

## CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editor of the *Mathematical Gazette*

DEAR SIR,

I read with great interest the article on the School Mathematics Project by Dr. Cundy in *The Mathematical Gazette* for February, 1963. You may be interested to learn of our experiences here since we started to use D. E. Mansfield's text last September on the new 11 + intake. The result after two terms is most gratifying.

In most years the youngsters come here having already decided "I can't do sums," or the opposite. In fact they are already sorted into those who think they can and those who think they can't and we have found that the sense of inferiority of the latter increases as the time goes on. With this book the transition from primary to grammar school brings a complete change into mathematics from "sums." This in itself is a stimulus and the fact that on this new work—new to ALL—they start level means that the worst is as well off as the best. Incidentally we have found that nearly all the old routine has had to be done but has just happened as something necessary to achieve some new and exciting end. It has therefore been done unnoticed and painlessly.

From my own point of view and that of my colleagues the approach has provided a most exciting and rewarding two terms of teaching. The reactions of the boys have been most stimulating for obviously they have found the sense of exploration just as exciting. It has been nearly impossible to plan a lesson except in very broad outline for the children themselves produce ideas which are valuable sometimes and at all times evidence of thought. After all this is one of our objects in teaching. Farey series and the drawing of lattices for instance produce the question "why don't they measure angles this way?" and one was or could easily be involved in tangents if one wished. When I did in an odd moment the "1089" problem with them one day a whole lot came back later on when I had forgotten all about it: "look sir, it works in every scale."

Everything has been worth it from this enthusiasm and interest which holds both the top and the bottom of the 11 + lists.

Yours faithfully

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To the Editor of the *Mathematical Gazette*

DEAR SIR,

A letter some time ago from Mr. Wheeler (*Gazette* 42, 197–200) pointed out that the notation  $\sin^{-1}$ , unlike its rival  $\arcsin$ , is consistent with modern usage where manipulations such as  $TT^{-1}x = T^{-1}Tx = x$  are commonplace. He joined his advocacy of the notation  $\sin^{-1}x$  to a plea for a "consistent policy by examiners to reserve the symbol with the lower case initial letter for the principal value of the inverse function,