

Teacher's notes

The format of **First Mental Arithmetic** differs from that of traditional mental arithmetic materials in that the children read the questions themselves and write down their answers – as in the Key Stage 1 national tests. The individual books may be used flexibly and children may set their own pace. However, you might find it helpful to use one book per term.

The mathematical content of the **First Mental Arithmetic** activities should already have been covered in maths lessons and the reading content is kept simple. Nevertheless, you might consider asking a classroom assistant to work with a group of children, helping them to read the questions. Ask the assistant to note the names of children needing further help, and the activities or concepts that they find difficult. You can then provide the necessary teaching, support or additional practice.

Books 1 to 3

Each of the Year 1 books is split into two sections. If you are working through one book each term, you might aim to complete Section 1 (and possibly Check-up 1) just before the half-term break. Sections 1 and 2 are further divided into sessions. One double-page spread containing nine questions is provided for each session. Parts A, B and C of each session contain different question types; for further details, please see the back cover. Depending on the child's skills, a session's work may be completed during the course of a week or over whatever time span you feel is appropriate.

As children progress through the series, different levels of support are provided. In Books 1 to 3, the children have access to a horizontal number line, which is provided on every double-page spread. You may decide that the children would also benefit from using interlocking cubes or other counting equipment that helps them to work out some answers.

Encourage the children to use the following mental strategies when working through Book 1.

- For addition: counting on in ones from the larger number; they may find it helpful to keep a tally on their fingers.
- For subtraction (both 'take away' and 'difference'): counting up in ones from the smaller to the larger number; again, many children will find it helpful to keep a tally on their fingers.

Assessment

The Check-up Tests help you monitor children's understanding.

- Check-ups 1 and 2 cover the concepts and skills of Sections 1 and 2 respectively.
- Check-up 3 covers all the number-based work in the book.
- Check-up 4, contained in the answers book only, is a photocopiable assessment covering measurement and geometry. Use it when all the other activities have been completed.

Record keeping

The photocopiable Group Record Sheets in this book allow you to note problem areas for particular children. For example, you might write *Counts objects to 5. Becomes confused beyond that. Write Needs further experience in...* Or, if a child still needs to touch, count and move objects to find totals, record, for example, *Needs more experience in counting objects, but without moving them, then counting pictures, remembering which ones have been counted.* Alternatively, you can simply record the child's marks. Use the completed sheets to plan appropriate work.