

Carew Academy

Wallington, Surrey ELC Maths cohort Size: 75

Cohort EAL: 8 Cohort SEN: 75

Background

Carew Academy is a larger than average special educational needs school for pupils aged 7 to 18 located in Surrey. The Academy caters for pupils who have a wide range of moderate learning needs, some of which may be complex or severe, including autism. Mike Wood, Director of Numeracy, explains why they include the Edexcel Entry Level Certificate (ELC) in Mathematics in the qualifications they offer and why it is such an important qualification for their pupils to help them develop the fundamentals of Mathematics and prepare for Level 1 qualifications (either GCSE or Functional Skills).

The Entry Level qualification is a great foundation for all our students

We have a wide range of ability levels and additional learning needs at our school. We have students we challenge to really exceed and push themselves to Level 1 accreditation and we are incredibly proud of the effort and hard work they put in to achieve their results.

The beauty of the ELC is we can put forward those students who sometimes struggle with more complex Maths topics through a qualification that gives them the most important fundamentals of maths, celebrating their achievements whilst promoting the skills for the next level of accreditation. All of our pupils who are entered for GCSE practise these fundamentals of maths by being submitted for an Entry Level Certificate up to level 3 first. This means that pupils gain an understanding of the foundations of maths no matter their pathway, and can see how Maths is so crucial in informing their future accreditation in Maths or even their future work and life skills outside of education.

Accessibility was a very crucial factor when choosing the right exam board

We initially looked at several exam boards for the Entry Level Certificate but some of them were really very complicated. They made it fundamentally quite difficult because the requirements go beyond the specifications of the qualification itself. We chose the Edexcel Entry Level Certificate because it is definitely the most accessible for our children. You have not complicated things. You have kept it nice and straightforward, easy to use and easy to submit, and as such it is easy for our pupils to access. The overall curriculum is far more functional than other boards which is why we stayed with Edexcel. We have been using the Edexcel Entry Level Certificate in Mathematics (including the legacy ELC specification) for over 6 years now. We originally entered approximately eight student but in the summer of 2018 this rose significantly to about 72 students, and every summer approximately 50 or so pupils are entered as a minimum (though year cohorts may vary!)

The ELC is a great qualification that blends in with the wider Maths curriculum

We deliver the ELC in regular lessons and it blends in very well with the curriculum, being a natural process of the fundamentals of Maths. It can be challenging with the different levels of Maths on offer, and the various topics that build on each other level to level, but they are a natural challenge and they do prepare pupils for the future. For Entry Level pupils, we follow the basics of Maths without over-complicating anything. We look at the Scheme of Work but

fundamentally they need to know how to add, subtract, multiply and divide, tell the time and other basic knowledge such as shape and geometry knowledge and reading a table.

There is a very smooth flow in our Maths lessons and we can assess our pupils in straightforward tests. It does not scare them and they can see how they can get the answers because it is very logical. We teach the pupils what they need to know and assess them at the end of the year. There has been a slight change in the structure because there are now two test papers for Entry Level 3 and one test for Entry Levels 1 and 2 but this is an achievable challenge for our students.

The outcome – the Edexcel Entry Level Certificate demonstrates what our children can do

The Entry Level qualification is very accessible for our students. It is less rigorous and intense because it is not a set exam and, above all, it does not scare our pupils off Maths! It is all about the fundamentals of Maths, which our children can achieve, and it is a staple qualification for key subjects, so incredibly important to us. The process is straightforward and enjoyable to teach for the teachers delivering it and the TAs supporting it and most importantly enjoyable for the students who are doing it/learning about it.