

	Target	What I have done in this assignment...
Target 1	Double check your spelling	I used an adequate spellchecker and proofread my whole essay multiple times.
Target 2	Ensure compliance with Harvard referencing technique	I followed the university referencing guidelines pdf.

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

Introduction

In this assignment, I will be examining a School's Development Plan (SPD). I will analyse the process of implementing an SPD and critically reflect upon one aspect of the SDP that I have chosen. I will be reflecting upon the school's strategy to improve this chosen aspect. In accordance with the anonymity guidelines set out in BERA (2018), for the context of this assignment I will be referring to the school as School X. School X is an English-medium, mixed-gender comprehensive school catering for around 900 pupils, based in Wales (My Local Schools, 2018). According to their last Estyn report (Estyn, 2018a), School X has 16.3% pupils who are eligible for free school meals, close to the national average of 16.4% however, Estyn also states that 25.9% of pupils in School X have additional learning needs (ALN), higher than the Welsh average of 22.9%. The aspect of School X's SPD I will be examining in this assignment is to improve standards of pupil's digital competence across the curriculum, which has been broken up into several actions points by School X (School X, 2020).

Literature review

For this literature review, I will look at the School Development Process and how this is used by schools. I will be researching the aspect I have chosen from School X's SDP, which is looking at how to improve the standards of pupils' digital competence across the curriculum.

The first area I will be exploring is the school development process. A school's improvement or development is extremely important, as without the willingness to change and strive to improve the school and the education that they are providing, how can a pupil improve if the school does not (Mitchell & Sackney, 2016)?

It is a school's obligation to ensure that pupils are given every chance to get the best education and best outcomes they can. Due to this, every school in the Wales (Welsh Government, 2014) will have something that they have decided to improve on, be it to improve the well-being of pupils or improving the school's performance in exams. The way in which a school does this is with an SDP or School Improvement Plan (SIP) – this is the school's strategical plan for its improvement. This sets out the plan and actions that will be taken to improve the areas that they have identified (Northern Irish Government, 2010). The SDP also shows the timeframe in which the school plans to complete that aspect by, this can be anywhere from a term or several years (Croneri, 2018). Furthermore, it shows the ongoing progress being made with that aspect (Welsh Government, 2014).

The school identifies these areas for improvement through different ways. Firstly, the school can have areas recommended for improvement after an inspection by governing bodies such as, Estyn (Estyn, 2018a). Another way works on the recommendations of staff and governors of the school, these areas could be based on their experience while teaching or could be from meeting with the parents or the pupils (Staffordshire County Council, 2019). These areas for improvement may also be decided based on the outcomes of the key performance indicators from previous years such as capped 9, A-level results and the end of KS3 levels and learning pathways (Welsh Government, 2019).

Secondly, I will be researching the aspect chosen from School X's SDP, which looks at improving the standards of pupils' digital competence across the curriculum. Digital competency is one of many terms used to describe the skills and understanding involved in the use of technology (Lomami et al 2011). The improvement of digital competency was highlighted by Donaldson (2015) in his Successful Futures Report. While the use of digital technologies is included under one of the four purposes (Welsh Government, 2020a), when talking about digital competency schools follow guidance from the Digital Competence Framework (DCF) (Welsh Government, 2020b). The DCF is a Welsh Government cross-curricular skills framework, which makes every teacher responsible for digital competence in their subjects therefore, this framework is the first aspect to consider. Originally, it was the responsibility of the subject of ICT or Computing to educate pupils about digital competency (Lau, 2018). However, since the introduction of the DCF, every subject has a responsibility to include areas of digital competency in their curriculum, which means sometimes pupils are

being taught an aspect of the DCF by a teacher who is not digitally competent themselves (EDCL Foundation, 2014). This can create problems because, it means that students aren't being given the highest standard of digital competency education throughout their subjects. It is suggested by Cervera & Cantabrana (2015) that teachers should be trained adequately in the use of digital technology by qualified individuals. As a result, many schools now have a position of DCF lead/coordinator which is usually an additional role of the ICT/Computing teachers (GwE, 2020). This position is required to organise training and ensure that teachers are implementing digital competency correctly (Estyn, 2018b), as well as giving teachers; most likely Heads of Departments (HoD) a better understanding of implementing digital competency in their subject (School Education Gateway, 2020).

To improve digital competency across schools, it is necessary for schools to improve accessibility to digital technology. This has been done by increasing the amount of computer rooms or by schools have access to Chromebooks or iPads (Education Endowment Foundation, 2020), which allows digital competency to be taught in any classroom setting, rather than having to schedule classes around each other for access to the dedicated computer rooms.

One of the key areas when talking about digital competency is e-safety (Tomczyk, 2020). Pupils can access technology and the internet whenever they want so it is important for schools to educate them in how to stay safe online, as well as some of the health and well-being issues that come with the use of digital technology such as the negative effects of social media (Welsh Government, 2020b). This aspect of digital competency can be taught in the form of pastoral lessons or assemblies with further information given by outside speakers such as the local police service (UK Government, 2015).

There are also many issues with the implementation of DCF. Although we live in an increasingly technological age, rural schools can struggle with connectivity issues and this can hinder learning and prevent opportunities to expand digital competency (Estyn, 2019). Similarly, there is also a lack of guidance surrounding opportunities to incorporate learning into a digital setting which can be difficult for a variety of subjects such as, mathematics or physical education (Estyn, 2018c).

Developing an action point

As with developing any SDP, School X firstly investigated how they wanted to raise the standards of their pupils. To do this, School X used the process of self-evaluation. Self-evaluation is important for a school's improvement and development (Department of

Education, 2017), it is a reflective process which looks at what is working well, identifies areas that need development and looks at improving the quality of education pupils are receiving. The self-evaluation process is also a collaborative one which requires head teachers, HoD, teachers and governors to work together in evaluating what the school needs to do in order to improve (Ofsted, 2006). When reflecting as part of the self-evaluation, the school analyses data (Welsh Government, 2014) that they have gathered from the previous year, the school will look at the attainment results of the pupils such as subject levels for KS3 pupils and GCSE outcomes at KS4. Using this data, the school can compare itself to schools in the same family (Education Endowment Foundation, 2020) or with the last PISA results, to see how they are doing in comparison with the country's average. The school can also look at the National School Categorisation system (Welsh Government, 2019) to see how they rate. In addition to this, the school can use qualitative data for their self-evaluation such as, the recommendations for improvement from their last Estyn report (Estyn, 2018a). The school can also consult with the stakeholders like the parents, staff, pupils, outside organisations and even the wider community that the school is engaged with, to ensure that this consultation is not just about outcomes or educational improvement but, also about pupil wellbeing (Welsh Government, 2014). From the process of self-evaluation, School X created ten School Improvement Priorities (School X, 2020), of which only three were recommendations by Estyn. At this point, School X started to create their SDP. The Senior Leadership team and the rest of the HoDs met to begin planning their strategy such as, how they will implement these improvements and what action needed to be taken.

As stated, above School X outlined several action points, which they felt needed to be taken in order to improve the pupils' digital competency aspect of the SPD. School X has highlighted the importance of the DCF in multiple actions. For example, "Revisiting the DCF mapping tool to promote better coverage of skills across the curriculum". This action suggests that School X have been using a DCF mapping tool, this is good practice as it is recommended by Estyn (2018c). Mapping will allow the school to find gaps in their coverage of the DCF and address those issues to ensure all pupils experience the whole DCF and the skills it provides. After School X had found the gaps in their curriculum, School X's next action point was "Ensuring that subjects create resources or adapt existing resources to meet the requirements of DCF"(School X, 2020). While these resources are created by the HoDs for those subjects, they will be supported by the DCF lead which, for School X, is the HoD for ICT and Computing. School X's DCF lead oversees "Developing the DCF toolkit further to assist departments with resources for classwork and homework." This action will help subject teachers who are weaker in digital competency, by ensuring they get the help necessary to provide resources for their

pupils. However, the use of a DCF homework seems unviable as it is impossible to ensure all pupils have access to technology, especially in an era where one in three children are living in poverty (Chamberlain & Mullineux, 2010). Therefore, even in ICT lessons the homework is normally paper-based (Kennewell, Parkinson and Tanner, 2003).

The next part of the SDP that School X had to consider was, how they were going to measure the impact of their changes. This can be done in several ways, depending on the aspect of the SDP you look at. Some aspects such as, "Improving pupil performance at key performance indicators" (School X, 2020) are measured by comparing the school's new results at the key performance indicators, with the previous years to see if there is a discernible difference. However, with the aspect I have chosen the way School X is measuring their impact is based on quantifiable success criteria, a list of targets that they want to achieve by the end of the time scale for this aspect. One of the success criteria is that "Departments will create new resources or adapt existing resources to meet the requirements of the DCF. These will be indicated in green within the DCF mapping tool" (School X, 2020). School X are going to use their mapping tool to store the data. This will be effective if School X had used their mapping tool in a previous year then they could compare the two, this will measure the impact of their changes. Another success criteria School X has, stated they will use "A pupil survey to show that pupils understand what digital competence is and how they can develop it." (School X, 2020) This is a good way in which to monitor the pupils' knowledge of digital competency.

Reflection and evaluation

In this section, I will be reviewing what School X has done in its development of the aspect I have chosen. I will be reflecting and evaluating what has been done based on the reviews in School X's SDP (2020), as well as using my own experiences from my placement in School X. The first review in School X's SDP is from the end of the first term, it shows that they are starting to make progress. It states that a small amount of HoDs have revisited the DCF and created new resources and while this is good, the fact it is only a small number is disheartening because, every teacher has a responsibility to make sure that they implement the DCF into their curriculum wherever possible. The reason this might happen is that the teachers are not entirely confident with the DCF and where it fits in their subject (Estyn, 2018c).

The mapping tool has been reviewed and areas with limited or no coverage have been highlighted accordingly, which is a great start as they now know what elements of the DCF

they need to concentrate on hitting. The DCF lead has offered one-on-one support to the HoDs that feel they need it, with several accessing this support.

The DCF lead has also added more to their DCF toolkit, in the form of help sheets and video tutorials for staff who are more digitally illiterate that want to teach in an ICT room. This is good practice as it allows the teacher to see effective modelling (Lau, 2018). The DCF toolkit is a useful resource and the video tutorials are easy to understand and follow, which is something I looked at to help me whilst on placement in School X.

The progress was then measured during the next term, with most progress being a continuation of what had already been started in the first term such as, more support time and further development of the DCF toolkit. However, this term School X (2020) had given their pupils a survey in order to work out what the pupils currently understood about the phrase “Digital Competence” and their thoughts on the importance of it in their lives. Some suggest that a survey is extremely useful as it offers feedback to gauge if the pupils understand the DCF but, it can also gauge the effectiveness of the improvements made by School X (Schulz, Sud and Crowe, 2014).

Overall, School X has followed their strategic plan effectively in improving DCF across the curriculum. The DCF lead has been training HoDs so they are more effective at teaching the DCF (Lomami et al, 2011). The mapping tool has been informative, allowing them to keep an eye on what elements of the DCF they are missing (Estyn, 2018c). The use of effective modelling in the form of video tutorials is effective way to support teacher’s professional development (Lau, 2018).

Based on the knowledge I have acquired through research, the only suggestion I would put into practice is that School X should concentrate more on the Citizenship strand of the DCF (Welsh Government, 2020b). This will help to get the community involved, by sending suggestions home to parents about how they can keep their children safe on the Internet (Welsh Government, 2018). There could be more interacting with the local school liaison police officer to come in to provide lessons on digital competency and reducing their digital footprint, providing assemblies on internet safety as well as in PSE lessons (UK Government, 2015).

Conclusion

In conclusion, I have examined the importance of School Development Planning and how this helps us, as teachers, to improve our teaching overall (Welsh Government, 2014). I have also looked specifically at School X's SDP (2020), focusing especially on the area of digital competency. Furthermore, I evaluated and reflected on what School X has done, whilst making practical suggestions of how I would improve the aspect using the knowledge from my research.

From this assignment, I have learnt that there is lots more schools need to do, to ensure they are following the government guidance on DCF across all subjects and that ICT/Computing teachers play an important role in this (Estyn 2018c). I have also learnt that it is crucial for schools to set these targets and time frames, to ensure that there is work continually happening in these areas. Overall, this will influence me professionally in the future because it has shown me how important working between departments and with stakeholders is to ensure frameworks such as these are met efficiently. Finally, it has also given me a different viewpoint on the responsibilities of an ICT or Computing teacher and has shown me that digital competency is every staff member's responsibility too.

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