

Point England School raises numeracy standards



ABOUT MATHS-WHIZZ

"There has been much in the media about a need for a numeracy programme to support New Zealand schools – Maths-Whizz is that programme! With new competitive pricing options and iPad compatibility in 2014, many schools will follow Pt England and other schools using Maths-Whizz to support their maths programme and raise numeracy results."

Chris Perkinson,
iLearn Interactive



Check out this three-minute video guide to Maths-Whizz.

whizz.com



For more information about Maths-Whizz contact New Zealand distributor iLearn Interactive on 09 431 4466, info@ilearn.co.nz or ilearn.co.nz

Designed for classroom use, online numeracy programme Maths-Whizz is bringing significant learning success to students at Auckland's Pt England School.

"I'd pay for it out of my pocket so that my students could have it," said Ted Barks.

What could possibly be so good that a teacher would use his own money to have it in his classroom? Well, he's talking about Maths-Whizz.

For three years it's been the online maths tutoring service of choice for Pt England School. The award-winning programme is being used across Years 5 to 8 and is responsible for some "huge learning outcomes", says Barks.

"It's a cracker of a programme," he said. "I like so many things about it. In a busy day in the classroom, at the click of a button I can see exactly what kids were doing for 15 to 20 minutes. I think you'd be hard pushed to find something that's so effective and can be so individualised."

Maths-Whizz is an online learning environment where students practise and learn maths concepts through interactive games and lessons targeted to their ability. After assessing individual students and giving them a 'maths age', it can be used to create a learning programme for each based on their individual strengths and weaknesses. As students use the system, it then provides teachers with up-to-date assessments and reporting on each.

Calculating 'maths age'

"Maths-Whizz provides very individualised programmes," explained Barks. "It starts with a 45-minute assessment of students' strengths and weaknesses, and their starting ability across the maths curriculum, as well as calculating their overall 'maths age'."

"As they use the service, I can check their usage and progress at a glance. I've really come to appreciate the data that's at my fingertips at any time."

Pt England School is a Decile 1, Year 1-8 primary school with 600+ students. It's part of the pioneering Manaiakalani Cluster and widely regarded as a successful adopter of e-learning practices. Each class has a blog and students produce schoolTV, a weekly public television broadcast. All Year 5-8 students also have their own netbook.

"These devices have changed the way we teach and learn. We were looking for an opportunity to really kind of start the 1:1 journey. We saw the Maths-Whizz program and that's where the partnership began."

Barks admits that when they started out it was less about a maths programme and more offering a way to utilise 1:1 devices. But that attitude soon changed.



"I'd challenge any teacher to have a component in their class with so much information at their fingertips," he said. "It makes any maths programme better. The marking, trends, and comprehensive reporting – it's all done for you."

Does Barks see Maths-Whizz fitting with the New Zealand Curriculum?

"Most definitely. There are hundreds of exercises covering the range of topics and, at this point, I can see a strong correlation between the Maths-Whizz 'age' and the GloSS testing. In fact, if anything, it's proving to be a harsher measure. Success is also time and date stamped, and material can easily be blended with a student's e-portfolio."

Engagement and accountability

His students can access Maths-Whizz at any, on any online computer – ideally they'll do about 90 minutes a week. They complete exercises and tests, and can compete against their classmates. Each student also has their own virtual 'bedroom'. When they are working in tutor mode they earn credits that they can spend in the Whizz shop.

"It's about engagement and accountability, and getting kids to build confidence and believe in their learning. This tool teaches them to manage themselves."

"Every Friday we celebrate who's improved the most, with Gold Silver and Bronze awards. They can see how they're improving and use it to further motivate their learning. Other tools simply don't give the same measure of growth."

"Maths-Whizz is huge for me. I don't think I could give it up." >

TED BARKS IS A YEAR 7/8 CLASS TEACHER AT PT ENGLAND SCHOOL IN AUCKLAND AND WAS TALKING TO *INTERFACE* EDITOR GREG ADAMS.