

Review by Martin Marsh

50 Mathematics Lessons – Rich and Engaging Ideas for Secondary Mathematics – Colin Foster (Continuum Books £18.99)

I must admit to a sense of *déjà vu* when this book arrived at my door. There have been so many books of this type over the years; books with lots of classroom ideas, lessons, worksheets etc. that I opened the book with little hope or expectation.

You may be surprised then, that having looked at the book in more detail for this review, that I am happy to recommend it to the readers of *Equals*. So what makes it stand out from other publications of this type?

Well, first of all the activities are very varied and very accessible to busy teachers without being patronising in terms of their mathematical content. They cover most areas of the national curriculum and provide engaging activities which could easily be taught in one lesson or over a series of lessons. As the author states in his introduction, they are not ‘spectacular one-off’

lessons, but lessons, that should you so wish, you could teach ‘eight in a day’ and still have some energy left at the end.

The lessons are differentiated for the most able. Extension activities are built into all the lessons. There might have been more suggestions for simplifying or making some of the lessons more accessible to the type of children *Equals* is intended for but it would not take a huge amount of imagination by a teacher to do so. The starting points for the lessons are generally very accessible.

A final very useful feature is the link to a web site (www.50maths.com) which the author has set up to provide useful resources to supplement the activities in the book.

The book would make a very useful resource for teachers in a secondary school or possibly even the top end of Key Stage 2.

Slough LA

Is this test worth taking?

About 121,200 of the key stage 3 tests had to be re-marked. English Sats papers were sent back for remarking between 2005 and 2007... That's just over 6% of the 1,950,000 tests taken by pupils in England in that time. It has cost schools hundreds of pounds. They pay £5 to the National Assessment Agency for each exam script that is re-marked, with a maximum of £250 for a whole year group.

In 2007, 116 schools asked for all their year 9's English tests to be re-marked. That's 11.5% of the estimated 650,000 sat by pupils that May. Substantially fewer were re-marked in 2007 – 25,549 – despite roughly the same number of the tests being taken more than the 20,544 sent back in 2005.

TES

Pesticide

A third of all food products tested had chemical traces.

Very small percentage posed risk, officials say.

Scientists found traces of pesticides in 70% of samples of free fruit and vegetables destined for schoolchildren, it was revealed yesterday ...

Overall more than a third of food and drink products tested in the UK last year contained chemical traces and 1.7% - 60 samples of the 3,562 surveyed - had residues above the legally permitted limits. ... In all 138 apples, bananas, carrots, cucumbers, pears, strawberries, tomatoes and soft citrus fruits such as tangerines and satsumas were tested by the committee.

The Guardian, 11.09.07

Bingo

Nearly 4 million people in the UK, the majority of them older women, play bingo at least once a week. But last year 25 clubs out of 464 in England closed due to financial pressure. ... Nearly 80% of over 70s have gone to the same club for more than 10 years.

Unrepresentative?

The 2005 House of Commons is one-third privately educated against 7% in the wider population. There are 79 lawyers, while only eight MPs describe themselves as semi-skilled or unskilled workers.

The Guardian, 17.11.08