

DoodleMaths

Contact: doodlemaths.com **Reviewed by:** John Dabell

What do you get when you combine personalisation, adaptive learning and creativity? The answer is DoodleMaths, a carefully-engineered, trailblazing, five star app. This innovative learning system promotes a mathematical mindset by offering healthy doses of cognitive challenge, inspiration and enjoyment so children in KS1, KS2 and KS3 can engage with the maths curriculum. The app contains unique algorithms to ensure that its activities are modified to the strengths and gaps of each individual user. It's designed to be used alongside core maths provision and slots in very nicely by blending the best features of one-to-one teaching and interactive touchscreen technology.

Getting started is a doddle. DoodleMaths HQ has produced an effective four-step lesson plan for getting your class up and running, so children can confidently start using it for high-impact homework, with no marking! Start by registering your class via the excellent website. Children can choose their own pet avatar (and nation flag) and, with adult help, select which year they are in and whether they find maths 'easy', 'OK' or 'tricky'.

In order to work out a pupil's ability, the app starts by asking each user a number of questions. The clever mechanics make a note of what the child knows or doesn't know, then configures a tailored work scheme, giving everyone a chance to shine. Upon completion of exercises, children get a score and are shown how long they spent on the questions, with the opportunity to improve their performance. There is plenty to explore, including fun games. You can search by topic and direct children to areas that fit in with what you are teaching in class. Children can collect DoodleStars whenever they complete an activity, so motivation to succeed is high. The top DoodleStar collectors are displayed on the DoodleMaths website and stars can be spent on building a virtual robot, or on accessories for their in-app pet.

DoodleMaths works well because of its short sessions and the fact that activities are always at the right level. There are all sorts of question types, from multiple choice and linking, to placement order, sorting and true or false: all rich in thinking with plenty of challenge. I love the interactivity of the written methods – children can perform their working out and maths



jottings on a doodlepad and hide it when they have finished.

There is a lifebuoy help icon to press if children need support. This gives them an independent option, rather than relying on an adult. The app can audibly go through an example via a 'speak it' option too.

An effective user interface needs to strike a balance between looking amazing and being easy to use, otherwise it is dead in the water. DoodleMaths hits the back of the net with a clean design, attractive graphics and interactive touches that reflect high production standards. The functionality is dynamic, so tapping, dragging, dropping, sliding and finger drawing presents no problem.

From a teacher and parent perspective, it is the feedback that DoodleMaths provides in terms of analytics that is particularly great. You can see what content has been covered

and weekly reports show exercises completed, time spent and stars earned. From the teacher dashboard, you can easily see who's been busy and who hasn't, and even watch them answering questions live.

The basic plan is free but only offers a curriculum snapshot and limited data. With the £99 per year per class option, you get reports, analytics, extra lessons, and access to individual, group and whole-class progress data over any time period.

According to recent research from the University of Bath, children who use DoodleMaths for 20 minutes a week are four times less likely to suffer learning loss. I'd recommend using the app for ten minutes a day throughout the year to avoid brain drain. It's up for two Bett Show 2017 Awards and I'm not in the least surprised. Stimulating, challenging and inspiring, DoodleMaths will help children become more confident mathematicians. Take a look at the TimesTables app too, as well as the one for KS3.



Verdict: Perfect partner

DoodleMaths helps with mastering skills, can be tailored to each learner's needs, matches the national curriculum and provides reliable assessment information. It also helps to quash maths anxiety, adding real value to class provision. It's a highly creative partner to the classroom that is ideal for clever catch-up, intelligent top-up or purposeful test preparation.