
Mastering Number at Reception and KS1 (Reception focus) trial 2025-26: Parents and carers privacy notice

1 Why are we collecting this data?

The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) has commissioned the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) to carry out an evaluation of Mastering Number at Reception and KS1 (Reception focus), delivered by the National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics (NCETM). The evaluation will use a randomised controlled trial (RCT) design.

The Mastering Number programme, developed by the NCETM and funded by the Department for Education (DfE), is an approach to teaching mathematics focusing on key knowledge and understanding needed in Reception and Key Stage 1. The programme aims to secure firm foundations in the development of good number sense for all children from Reception through to Year 1 and Year 2. The programme provides training to participating teachers and access to lesson resources to support delivery to pupils.

The trial aims to assess the impact of the Mastering Number programme on Reception pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, and their teachers and will take place over the course of the 2025-26 academic year.

This document outlines how pupils' personal data will be collected and processed for the purposes of this trial.

NFER makes decisions about how personal data is used for the trial and is the data controller. NCETM supports the evaluation and is a data processor, processing personal data following NFER instructions. For the delivery of the NCETM programme, the DfE is the data controller and NCETM are again a processor following their instruction on how personal data is used in delivery. Further information about the processing is available here: <https://www.tribalgroupp.com/privacy-policy>

2 What is the legal basis for processing activities?

The legal basis for processing personal data is covered by GDPR Article 6 (1) (f):

Legitimate interests: the processing is necessary for your (or a third party's) legitimate interests unless there is a good reason to protect the individual's personal data which overrides those legitimate interests.

We have carried out a legitimate interest assessment, which demonstrates that the evaluation fulfils one of NFER's core business purpose (undertaking research, evaluation and information activities). It cannot be done without processing personal data, but processing does not override the data subject's interests. The research has wider societal benefits as it will contribute to improving the lives of learners by providing evidence about the impact of teaching techniques used in the classroom.

The legal basis for processing special personal data is:

GDPR Article 9 (2) (j) - processing is necessary for archiving purposes in the public interest, scientific or historical research purposes or statistical purposes in accordance with Article 89(1) based on Union or Member State law which shall be proportionate to the aim pursued, respect the essence of the right to data protection and provide for suitable and specific measures to safeguard the fundamental rights and the interests of the data subject.

The research should not cause damage or distress to the data subjects. Its outcomes will help to build an evidence base for the use of the Mastering Number programme in Reception and will not result in the creation of measures or decisions being made about any individual.

3 How will personal data be obtained?

NFER will collect personal pupil data from all schools participating in the project using NFER's secure online portal. The data will be collected for all pupils enrolled in Reception classes in the 2025/26 academic year.

An observational baseline measure (Early Numeracy checklist) will be completed by Reception teachers for 12 sampled pupils in each Reception class in September 2025. Unique links to each sampled pupil's checklist will be shared with schools by NFER via a secure online portal. The data will be submitted by Reception teachers to NFER using an online survey tool called Tivian.

In June or July 2026, NFER Test Administrators will visit all participating schools and administer the Preschool Early Numeracy Screener – Brief (PENS-B) to 10 of the 12 sampled pupils in the lead Reception teacher's class. The pupil responses will be recorded on a paper form alongside the pupil's name and date of birth.

Further pupil personal data will be obtained from the National Pupil Database (NPD), via the Office for National Statistics (ONS) Secure Research Service using the Department for Education's (DfE's) secure exchange portal and the Office of National Statistics' secure access procedures. To obtain the information from NPD, NFER will provide the Data Sharing Team at the DfE with the names of the sampled pupils, their dates of birth and UPNs, allowing a match to the National Pupil database (NPD). After the matching process has taken place, NFER will then analyse this data using the ONS Secure Research Service (SRS). The SRS system does not allow users to remove or copy data from its servers.

4 What personal data is being collected by this project?

We will collect the following personal data about each child enrolled in Reception in 2025/26 directly from the participating school:

- Full name,
- Date of birth,
- Free School Meal (FSM) status.

In addition, we will collect the following personal data about each of the **12 sampled pupils from each class**,

- Unique Pupil Number (UPN),
- Responses to the baseline observational measure (Early Numeracy) checklist (completed by their class teacher).

For the 10 sampled pupils from the Reception class taught by the Lead Reception teacher who are selected for endpoint testing, we will collect the following additional data:

- Responses to the PENS-B assessment (completed with an NFER Test Administrator)

For the 12 sampled pupils from each Reception class, we will collect the following additional data from the DfE's National Pupil Database (NPD) at the end of the Reception year:

- Early Years Foundation Stage Profile outcomes (EYFSP), sex, Special Educational Needs (SEN) status, absence rate and eligibility for Free School Meals (FSM).

5 Who will personal data be shared with?

NFER will share the full name, date of birth and UPN of sampled pupils with the DfE's NPD team to request the additional background data listed above.

At the end of the evaluation, NFER will share pupils' outcome data (PENS-B scores) with schools.

Three months after the publication of the evaluation report, pseudonymised¹ matched outcome data will be added to the EEF archive, which is managed by the Fischer Family Trust on behalf of EEF and hosted by the Office of National Statistics (ONS). This will enable the EEF and other research teams to use the pseudonymised data as part of subsequent research through the ONS Approved Researcher Scheme. At this point, EEF will become the data controller and is responsible for taking decisions about the means and purposes of processing. NFER will no longer be responsible for the data and will no longer be the data controller. **FFT Education** (<https://fft.org.uk/about-fft/>) and the designated EEF archive evaluator will act as data processors for the archive. Further matching to NPD and other administrative data may take place during subsequent research.

¹ Pseudonymisation is a technique that replaces or removes information (like names or other meaningful identifiers) in a dataset that identifies an individual.

Further information about the EEF archive is available here:

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/projects-and-evaluation/evaluation/evaluation-guidance-and-resources/evaluation-data-archive>

The baseline observational checklist data is collected via Tivian which stores survey responses in Azure and Amazon Web Services (AWS) data centre infrastructure in the European Union.

Tivian's privacy notice is available here: <https://www.tivian.com/uk/privacy-policy-2/>

6 Is personal data being transferred outside of the UK?

When NFER use Tivian to administer the baseline observational checklist, data is securely stored in the European Union (EU). The baseline observational checklist will contain pupils' names, their date of birth and their teacher's responses for the child.

7 How long will personal data be retained?

NFER will share all the pseudonymised data with EEF's data archive processor within three months of the publication of the report. NFER and NCETM will delete any personal data after one year from the publication of the final report (due to be published May 2027). Once NFER delete the data, EEF will retain sole data controller responsibility for the archived data.

The deletion process is currently planned for May 2028.

8 What are my rights with respect to personal data?

NFER handles personal data in accordance with the rights given to individuals under data protection legislation. Under certain circumstances data subjects have the right:

- to request access to information that is held about them (a data subject access request).
- to have personal data rectified if it is inaccurate or incomplete.
- to request the deletion or removal of personal data where there is no compelling reason for its continued processing.
- to restrict processing of personal data (for example, permitting its storage but no further processing).
- to object to processing
- to data portability
- not to be subject to decisions based purely on automated processing where it produces a legal or similarly significant effect.

We may need to request specific information from you to help us confirm your identity and ensure your right to access the information (or to exercise any of your other rights). This helps us ensure that personal information is not disclosed to any person who has no right to receive it.

Although we value your child's participation in this evaluation and their contribution to important findings, you can withdraw their data from the evaluation activities at any time. If you withdraw, unless otherwise instructed, we will use any data we have collected up to that point in our analysis. Please note that withdrawing your child's data will not be possible once data analysis has commenced (from September 2026). Withdrawing your child's data will not impact the participation of your child's school in the Mastering Number programme. If at any time you wish to withdraw your child's data from the evaluation activities, or correct errors in it, please contact: masteringnumber@nfer.ac.uk

9 Who can I contact about this project?

Any queries about the day-to-day management of the data processing outlined in this privacy notice, please contact the project team at masteringnumber@nfer.ac.uk.

If you have concerns about the way NFER processes personal data or wish to exercise a data subject right (see section 8), please contact the Compliance Officer: compliance@nfer.ac.uk.

If you remain dissatisfied, you have the right to lodge a complaint about data protection issues with the Information Commissioner's Office, the body responsible for enforcing data protection legislation in the UK, at <https://ico.org.uk/concerns/>.

10 Updates

We keep this privacy notice under review to make sure it is up to date and accurate. Any changes will be noted. We recommend that you revisit this information from time to time. The date when this privacy notice was last updated is shown in the footer at the bottom of this document.