

Primary maths

Vocabulary progression document

September 2025

Introduction

The use of accurate mathematical vocabulary is essential for children's understanding and communication of mathematical concepts.

This progression document provides an outline of where key mathematical vocabulary is introduced and developed in the White Rose Maths schemes of learning.

Measure (length and height)

Reception	Year 1	Year 2
height	centimetres	metres
length		
long		
longer		
longest		
measure		
short		
shorter		
shortest		
tall		
taller		
tallest		

To save repetition of vocabulary, words are listed only where they are first introduced. For example, although the word 'sharing' is used throughout school, it is listed in Reception. Key vocabulary is revisited frequently as students progress through the curriculum.

Teachers can use this document to ensure that children are supported in using the correct mathematical vocabulary at each stage of their learning. By developing confidence with key terms, pupils can better articulate their thinking, reason effectively, and build a strong foundation for future learning in mathematics.

Addition and subtraction

Reception	Year 1	Year 2				
1 less, 1 more, add, add more, altogether, first, left, now, part, take away, whole	addition, add together, subtraction/ subtract, difference, double, efficient, equal to, fact family, greater, group, inverse, less, minus, near double, number bond, plus, symbol, systematic, total	calculation, exchange, method, multiple, one(s), operation, partition, related facts, ten(s), value, increase, decrease, sum				

Multiplication and division

	Reception	Year 1	Year 2				
	double, equal groups, even, fair, grouping, groups, odd, pair, sharing, unequal, groups	array, divide, repeated, addition	divide, even, half, lots of, multiply, odd, twice, times times-table,				

Fraction, decimals and percentages

Reception	Year 1	Year 2				
	equal parts, half, quarter, whole	numerator, denominator, equivalent, unit fraction, non-unit fraction, third, two-quarters, three-quarters				

Measure (money)

	Reception	Year 1	Year 2				
		amount, coin, note, money, pence (p), pound (£), unitise, value	change, cost, worth				

Measure (length and height)

	Reception	Year 1	Year 2				
	height, length, long, longer, longest, measure, short, shorter, shortest, tall, taller, tallest	centimetres, ruler	metres				

Measure (mass, capacity and temperature)

	Reception	Year 1	Year 2				
	balanced, balancing scales, empty, float, full, heavier, heaviest, heavy, least, less, light, lighter, lightest, mass, more, most, narrow, sink, tall, thin, weight, wide,	capacity, container, non-standard, volume	celsius, circular scales, degrees, grams, kilograms, litres, millilitres, temperature, thermometer				

Measure (time)

Reception	Year 1	Year 2								
after, afternoon, before, clock, day, evening, later, lunchtime, minute, morning, night, night-time, today, tomorrow, week, weekend, yesterday,	half past, hour, month, o'clock, second, watch, week,	five-minute intervals midnight, noon, quarter past, quarter to,								

	Reception	Year 1	Year 2				
	2-d shape, 3-d shape, circle, cone, corner, cube, cuboid, curved, cylinder, face, flat, pyramid, rectangle, rotate, set, sides, solid, sort, sphere, square, straight, surface, triangle	properties	edge, line of symmetry, symmetrical, vertex, vertices				

Statistics

Reception

Year 1

Year 2

block diagram,
key,
pictogram,
table,
tally chart,
collect,
record

Position and direction

Reception	Year 1	Year 2				
above, around, backwards, below, beside, bottom, forwards, map, next to, position, route, top	far, full turn, half turn, left, near, quarter turn, right, three-quarter turn, direction	anti-clockwise, between, clockwise				

Ratio and proportion

	Reception	Year 1	Year 2				

Algebra

	Reception	Year 1	Year 2				

Pattern

Reception	Year 1	Year 2								
continue, copy, mistake, repeat, repeating, pattern, same, unit of repeat,		decreasing, increasing, sequence								