



**SUCCESS CUBED: Teachers Frances Hanna and Clare Enright**

# Maths with a smile

BY BRÓNACH NÍ THUAMA

A WEST Belfast primary school's use of an innovative new maths learning tool is boosting not only numeracy but pupil confidence too, say teachers.

St Oliver Plunkett Primary School on the Glen Road has embraced the interactive educational resource Izak9 to help children engage more with maths. Year 6 teacher Clare Enright says: "The biggest benefit of using Izak9 within the classroom is that it is fun. Coming from a literacy background, I always thought of numeracy as a more academic, pen and paper subject – with lots of rote learning and recalling facts.

"But Izak9 means maths isn't like that, it's fun, exciting, interactive, practical, hands-on learning with opportunities for children to practice maths without the fear of failure."

Izak9 consists of 27 cubes with different combinations of colour, number and shape, which have been proven to increase pupil performance by injecting enjoyment into numeracy through practical learning. Teacher Frances

Hanna says Izak9 provides children with "a stimulus for problem solving".

"Izak9 provides me with opportunities to observe my class and use the outcomes to inform future teaching and learning," she said.

Both teachers have recently been trained as Izak9 'superusers' to share leading practice in the teaching and learning of maths using the resource.

"Using Izak9 in the classroom, we saw the immediate impact that it had on our pupils," added Frances.

"We saw mixed ability groupings working with each other in a spirit of learning and teaching, they were working with high levels of synergy."

She says that children are "eager to take part" when Izak9 is used in class.

"For us this is one of the main benefits of using Izak9. We were pleased to see pupils who were lacking confidence in literacy and numeracy – and talking and listening – taking part and talking to their peers and explaining in their own way how they carried out calculations."