

Realistic Mathematics Education Evaluation

Parent and carer information form

Dear Parent/Carer,

We are writing to make you aware that your Y7 child will be taking part in an evaluation of a mathematics education intervention known as [Realistic Mathematics Education](#) (RME). It is funded by the [Educational Endowment Foundation](#) (EEF). This letter briefly explains what the RME intervention is and how it is being evaluated. It also explains what it will mean for your child and your right to withdraw your child from the evaluation process.

What is RME?

RME aims to help students understand how mathematics relates to the everyday world, to encourage them to think for themselves and use their knowledge to solve novel problems. RME prioritises context and model-building to engage and motivate students, enabling them to visualise mathematical processes and make sense of what they are doing.

RME was first developed in the Netherlands and is widely used there. The Netherlands is one of the highest performing European countries on international comparative mathematics tests. Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) has developed RME materials for use in England for more than ten years and has led a number of projects which have indicated that an RME approach can improve pupil attainment in comparison with regular teaching.

The RME intervention

In order to determine whether RME leads to improvements in mathematics attainment, the EEF is funding a randomised controlled trial (RCT) of RME, delivered by teacher educators, curriculum designers and researchers at Manchester Metropolitan University. The evaluation will focus on pupils who are in Y7 in 2018/19 and Y8 in 2019/20.

The RCT will run in 120 secondary schools in England. Half of these schools (60) will be randomly selected to receive the RME programme and the remaining half will form a control group. In the 60 randomly selected RME schools, two mathematics teachers use Y7 RME materials with their Y7 mathematics class in 2018/19, and Y8 RME materials when the class moves to Y8 in 2019/20. Teachers in the 60 control group schools will continue using their current / usual approach to teaching mathematics during the trial period (2018/19 & 2019/20).

The evaluation

Sheffield Hallam University (SHU) are undertaking the independent evaluation of RME in order to establish if teaching Y7 and Y8 pupils using RME methods leads to improvements in mathematics attainment and pupils' attitudes towards mathematics when compared with the pupils in the 60 control schools. As part of this evaluation, Y8 pupils in both control and intervention schools will take a mathematics test in summer 2020. The test results will be collected by SHU and marked by GL Assessment. For the purposes of academic research, test results will be linked with information about the pupils from the National Pupil Database and shared with MMU, the Department for Education, the EEF, FFT Education (EEF's data processor for their archive) and, in an anonymised form, with other research teams and potentially the UK Data Archive. We will not use pupil names or school names in any report arising from the research.

Your child's involvement

Your child is in Y7 in one of the 120 schools recruited to the RME project. This means that they will take a test in mathematics at the end of Y8 and be asked to complete a survey on attitudes towards mathematics around the same time - unless you decide to withdraw your child from the evaluation (see below). The mathematics test and attitudes survey at the end of Y8 will be taken in class as part of the normal school day.

By comparing the results from the two sets of schools, we will be able to determine how well the RME approach works. This has the potential to benefit not just your child, but children in schools across the country.

In addition to taking a mathematics test and attitude survey, the evaluation will select a small sample of pupils and teachers to be interviewed and mathematics classes to be videoed. If your child is included in either of these samples, you will receive another letter asking for your consent, and no data will be collected unless your consent is obtained.

and ethical issues

Your child's response to the survey will be anonymous and confidential, so no individual pupil or school can be identified from the survey. No information included in any report or publication will identify individuals in any way. Data collected from schools will be stored confidentially for up to ten years, as is standard university practice. All data will be stored securely on password protected and encrypted computer servers, and will be held in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). You are free to withdraw your child from the evaluation process and data collections at any point (see below). The study has been checked by Sheffield Hallam University's (SHU) ethics approvals process and will be conducted in line with SHU's ethics procedures, which are consistent with the British Educational Research Association and the British Sociological Association guidelines.

For more detail on data collection and how it will be used for the evaluation of RME, please see the evaluation fair process notice which can be found here: <https://bit.ly/2LKrZV>

Your right to withdraw your child from the evaluation process

You are free to withdraw your child from the evaluation process at any time during the trial period. If you do decide to withdraw your child, no data about them would be included in the evaluation and your child would not be required to take the Mathematics test or survey at the end of Y8. If you would like to withdraw your child please complete the slip below.

For further information, please contact the Project managers at Sheffield Hallam University using the contact details below.

Rachel Handforth (Co-project manager, working days Mon-Weds) r.handforth@shu.ac.uk 0114 225 6053

Claire Wolstenholme (Co-project manager) c.e.wolstenholme@shu.ac.uk 0114 225 6058

Please return this slip to the school office by Friday 28th September

The evaluation process for the RME intervention

I **DO / DO NOT*** give my permission for my child to take part in the evaluation process and testing.

*Please delete as appropriate

Child's full name	
Signed	
Parent/carers	
Date	

