

Flexible Grouping - Primary

By Hina Patankar

Flexible grouping is a great way to respond to the needs of the pupils within my class. One example of when I used flexible grouping was when I was preparing to teach a different concept in Maths. For example, some children may thrive with the four operations, but others may struggle to understand the concept of time.

When planning the sequence of lessons, I drew upon data from termly formative assessments and attainment from the previous academic year of this specific topic to identify pupils who might struggle to understand the concept of time and may require content to be broken down into smaller steps than their peers. I identified a group of 5/6 pupils who I thought would require additional support when introducing the concept so in the first lesson of the sequence, I planned to work with these pupils during independent practice to ensure they developed secure foundational knowledge. This gave children the opportunity to take risks with their answers and have high expectations of themselves. Fluidity within grouping enables me to provide first-hand intervention within the classroom dependent on the needs of the children.

During the lesson, throughout my explanations and modelling, I used formative assessment to check pupils' understanding to help me identify when pupils were ready for independent practice and to refine who I would support during this. I identified one of the target pupils was really excelling whilst another pupil who I hadn't previously identified, was struggling to grasp the concept. This meant I needed to adjust who I had planned to work with to ensure I provided support to those pupils who required it the most.

I asked those pupils to work with me so I could provide additional explicit instruction and support pupils through guided practice. Children worked at a gradual pace meaning content coverage may not be at a greater depth as compared to other groups but meeting their needs is the priority. Being able to remain flexible, showing children step by step what is expected of them through thorough modelling and allowing the children to use practical equipment such as analogue clocks was key to building their confidence furthermore.

Adapting my lesson to respond to pupils' needs helped to ensure the 5/6 target pupils I worked with developed a strong foundational understanding of time. This meant they were able to achieve meaningful success in the lesson. I try to ensure I work with a variety of pupils through this method either to support or extend pupils. For example, when reviewing pupils work following that lesson, I identified a group of pupils who had got all their answers correct. So, the next lesson, I planned to work with them to extend their learning further by providing them with more reasoning and problem-solving questions. These questions included multi- steps to increase their independence and thinking skills.

I find that by working with different pupils throughout the week, I can meet the needs of all pupils in my class. This ensures all pupils get the opportunity to work without an adult, helping them to self-regulate their learning. It also helps to prevent any stigma being attached to working with the class teacher. I find this has a positive impact on pupils' motivation and their attitudes towards learning.