

# Primary Cohort: Lead Teacher Guide

2024-25

This guide has been created for the member of staff in school that is the main point of contact for the Observatory for Mathematical Education's Cohort Study.

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# 1. Introduction

We want to begin this guide by thanking you for being a research partner of the Observatory. We are excited to be starting this partnership with you; we hope you are excited to contribute to research that will inform the future of maths education in England.

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*“England’s primary schools are vibrant environments supporting the mathematics learning of a diverse range of young children. Skilled teachers work hard to give the children the best possible future, knowing how important mathematics is to individuals and society. There are myriad pedagogic and organisational choices that schools make in regard to their mathematics teaching, but it can be difficult to make informed choices and predict the short and longer term impact of decisions. Research evidence can be invaluable in revealing approaches that are likely to be more or less effective. However, large scale evidence captured over years of schooling is needed to be confident of likely effectiveness. Moreover, this evidence needs to be broad to include the large number of variables that exist in the complex world of education. This is why it is such a privilege to be working with schools across England on the primary cohort study – one of the largest and most complex studies of its kind. To teachers in research partner schools, I say ‘thank you’ for your contribution, not just from me but on behalf of the generations of future teachers, children, families and communities which will benefit from the knowledge about mathematics education that you help to generate.”*

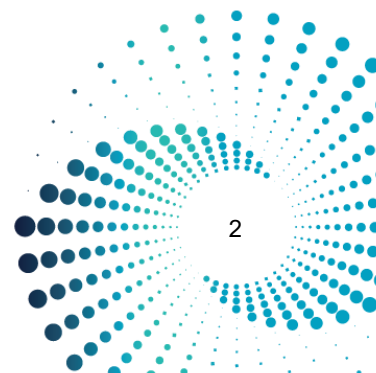
*Dr Catherine Gripton, Cohort Studies Lead for the Observatory for Mathematical Education and Associate Professor at the University of Nottingham*

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This guide has been created for the lead teacher overseeing your school’s participation in the Observatory’s seven-year longitudinal study. It contains the following information:

- An overview of the study, its purpose and aims.
- A summary and detailed breakdown of activity in the first year of the study (2024-25).
- The responsibilities of the research partner school in the first year of the study.
- Contact details should you have any questions or concerns.

We recommend you read through this document at the beginning of the year and then refer to key sections as needed.



## 2. Study Overview

Starting in 2024-25, the Observatory is following three cohorts of pupils in schools across England.

- Primary cohort: Pupils in Reception in 2024-25. This cohort will be followed until the end of Year 6.
- Secondary cohort: Students in Year 7 in 2024-25. This cohort will be followed until the end of Year 11 or 13 (for schools with sixth forms).
- A-level cohort: Students in Year 12 in secondary schools and sixth form colleges in 2024-25. This cohort will be followed until the end of Year 13.

The cohort studies form the largest ever longitudinal study of mathematics education in England. Over 7 years, the Observatory will build a picture of maths education in England through detailed exploration of a number of areas of interest, including through review of pupil attainment, attitudes, progression and experiences.

### 2.2 Purpose

We all know the importance of mathematics education for children's future lives and employment. Within the complexities of the education system in England, there are a large number of factors contributing to a child's mathematics education. For this study, the Observatory is taking a longitudinal, cohort approach: collecting data on attitudes and experiences from the same group of pupils over several years from a representative sample of schools across England. The data will be analysed to identify trends across different approaches, resources, school types and pupil groups over time.

We will build a picture of the maths education landscape from a range of viewpoints: students, teachers, subject leaders and parents/guardians.

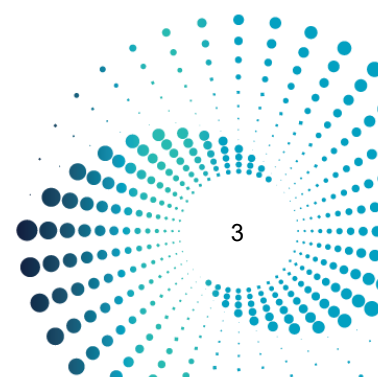
### 2.3 Aims

There are two broad aims to this study:

1. Gain a comprehensive understanding of the current maths education landscape in England. This means seeking to understand patterns in children's attainment, attitudes, experiences and progression in mathematics.
2. Identify how these patterns vary according to regions, schools and classrooms; and for different groups of children (ethnicity, gender, SEND, language and socio-economic status) This will provide understanding of the impact of curriculum and teaching choices which will inform maths education policy and practice in the future.

### 2.4 Study timeline

The study will run for 7 years and follow one cohort of children from Reception to Year 6. Each year will follow a similar sequence of activities.

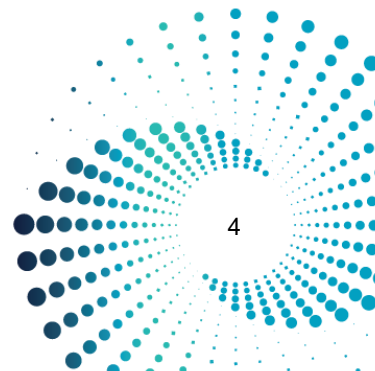


## 3. Reception year: September 2024 – August 2025

This section provides an overview and a detailed breakdown of the activities in the first year of the study. Future years will follow a similar format.

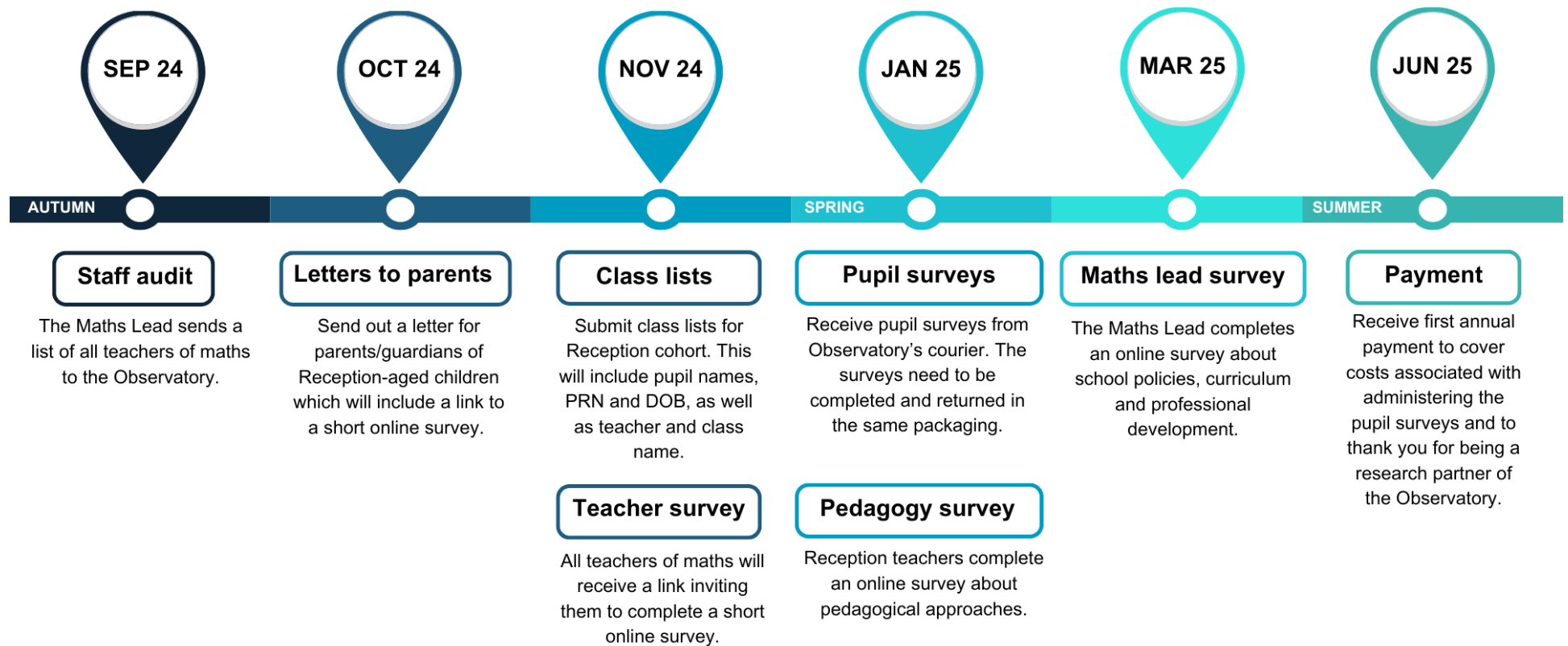
### 3.1 Reception year overview

On the next page you will find a timeline outlining the key activities taking place in 2024-25. Please ensure a copy of this is readily available to consult throughout the year. You can access a printable poster (PDF) of this timeline on the Observatory website.



# PRIMARY COHORT STUDY TIMELINE

## Reception, 2024-25



## 3.2 Reception annual planner 2024-25

Month	Activity	Who	What
September 2024	Staff audit	Mathematics Lead	Send the names and school email addresses of <b>all</b> teachers to the Observatory. Note: this includes teachers of any age group and class size.
October 2024	Letters to parent/guardian	Lead teacher and school office	Send a letter from the Observatory to the parent/guardian of all Reception pupils. The letter includes instructions on how to withdraw their child from the study (an online form collected by the Observatory). There is also a link to a short parent/guardian survey contained within the letter.
November 2024	Class lists	Lead teacher	Send class lists for all Reception classes to the Observatory. Each class list contains: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Name of teacher</li> <li>• Name of class</li> <li>• Name of pupil</li> <li>• Pupil date of birth</li> <li>• Unique pupil number<sup>1</sup></li> </ul> The request for class lists will include a list of pupils who should not be included (those that have been withdrawn from the study by their parents/guardian).
November 2024	Teacher survey	All teachers	Teachers listed in the staff audit will be sent a link by the Observatory to their school email inviting them to complete a ten-minute online survey. The ten-minute survey consists of mostly multiple-choice questions and asks about their role, their teaching, their career and their professional development. As the lead teacher, we ask that you encourage your staff to take part in the survey.
January 2025	Pupil surveys	Teaching Assistant and children	Your school will receive a package by courier containing the paper pupil surveys and screening tests, instructions and return packaging. You have three weeks to complete and return the surveys. <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The unique pupil number (UPN) that each child is given by the Department for Education when the child starts school.

<sup>2</sup> If you are delayed for any reason in completing the pupil surveys, please contact the Observatory.

Month	Activity	Who	What
January 2025	Pedagogy survey	Reception teachers	This survey is for Reception teachers <b>only</b> . They will be sent a link to their school email from the Observatory to complete an online survey about the pedagogical approaches they use in their teaching.
March 2025	Maths Lead survey	Maths Lead	The Mathematics Lead will receive a link to their school email to complete an online survey about school policies, curriculum and professional development.
June 2025	Payment	Observatory	Your school will receive a payment by bank transfer from the Observatory. This payment is to thank you for being a research partner and to cover the costs associated with completing the pupil surveys. <sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> In the first year, all schools receive £600 as a thank you for being a research partner. All schools will receive an additional amount to cover staffing costs for administering the pupil surveys. This amount is dependent on cohort size. Schools with 30 or fewer Reception pupils will receive an additional £200; schools with 31-60 Reception pupils will receive an additional £300; schools with 61-90 Reception pupils will receive an additional £400 and schools with 90+ Reception pupils will receive an additional £500.

### 3.3 Administering the pupil surveys

#### Helping Reception children complete the survey and screening test

A teaching assistant (or other appropriate adult working in school) will need to help the children to complete the survey and screening test. The pupil survey takes about 7 minutes per child to complete, with an additional 2-3 minutes for the screening test, so 9-10 minutes in total per child. Therefore, you should set aside an appropriate amount of time for all pupils to complete these.

Ideally, the adult will need a quiet space to complete the survey and test with each child. We understand that this can be challenging in a busy primary school, so do not worry if you cannot find a separate space. Just try to ensure that the child can hear the adult's instructions and that no other children are able to see the child's answers.

An instruction booklet on how to administer the pupil survey and screening test will be delivered with the survey papers in January 2025. Digital copies and video support materials will also be made available on [our website](#).

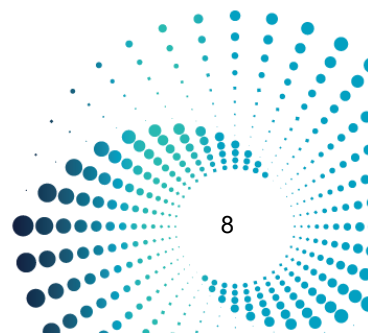
If you would like more information about completing the pupil surveys, or have any concerns, please do not hesitate to [contact the Observatory](#).

#### Class lists

Several weeks before we send you the survey and screening test papers, we will ask you for class lists for all classes with Reception-aged children. This means we can send the right number of papers for each class, and we can print the child's name on their papers.

We will use Wonde to request the data we need for the class lists (name of teacher, name of class, name of child, child date of birth, child's UPN). Your school's Wonde administrator will receive a request directly through Wonde in November 2024 for the class lists. You may want to speak to your Wonde administrator in advance to inform them about this.

If your school does not have a Wonde account, please [contact the Observatory](#) and we will arrange an alternative means of secure data transfer.





## 4. Observatory contact details

We want your involvement in our research study to be as straightforward as possible. We know there are many demands placed on schools and on your time as teachers. If you have any questions or concerns, at any point during the study, please do not hesitate to contact our friendly team using the below contact details.

### Observatory for Mathematical Education

**Telephone: 0115 9514426**

**Email: [mathsobservatory@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:mathsobservatory@nottingham.ac.uk)**

Calls and emails will be replied to during our working hours Monday–Friday, 8.30am – 4.30pm.

### 4.1 Meet the operations team

Meet the team that will be answering your emails and phone calls.



**Dawn (she/her)**



**Al (he/him)**



**Emily (she/her)**

