

Case study: working with Grinling Gibbons Primary School

Grinling Gibbons Primary School in Lewisham has been using BrightSpark's online maths tutoring since early 2011. Starting with a group of Year 6 students, they have expanded the tutoring to Year 5s and twice a week for Year 6 after seeing the positive impact it was having.

Headteacher Carol Wilson is delighted with the results seen in the children after having regular BrightSpark sessions.

"The children use BrightSpark for an hour after school so it means that we have control over it. Because they are dealing with somebody outside of school, they're having the confidence to speak up and to ask questions that they normally wouldn't do. At the beginning of the year the children involved were extremely quiet and introverted, so for me it's a surprise to see them speaking and being so forthright. Their confidence has come out through interacting online with people they didn't know before.

"We chose children who we felt would not achieve their target levels for BrightSpark tutoring. All the children excelled and got Level 5 in their SATs which was on or above their target. It's been a success story with the Year 5s too, as they are ending the year at Level 4 – ahead of where they should be. It has made all the children very confident – both in speaking up in class and also in their application of maths.

"The children have thoroughly enjoyed it and actually look forward to staying after school to work with their tutor. Their areas of difficulty are being dealt with one-to-one.

"We have a one-to-one tutor in school, but the children like the anonymity of online learning – they can ask anything and not feel silly about it. Other online solutions we've tried have had an impact at first, but then that impact waned slightly, whereas students using BrightSpark have shown continued improvement.

"For us it's been a great success story. The children come back into the class and talk about what they've been learning, and have even been able to help other children in their class that might have struggled with an area. It's really making a difference.

"The big advantage of BrightSpark for me as a leader is that the gap analysis in our school has improved since we started using it, which means an improvement for the whole school. For teachers, the online tutoring means they can target specific children's individual gaps and monitor and control the intervention without significantly adding to their workload. The children have stayed focused throughout the year and enjoyed the special attention from the tutors.

Year 6 pupils feel that BrightSpark has really helped them. "Working one-to-one makes you more confident," says Ernis. His classmate Koshin agrees: "BrightSpark is very unique! When you speak to the tutor you don't have to worry about asking questions." "It helped me get a Level 5 in my SATs," says Sam. They have all enjoyed using the computers for their work: "It's a great idea to do it online because it's a different way of learning," says Liam.

There have been benefits for the wider school too. "Across the board BrightSpark is reducing people's workload. We are exceptionally pleased with it," says Ms Wilson.

"We'll certainly be using BrightSpark for children in Year 5 and Year 6 throughout the next year, and hope to get parents more involved so that the children can use BrightSpark at home too."

For more about Grinling Gibbons, please visit:

<http://www.ggibbons.lewisham.sch.uk/>

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