

Activities for parents' workshops

Participants in the pilot project drew up the following checklist to consider when selecting activities for parents' workshops. The points are organised as a set of recommendations, some pitfalls to avoid and some questions that you may want to consider.

You will of course want to consider all of these points in the context of your own school, rather than treating them as a set of fixed instructions.

Do:

- choose activities that promote group work and discussion
- keep the approaches simple, practical and interactive
- make sure that the activities are enjoyable and engaging
- focus on participants' strategies rather than solutions
- include activities with visual and kinaesthetic aspects
- think about reading ages – especially in relation to written instructions
- consider activities that you already use successfully with pupils
- ensure that activities are open-ended and accessible.

Don't:

- rely on 'traditional' teaching or long explanations
- have too much writing or recording
- undermine confidence with closed tasks, time limits or 'marking'
- let competition create an emphasis on 'winning and losing'
- make it complicated
- make assumptions about parents' knowledge
- trivialise or patronise – activities should be accessible but challenging
- try to use technology to 'carry' the session.

Think:

- do you want to include several areas of mathematics – or focus on just one?
- do you want to have a direct impact on pupil learning, through activities that address common misconceptions?
- will you have some activities (perhaps mathematical games) that parents and pupils can take away to use at home?
- what use will you make of technology – for example, use of websites or interactive whiteboards?