

	Targed/target	Yr hyn yr wyf wedi'i wneud yn yr aseiniad hwn What I have done in this assignment...
Targed/Target 1	Ymgysyllta gydag ystod ehangach o lenyddiaeth ac yn fwy effeithiol er mwyn bod yn gritigol ac i gefnogi meddwl beirniadol.	
Targed/Target 2	Ymgeisia i gynnal lefel uchel o ddadansoddi beirniadol, gan ystyried mwy o safbwyntiau cyferbyniol.	

A Critical Evaluation of the Development of a Strategic Target in a School Development Plan: Actions, Impact, and Evidence-Based Reflections

Introduction

Within all schools in Wales, they are required to have an SDP, a school development plan. This is a document that the Welsh government has mandated within schools to ensure that schools across Wales don't stagnate and continue to improve the schools to enhance educational achievement and outcomes. The school development plan that I'll be evaluating will be that of my placement school, which will be recognised as school A throughout this evaluation.

As School A is a Welsh medium school, the school development plan is also written in Welsh. To make it eligible for all, I will translate the strategic target that I've chosen to evaluate. It reads as follows, 'Improve behaviour, and uniform to enable everyone to work together in a productive and. Positive atmosphere, with pupils developing into healthy, confident individuals.' The reason I believe that this is a target for the school is that not only is it a Welsh medium school, but also an all-years school. Developing this foundational building block early in the pupils' time in the primary will be vital for when it comes to establishing themselves once they move up into the secondary school. Whilst also making a

better name for the school when they get to the secondary and are introduced to other feeder schools. By having them already understanding the importance of their behaviour and the standards that the school set is bound to give them an edge when it comes to the bridging period before starting their educational journey once again by the time they reach secondary.

Within this assignment I will go into more detail on this topic, whilst evaluating the school policy further and how focusing on this strategy can be beneficial but also the downsides in the ways in which the school will approach it. After that I will analyse the way that the school as approached this target before reflecting on how it'll be possible to upkeep this target before summarising the key points spoken about within this assignment.

Background

School A is based in a location described by the Welsh government as “Over 30% of Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Vale of Glamorgan are in the top 20% most deprived in Wales in terms of income.” (Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities 2024) By taking this into consideration you can make a clear connection as to why the school would want to focus on behaviour and uniform as a ways to not only improve school life, but by bringing them into schools giving them a place that will not assume as everyone is on a level playing field, *“A school uniform creates a feeling of belonging within the school. Experts in psychology generally agree that clothing and appearance influence individual and group behaviour”* (Caruso, P 1996) By being able to not be different and look the same as your peers, it creates the illusion that no matter what, that sense of belonging grows stronger in a school environment, especially if everyone is wearing the same school uniform, which in turn improves behaviour as if the school is strict on their policies regarding uniform it will go hand in hand with making the school a place for all, not the few.

School Development Plans and the Welsh Government

The school development plan is used in all schools in Wales that aligns with the Welsh governments framework for supporting high quality education, wellbeing and inclusive learning environment. The reason why schools across Wales use them are so schools can use a reliable roadmap that supports the school vision and priorities. With these priorities being the focus point of the document. The targets that the school see as a vital way to improve are targeted within the document and are enforced throughout the years in

September before evaluating at the end of the year and reflecting on if the strategies used need to be changed. By doing this it should enhance the teaching and learning seen in the school.

The school development plan is directly linked to the Welsh governments national and regional education policies. The priorities being its connections to the new curriculum for Wales which supports independent and ambitious learners whilst also being heavily linked to Cymraeg 2050 which aims to increase the number of Welsh speakers up to a million Welsh speakers by 2050 Welsh Government (2017). By having these as the essential backbone of any school development plan it is clear to see the use of school A's plan of enforcing better behaviour by using school uniform as a means for equality. Another inspiration that can be seen in School A's outline for their development strategy would be their Estyn report. By reading over their report and by seeing how School A can improve in the words of an outside influence, the steps that they take in writing their development plan are clearly inspired by what Estyn have reported back on.

School A Development Plan

School A's development strategy covers a vast array of different school policies. It includes 5 different themes, with each going into more detail on how they'll improve the school over the next handful of years. Those being, Health and Wellbeing, Learning and Teaching, High Standards, Embedding, Monitoring, Evaluating, Improving the Wellbeing and Happiness of all School Stakeholders. All of which come together to create a safe and supportive atmosphere within the school to students to learn to the best of their abilities whilst also becoming better members of society.

The target that I'll be focusing on will be that of improving behaviour and uniform to allow everyone to work together in a positive environment with the pupil developing into a healthy and confident person. The ways in which the school has approached this is over a three-year plan. By the end of the 2024 academic school year, their target was to improve the state of the school uniform to a greater standard whilst having the School Parliament consider the welfare needs of the school's pupils at all meeting and how support can be developed. These points further enhance the schools want to connect with their pupils both in and out of school whilst also relying on the school parliament to take into consideration, not only their academic life but also their home life in response to their academic upbringings. By having School A in a deprived area, it is vital that the Governors take into

consideration the challenges that can be brought by a school uniform, and how it can influence the pupil's behaviour.

School A Success Criteria

Within the school development plan there's a segment on how the school will enforce this to reach their targets over the years. Regarding uniform and behaviour, they have stated numerous ways in which they will try and succeed in this area. The first being that all school staff will contribute to protecting the standards set by the school when enforcing behaviour and uniform. By doing this it will set a precedent for all students that it's one rule for all without exceptions. Having all teachers be on the same wavelength and knowing the steps needed to protect the pupil it will result in an equal rule throughout the school enforcing the school's ideology on what they expect. In theory this way of approaching the school's rules seem hardline and equal. But with most strategies laid out amongst other schools this can be hard to keep up.

The second point within this criterion is to have all pupils embody the values of the school. By doing this all pupils will understand the values of the school and see each other as equals with the same goal to succeed within the school whilst also feeling as though they belong. Many schools have adopted such values to ensure both teacher and pupil are striving for the same thing, *"It provides a shared purpose and a sense of identity for the school community. When students and teachers align their daily efforts with the values expressed in the motto, it creates an environment of mutual respect and collective ambition."* Cambridge Home School Online. (2024) By using this as a means to inspire the pupils around them, it gives them a purpose to do better and be better as if they have a good relationship with their classmates and teachers this is what the pupils will strive for as everyone will be there to support them along the way. By creating an environment where everyone is trying to help everyone else it creates an educational experience where *"Relationships are more than just knowing the student's names; they encompass mutual respect, building trust, and feelings of safety."* (McKay, C., & Macomber, G. (2021) and in doing so bridges that gap for good behaviour and bad behaviour.

The final point within this criterion piggy backs on the previous point as it states that all pupils feel ownership over their behaviour. By doing this it falls under the system built by the Curriculum for Wales stating that all pupils should *'understand and consider the impact of their actions when making choices and acting'* and *'form positive relationships based upon trust and mutual respect'* Welsh Government (2022). By having the pupils explore their

behaviour within themselves and those around them, it gives them an onus to be respectful to one another and develop their social skills that will stay with them for life. All supplied by the Welsh Governments curriculum to create ethical, informed citizens and those who are healthy and confident individuals. By giving them independence in the way in which they choose to act, it is up to the educators to guide them on the right track and not tell them how they should react.

What actions are needed?

As stated previously, to create and enforce these strategies there must be a rule for all type of approach. By creating an atmosphere where everyone's on the same team we must look at how to execute these strategies effectively whilst also taking into consideration the short comings of school uniforms and their use in managing pupils' behaviour.

To enforce this ideology of a school uniform and appropriate behaviour, all school staff must challenge the pupils that aren't complying with the school's policy around behaviour and uniform. According to School A's website, it states that they believe that the uniform is a way of setting a high standard for the school whilst also being practical and simple and by doing so keeping costs down for families. As said earlier, with this school being located in one of the more deprived areas of Wales, being able to keep the cost down for families in need is a key focus point.

By keeping uniform, the same for everyone it doesn't single out any pupils attending the school and hides an economic short coming that you may see in schools without a uniform and being able to deduce a pupil's economic situation by the clothes that they wear. Within School A they also have boxes full of old school uniforms that if a certain pupil wasn't complying with the school uniform policy, there would be a chance for them to change into the uniform with no judgement being shown. For most of the pupils that did own a school uniform, especially with those that took part in sport on wet days in the school the families wouldn't have to be concerned that they didn't have a replacement uniform as one would be provided for them.

Regarding the strategies the school used when it came to behavioural management, pupils were tasked with, as stated by the schools' guidelines and the Curriculum's framework, was to allow them to take ownership of their behaviour. This would mean that if a pupil we're to assess their emotions and felt the need to take five minutes and regulate themselves they would be able to leave the classroom and go to an area designated for them to self-regulate

before coming back to the classroom. Of course, this has short comings within itself but for many students this was seen as an effective way to approach behavioural ownership whilst also ensuring that it wasn't disruptive to other pupils' learnings. Whilst doing research into self-regulation it can be used as a way to reset their outlooks on the tasks at hand, a booklet created by the National Council for Special Education (2020) stated that, "Incorporating student interests into movement breaks can help motivate students and maximise participation" by creating an environment within the classroom that supports regulation, rather than seeing it as a hindrance towards learning, it can create an environment that not only manages behaviour but one that is fully independent by each pupil furthermore making them into independent, free thinking, respectful members of the community.

Critical Analysis

There are many ways in which school A has decided to approach behaviour and uniform as we've seen through this assignment so far. The ways in which they've outlined the steps they're willing to take to ensure that the school develops and enhances not only the school's reputation but also the pupil's reputation both in and out of the classroom. These building blocks are vital, especially within the area that the school is based.

Despite this as I've mentioned, there are some short comings within their development plan. In a research document submitted by the Education Endowment Foundation, they concluded that "there is little robust evidence that introducing a school uniform will, by itself, improve academic performance, behaviour, or attendance." (EEF 2021) whilst also stating that one of the key things that need to be considered when using school uniforms is "how to support families that may not be able to afford uniform." This is the key issue that can be stemmed from school uniform. The school as mentioned has spare uniforms if needed, but if they run out, then the pupil will come to school, in accordance to the schools policy get reprimanded for not wearing a uniform which in turn will change the way in which that pupil behaves as it's out of their control, furthermore creating an uphill battle in dealing with their behaviour which if becomes regular can make the pupil no longer want to attend school as they'll feel as though they don't belong.

Conclusion

By having a blanket statement on their strategy for dealing with behaviour and uniform, there must be more leeway in the way in which they approach certain pupils that may struggle with following this action. By supporting those who need it, having them take five minutes out of

their day to self-regulate is a perfect way to reset. But can also lead to the pupil taking advantage of being left alone and taking more time out of their day to regulate when they could be waiting time, furthermore, leading to less time withing the classroom, leading to the possibilities of them missing out on education, despite being in the school.

When it comes to independent learning, it must be something that all schools encourage, being able to let the pupils decide by themselves how they want to take ownership of their education and behaviour. But we must be cautious that despite wanting independent learners, we must remember that they're still learners and still need a helping hand in their approach to being a citizen within society.

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