

Welcoming a new mathematician into an established circle

Don't panic about 'catching up'. Mathematicians can join at any point. Prioritise them fitting in with the community and understanding the circle norms over re-teaching missed content.

Let the circle be the support. Set up the conditions so the new mathematician can learn from the others and practise their AAA behaviours alongside them.

In your advance planning

Find out more about the pupil

- Are they new to the school?
- Any known confidence, attendance or pastoral considerations?
- Do they already know anyone in the circle?

Choose a 'buddy'

- Someone kind and confident enough to include others.
- Speak to them beforehand; ask them to pair up with and support the new mathematician.

Pick specific, low-stakes moments to include them

- "Can you read out the problem for the circle?"
- "What do you notice?"
- "Can you rephrase your partner's reasoning?"

Previously on...

- Use the 'Previously on' slides to check what they might need to know from previous sessions.
- Give them access to the words in the glossary for that session.

At the start of the session

Welcome them

- Make them feel at ease and introduce them to the circle. Tell them that there's nothing to catch up on; they have all they need to join in.
- Introduce them to their buddy and sit them nearby.

Get the others involved

- As a circle, talk through the first two slides in the session.
- "What's the same, what's different between maths circles and maths lessons?"
- "Can you give an example of how someone was adventurous / articulate / accepting last week?"

During the session

Make the thinking visible

- Write key vocabulary on the board.
- Encourage everyone to share their written work.
- Regularly ask: "What do you notice? What's the same, what's different? Why?"

Get support from the whole circle

- Build in pair or mini-group work before whole-circle sharing.
- Use the buddy: "Compare your approaches and decide what you'll share together."
- If you have junior mentors, ask them to check in and prompt if needed.

After the session

- Check in: "What helped you feel included today? What would help next time?"
- Note one thing to tweak for next session (e.g. seating, buddy choice, vocabulary recap).