

MATHS · ADULT REFERENCE

Manipulatives — Audit & Setup

What every classroom needs and how to ensure it's used

Why manipulatives matter — even in KS2

The 'manipulatives are for younger children' problem

Minimum kit per classroom

Year group	Essential manipulatives
Reception	Counters (50+), cubes (200+), pattern blocks, sorting trays, number rods, dice, dominoes



Year group	Essential manipulatives
Year 1-2	All of the above + ten-frames, hundred squares, number tracks, place value cards (TO + HTO), bead strings
Year 3-4	Place value cards (HTO + ThHTO), counters with positive/negative, fraction strips, money sets, geoboards, protractors
Year 5-6	All of the above + decimal place value cards, fraction circles, percentage strips, coordinate grids, 3D shape sets, scientific calculators (limited use)

Specific high-leverage manipulatives

Storage strategy



Auditing existing stock

Common pitfalls

Maths Lead's manipulatives audit checklist

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| ■ Walk through every classroom; list manipulatives present | ■ Photograph storage setups for reference |
| ■ Identify gaps: missing ten-frames? Missing place value cards? | ■ Check fractions resources for KS2 specifically |
| ■ Identify damaged or outdated items to discard | ■ Calculate replacement budget needed |
| ■ Ensure every classroom has a 'minimum kit' | ■ Plan a CPD session on using manipulatives in upper KS2 |
| ■ Set norm: manipulatives accessible at child height in all rooms | ■ Annual re-audit in May to plan summer purchases |

