

# Mastery Checkpoints



## What are Mastery Checkpoints?

The Abacus Mastery Checkpoints are short activities for you to use as a quick 'check' to see whether children have mastered a key concept straight after it has been taught in a lesson or series of lessons. They enable you to quickly identify any children who have not yet mastered a concept and to intervene before these children fall behind. Each Mastery Checkpoint consists of one or two questions that assess mastery of the relevant outcome and one or two questions that assess whether some children have achieved mastery with greater depth (Champions' Challenge). The Checkpoints are designed to take about 15 minutes. Children who have fully mastered the outcome and can answer the *Have you mastered...?* questions quickly and correctly should also be able to attempt the Champions' Challenge questions within this time frame.

### The 2014 National Curriculum states that:

*'Decisions about when to progress should always be based on the security of pupils' understanding and their readiness to progress to the next stage. Pupils who grasp concepts rapidly should be challenged through being offered rich and sophisticated problems before any acceleration through new content. Those who are not sufficiently fluent with earlier material should consolidate their understanding, including through additional practice, before moving on.'*

The Mastery Checkpoints will help you to assess whether children are ready to progress. For example, after teaching place value in 3-digit numbers, comparing and ordering and using different representations, you can use the relevant Mastery Checkpoint to find out whether pupils have really mastered this and use it to inform your next lesson.

#### As a general rule:

- If all pupils have mastered a concept, they are ready to move on to the next piece of content.
- If the majority of pupils have mastered a concept but some have not, you should intervene quickly to help those who have not yet mastered it to keep up so that the class can move on together, for example by using same-day intervention.
- If the majority of pupils have not yet mastered a concept, you may need to spend longer teaching this topic.

All Abacus terms include 10 weeks of lesson plans, which is shorter than most school terms. The weeks and days allocated to each Abacus lesson plan (for example, Autumn 1, Week 2, Tuesday) are provided as a guideline, and you should use the planning structure flexibly according to the needs of your individual class. This means that if your class has not yet mastered a key concept, you can pause and spend longer on teaching that concept until the class is ready to move on.

## Which outcomes are tested?

Mastery Checkpoints are designed to check only the key concepts and skills that children need to master in order to reach age-related expectations at the end of the school year. This is in line with advice from the report *Eliminating unnecessary workload associated with data management*, released in March 2016, which recommends the following:

*“Teachers should [...] make professional judgements of pupil attainment against key performance indicators – the big ideas that tell us whether a pupil understands and has grasped what they have been taught. Focusing on key performance indicators reduces the burden of assessing every lesson objective. This also provides the basis of next steps: are pupils secure and can pupils move on, or do they need additional teaching?”*

You can read the full report at: [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/511258/Eliminating-unnecessary-workload-associated-with-data-management.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/511258/Eliminating-unnecessary-workload-associated-with-data-management.pdf)

Some weeks have no Mastery Checkpoint. This is either because the teaching of a complex concept, skill or procedure is only part-way through, or because the lessons that week cover something that, though necessary in its own right, is not a stepping stone to those age-related expectations.