workshop is aimed at Y5 or Y6 pupils visiting their destination high school and is designed to help with the transition process. It is also suitable for use with Y7 groups.

Each session lasts for 75 minutes. The primary (or Y7) pupils should be divided in advance into 6 teams, and these teams rotate around a carousel of 6 different activities, all of which are selected to be large and tactile. Teams spend about 10 minutes at each base, before being asked to move to the next.

The bases are staffed by Y9 pupils from the high school, enabling the younger pupils to meet older mentors in an informal context, and freeing staff to take a more hands-off role. The Y9 mentors rotate through the bases themselves, but in the opposite direction.

Numbers of pupils

The optimal team size is 6 – 8 pupils, but an absolute maximum of 10 per team will still work, allowing for up to 60 pupils in a session.

Equipment needed

All resources are provided.

Room requirements

A spacious hall or gym is needed, as the activities are all on a large scale.

Room layout

The floor space should be clear, with 12 classroom tables available for us to set up the activity stations on arrival.

Staffing

We will bring a team of two from the University.

Normally, the primary groups will have brought several staff; for a Y7 session, the high school should provide two teachers or teaching assistants.

For each session, there should additionally be 12 Y9 mentors (2 for each base), who are sensible and reasonably good mathematicians. These need not be the same mentors all day if this would cause difficulties.

The role of staff and support staff

We will need to brief the Y9 mentors prior to the session and so it would be useful if they could arrive half an hour before the younger pupils.

The mentors will introduce the activities at their particular base to the team of younger pupils, and provide hints and encouragement as necessary.

After each switchover, the Y9 mentors will rotate in the opposite direction from the participants, so that they encounter all of the different activities, while also meeting different pupils.

School staff and the University staff should supervise and ensure the smooth running of the session, intervening and offering advice where appropriate. School staff remain responsible for any behaviour management.

General

Setting up usually takes us about 20 minutes if the room is already arranged as requested, so we aim to arrive about 40 minutes before the first session. If we encounter traffic problems en route, we will always try to call ahead to the school office, if possible.

We will need a parking space to be reserved, ideally near an entrance point to the hall, as there will be a lot of bulky equipment to unload and carry.

On the day itself, lunch and also tea/coffee for the team is appreciated!