

	Targed/target	Yr hyn yr wyf wedi'i wneud yn yr aseiniad hwn What I have done in this assignment...
Targed/Target 1	Consider incorporating some headings (like 'Introduction' and 'Conclusion') to signpost readers in your upcoming assignments. Use the Academic Phrasebank for more guidance.	For this assignment I used the academic phrase bank for guidance and incorporated headings to signpost the readers
Targed/Target 2	Continue working on your previous target on referencing skills. There were some inaccuracies in your use of citations and reference list. Please consult the latest Harvard Referencing handbook to ensure consistent accurate referencing.	I consulted the latest Harvard Referencing handbook to ensure consistent, accurate referencing.
Targed/Target 3	Carefully proofread your work. It's essential to address instances of high-similarity text in academic writing. Consider paraphrasing or rewriting some sentences in your own words to prevent any issues related to academic misconduct.	I ensured to paraphrase some sentences in my own words to prevent any issues related to academic misconduct

How a school develops one aspect of it's SDP; a report that critically reflects on the actions, impact, and evidence base

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Introduction

This report will provide an explanation of how a school develops one aspect of its School Development Plan (SDP) by critically reflecting on the how the priority was addressed, and impact measured with an evidence-based framework.

The school development plan is taken from an English-medium primary school in the Swansea area. Currently, the school has 427 pupils on roll aged 3-11 and they are organised into 16 classes (Estyn, 2020, p.1). In addition, 21% of pupils are eligible for free school meals which is above the Welsh average of 18%. 30% of pupils have been identified by the school as having special educational needs, which is above the Welsh average of 21% (Estyn, 2020, p.1). A majority of pupils are white British ethnicity and come from homes where English is the main language, a minority of pupils speak Welsh at home. The SDP was written primarily by the senior leadership team of the school but also had input from a wider body of stakeholders including school staff, governors, and parents. In accordance with the guidelines outlined by the British Educational Research Association (BERA) in 2018, the designation "School X" will be consistently employed throughout this report. This deliberate choice is made to safeguard the privacy of the school by upholding anonymity.

Literature Review

There isn't a single definitive piece of literature that universally describes what an SDP is, as the concept and its implementation process can vary across educational systems and regions. MacBeath (2005) supports this statement further adding that there is no 'perfect way' to undertake school improvement (MacBeath, 2005, p.13).

In Wales, guidance published in 2014 describes an SDP as the 'schools strategic plan for improvement' (Gov, 2014, p.3). The guidance states that an SDP should set out actions that a school will take to improve learner outcomes through 'Evaluation, strategic planning and reviewing impact' (Gov, 2014, p.34). The idea that an SDP can improve learner outcomes is supported by Demetriou and Kyriakides (2012) who found that school self-evaluation (SSE) had a positive outcome on student achievement by involving stakeholders and using Educational Effectiveness Research to develop SSE procedures.

Although this evidence is useful, Estyn (2016) challenges the validity of the Welsh Government guidance and provides more recent recommendations in line with the

curriculum reform. Estyn (2016) outline common tasks that all schools need to address at all stages of their development including 'improving standards and wellbeing' for pupils and ensuring that 'continuous professional development of staff improves the quality of provision and outcomes for students' (Estyn, 2016, p.3). This is supported by Hattie (2012) who highlights the significance of professional development for teachers and how it can contribute to improved student outcomes.

Even more recently, the Welsh Government has released new school improvement guidance which replaces the 2014 guidance that places the requirements of the 'The Education (School Development Plans) (Wales) Regulations 2014' in relation to the new framework for accountability, evaluations, and improvement (Gov, 2022). Under the new guidance, the accountability system is described as the processes implemented to ensure that evaluation and improvement is functioning effectively. The guidance states that it should not be the driver for school improvement activity, although it can contribute to it, instead it should ensure that problems are identified and address (Gov, 2022).

Similarly, Smylie et al (2020) examines the role of leadership in school accountability and discusses how effective leadership contributes to school improvement. Smylie et al (2020) also addresses the challenges that leaders face in being accountable for student outcomes, the Welsh Government (2022) aims to address these challenges by providing clarity and understanding to school leaders about their roles and responsibilities.

To summarise, in Wales, the overarching purpose of school improvement is to ensure the best learning experiences and outcomes for all students, promoting high standards and aspirations. Under the Curriculum for Wales, a key focus for schools will be supporting every learner to progress in line with the four purposes of the curriculum (Gov, 2022).

The key priority from the SDP that I have chosen to focus on for this assignment is 'Develop our whole-school approach to promoting and nurturing positive relationships across the school community'.

Research shows that promoting and nurturing positive relationships among students, teachers and parents can support children's social and emotional development. Eccles and Roeser (2011) emphasise the importance of schools as social contexts that significantly shape children's social and emotional development. In addition, student well-being is also linked to academic success. Similarly, Battistich et al (1995) support the view that positive relationships contribute to a supportive and inclusive school environment, fostering the well-

being of students. This, in turn, has been linked to improved academic performance and achievement in schools.

Following on from this, positive teacher-student relationships can create a positive classroom environment which has an impact on factors like motivation, engagement and behaviour (Roorda, 2011). This priority doesn't just apply to teachers and students, it also links to parental involvement and Epstein (2010) argues that positive relationships with parents leads to increased parental involvement which contributes to better academic achievement and overall student success. Positive relationships can also contribute to a positive school culture that help shape students' attitudes, behaviours and overall well-being (Cohen et al, 2009). In addition, building positive relationships can help foster a culture of respect and empathy which is essential for conflict resolution and bullying prevention (Hawkins, Pepler and Craig, 2001).

In addition, developing the whole school approach to promoting and nurturing positive relationships also links to the Curriculum for Wales (2022) and is integral to achieving the four purposes. One of the four purposes of the Curriculum states that children should develop as 'healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society' (Donaldson, 2015, p30). Donaldson (2015) argues that children should become healthy, confident individuals who 'form positive relationships based on trust and mutual respect' and are 'building their mental and emotional well-being by developing confidence, resilience and empathy' (Donaldson, 2015, p.30). By promoting positive relationships across the school this will contribute to developing children into healthy, confident individuals.

As well as aligning with the priorities of the Curriculum for Wales, promoting and nurturing positive relationships also supports the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (2015). The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (2015) relies on positive relationships to create a supportive environment for sustainable development. By promoting collaboration, community engagement, and a long-term perspective, positive relationships contribute to the overall success of initiatives aimed at ensuring the well-being of current and future generations.

Overall, this priority is crucial for children's social and emotional development and aligns with the Curriculum for Wales (2022) and the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (2015). This section has provided a review of the literature on the school development process as well as a review of the literature on promoting and nurturing positive relationships.

Developing an Action Point

This section will outline the process that School X undertakes to develop their SDP including self-evaluation, data analysis, involving stakeholders and strategic planning. The first stage the school took to develop their development plan was self-evaluation. School self-evaluation is a process 'by which members of staff in a school reflect on their practice and identify areas to simulate improvement in areas of pupil and professional learning' (Chapman & Sammons, 2013, p.2). Following on from this, Gomez-Jorge and Diaz-Garrido (2023) states that self-evaluation is a key stage in school improvement process and allows for development to be more effective. The school undertakes self-evaluation through assessment and analysis of the current state of the school. This is done by analysing student data, assessing the schools' strengths and weaknesses, and identifying areas for improvement.

During the assessment and analysis process the school also has input from various stakeholders including school staff, pupils, parents, and community members. Involving stakeholders in the school development process brings diverse perspectives, experiences, and expertise. Involving a variety of perspectives can help identify a wide range of issues, potential solutions and innovative ideas that may not have been considered otherwise. In addition, when stakeholders are actively involved in the school development process, they develop a sense of ownership and commitment to the outcomes. This increased sense of ownership can lead to greater motivation and collaboration toward achieving common goals. This is supported by Brighthouse and Woods (1999, p.114) who describe stakeholders as 'invaluable' to schools during the school development process, however they do acknowledge that stakeholders need to negotiate a careful balance between pressure and support.

After the areas for improvement have been identified, clear and measurable goals are established which align with the schools' mission and vision. These goals are then prioritised based on their significance and impact on overall improvement and become key priorities in the SDP. Once the key priorities have been established, action plans are developed for each priority which outline specific steps, responsibilities, timelines, and resources required to achieve the desired outcomes. Once the SDP has been developed, it is then communicated to all stakeholders, Epstein (2018) provides a useful insight into building effective partnerships between schools, families, and the community so that the SDP can be communicated and implemented effectively.

In addition, the school identifies professional development opportunities for staff to build the skills and knowledge necessary for successful implementation. The school is a learning organisation and they have adopted the school as learning organisation (SLO) model since 2018 and this is used to support the professional development of staff. Every year, school staff complete the SLO survey anonymously and the results of the survey are used to identify strengths as well as areas for development. These areas for development are reviewed by the senior leadership team and prioritised on their significance to become school priorities. This further supports how valuable stakeholders are in the school development process.

Teachers at the school are also encouraged to participate in professional enquiry, the enquiry process is used as a tool for teachers to experiment with and to innovate practice. All teachers carry out their own professional enquiry each year and the enquiry is focused on learner experiences and outcomes. Priestley and Drew (2016) state that through professional enquiry teachers develop a better understanding of the curriculum and innovation in pedagogy including more democratic ways of working. However, DeLuca et al (2015) has highlighted the practical constraints on professional enquiry including limitations in space and time.

Lastly, the school regularly reflects on the effectiveness of the SDP and the plan is revised and updated as needed to address any emerging needs. Schon's (1983) work emphasises the use of reflective practice and the importance of being a reflective practitioner and this involves a continuous cycle of learning through experience, reflection, and action. Despite the benefits, it could be argued that Schon's (1983) model is focused on individual reflection and problem-solving which may neglect the importance of collective and social aspects of learning and problem-solving within a professional community.

To summarise, this section has outlined the process School X undertakes to develop their SDP. The process includes self-evaluation, data analysis, stakeholder involvement and strategic planning. The school emphasises self-evaluation through assessing current conditions, involving stakeholders for diverse perspectives, setting clear goals aligned with the schools' mission, and creating action plans. Professional development opportunities for staff, including participation in professional enquiry, are also integrated into the SDP. The SDP is communicated to stakeholders and regular reflection ensures ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of the SDP takes place and is updated based on emerging needs which aligns with Schon's emphasis on reflective practice.

Reflection

The priority I have chosen to engage with for this report is focused on promoting and nurturing positive relationships across the school. As per the action plan the deputy headteacher leads this priority. However, as it is a whole-school priority everyone in the school is aware of the responsibility they have to promote and nurture positive relationships across the school community. A key part of the action plan was the implementation of the positive behaviour policy. This policy was developed by the school and is supported by Dix (2017) who highlights the need for a consistent approach to relationship building by all adults working in a school. Dix (2017) also recognises the importance of positive reinforcement strategies rather than a more traditional approach to behaviour management based on pupils' fear of breaking rules. Overall, the positive behaviour policy outlines how staff should deal with inappropriate behaviour on different levels.

Another key part of the action plan was the introduction of class charters. The class charters encourage pupils to make good choices and work collaboratively as classes earn stars as a whole rather than rewarded individually. These achievements are praised in the weekly assembly to reinforce positive behaviours. In addition, providing professional development opportunities for all staff was part of the action plan for this priority. This was done during an Inset day with teachers and teaching assistants to ensure expectations are made clear and there is a consistency of approach to model appropriate relationships and behaviours. Also, during ADD's sessions a regular reminder was given to staff of the in-class expectations and discussions take place on where these expectations overlap or differ as well as planning the way forward to strengthen practice.

Overall, School X has demonstrated a clear commitment to promoting and nurturing positive relationships across the school community by implementing the positive behaviour policy, class charters and providing professional development opportunities for staff.

Practical Suggestions for Improvement

Despite the impactful measures the school have put in place based on literature focused on positive relationships in schools there are several suggestions that can be made for improvement and contribute to the school achieving this priority.

Firstly, the school could implement a peer-mentorship programme. Harris and Meltzer (2015) highlight the positive influence that peer support and social relationships have on development, motivation and achievement for all students including those with additional learning needs. The pupils at School X could benefit from a peer-mentorship programme as a way for students to support each other academically and emotionally.

In addition, the pupils at the school could benefit from the integration of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) programmes into the curriculum to teach students essential interpersonal skills as well as offer workshops on emotional intelligence, conflict resolution and empathy. Elias et al (1997) acknowledges the crucial need for educators to establish and implement programmes to enhance the social and emotional development of children. More recently, Weissberg (2019) has supported the use of SEL programming in schools as it can encourage pupils to establish and maintain positive relationships which contributes to School X's key priority.

Lastly, the school could implement a conflict resolution programme. One reason the priority was established was because of conflict between students that was impacting on classroom engagement so the implementation of a programme that teaches students effective ways to manage conflict and disagreements as well as provide a safe space for students to express their feelings and concerns would be beneficial. Ury (2000) acknowledges the benefits to implementing a conflict resolution programme in schools to support pupils social and emotional development.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this report has given an overview of the school development process as well as focusing on School X's key priority of promoting and nurturing positive relationships across the school community.

The chosen priority aligns with broader educational goals outlined in the Curriculum for Wales (2022) and the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (2015), acknowledging the key role positive relationships play in fostering a supportive learning environment. Drawing from extensive literature, the report emphasised the impact of positive relationships on students' social and emotional development, academic success, and overall well-being.

Reflections on the practical implementation of the priority at School X revealed a comprehensive approach, including the positive behaviour policy, class charters, and staff

development initiatives. This report acknowledges the school's commendable efforts in creating a positive and inclusive school culture.

However, despite these measures, suggestions have been made for practical improvements, such as implementing a peer-mentorship program, integrating Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) programs into the curriculum, and introducing a conflict resolution program. These suggestions aim to enhance the existing framework, aligning with contemporary research on the positive impact of such initiatives on students' social and emotional development.

In summary, this report emphasises the complex process of school development, highlighting the crucial role of positive relationships. Through an examination of School X's initiatives and the suggestion of practical improvements, this report contributes to the ongoing academic discussion on effective strategies for fostering holistic pupil development in education.

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