Improving Numeracy Attainment Through Targeted Support
St Serfs RC Primary School

Shannon Miller – Class Teacher
Stephanie McGlinchey – Teacher
Catherine Mullen – Head Teacher

Rationale

This project addressed ongoing schoolwide issues with pupil understanding of worded problems and their inability to find key information within a text. Pupils were having issues breaking down texts to find relevant information to help them answer questions/solve worded problems.

Stretch Aim: By June 2021, the group of targeted pupils will be at the appropriate levels for their age/stage within numeracy.
Aim 1: By February 2021, 100% of targeted pupils can read a worded mathematical problem, identify then use the correct operation. At the beginning of the project 60% of the pupils could identify key words and 40% could use this vocabulary to solve the problem.

Method

- The Class Teacher gave a weekly teaching input (beginning of the week) surrounding scanning for information and picking out key words. There were 3 or 4 weekly challenges and worded maths problems testing pupil skills in these areas.
- Class Teacher challenged the whole class with worded problems but focussed attention on the targeted pupils and observed if they could both identify the mathematical vocabulary then utilise it when answering the question (regardless of reaching the correct answer)
- Received Quality Improvement coaching support from Improvement Coordinator through weekly virtual calls.
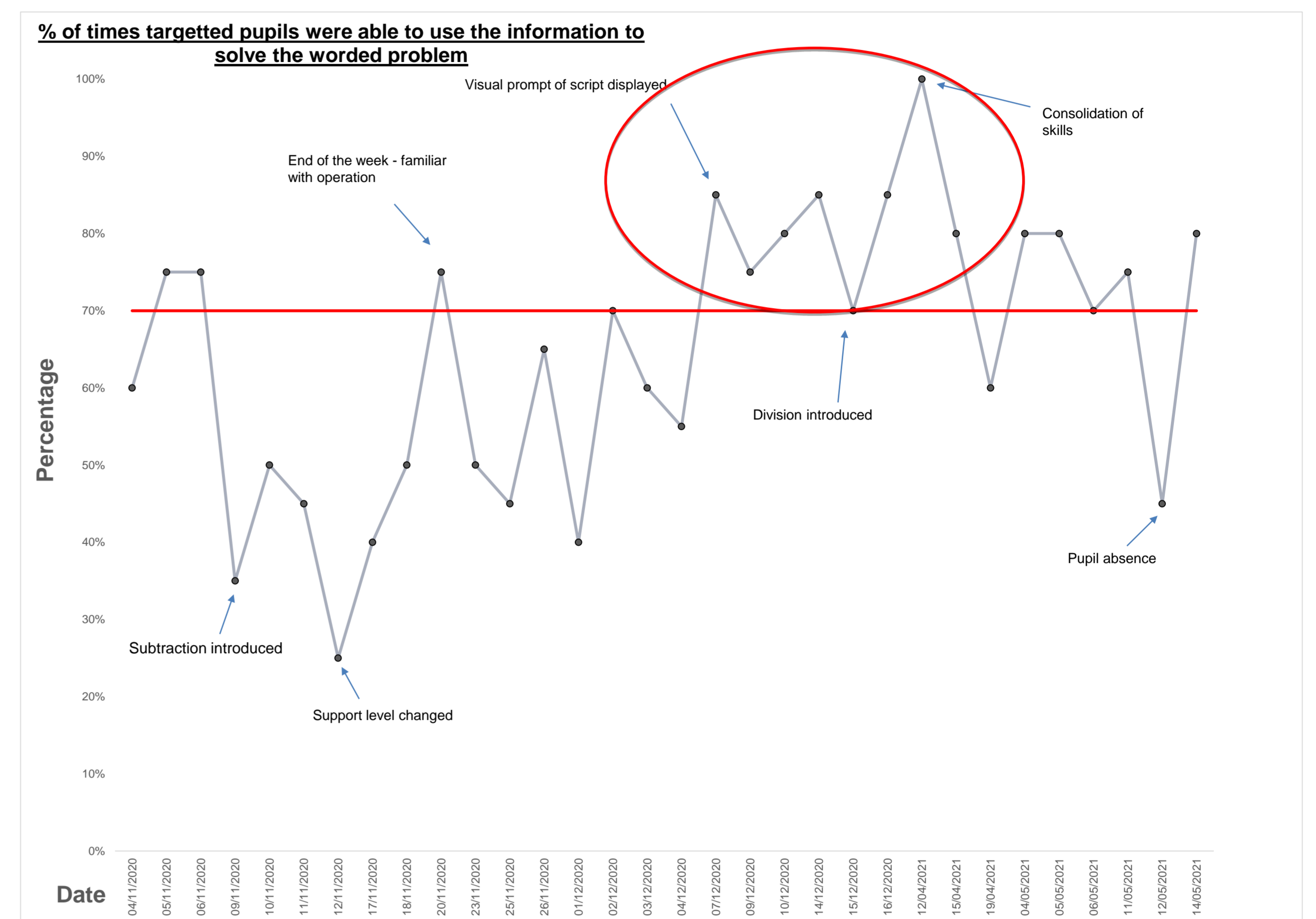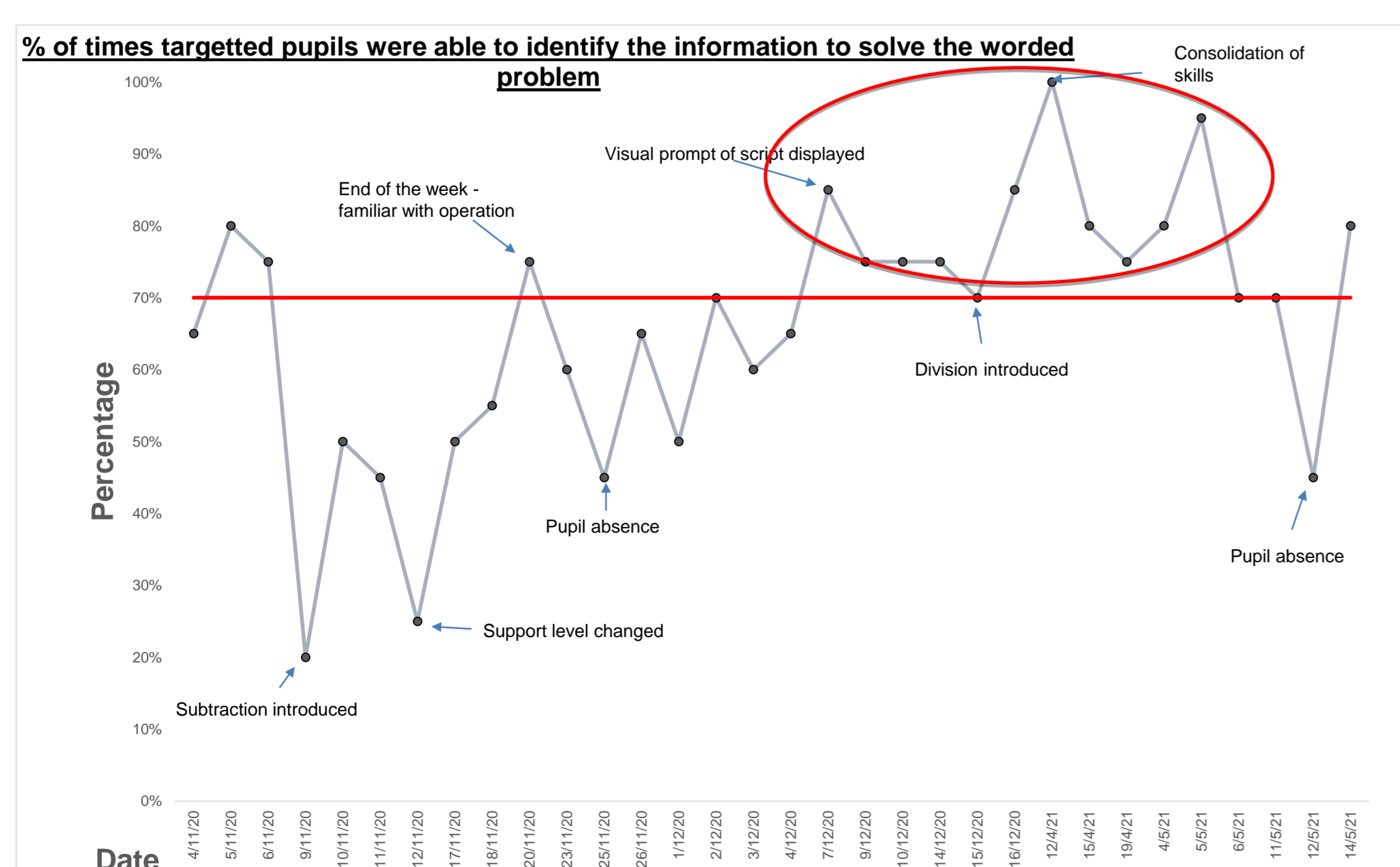- Weekly support sessions and opportunity for professional dialogue

Process Change

- Baseline information gathered at beginning of project – 60% of targeted pupils could identify key words in a worded maths problem. 40% of targeted pupils could use the key words to help them solve the problem they were presented with.
- Daily discussion and professional dialogue surrounding project
- Adjusting levels of support tailored by the Class Teacher as project progressed
- Script introduced to pupils to encourage finding key vocabulary and using tools available to them

Achievements

- Whole class engagement with project
- Class Teacher more confident in assessing pupil progress and knowing exactly which numeracy/literacy skills covered
- Pupils utilising taught skills with increasingly less support
- Shared methods with cluster schools

Results

- 100% of targeted pupils can now read a worded mathematical problem, identify the key vocabulary needed then solve it effectively
- Pupil confidence has improved
- Pupils are starting to apply approaches to other areas of the curriculum

% of times targetted pupils were able to identify the information to solve the worded problem

% of times targetted pupils were able to use the information to solve the worded problem

Conclusions

- Script approach was successful in supporting pupils
- Class Teacher confident in collecting data and using it in their next steps with learners

Key Learning Points

- Allocated weekly time for improvement methodology invaluable to all staff involved
- Use of strategies intended for targeted pupils has benefitted whole class
- Use of methodology built confidence in subject area and teacher ability to assess pupil progress
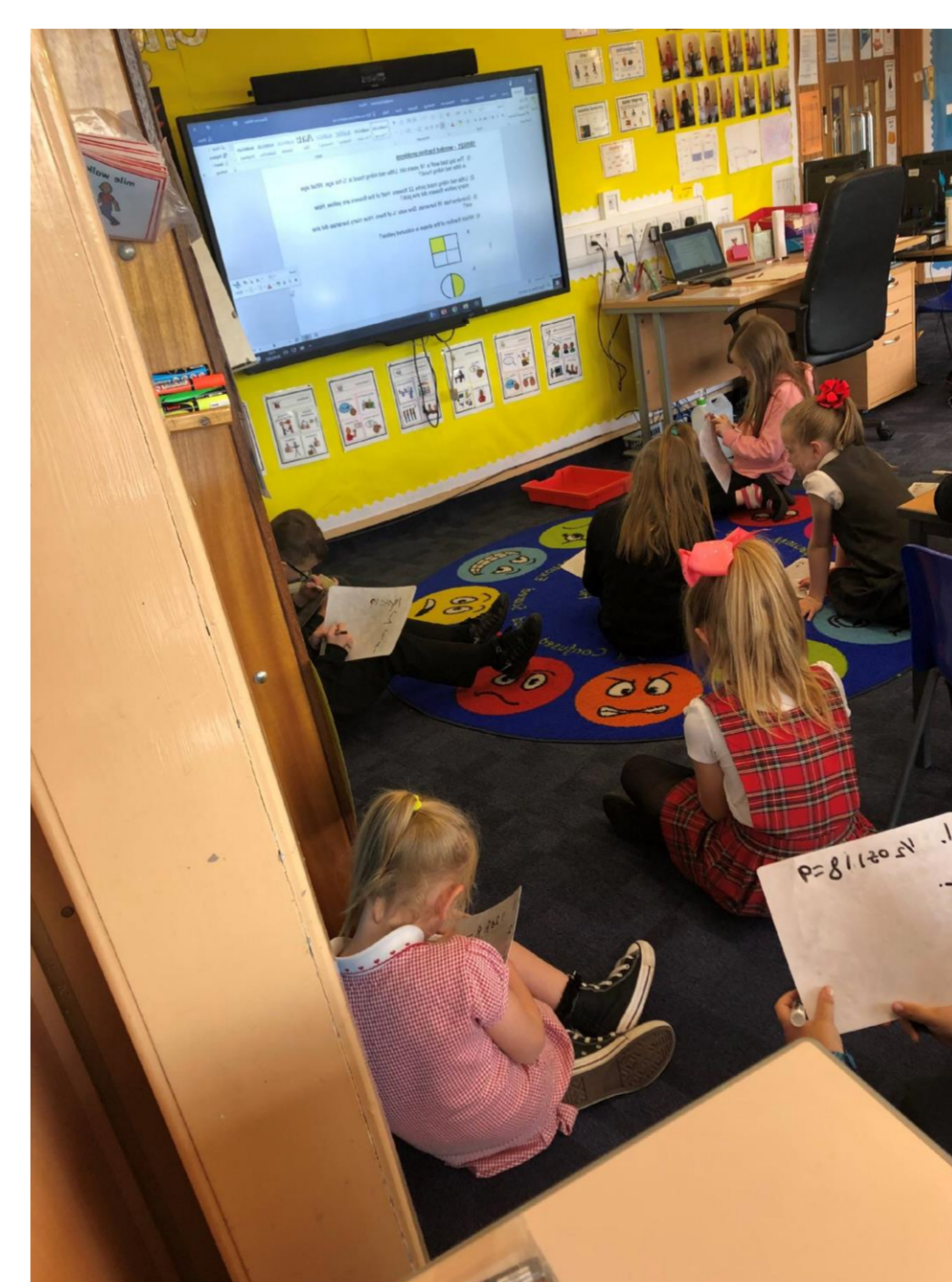
"I still sometimes use the script to help me but now I am more confident in trying by myself."
Pupil 1

"I now feel ready for challenge in my maths problems."
Pupil 2

"Its easy. All I do is find the words I need and ignore the rest!"
Pupil 3

Next Steps

- Pupil application of strategies to other curricular areas
- Continuing to adjust levels of support until pupils can use the skills completely independently
- Sharing strategies and findings with other colleagues