

The role of the subject leader in raising standards in mathematics

A mathematics subject leader's principal responsibility is to ensure that their school's ambitions for high quality teaching and learning in mathematics, leading to high levels of achievement for all pupils, are shared and pursued by all those who teach or support the subject. The Secondary National Strategy has provided a great deal of training, guidance and practical support materials to assist subject leaders in fulfilling their crucial role. All mathematics subject leaders in maintained schools in England should be invited to a programme of Subject Leader Development Meetings (SLDM). These are sometimes known by different titles locally and are held regularly by local authorities (LAs) in order to keep subject leaders informed about and trained in key Strategy developments. It is also important to have access to and be familiar with the *Mathematics subject leader development folder* designed to collate the resources provided through the SLDM.

A significant aspect of the subject leader's role is establishing agreement across the department about what mathematics is taught when and how it is best taught to maximise pupils' progress. These decisions need to be recorded. A departmental scheme of work is the usual vehicle for this. The construction of a scheme of work should rarely involve wholesale change. Instead, the scheme of work should normally evolve through a planned and progressive approach to reviewing current practices, trialling and refining improvements, and updating the record accordingly. This is most powerfully achieved when the work:

- is undertaken collaboratively, involving all those involved in implementing the plans
- focuses on both the 'what' and the 'how' of teaching and learning
- is strategically planned and integral to departmental life
- has the active support of senior leaders in the school.

This Framework and the accompanying planning toolkit resources are designed to support these processes. In deciding how to prioritise improvement activities, subject leaders should consider:

- pupils' past, current and expected attainment in mathematics, including their rates of progress across both key stages, and the extent to which the department is likely to meet targets for raising standards
- analysis of pupils' attainment and progress within different aspects of the subject
- how well the key processes are reflected at the heart of the department's approach to planning and teaching
- the extent to which the curriculum opportunities identified in the programmes of study are planned and provided
- how the teaching objectives and expectations of pupils compare with the level and rigour of those in this Framework
- outcomes from surveys of pupils' attitudes to mathematics and the extent to which pupils see themselves as confident learners of the subject
- outcomes from departmental monitoring of the strengths and weaknesses of planning and teaching

The Framework for secondary mathematics

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- the extent to which the department is staffed by non-specialist teachers of mathematics or others who require support with their planning and teaching.

Subject leaders also have two further related roles:

- monitoring the implementation of the departmental schemes of work and other policies and, crucially, evaluating their impact on the learning and attainment of pupils. Further guidance on this aspect of work can be found in the Strategy's *Middle leaders' self-evaluation guide* available at:
www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/secondary/keystage3/all/respub/ws_midlead_selfeval.
- supporting and promoting the continuing professional development (CPD) of departmental colleagues and all who contribute to the teaching of mathematics in the school. Information on Strategy support for CPD should be available through LAs. Other sources, national and local, can be found through the National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics at www.ncetm.org.uk.