



NO GIRL LEFT BEHIND: TT Rock Stars Fire Up All Girls Primary Class in Top of the Rocks Competition



**Axe Mandalaybae AKA
Rachel O'Doherty - Fourth Class Teacher,
St Ursula's**

Fact File

School: St Ursula's Catholic
Primary School

Ages: 4-11 years

Where? Waterford, Ireland

Rock Stars users since 2022

Worksheets are a Time-suck

Rachel O'Doherty, Fourth class (Year 5) teacher, was finding it incredibly time-consuming to cater to all the different needs in her mixed-ability class.

"Obviously they're not all on the same level. And, you know, trying to cater to all needs in the one lesson was a challenge," Rachel states.

Rachel was setting different work for the huge range of abilities in her class and giving them so many worksheets was eating into her time.

"Some will be very confident in maths and really good. And others have no confidence whatsoever and don't think they're good at it and probably think they're worse than they actually are."

Some of the girls had so little belief in their maths ability, Rachel could hear half the class grumble as soon as she'd say to get their maths books out.

"It's beneficial and worthwhile."

Inwardly, Rachel would groan at the thought of having to create another different fun lesson to keep her girls engaged.

Rachel could have taken the grumbles in her maths lesson to be a reflection on her teaching, but she knew better.

She knew it was the children's confidence and belief in themselves.

So when Waterford Libraries offered her the opportunity for her class to benefit from Times Tables Rock Stars, she jumped at the chance.

Once a week, Rachel's class enjoys playing Times Tables Rock Stars on iPads as part of their lesson.

"They go on themselves and they work at their own level. And then they can do it at home as well," Rachel said.

But it was the Top of the Rocks competition where Rachel saw a jump in enthusiasm...

"They were hugely motivated to do it. There was another school at the start that was ahead of us. And some of my girls are really competitive and, you know, really want to win so they were playing loads at home."

Rachel's class had the shared iPads for the whole 3 days of the competition. The girls loved it and Rachel did too...

"Also I could go on and see the leaderboard," making it super easy to see who in her class was benefitting the most.

"It makes them want to do better."

Rachel has seen a massive increase in her students' confidence in times tables...

"Their recall of times tables is much quicker and obviously that helps with their maths too".

Rachel is delighted that the time has come to teach long multiplication.

She knows it's not going to be the hard slog that it can be with children who don't know their times tables.

Even with the children who have low confidence, Rachel has seen a huge improvement in this subject, more so than in previous years.

Importantly, Rachel believes Times Tables Rock Stars is "inclusive and accessible. Like, everyone, every child, all abilities can access it."

And this makes a huge difference in how she plans, teaches, and differentiates work for her children.

"If I said, "let's do another page in our maths book"," Rachel jokingly rolls her eyes, "They're like, yeah, they won't like that. But yes, we'll do more Times Tables Rock Stars," laughs Rachel.

"It's not a chore. It makes maths fun and the pupils enjoy it. And I might get to do more maths in the day because of that."

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