Use questioning to encourage talk and discussion

The role of questioning in the classroom is an important one. Encouraging children to question you, themselves and each other, is a large part of helping them to develop into mathematical thinkers. We should aim to help children see that the best mathematicians are likely to be the ones with the right questions, not just the right answers.

Consider integrating some of the questions below into maths lessons and see how simple it can be for talk to be at the heart of maths in your school.

- Have you found all the possibilities?
- What would happen if...?
- Can you prove that...?
- How could we find out...?
- What numbers do you think it might not work for?
- What is the pattern?
- Can you explain why this works?
- Can you convince me/your partner that...?
- What could we think of that would disprove this?
- What is the same, and what is different about...?
- Is this statement always, sometimes or never true?
- What else would we need to find out?
- Why is this wrong?
- What might I have done to ....to get...?
- What else might we ask?
- Is there an alternative answer?
- How many other ways can you find to...?
- How could we best organise this information...?
- Why doesn't this always work? When does it work?
- What do you predict will happen if...?
- How would you convince an alien that...? How could you explain that to an alien?