

In-School Volunteer (ISV)

Assisting children with primary-level maths

About Number Champions

We believe that every child deserves a good education, leading to better opportunities in life - and numeracy is a crucial part of this. Primary schools do a great job teaching maths but, inevitably, have limited resources, and the support that children receive at home varies. We created Number Champions to provide numeracy support to help fill this gap.

Our ISVs use games and other creative activities to provide one-to-one support to children in state primary schools who are behind in maths. We work with children in Years 2 and 3 (aged six to eight), as research shows that this is the best time to help children get back on track. Class teachers select the children who can best benefit from the sessions.

Now in our sixth year, we are working across 14 London boroughs in 31 partner schools, with over 100 ISVs supporting 300 children. We plan to increase these numbers in future years.

The role

- An ISV runs one-to-one sessions with children in Years 2 and 3.
- The sessions take place weekly for a full school year, during school hours, on school premises but outside the classroom.
- Each session lasts 25 to 30 minutes and the volunteer typically sees three children consecutively.
- Sessions include simple mathematical games and other creative activities.
- To ensure continuity for the children, we ask our volunteers to commit for a full school year (excluding occasional holidays or other absences).
- Volunteers need to prepare for the sessions each week – this is covered in training.

ISVs report to our Head of Operations, who is a member of staff. In some boroughs we have a volunteer Area Leader who shares the role of supporting ISVs.

Why our In-school Volunteers are so important

- Almost all children can learn maths! However, for a variety of external reasons, many children fall behind in maths at a young age and they may simply switch off the subject and never catch up. Our volunteers can change this.
- Children with increased skills, enjoyment, and confidence in maths are more likely to engage fully in classroom maths lessons. And overcoming educational challenges in one area can grow their confidence in other areas, enhancing their longer-term educational prospects.
- A high proportion of the children we work with are from disadvantaged backgrounds. Our volunteers provide them with opportunities they might not otherwise have.

Required skills and experience

As well as enthusiasm for working with children and good interpersonal skills, our volunteers need to have adequate numeracy. At this level, this means being competent with simple addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division.

Training, support, and resources

- We provide training before ISVs start in school. The total time commitment is about seven hours.
 - The training is delivered by our Mentors (who are experienced primary school teachers) and by our Safeguarding Lead.
 - In advance of the actual training sessions, volunteers watch several short videos and do some background reading. We provide all the relevant material, and this preparation can be done at a time to suit the volunteers.
 - We train new volunteers in small groups. The training covers how to work with young children and how to teach basic maths skills, with a particular focus on using physical objects and games.
 - The training also covers safeguarding and communicating with our partner schools regarding issues for individual children.
- For continuing ISVs, we have annual remote refresher courses for safeguarding.
- Mentors also provide one-to-one support to our ISVs throughout the year on educational and behavioural issues. They will also aim to join In-School Volunteers, at least annually, in a session with a child.
- We provide extensive online resources.
- We provide online training and talks each half term and welcome ideas from ISVs for content.
- The HoO (and Area Leaders as appropriate) provide administrative support.

Social

- We hold periodic in-person social events for all volunteers.

Background checks

- We interview all candidates – in person or by video call.
- We require ID and two references from people who have known the candidate for at least two years (and are not family). They need to be able to vouch that there is no reason that the volunteer should not work with children. We follow up some references by telephone. (For ISVs joining from a partner school's parent community we accept the school's recommendation in place of one reference.)
- We require a DBS check – enhanced and with child barring. We usually do this, although a few schools prefer to do it themselves.

Location

We have partner schools across London. We aim to match our volunteers with a school near them.

Expenses

As per our volunteer policy (available on our website) we will cover relevant expenses.