

This assignment aims to critically evaluate one action point from the school development plan of placement school A. The target chosen is priority 2 of the school development plan: **Wellbeing and Attitudes to Learning**. The target applies to pupils in progression step three. However, the actions within the target are applied to supporting all pupils across the school and are adopted by all members of staff. School A is an English medium, community primary school within a sub urban area of a town in South Wales. It has approximately 440 pupils in attendance across fifteen single age classes. There are 17% of pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) and three per cent of pupils who are identified as having additional learning needs (ALN). With regards to eligibility to free school meals, 10% of children are registered ([REDACTED], 2025a).

The assignment will now go on to review literature surrounding school development plans and the selected target of wellbeing and attitudes to learning. Analysis of School A's approach to the target and implementation of steps taken within practice will be looked at. The process of measuring the impact such implementations have had will be discussed along with the critical evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the school's approach.

Literature review

According to the Welsh Government (2022a) the purpose of a school development plan is to assist schools in affording every learner, regardless of their circumstances or backgrounds, the possibility of reaching their full potential. In addition, Javed *et al.* (2019) claim that the school development plan is a strategy aimed at managing the transformations required to improve the performance outcomes of the pupils, detailing how these transformations will be made as well as when they will be implemented.

Welsh Government (2022b) state that the initial process of school improvement is self-evaluation. The Welsh Government (2021a) suggests that this self-evaluation aspect should involve the whole of the school community, including teachers and support staff, learners, parents, governors, and members of the local community and state that this will enable continuous improvement. This will allow for a range of information to be gathered from differing stakeholders that will not only enable schools to develop practices to support learner progression but to also recognise areas of strengths that will help inform improvements in the wider school system (Welsh Government, 2021a). Carmarthenshire County Council (no date)

agree, considering that collaboration is a core value in improvement as it enables effective use of resources. Engaging with learners is also recognised as a key tool in informing development plans, which also aligns with the fundamental rights of the child, one of which is to be heard (UNICEF, no date). Moreover, the Welsh Government (2021a) also states that to be of high-quality, self-evaluation should be enquiry based and carried out with integrity. However, Vangroningen (2023) insinuates that some development frameworks can be contradictory in their actions; knowingly or not, as the enacted theory does not always match the proposed theory. Furthermore, Estyn (2021) argue that the term, 'enquiry-based' may cause some uncertainty around what is required during the self-evaluation process, stating that an explanation of what is expected in practice would be useful or to replace the term with 'evidence-based' instead, this recommendation was acted on by Welsh government in their updated school improvement guidance (Welsh Government, 2022a). Welsh Government (2022a) also state that observations of teaching as well as listening to the learners should be of greater importance than the collection and analysis of data alone, as this gives a broader view of evidence as opposed to reviewing a limited set of statistics. Gathering qualitative data in this instance allows for a comprehensive understanding of the wellbeing of learners and a clear evaluation of their progression. These aspects relate to the *Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015*, where public bodies are legally bound to improving the well-being of Wales. Future Generations for Wales Commissioner for Wales (2025) states how this Act is central to the design of the Curriculum for Wales, which emphasises the importance of the mental health and wellbeing of learners in Wales.

The next stage within school development planning is improvement priorities, where schools are able to recognise achievable improvement priorities as a result of proper self-evaluation (Welsh Government, 2021a). These priorities are unique to each individual school and have the goal of positively impacting on the outcomes of learners. They are determined by the school context, and the self-evaluation process and are announced in one document detailing the school's development plan. Often, as is the case for School A (██████████, 2025b), the improvement priorities are summarised in a manner that is easy for learners, parents and other stakeholders to have access to (Welsh Government, 2021a). Welsh Government (2022a) state how governing bodies are required to address areas of professional learning, taking in to account the *Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021*, to ensure that staff are equipped with the knowledge and skills to develop learners' progression. The use of resources and staff within the school are considered which will have a bearing on the goal of tackling the impact that poverty has on learners' attainment and the ability to meet the needs of each child. Governors are required to prepare a plan that spans at least 3 years that is to be reviewed yearly or

following an inspection from Estyn. Within 20 working days from inspection, schools are required to reflect on feedback and prepare actions for the school development plan (*The Inspection of the Careers and Related Services (Wales) Regulations 2006* and *The Education (Amendments Relating to the Inspection of Education and Training) (Wales) Regulations 2014* and Welsh Government 2022a). In addition to consulting with governing bodies and Estyn, it is suggested that schools engage in professional dialogue with peers with the aim of having a different viewpoint to consider. They are also required to consult with the local authority and regional consortia to ensure that the priorities are appropriate, and the school can access the correct support needed to ensure pupil progression (Welsh Government 2022a). Welsh Government (2024) maintain that the improvement priorities should be measurable to enable schools to reflect on the progression that has been achieved due to their efforts but also ensuring to prioritise targets to ensure they are viable in terms of cost and the benefits that the learners will get.

As well as support from regional consortia, local authorities and diocesan authorities where applicable, local authorities and Welsh Ministers can legally intervene in schools that are displaying a cause for concern as is documented in the *School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013*. However, if schools are engaging and collaborating in honest discussion with support systems available, any cause for concern should be identified early through self-evaluation and acted upon (Welsh Government 2022a).

The strategic target to be focused on in this assignment is well-being and attitudes to learning.

Developing an action point

The target of improving well-being and attitudes to learning aligns with School A's mission of "Be All You Can Be", where the school aims to develop the confidence, self-esteem and resilience of each pupil enabling them to reach their full potential.

The target was chosen based on data which showed an increased use of ABC behaviour charts, used to document incidents of challenging behaviour. There was also a notifiable

increase in referrals to the Local Authority Behaviour Support Community Team and an increase in referrals to counselling services, all of which identified an increased need to support the wellbeing of pupils. Pupils in years four to six also complete the HAPPEN survey in conjunction with Swansea University, that focusses on the physical and mental health of pupils. A report is then generated for the schools to gain an insight into the overall health and wellbeing of the school in alignment with the Curriculum for Wales (HAPPEN no date). Data from this report was analysed by the school which identified that well-being was an area that needed improving. Emotional literacy assessments were also added to the data collection and additional learning provision were instrumental in identifying any individual interventions that were required for specific pupils. Circle time activities in line with Wales Restorative Approaches Partnership (WRAP) were already in place before the target was identified, however staff were not clear on the concept and so the approach was not being utilised to its fullest and so was not supporting the development of emotional wellbeing and attitudes to learning to its best potential.

As a result of the data analysis and prioritization of the target, professional development for staff has been a focus. Inset days have provided staff with the opportunity to have training in Team Teach and WRAP strategies. Pupils, parents and Governors have also all attended WRAP training to ensure that the method is embedded throughout the school community to fully support the wellbeing and attitudes to learning of pupils. Pupils are also able to use their voice through school councils which enables them to proactively contribute to wellbeing action planning. Implementation of the whole-school approach, JIGSAW has also been made during classroom circle times. This aims to improve the social and emotional development of pupils through mindfulness and build skills year by year as the children progress through the school (JIGSAW, 2025).

The school evaluates the priority, along with the others in the school development plan at the end of every term. However, the HAPPEN survey was carried out mid-term, which allowed the pupils to draw up an action plan of activities to support health and wellbeing which resulted in a 'Health and Wellbeing' week starting on 13 March 2025.

During this 'Health and Wellbeing' week was when I implemented steps to address the target chosen. My placement was within a nursery class and so I implemented it only to those pupils. Each class had a goal related to The Global Goals, with the nursery class having, 'Life on Land'. To link this to the wellbeing goals of the target, I actioned a litter pick based on a children's storybook. I used resources, including bins, litter pickers and real materials including plastic, paper, cardboard, metal and food. I also dressed as the main character in the book, using a

green cape and a colander as a helmet. I used these resources to demonstrate and be included within recycling activities with the class before going on a 'clean up' of the school grounds.

To measure the target of Wellbeing and Attitudes to Learning the school use the HAPPEN survey and review the target termly. Feedback from discussions with the local authority, pupils and staff is looked at along with data analysis of pupil and staff surveys. Observation of pupils during circle time are also used as well as comparing the number of referrals to counselling were being made and the quantity of ABC behaviour charts that were being completed.

School A's approach to gathering data has been strengthened by using a variety of different sources. Known as triangulation, this method of gathering data adds validity to the research (Bans-Akutey, A. and Tiimub, B.M., 2021). Welsh Government (2021b) agree by stating that schools should not focus on narrow sets of data. However, Welsh Government (2022a) state that with regards to wellbeing, data related to attendance and welfare are likely choices to be included, but were not mentioned by School A. These could be two more areas that could be considered when evaluating the success of the target.

The school's approach to embedding practices already in place shows that there is integrity in their self-evaluation. Admitting that improvements could be made to the way WRAP was being implemented and engaging the whole school community to embed it, is being open and honest, which the Welsh Government (2021b) claims is the correct thing to do.

An area that School A could improve in is using a scale to measure the wellbeing and attitude to learning of the pupils. The Leuven Scale could be implemented as a way of signaling whether the pupils are showing increased signs of wellbeing or increased levels of involvement (Laevens and Declercq, 2018).

School A is fortunate to have a well-resourced outdoor space for pupil learning. This could be an area that could be utilised more, as Patchen *et al.* (2024) claim that wellbeing, academic attainment and health all benefit from pupils spending time outdoors during the school day.

Reflection and Evaluation

During my practice and the implementation of the recycling activity, I was able to support School A in developing the wellbeing and attitudes to learning of pupils. Firstly, by linking the activity to the 'Life on Land' Global Goal, where the activity supported the recycling of materials, composting of food waste and the cleaning of the school grounds (Global Goals, no date). This links to the *Wellbeing of Future Generation (Wales) Act 2015* by developing the pupil's knowledge on supporting ecosystems by maintaining the natural environment. Where their wellbeing is improved from the choices and behaviours they make and where they can take account for being responsible for making a positive contribution to global wellbeing. This also links to the curriculum for Wales and its four purposes (Welsh Government 2022c).

The activity took place outdoors, which the Welsh Government (2022d) states is essential for the engagement in learning and for the pupil's wellbeing. Beames *et al.* (2024) agree stating that the educators can play an integral role in improving the mental health and wellbeing of their students by taking them outside to learn. All the resources that were used were real, authentic materials and the activity was a real-life experience. Welsh Government (2022d) insists that authentic and purposeful learning such as this can ignite creativity, enhance wellbeing and give a sense of purpose to their learning, all of which support School A's target. This is supported in theory by Kolb, who was of the opinion that learning is at its optimum when individuals are involved in first-hand experiences (Aubrey and Riley, 2022).

The use of litter pickers and the action of bending and stretching to pick up litter, as well as the walk around the school grounds are essential gross and fine motor movements for a young child's physical development. Allowing the pupils to explore these movements promotes physical and mental wellbeing (Welsh Government, 2022d)

The use of a costume and dressing as a character from the book brought the story to life for the children and instantly engaged them in their learning. The character was a role model for the children, as was I, and according to Bandura's social learning theory it is important for educators to lead by example to help develop children's motivation and cognitive capabilities (Aubrey and Riley, 2022).

Conclusion

To conclude this critical evaluation of the development of a strategic target in a school development plan, it has been found that the school improvement process is complex in nature, involving the input of multiple stakeholders. The cyclical nature of the process calls for continuous self-evaluation and prioritisation of improvements. Schools must be honest in their areas for improvement but must also take note and take pride in their strengths, so that practice can be shared to improve the wider school systems. The importance of making evidence-based decisions is integral to making improvements within the school. However, a range of data collection methods should be used to triangulate findings and ensure that the improvements are prioritised accordingly.

This experience will influence my future practice by making me aware of the continuous nature of the self-evaluation process, the importance of collaborating with stakeholders, regional consortia, local authority and other external agencies. It has enabled me to be reflective on my practice, and confident in my abilities to create positive learning environments that will improve the wellbeing and attitudes to learning of my future pupils.

The experience supports my professional standards by enabling me to refine my practice and exploring different pedagogies, such as experiential learning. My activity allowed the pupils to take ownership of the environment that they learn and play in which contributes to their attitudes to learning.