

	Targed/target	Yr hyn yr wyf wedi'i wneud yn yr aseiniad hwn What I have done in this assignment...
Targed/Target 1	To strengthen your work, aim to engage in a more critical manner with the author's ideas.	I have engaged with the author's work, being more critical and using more up to date sources to keep the writing relevant to the idea of the author plus my own critical reflections.
Targed/Target 2	Aim to use lengthier paragraphs to build an argument or evidence the points you are remaking in more depth.	I ensured to build the paragraphs and the argument within. Using the sources to build up to writing and outcomes.
Targed/Target 3	Proofread your writing to both check for grammatical errors but to also ensure clarity of expression - check your sentences make sense.	I have ensured to proofread the essay as I went along and went into detail with each section to ensure they made sense and carried through the argument written.

Where Am I Teaching?

ECAD7003

“How a school develops one aspect of its SDP: a report that critically reflects on the actions, impact and evidence base.”

Word Count - 2580

Introduction

Developing a School Development Plan (SDP) is an essential process that does hold an importance in following the crucial priorities, the involvement of stakeholders, and relevant resources. Through the exploration of research and the information gathered from the placement school (School X), the key steps of the process and the findings from the readings will be put towards what leaders and educators do to enhance their school's strategic planning and how they would then continue to improve on their performance and their outcomes.

For the purpose of this, through the use of critically reflecting on the process of creating the SDP and how School X utilises it in their own self improvement the priority of "Developing the Welsh Medium Stream." Investigating this action point by delving through the use of reflecting on policies, how it is being implemented throughout the school and how the impact can be measured by following a research, evidence-based framework.

School X is situated within a small village in the county of Powys, with a student population of 135 pupils. A significant element of this priority is how the placement school is promoting the use of the Welsh language within the Welsh medium stream (School Development Plan Overview 2023) as well as how it is implemented throughout the whole school (esyn.gov.wales 2024). Rhys and Thomas, (2013) state that when students are developing their vocabulary, it is linked to their exposure to language that surrounds them. Explaining that it is not just learned by what is taught within the classroom but also contributes by what they hear beyond, emphasising the importance of becoming a bilingual community to help the students feel comfortable and have confidence speaking in the language they are learning.

Literature Review

Amidst the current challenge that is faced toward the education system, how the formulation and execution of the SDP is the pivotal point of this assignment. Prompting a critical evaluation of both academic literature and using various governmental sources to uncover the process of creating a SDP. Surrounding the utilisation of the SDP, Donaldson (2015) provides an outline of the purpose of the plan, to identify both the accomplishments and challenges discovered throughout the school. Furthermore, it can serve as an informant of evidence for assessing the impact of teaching, how well the curriculum is being implemented within the school as well as how the leadership affects the process as a whole. In parallel Antoniou, Myburgh-Louw, and

Gronn, (2016) focuses on how engaging purposefully with the teaching methodologies and the student outcomes can provide evident outcomes. One of the main difficulties with this line of reasoning is that the distinction of education is contingent with the degree of attainment and achievement goals (Kurum, and Cinkir, 2019). The level of the pedagogical practises provided by the teaching staff, undeniably shapes the learning outcomes, the emphasis lying on the role of the teacher and how they can format the result of the evaluation. O'Brien, S. et al. (2022) argue that it is the role of the teacher to use the data as a part of the normal working life and use this data throughout their career as a form of professional development. The adoption of self-evaluation throughout the everyday routine of school emerges as an indispensable tool, which can then promote the continuous development of the teaching practises along with other targeted elements within the school.

Through the application of models such as the five levels of professional development, Guskey (2002) gains an understanding of how various stages of assessment may impact educators' professional development and how attitudes towards self-evaluation can affect the outcome (Boylan, M. et al. 2018). Including the stakeholders in the school environment is crucial for a successful assessment journey, as indicated by one of the stages that is related to organisational support and transformation. MacBeath (2006) theories that self-evaluation entitles schools to advocate for themselves, to establish the priorities, finding out how the progression can be measured and overall narrating their educational journey as a school. Not to be overlooked in this domain of schools speaking up and sharing their experiences are those who made contributions outside of the learning environment. The knowledge of others is frequently vital in helping a student overcome obstacles, and this can lead to professional collaboration (Harris and Jones, 2020). This can then become a step towards obtaining the information needed to assist the child as well as the teachers in the school. Having ties with the surrounding community, families and having them contribute to the learning is also key in terms of having a significant outcome for the student as this can strengthen the teaching and learning further, contributing to the face and the narration of the school.

Exhibiting a dedication to the linguistic and cultural preservation of the community, keeping in line with the Cymraeg 2050 (Llywodraeth Cymru 2017) and delivering their work toward meeting this goal. However, the process of gaining and teaching the skills to the students may raise a question regarding the feasibility and implementation strategies required to achieve the goal of the priority. In recent years, this approach has been challenged as Baker and Wright (2021) comment that an outstandingly designed bilingual program will fall if supplied with untrained or

insufficient quality staff. Highlighting the importance of having the teachers and staff that readily possess the essential skills to efficiently carry out the scheme, without having those skills to hand or now knowing how to implement that training can prove to be a substantial obstacle in completing the framework created, which in itself can prove to be a challenge to achieve an understanding on what is being asked of the teachers who are attempting to implement it. Reflecting on this, The Welsh Government (2022) approach this with emphasising the importance of expanding the number of students within the Welsh-medium and bilingual education while ensuring that those learners gain the opportunity to develop their proficiency in the Welsh language and their own skills within this to benefit themselves in various aspects of life.

By intently involving a wider community of fellow teacher, educators, parents, pupils and the community (Kyriakides, and Campbell, 2004) in the process of planning and contributing to the decision making processes may determine the accomplishments from their knowledge of their own local area and having the insights of the priorities of what is needed in the community, where they are in their language journey which can then lead to having success within the planning process with the school. Efficient employment of the consistent planning framework would demand not only extensive stakeholder contribution but also with awareness of Antoniou, Myburgh-Louw, and Gronn, (2016) in stating that school stakeholders carry an exclusive awareness of the schools demands, possibly bettering the capability in delivering the correct directions for resources, the efforts that would be needed to accomplish the planning process with the school in line with the framework and be able to address these needs. It should then be a role in which the governing body takes on board and executes with sincerity, using their knowledge to contribute to the development of the school and the staff within in order to gain commitment from becoming a role model to all (Estyn.gov.wales 2019) and it is then their responsibility to report the level of attainment achieved in the Welsh medium education and state the progress (Thomas 2021). The approach for a national framework by the Welsh Government to institutionalise the Welsh-Medium stream education planning across Wales highlights the search for consistent and coherent policies (Bowyer, and Dauncey, 2023).

Developing an Action Point

At the centre of it all, the school improvement aims to transform internal processes systematically to increase their strength at obtaining their educational goals, moreso in

moments of unknown (Kyriakides, and Campbell, 2004) and having that preparation and readiness to face the uncertain with the knowledge on how. When coming to the decision of completing a self evaluation, its purpose serves as the essential cause of reaching the schools future goals. It should not be something catered to outside sources such as inspectors of OFSTED, with it being common of schools admitting to meeting the protocols of the inspectors framework solely (MacBeath, 2006) with neglect to the schools own identity and place within the community. Instead it should be how the school wishes to represent themselves to the community and beyond (Kurum, and Cinkir, 2019) and how the inner and outer circle of the school perceive it and how the school then responds and deals with global problems. In terms of the placement school, they have taken on board the intake from the latest inspection which took place in 2023 as well as the development of the local area and the need of a Welsh-Medium stream school within the community.

Once the consensus is reached of what within the school requires attention to be improved or gain a greater challenge toward success, data must be collected. From an outside view, the collected data is effective and efficient to help improve and increase the students achievement across the school, however it is perceived that teachers do not use the data efficiently to its own best effect and it is a system that needs to be completed within a team rather than individually (Schildkamp, Poortman, and Handelzalts, 2016). The methods in which the data is being collected should disclose what problem or change is being targeted, when entering the stage of analysis it should turn out the beginnings of feedback on the issue addressed and provide to the framework that can be created in order to complete further action within the plan (Harris, 2002). Fullan (2020) states that when beginning the process of change that it is all about the interaction the school has with those who surround them, and depending on how complicated the challenge is that is going through change, the more people that are well suited to help should take part. Every member of the school staff holds the responsibility of contributing to the whole school evaluation through utilising their own expertise and experience to address particular school needs. They should not delegate the responsibility to the senior leadership team exclusively (estyn.gov.wales 2020). The information obtained and assessed can be incorporated into an action plan with the support of stakeholders who possess a deeper understanding and knowledge (Schildkamp, Poortman, and Handelzalts, 2016). In accordance to the Estyn report, only 5.9% of the 135 pupils enrolled at School X speak Welsh at home, signifying that there are only approximately eight students in the school. The school acknowledges that this is a low figure that needs to be improved in order to fulfil its goal as a bilingual school. In order to

improve the usage of the Welsh language throughout, this was then considered an objective that would require attention.

According to Hattie (2009), setting realistically difficult goals and then creating a structured framework are necessary to know how to proceed with growth so that everyone may achieve the desired results, regardless of whether the goals are being tailored for teachers or students. The SDP ought to be a document that is routinely examined during the academic year and that is properly reviewed and monitored during the school's progress (Welsh Government 2014).

Reflection and Evaluation

The application of Dewey's (1933) reflection theory, which emphasises the value of being a reflective practitioner and having the curiosity to ask questions and investigate new concepts whilst learning during the educational journey, was central to the analysis of the self-evaluation and reflection process during this reflective process. Active engagement with authentic contexts constitutes the way learning is achieved, and reflecting is a critical first step towards comprehending what has been encountered and gaining new knowledge.

The Welsh Government (2010) comments on how the priority is to have a country where the training of educators within the Welsh-medium is an indispensable part of the Welsh education system. This is demonstrated by School X in accomplishing the goal; in addition to the teachers receiving sabbatical training, the teaching assistants are also participating in training. In the process of School X working toward the priority of developing the Welsh Medium Stream, one of the biggest contributions that was seen was the training that the staff was experiencing in order to educate themselves in the Welsh language. As there is a larger Welsh-medium class joining the school, it is necessary for the staff to be able to accommodate that. Meissel, Parr, and Timperley, (2016) state that the professional development of the staff within the school have never had a greater value, in connection to how the training of the staff within the placement school is detrimental to the development of the Welsh-medium stream as well as the staff being able to then spread their own skill development to others and pass on their pedagogical values. When schools are in the process of improvement and development the initial focus should be on the quality of the teaching and keeping it consistent throughout the school (Hopkins, 2020), School X is putting their staff in the forefront of this journey of meeting the priority but with the impact of the pupils overall performance in mind, with efficiency and implementation of training.

Regarding the classroom setting in relation to the four purposes, the duty of educators is then to establish appropriate academic pathways so that students are developing in their ability to use the Welsh language in everyday circumstances and to ultimately spread the language throughout the school and the community (Welsh Government, 2022). All to improve the language of the school and to create a bilingual environment that is comfortable for both English and Welsh speaking students (estyn.gov.wales 2023). In connection the Welsh Government (2023) connected this by stating that pupils who can speak Welsh spend more time speaking it with their friends within school than outside and that is influenced by those who surround them within the learning environment. Having built that confidence can then influence others into speaking the language with them, spreading the language throughout the school.

Conclusion

To conclude, through the exploration of the SDP while analysing different sources critically has highlighted both the strengths and weaknesses of a variety of stages that are conducted during the process of the strategic planning and evaluating a school as well as moving forward in their journey in developing the teaching and learning. Through incorporating from a variety of theoretical frameworks, conducting research from a diverse range of sources ranging from the theories of self-evaluation created by Dewey (1933) with combination of policies created by the Welsh Government, this assignment has discovered the multifaceted journey of the SDP and how the school approaches and evolves with it is crucial in order to develop themselves. In order for the school to understand the journey they are going to take in self-evaluation and improvement, they must determine the destination and what steps would be needed to get there (Kyriakides, and Campbell, 2004) and how the staff within the school play an imperative role within this movement, through the employment of taking action and becoming the directors of change, whether that be from taking a direct step forward in the teaching or becoming a learner themselves in the form of training to not only better themselves but the network surrounding them can prove the emphasis on improvement being carried by not only the Headteachers but those that surround them (Antoniou, Myburgh-Louw, and Gronn, 2016).

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