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***Assessment Component 1: What is your understanding of the Role of the Maths and Numeracy Co-ordinator?***

**The Role of the Maths and Numeracy Co-ordinator: A Reflective Journal.**

**Theoretical Overview.**

During my placement, it became clear that the role of the Maths and Numeracy Co-ordinator is shaped by both policy and pedagogy. The Curriculum for Wales (Welsh Government, 2020) presents numeracy as a cross-curricular responsibility, meaning the co-ordinator supports not only maths teaching but also how numeracy is embedded across other Areas of Learning and Experience. This wider influence shifts the role from subject leadership to driving whole-school progression.

Through interviewing the school's Maths and Numeracy Co-ordinator, I was introduced to the use of 26 numeracy "threads" (Appendix 1). These are grounded in Curriculum for Wales guidance, which promotes progression as a flexible, cross-curricular process rather than a fixed path (Welsh Government, 2020). Rather than acting as rigid checklists, these threads serve as developmental guides, helping learners revisit and deepen key concepts over time. This reflects Bruner's (1966) spiral curriculum, where understanding builds through revisiting core ideas in increasing complexity. For teachers, this approach provides clear, manageable steps in progression, which is especially valuable in mixed-ability classrooms.

The shift away from fixed levels towards a more fluid understanding of progression also aligns with Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development, which focuses on what learners are ready to achieve with appropriate support. Estyn (2023) highlights that schools with strong numeracy leadership often use formative assessment effectively to plan targeted support and guide next steps.

Estyn (2023) also highlights the value of authentic, real-world contexts in reinforcing numeracy skills. For instance, Pentrepoeth C.P. School effectively utilised outdoor environments to apply numeracy in meaningful ways across the curriculum. This reflects the Curriculum's emphasis on purposeful learning that connects with learners' lives and promotes deeper understanding (Welsh Government, 2022). The co-ordinator's role is not

just about delivering maths outcomes, but about building a shared culture where numeracy belongs to everyone.

### **Reflections and Practical understanding.**

Spending time alongside the Maths and Numeracy Co-ordinator gave me a much deeper understanding of how this role works in practice. While the Curriculum for Wales and its guidance documents provide the foundations, what stood out most was the way this co-ordinator brought that vision to life in ways that were both strategic and practical.

One of the clearest examples of this was the focus on curriculum mapping. During my placement, the co-ordinator regularly worked with staff to plan progression in numeracy using the 26 threads (Appendix 1). These served as a visual guide, breaking down big ideas like reasoning, measuring or number sense into smaller, teachable steps. Staff across the school referred to these threads when planning, which helped maintain consistency without feeling overly prescriptive. This bespoke approach ensured that each teacher could adapt planning to meet the needs of their class, while still following a shared structure. There was a clear sense that staff were working together, not just following instructions.

Another important part of the role was supporting teachers in identifying where learners were in their mathematical development. Snapshot assessments were used frequently which are short, informal tasks that gave staff a clearer picture of what children could do and what needed more attention. This matched up with what Estyn (2023) described in effective schools, where co-ordinators supported staff in using assessment to inform timely interventions and targeted challenges. It also helped promote a culture of responsive teaching, where the next steps were shaped by pupil needs, not just curriculum demands.

What particularly impressed me was how the co-ordinator encouraged the use of manipulatives. Across Foundation Phase and lower Key Stage 2, concrete resources like Numicon, place value counters, and bead strings were embedded into everyday teaching. She talked about the importance of helping pupils build mental models displaying ideas that resonated with Bruner's stages of representation (Bruner, 1966). Her focus wasn't just on helping pupils 'get it right' but on helping them understand why it worked. For learners with additional needs, this emphasis on practical resources made a real difference, particularly when abstract thinking was a barrier.

There was also a clear effort to move away from worksheet-heavy teaching. While some written tasks were still used, particularly when pupils needed extra practice, the co-ordinator encouraged more practical and discussion-based tasks that developed reasoning and problem-solving. This echoed what Estyn (2021) described in schools that promote deeper mathematical thinking through active and purposeful learning.

One area I hadn't considered before this placement was how the co-ordinator worked with families and the wider school community. She had run several parental workshops, including one on supporting multiplication at home. Although attendance wasn't always high, she spoke about how useful these sessions were for building confidence among parents who may have had negative experiences with maths themselves. She also liaised with governors and shared updates on school-wide numeracy progress, helping keep everyone in the loop.

Something else I valued was her focus on integrating numeracy into other areas. I saw pupils collecting and interpreting data in science, measuring in design tasks, and solving real-world problems in outdoor learning sessions. These moments brought numeracy to life. They also showed how the co-ordinator worked closely with other AoLE leads to ensure maths wasn't isolated but connected across the curriculum.

Throughout my time in school, I came to see how much of the co-ordinator's role involved building relationships. It wasn't just about systems or data, but about trust, supporting colleagues, sharing ideas, and making space for professional dialogue. As a teacher in training, it reminded me how important it is to understand the 'bigger picture' of curriculum development, and to view leadership not as control, but as enabling others to grow in confidence and consistency.

### **Limitations and Barriers.**

Although the Maths and Numeracy Co-ordinator in my placement school was clearly knowledgeable and proactive, there were still limitations that affected how far her work could reach. One of the biggest challenges she mentioned was time. Like many subject leads, she had a full teaching timetable, which meant limited capacity to observe lessons, model strategies, or offer regular one-to-one support. Estyn (2023) also notes that in some schools, leadership responsibilities can become overwhelming when not balanced with adequate release time or staffing support.

Another issue was staff confidence. While some teachers were enthusiastic about embedding numeracy across the curriculum, others felt unsure of how to do it in a way that felt meaningful and manageable. The co-ordinator worked hard to offer support, but progress varied depending on individual confidence and experience. Estyn (2021) also highlights this as a barrier, especially when cross-curricular numeracy is viewed as an add-on rather than part of a shared approach.

Parental engagement also proved tricky. Although the co-ordinator had organised helpful workshops, attendance was inconsistent. She mentioned that work patterns, childcare responsibilities, and sometimes parents' own negative experiences with maths affected participation. While the workshops that did go ahead were well received, finding ways to widen access remained a challenge.

There were also practical concerns, such as accessing high-quality manipulatives or digital tools. While the school had some resources in place, expanding them across all year groups was dependent on funding and staff training.

To address these barriers, the school had begun to consider recorded video sessions for parents and engaged in collaborative cluster training with nearby schools, and the use of internal drop-in sessions for staff. These strategies felt realistic and sustainable, not perfect solutions, but small steps in the right direction.

### **Personal Professional Development.**

Spending time with the Maths and Numeracy Co-ordinator helped me realise how much subject leadership involves supporting others, not just having strong personal knowledge. I saw clear links to the Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership, particularly in how she promoted professional dialogue, supported progression through formative assessment, and helped make cross-curricular numeracy feel purposeful and accessible.

This experience made me reflect on my own development. I have often focused mostly on planning and delivering lessons, but now I'm more aware of the importance of whole-school thinking such as how consistency, collaboration, and confidence in numeracy are built over time. It's made me want to strengthen my own understanding of progression and get more confident in identifying small steps in learning. I'd also like to explore leadership pathways in the future. This experience has shifted how I see myself growing as a practitioner by helping me think more strategically and recognise the value of supporting others, not just my own class.

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## **Appendices:**

### **Appendix 1 – Interview notes with Maths and Numeracy Co-ordinator.**

- Curriculum Mapping - tick sheet.
- ↳ all Numeracy leads met on a course to discuss threads
- 26 threads - like a tick sheet.
- ↳ descriptions of learning for over 3 years how do they go from year 1 to year 9.
- ↳ description of what it looks like.
- ↳ Stage not age for ALN.
- ↳ Bespoke planning for ALN - all needs catered for.
- ↳ Snapshot assessment. RAG.
- ↳ assessing on Friday
- ↳ Whole School Tracker and WG Scores.
- ↳ 3 evaluations every term Pick focus
- ↳ manipulative Maths for gaps.
- ↳ reduce Worksheets use where necessary.
- ↳ Engagement is so important.
- ↳ Community things: Amazon Wishlist.
- ↳ resource audit, what's needed Shopping list.
- ↳ wishlist bought by parents and brought in BSE resources
- ↳ Multiply workshop, Bingo activities, number day, enterprise pupil jobs > parents involved.
- ↳ food sorted by shop and weight

- Thinking outside the box.
- Link everything, make it authentic AotE.
- Take up help > parents + governors.
- AotE training a term, cluster training, cluster training + questionnaire > training needs, what they lead, organise training from this.
- Data handling course > AotE.
- Keeping up with progress development.
- Don't be afraid to admit flaws.
- Improve engagement > questionnaire, what would they like to learn, manipulative maths > make interesting.
- ↳ Real life context. Every day there is opportunities for teaching maths,