



## Hear from our Sumdog schools: Amanda Uden at Rivermead School, Gillingham, Kent

Amanda Uden is a Year 11 teacher, Head of Maths and Data Manager at Rivermead School in Gillingham, Kent.

### About the school

Rivermead School is a community special school based in Gillingham, Kent, catering to learners aged 11–19 with a wide range of additional needs. The school supports pupils working significantly below age-related expectations, with a strong focus on preparing them for life beyond education. With a commitment to inclusion, individual progress, and fostering self-confidence, Rivermead provides tailored learning experiences designed to meet pupils exactly where they are. The school has been using Sumdog on and off since 2011 as a key part of their maths provision.

### Making maths fun and accessible

As a special school, our top priority is finding learning tools that are both accessible and engaging for pupils working at a wide range of levels. When I rejoined Rivermead, I wanted to bring back Sumdog because I'd seen first-hand how effective it was. Sumdog makes maths fun and allows learners to build skills without feeling like they're just working through textbook problems. The pupils engage with it in a way that feels like play — but we know real learning is happening underneath.

In my Year 11 classes, many pupils are working at around a Year 6 level, so it's important we offer support that's matched to their needs while still aiming for progress. I'll often set Sumdog

challenges based on current class topics, focusing on things like accuracy or the number of correct answers. Each week includes a technology-based maths lesson, where pupils can apply what they've learned, revisit tricky concepts, or engage in competitions. For them, this is not just motivating, but empowering.

### A tool that adapts to every learner

What I love about Sumdog is the flexibility. I can create individualised challenges for each student, all within one platform. With learners working at different levels within a single class, it's great to be able to tailor content so precisely. I'll regularly use diagnostic and end-of-topic assessments to pinpoint gaps and measure progress. The data gives me everything I need to track performance, and because it's all built into the platform, there's no extra marking.

Our older pupils, some working at Year 3 or 4 level, enjoy the platform because it doesn't feel patronising. They're still able to access maths in a way that feels age-appropriate and fun. The games create healthy competition — whether that's between classmates, or even across year groups. There's a real buzz when someone rises to the top of the leaderboard, and pupils will spend an entire session trying to beat a high score, meaning lots of extra practice!

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## A positive impact on confidence and attitudes

Since reintroducing Sumdog, I've seen a real shift in how our learners approach maths. It's no secret that many of our pupils struggle with confidence in the subject, but with Sumdog, engagement is much higher. They're more willing to give things a go, and lessons feel more inclusive and energised. On a Friday, our Sumdog sessions have become something learners look forward to — and when they're asking about it in advance, you know it's having an impact.

One pupil in particular stands out. She'd struggled with times tables for years, despite lots of different approaches. With Sumdog, something clicked. She recently told me with pride that she's just one table away from having everything marked green in her times tables report. To see that kind of personal achievement and to know how much it means to her is exactly why I value the platform.

## Supporting teaching and learning school-wide

As both Head of Maths and Data Manager, I also look at usage across the school. Teachers love the simplicity of setting up tasks and seeing instant results. For newer staff or those teaching outside their specialism, Sumdog offers an easy and effective way to deliver high-quality maths content. It's now embedded in a number of classes and is used not only for teaching, but also as a reward for effort and good behaviour.

At Rivermead, we don't set homework because of our pupils' needs, but even within the school day, Sumdog offers a space where learners are motivated, focused, and achieving at their own pace. It's easy to use, it supports our whole-school goals, and most importantly — it works for our pupils.

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