

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

Gallwch ychwanegu'ch targedau o'ch aseiniad diwethaf (Ond yn berthnasol os yr ydych wedi cwblhau aseiniad) / Please add your targets from the previous assignment (Only relevant if you have completed an assignment)

	Targed/target	Yr hyn yr wyf wedi'i wneud yn yr aseiniad hwn What I have done in this assignment...
Targed/Target 1	Ensure that you use literature to support all assertions throughout your assignment. This will allow you to engage in a more critical way.	I have tried to include more literature within this assignment to support any assertions I have made.
Targed/Target 2	Develop arguments more comprehensively, using a wide range of academic and professional texts.	I have tried to develop my arguments using the literature in order to show more criticality.

Word count: 2740

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to demonstrate how school development plans (SDP) and strategic planning are used; to set achievable targets to improve the outcomes for learners (Welsh Government, 2014a). It aims to explore the way in which a school develops **one** of the priorities of its SDP, by evaluating the actions, impact and evidence base of the priority. The priority chosen for the purpose of this report focuses on continuing to support positive well-being of all stakeholders within the school (see Appendix 1), which displays the 2019-22 SDP for the school, and it is a continuation of a 2018-19 priority, (see Appendix 2).

In order to preserve confidentiality and anonymity as part of the British Educational Research Association's (2018) recommendations for educational research, the school in this report will be referred to as School X (p.21). School X is a community school with 429 pupils and a budget of £3331 per pupil, (My local school, 2019). It has an average attendance of 94.4% and is currently ranked as a 'Green' support category school, however almost a quarter (24.7%) of pupils receive free school meals (FSM), which is greater than the average for Wales (18.4%), suggesting that the school is situated in an area of higher social deprivation (My local school 2019). Likewise, the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation position School X within the top 20 of 148 of Swansea's (and top 200 of 1900 in Wales), Lower Super Output Areas, (Welsh Government, 2014b). The number of pupils with an Additional Learning Need statement is 2.6%, and the percentage of English as an Additional Language (EAL) pupils is 15.9%, which are both significantly higher than the averages of Wales 1.9% and 6.0% respectively (My local school, 2019).

Literature Review

School development plans aim to improve the quality of schooling to ensure it is effective, (Fernandez, 2009). A cyclical model of planning that consists of four steps (self-evaluation, strategic planning, making improvement/action and reviewing impact), is recommended by Welsh government (2014a), suggesting that continuous reflection is needed to ensure that long-term objectives remain achievable and adaptations can be made if necessary. These long-term objectives are known as the school's vision, and only though all stakeholders having comprehensive understanding of this vision can strategies for improvement be decided and implemented in order to raise standards (Davies, 2006; Welsh Government, 2014a).

The first of these four steps is self-evaluation, which Swaffield and MacBeath (2005) declare is a process which schools conduct to, by and for, themselves (p. 239), and Welsh Government (2014a) attribute the need for self-evaluation to determining current

performance and needed improvement, as well as the actions required for improvement. Traditionally, school evaluation was the responsibility of inspectorial bodies, however, self-evaluation is now something of equal importance (MacBeath and McGlynn, 2002), especially when developing an SDP. Schools use a variety of data that can be *quantitative* (based on numerical conclusions) such as assessment results and progress tracking information and/or *qualitative* (more theoretical and have more breadth) such as inspection reports or questionnaires, to draw conclusions about the school and groups of learners (MacBeath and McGlynn, 2002; Welsh Government, 2014a). These conclusions then provide the basis for the actions decided upon in step 2.

Step 2 involves strategic planning, a process which aids the school in advancing, by considering their targets and goals, and pinpointing the best way to successfully achieve these (Lingam, Lingam and Raghuwaiya, 2014). There are two main models of strategic planning, top down and bottom up, with the former led by decisions made by individuals with higher authority at the 'top', and the latter led by contributions from all stakeholders including those at the 'bottom', (Lingam, Lingam and Raghuwaiya, 2014). Both models are often utilised throughout the school development planning process, however, Welsh Government (2014a) cite the importance of involving and consulting all stakeholders during this stage of the cycle in order for the improvement/development process to be successful. This notion is supported by Zhu (2008) who indicates that teachers view their own as well as school leadership teams' contribution to strategic planning and any decided actions as essential.

The third step in the cycle is where the deemed improvements and actions from step 2 are implemented into everyday practice. Van Der Voort and Wood (2014) express the need for secure and coherent plans for this part of the cycle to be effective, while Welsh Government (2014a) stress that key details such as 'responsibilities, accountability, actions and timescales' are made clear to all stakeholders (p.16). This should ensure that actions are implemented as planned. While step 4 of the cycle involves reviewing the impact of the changes employed in the previous steps. Thus, the cyclical process of SDPs allows stakeholders to monitor and measure progression of the targets and goals based on the actions that have been implemented, (van Der Voort and Wood, 2014). Consequently, it is important that the SDP is regarded as a working report which should be evaluated and revised regularly and as necessary, (Welsh Government, 2014a).

School X proposes four priorities within its SDP, and the second priority which focuses on stakeholder well-being is one which has received great attention at a national level in the last few years. This is in response to the introduction of The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act, which aims to improve seven well-being goals of Wales, including making Wales more 'prosperous', 'resilient', 'healthier', 'equal', 'globally responsible' as well as ensuring it has 'cohesive communities' and 'vibrant culture' (Welsh Government, 2015: 6).

This vision is also promoted in Wales' national mission, where part of this mission is to positively support the health and well-being of everyone (Welsh Government, 2017), as well as in the new 2022 curriculum for Wales, in which one of the four purposes is to 'develop pupils as healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society' (Donaldson, 2015; Estyn, 2019).

John-Akinola and Nic-Gabhainn (2014) express the importance of schools supporting well-being and note the correlation between an encouraging schooling environment, positive staff-student relationships and learner participation. This link between positive relationships, student engagement and resulting student well-being is also something which Estyn (2019) identify, suggesting that staff play a vital role in encouraging learners to participate and thus improve their wellbeing. Comparably, student voice is an area of participation which literature suggest is essential for learner well-being as it allows learners to engage with the policies and practices that correspond to their well-being (Anderson and Graham, 2015; Simmons, Graham and Thomas, 2015).

Additionally, Hall (2010) cite that one of the crucial ways to promote well-being, is through ensuring that staff have a significant input during meetings and planning of the SDP. Similarly Kern et al., (2014) state that the views of staff surrounding well-being are essential for maintaining a positive standard for themselves and students alike, and that by listening to these views and taking them into account the wellbeing of all educational stakeholders is promoted. Thus, it is also suggested that increased student well-being is then mirrored by positive staff-wellbeing, (Estyn, 2019). Likewise, developing staff who are sufficiently trained and supported in their own professional development, will ensure that the well-being of the learners, as well as the well-being of the staff is considered and promoted (Welsh Government, 2017). The well-being of staff can also be supported by ensuring that they have a fair work-life balance (Estyn, 2019; Welsh Assembly Government, n.d), which guarantees they also feel supported and protected by the leaders of their schools.

Developing an action point

It is evident that School X have involved stakeholders at all stages of the SDP process. In the self-evaluation step, the school produces a self-evaluation report (SER) which is composed of a variety of data such as test scores, surveys from staff, pupils and governors, and reports written by stakeholders with key responsibilities (Emotional literacy support assistants (ELSA) and intervention group leaders for example). They consider the suggestions and comments raised from their most recent Estyn (2014) inspection, as well as the previous year's priorities which are red/amber/green (RAG) rated (see Appendix2) to

determine their success and progress. This enables School X to collate a range of evidence and data to assess the impact that the school have had in achieving these priorities so that the next steps can be strategically planned. In relation to the priority discussed within this report (the promotion of well-being), the data used to self-evaluate ensures that pupil voice is at the forefront of the process and includes pupil surveys and pupil led learning walks for example, guaranteeing learners are involved from the outset, which is essential for their well-being (Anderson and Graham, 2015; Simmons, Graham and Thomas, 2015).

Next is the construction of the SDP, where the rationales for priorities are discussed in relation to the evidence collected and evaluated during the self-evaluation, and the intended actions are set out. School X identify their expected outcomes and timescales to achieve them, which displays their focus on both the long and short-term goals, as well as their continuous strategic planning and reflection (Fernandez, 2009). Similar to the attention paid to student well-being during this process, staff well-being is also considered by supporting their participation in the planning, something which Lingam, Lingam and Raghuwaiya (2014) cite will heighten their motivation to implement the intended actions. Likewise, Sailes (2008) associate meaningful professional dialogue to significant involvement with identified priorities. The schools set priorities which though achievable over the three years term, are still challenging so that improvements can be appreciated, and these priorities will be comprehensive for the current year (short-term) but also detailed for the following two years (medium to long term) (Welsh Government, 2014a). This is one of the reasons why School X include the previous year's RAG-rated priorities within their current SDP so that improvements up to this point can be appreciated, next step to develop can be planned, and actions established.

The proposed actions set out within School X's SDP are implemented with the intention of meeting the target of the priority; to promote the positive well-being of all of the school's stakeholders. There are many actions proposed and this report will highlight a selected few (See Appendix 3). One of these actions is to ensure that staff receive essential training such as 'trauma informed schools', 'mindfulness' and certain staff become 'Emotional literacy support assistant' trained, in order to develop a staff who are able to support the safety and well-being of their learners, which is also part of Wales' national mission (Welsh Government, 2017). These actions ensure that student voice is paramount, as there are a multitude of student voice groups across the school including 'School Council', 'Welsh dragons', 'Tech team' and 'Friends of the Earth' who each have a staff mentor and meet for a short period every week. These groups have ownership of their own objectives and have the opportunity to contribute to School X's policies and procedures, again promoting the well-being of learners (Anderson and Graham, 2015; Simmons, Graham and Thomas, 2015). By each group having a different member of staff it also ensures that

everyone is responsible for health and well-being, something which Estyn (2019) cite as important as the school develop an ethos where all members of the schooling community care about well-being. This distribution of workload meets another of the school's action points which aims to ensure that staff have a manageable workload and healthy work-life balance (Welsh Assembly Government, n.d), which is also paired with weekly optional staff 'mindfulness' sessions, and FIKA style drop in sessions to ensure staff well-being is considered as part of the priority (Kern et al., 2014). The school have also proposed to introduce a community café which will provide a safe space for parents in the community to socialise and communicate about their children's learning, thus promoting the well-being of the community, as part of Wales' national mission, (Welsh Government, 2017).

The fourth step in the cycle reviews the impact of the actions outlined in the SDP, and school X measure this impact via termly RAG rating by members of the senior leadership and management team (SLMT), and these findings are then shared with the governing body through termly head teachers reports. According to MacGilchrist and Mortimore (1997), governors consider these updates regarding impact progress important, and believed that these reports were beneficial as they felt that the staff and headteachers were most qualified to assess and evaluate the impact. Similar to the self-evaluation at the start of the cycle, the impact measurement requires the SLMT to gather evidence in order to identify the next steps.

Reflection and evaluation

It is the responsibility of school leaders to ensure that they are supporting the well-being of staff and students alike through measures such as establishing a manageable work-life balance, however a whole-school attitude to promoting well-being is essential (Estyn, 2019). Whilst the leaders of School X uphold this statement, they also employ a more bottom-up approach to their self-evaluation and strategic planning, involving stakeholders and learners in all stages of the process in order to ensure that they have a school-focused mindset in the production of their SDP, (Zhu, 2008). Moreover, Bennet et al., (2000) report in their study that many schools did not view the SDP as a concrete plan, and instead used it more as a draft document so that they could be adaptable in their responses to certain priorities. This is important as the SLMT at School X review their SDP on a termly basis, and all members of staff can input any comments or ideas in relation to the priorities which can then be input into these reviews to adapt to aid them in their progress.

In regard to delivering and implementing the actions to meet their priority of promoting well-being of stakeholders within the school, I think School X have been coherent in their planning and the resulting actions, and during my time there I was able to observe

many of these actions in practice. This consistency between the planning and delivering ensures that learners are receiving the same message of health and well-being from all members of the school and that impact is maximised and pupils see the link, (Estyn, 2019).

One thing that stood out when comparing School X's current priorities to last years' priorities is that the two RAG rated as 'amber' for needing improvement had a larger number of action points (approx. 14) when compared to the priorities rated 'green' for on track (less than 10) (See appendix 2). This may suggest that having a large quantity of action points limits the achievability of the priority, as Hanover Research (2014) express the dangers of setting targets which are too great, for example, non-achievement and disappointment. This in turn may affect the well-being and morale of staff and stakeholders, and as such may be something that School X could consider when creating their next action points during the strategic planning stage of the SDP.

Conclusion

This report has intended to depict the process of school development planning, as well as the reasons why it is such an essential component in the reflection and improvement of schools; to ensure that they are becoming a 'school-based teacher learning organization' (Fernandez, 2009: 361). It has focused on how the school developed a priority which focused on promoting the positive well-being of all stakeholders within the school by looking at how they have implemented the cyclical model of school development planning, such as the type of data used to self-evaluate and the action points decided in strategic planning and how these are then implemented, and the impact measured.

Reflection, evaluation and strategic planning are significant roles of educators and as such this assignment has allowed me to become familiar with the processes and need for school development plans. It has shown me the importance of including all stakeholders during the processes and thus creation of SDPs, and the reason why a bottom-up approach is essential for this type of planning. It has also allowed me to understand and further develop my position against the new Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership which aim to encourage and develop best practice in educators, for example 'working with in school colleagues' and 'supporting formal leadership roles' (Welsh Government, 2019). In conclusion it has illustrated to me the need for schools to work in unity to produce an SDP which improves the quality of schooling and education for learners, (Fernandez, 2009).

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Appendices

Appendix 1: School X 2019-22 SDP school priorities.

School Development Plan 2019 - 22		
Overview of School Development Plan Priorities 2019-20		
Priority Reference	Priority Identified	CIF & SER 2019-20 Reference
SDP PRIORITY 1	To continue to prepare for the new curriculum, in readiness for statutory implementation from September 2022	IA 1 – Standards IA 2 – Well Being and attitudes to learning IA 3 – Teaching & Learning Experiences IA 5 – Leadership and management SER – PG SLO – Developing: Establishing; Learning; Modelling
SDP PRIORITY 2	To continue to support the positive wellbeing of all stakeholders	IA 2 – Well Being and attitudes to learning IA 4 – Care, support and guidance IA 5 – Leadership and management SER – PG SLO – Developing: Promoting; Learning; Modelling
SDP PRIORITY 3	To ensure continued professional learning for all staff	IA 3 – Teaching & Learning Experiences IA 4 – Care, support and guidance IA 5 – Leadership and management SER – PG SLO – Creating; Promoting; Establishing; Embedding; Learning; Modelling
SDP PRIORITY 4	To use PDG funding to raise standards of all eFSM pupils / To use RCSIG funding to raise standards of ALL pupils	IA 1 – Standards IA 2 – Well Being and attitudes to learning IA 3 – Teaching & Learning Experiences IA 4 – Care, support and guidance IA 5 – Leadership and management SER – PG SLO – Developing; Promoting; Learning; Modelling

Appendix 2: School X 2018-19 priorities which show priority 2 as continued in 2019-20

Summary of progress against previous year's priorities (2018-19)	
Priority Ref & RAG rating	Priority Identified, Progress & Impact to date and Next Steps (if applicable)
SDP 2018-19 PRIORITY 1	To evaluate our existing curriculum position and consider ways to develop in light of 'Successful Futures' - A number of 'Successful Futures' awareness raising sessions were held for staff, including a meeting led by [REDACTED] regarding pedagogical principles, interaction with the draft curriculum when it was published, attendance at ERW training sessions and a twilight session with governors and parents invited. - We continued to undertake our role as a Digital Competence Pioneer, linked to the Health and Well Being Area of Learning and Experience. - A Curriculum Designers Pupil Voice was established ensuring Pupil Voice was considered. - Staff and pupils considered what we value in our current curriculum and how existing practises address the Four Purposes. - A shared 'curriculum vision' was developed and an infographic created to communicate what is important to our curriculum delivery. - Teaching staff engaged in a number of workshops with University [REDACTED] to explore enquiry skills and action research. - Teaching staff were provided with reading days to engage with areas of research interest. - A number of curriculum developments were trialled, evaluated and incorporated into our curriculum approach where appropriate. 'Children as Researchers' or the 'Present Curriculum' were not completed and will carry over to this academic year. - We moved forward in our ability to support our EAL learners independently by utilising devolved funding to access training and support
SDP 2018-19 PRIORITY 2	To further support pupil well-being and participation throughout the school. - Attendance was 94.4% for the year which is our second highest result ever and placed us in the top quartile for our eFSM group. We did not however reach our own target of 95%. - Our target of no children under 80% was not realised. 5 children had attendance less than 80%, the same as the previous year. 2 of these were in reception and therefore not officially recorded and 1 was as a result of a reduced timetable as part of a Pastoral Support Plan. 2 others were as a result of ongoing family issues but both families engaged with the school and Education Welfare Service. 35 children had 20 or more lates. This did not hit our target of <24 children which would have been better than our lowest result from 2017. However, 35 is an improvement on 42 pupils which was the figure from 2018. Persistent punctuality issues remain a key issue. It should be noted that of the 21 children with more than 30 lates, this constitutes 13 families. - While persistent lateness remains an issue, we exceeded our target of >80% of children having less than 10 lates during the
	academic year with 82.3%. In fact, 61.7% of the full time pupil population had fewer than 3 lates in the academic year, illustrating further that the majority of the pupil population arrive on time. 'Feel Good' Fridays proved very popular. Both children and staff particularly liked Enrichment. - Restructuring of Pupil Voice groups ensured that more children were able to take an active role across the school. The structure of meetings ensured they happened more regularly but there was an imbalance in what each group was able to achieve. - An external audit of behaviour across the school was positive and demonstrated that staff acted respectfully and consistently. The only negative was that children did not know the school rules. - Cluster training around behaviour was well received and staff began embedding the principles discussed. The Behaviour Policy was not reviewed as planned and this will take place during 2019-20. - Due to staff sickness, the Present Curriculum was not rolled out as planned. - Lockers in KS2 were a significant improvement, freeing up valuable space and removing bottle necks which caused behavioural issues in the past. - Lunchtimes were evaluated and processes improved. Feedback from both staff and pupils, at the end of the year, was very positive. - The Hangout was set up and trialled towards the end of the year. Feedback so far has been positive although processes may need further development during 2019-20. - The concept of trusted adults was fully introduced and utilised throughout the year. When surveyed, less children found it difficult to name an adult they felt they could talk to in school, than the previous year.
SDP 2018-19 PRIORITY 3	To develop our curriculum and ensure it is relevant to the needs of our pupils. - The SLO model was shared with staff during the course of the year in order to familiarise them with the seven dimensions. - The 12 Pedagogical Principles were considered in training and during session observations. - The school vision and aims were revisited and the principles of our curriculum approach successfully defined. - All staff explored the standards for their roles and this assisted with understanding and engagement. - The in house menu of support pilot was not undertaken and this will feature in our 2019-20 SDP. - All teachers engaged in the development of research skills and extended their own knowledge of research interests. - All staff did not visit other establishments as planned and this will remain a target moving forward. - A new peer observation model using video was well received by teachers. - The whole school focus on behaviour, the new curriculum and use of technology to introduce a new online staff platform via Hwb and Teams all proved very successful. - Teachers reflective journals demonstrate that the majority are comfortable taking measured risks to move learning forward and are engaging more in research enquiry to inform their practice. - A newly introduced Pupil Update Grid excel spreadsheet simplified the process and made it more purposeful. - Cohort on a Page data capture provides a quick overview of each cohort and their needs but these need updating. - Our role as a Digital Pioneer saw us supporting other schools as well as benefitting from access to current thinking.

Appendix 2 cont.

School Development Plan 2019 - 22	
	Staff were able to apply for some leadership roles at the end of the year, in preparation for our 2019-20 staffing structure.
SDP 2018-19 PRIORITY 4	To continue to develop our role in supporting Initial Teacher Training with [REDACTED] - The network pilot proved successful as did the model of having [REDACTED] leading it on our behalf. - A number of staff members were able to take an active role in the [REDACTED]. This involved presenting, leading seminars, liaising with staff from other schools and the university and interviewing prospective student teachers for the 2019-20 cohorts.
SDP 2018-19 PRIORITY 5	To use PDG funding to raise standards of all FSM pupils / To use RCSI funding to raise standards of ALL pupils. - Well established programmes, such as Language and Play and Families @ [REDACTED] continued to prove popular with parents. - New parents spoke very positively about the pre nursery visits. - The purchase of Rapid Reading resources proved beneficial – pupils included in the programme made on average 1.5 year's progress in their reading age over a 8 month period. - Residencies in each Foundation Phase year were extremely well received by children, parents and staff. - Around 94% of parents engaged in parental consultations. There is evidently a reduction though in the demand for day time appointments. - At the end of KS2, 100% of eFSM children achieved the Core Subject Indicator in 2019, compared to 92.1% of nFSM. Data trends show that eFSM children achieve well by the time they leave St Thomas. - KS2 CSI results show a positive trend over the last five years, with 94.2% of the cohort achieving CSI in 2019.

Appendix 3: images taken from School X SDP of the well-being priority actions

2.2	To extend our knowledge and understanding of trauma	Staff feel more informed of issues around trauma.	Sept '19 – July '20		trainer	See 3.3
2.3	To continue to improve attendance and punctuality	Attendance reaches 94.8% < 5 children have attendance less than 80% <24 children have more than 20 lates >65% of the pupil population have fewer than 3 lates during the academic year.	Sept '19 – July '20		Template letters Weekly analysis Attendance & Punctuality Agreement	£300 of incentives
2.4	To introduce specific KS2 well-being intervention groups, using the ELSA model. Actions include: - Appoint two TAs to 0.5 well-being roles (Grade 5), with the view to develop as ELSAs. - Provide resources and training to run well-being groups for three afternoons a week.	Children are better supported in their well-being needs and this improves behaviour, social interaction and learning. ELSAs complete the training and receive supervision to undertake their roles. Staff feel supported by the ELSA model and can see the benefit of it.	Sept '19 – July '20		Training Supervision Resources	See 3.4
			Sept '19 – July '20		Space	None

2.10	To further develop the Pupil Voice structure, introduced last year. Actions include: Creating a central location for individual Pupil Voice Communication Boards	All Pupil Voice groups have clear objectives which they have ownership of. All Pupil Voice groups have a similar balance of experiences and opportunities to ensure their voices are heard. All pupils have an understanding as to what the Pupil Voice groups are doing for them.	Sept '20 – July '20		Pupil Voice Boards Pupil Voice Objectives School Council Board	None
2.11	To revise communication systems to help assist staff work life balance	Staff are still contactable but do not feel that this encroaches on the personal time, outside of school.	Sept' 19		Whats App Staff Handbook	None
2.12	To provide a staff Mindfulness drop in and	Staff feel that their views are listened to and considered.	Sept '20 – July '20		Time	None

	to create a weekly FIKA session to pause, socialise and enjoy.	Work life balance is improved and staff feel supported in their wellbeing.				
2.13	To introduce a weekly Café [redacted] as a drop in for parents to socialise and discuss children's learning.	Parents have a safe, friendly environment where they can pause and socialise with others.	Jan '19- July '20	Parent Volunteers	Refreshments Community Helpers Community Rm	£100
2.14	To develop the outdoor space with playground markings to promote physical activity – guided by Pupil Voice	Children have a say in what markings they want in the yard and markings promote physical activities to help fitness and wellbeing	Spring '20	School Friends School Council	External Company Landlord's consent	£5000
	RAG rating of Progress and Impact Measured	Autumn	Spring	Summer		