



Guidelines for Schools

Who are Suas?

Suas is a children's literacy charity that works in Ireland and internationally. We work with partner organisations to deliver quality literacy programmes to children in need of support. We recruit and train volunteers to help us to improve children's literacy.

Suas Ireland Education Programme

In Ireland, Suas works exclusively with designated disadvantaged (DEIS) schools in Dublin, Cork, Galway, Limerick and Waterford delivering literacy and numeracy interventions to children aged 8-14 years, who are struggling with reading and maths and are starting to fall behind their peers and lose confidence as learners.

The need for Numeracy Interventions in DEIS schools

Repeated assessments of mathematics at primary level in Ireland have revealed weak performance in numeracy. The performance of students in Irish schools in international assessments has been disappointing and has declined in recent years.

The challenge is particularly great in Urban Band 1 DEIS schools. Research conducted by the ESRI in 2015 suggested that over 50% of students in second class in Urban Band 1 DEIS schools are the lowest achievement band for numeracy.

Suas aims to tackle that problem by partnering with DEIS schools to support 8 to 10 year olds who are struggling with numeracy.

Our research showed a marked lack of structured numeracy support programmes in comparison to literacy support programmes. So, with feedback from partner schools, we have developed an intervention that can be delivered by trained volunteers.

1. Project Details

Suas Numeracy Intervention using Powerof2

The Suas numeracy intervention provides children who are struggling with numeracy an opportunity for repeated practice, further explanation and reinforcement, delivered in a 1:1 coaching session.

The workbook being used, [Power of 2](#), is a user-friendly workbook designed for one-to-one mentoring. Suas has also developed supplementary materials and acquired play materials to complement Power of 2.

Power of 2 essentially focuses on developing understanding of number and skills with mental calculations.

Powerof2 is an effective resource, and we recommend that sessions focus on progressing through the workbook, and the purpose-designed worksheets and activities are used where children need additional support (further information on session structure below).

Project Structure

Two one-hour sessions per week for seven weeks.

Split sessions, one mentor will work with two children twice a week, one hour in total per child for 7 weeks (e.g. 6 mentors will work with 12 children throughout a project)

Session breakdown

5 mins - settle down and chat between child and mentor

10 mins - work on Power of 2 workbook only

10 mins – work on relevant worksheets / games

5 mins – wrap up

Project Resources

Suas will provide the following project resources

- Volunteer mentors (trained and Garda vetted)
- Power of 2 workbooks and related materials
- Project management and general support to the school throughout

2. Participant Selection

Guidelines for participant selection

Suas would recommend schools use the following guidelines when selecting children for the intervention.

Mandatory

- Based on results from last standardised test results, children found to be between 15 to 25 percentile range OR with a standard score of less than 90 OR with a STEN Score of 3
- Children from 2nd-3rd class (aged 8-9)

Optional

- Children who have fallen behind due to attendance or other factors that would benefit from a numeracy intervention

- Children who are low in confidence, self-esteem and/or could have a stronger affinity for school and learning
- Based on review of Powerof2, participant at the level outlined in workbook/worksheets
- Has an interest in working one to one with maths buddy

Please see attached participant selection form which needs to be completed and returned to Suas prior to project commencement.

Recommended number of participants is 12 per project.

3. Space

Our programme works well in a quiet space. Usually schools locate a library or classroom for the sessions. All the mentors and children will be in the same room for the duration of the sessions. This means that there will be six mentors and six children in the room at any one time.

4. Supervision

In accordance with Suas Health, Safety and Welfare policy and Suas Child Protection policy, all Numeracy Support sessions must be supervised by a member of the school staff. Responsibility for provision of supervision lies with the school. The school is responsible for providing a supervisor who will be present for the duration of each session. The supervisor is responsible for ensuring sessions start and end on time and the changeover mid-session happens on time; maintaining a healthy learning environment; dealing with any behavioural issues; recording of any incidents/disclosures and maintaining communication as appropriate with Suas.

5. Evaluation

Suas Ireland Education Programme includes a monitoring and evaluation framework that involves pre and post testing of children's numeracy ability, feedback from children, mentors and school staff via customised questionnaires and ad hoc feedback. This approach enables us to identify best practice as well as demonstrating impact to project stakeholders.

Pre and Post Testing is completed by Suas at a pre-arranged time slot and is an essential component of the programme. We ask that schools facilitate and support this testing process by making students available pre and post programme and ensuring that a quiet space is available with no interruptions.