



Module Code: ECAD6016

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

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AI Acknowledgement

I confirm that I have not used any AI tools in the research and creation of this assignment.

I confirm that I have not presented any AI generated materials as my own work.

I confirm that I have copies of my drafts, notes, and other resources I used, which I may be asked to provide in evidence.

Targets from previous module	How I have worked on these?	An example can be seen on...
Strengthen the use of literature and try and support each idea.	I have aimed to use academic sources including reports, journals and policies.	Policy section – links to Welsh Government and Estyn where relevant.
Revise critical thinking.	I have aimed to critically analyse White Rose Maths, using supportive evidence.	Literature review section.

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

Introduction

This report intends to critically evaluate a target from a School Development Plan (SDP). An SDP is an improvement strategy for a school. It outlines the steps that will be taken to enhance learning outcomes and performance (Welsh Government, 2014). The specific target chosen for focus is ‘use of plans from White Rose Maths to aid planning for maths development’. This is a significant target for the school, due to teacher workload increasing everyday (Easthope and Easthope, 2010) as well as the Welsh curriculum’s requirement to link lessons to everyday issues and real-life situations (Welsh Government, 2019). White Rose Maths was selected as a target for this school, as it provides them with ideas and layouts for maths lessons that are valuable and interesting for pupils, whilst providing them with essential skills and knowledge that can be adapted in different circumstances (White Rose Education, 2025).

This specific school will be referred to as school X due to following BERA guidelines (BERA, 2024). School X is situated within an urban area of South Wales, close to the city centre. Pupils come from a varied catchment area, meaning that there are families from both deprived and affluent areas. A high percentage of the school population speak English as their first language, and few pupils speak significant Welsh. It is a school in which a low percentage of pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds, however, lessons are still taught regarding a range of religions and cultures to raise awareness.

Policy

Welsh Government (2024) have stated that in order to meet high standards for all, the main aim of school development is to support schools in providing pupils with the best learning opportunities, regardless of their situations or background. This is supported by the Welsh Government’s national mission as it aims for every child to receive help to become a healthy, involved, enterprising and moral citizen, who is prepared to participate through life (Welsh Government, 2023). These statements link with the four purposes, which were designed to be and serve as the foundation for the curriculum design of schools, therefore supporting learners as they develop (Welsh Government, 2022a).

During an Estyn inspection, there are various areas which are reported on. The development of pupil progress, knowledge and understanding will be addressed to ensure a positive learning environment for all. Moreover, there will be a focus on those pupils with adverse outcomes to guarantee their needs are being supported appropriately (Estyn, 2024).

Despite Estyn releasing targets for schools following an inspection, schools also utilise a self – evaluation process to consider their performance and use the results as a foundation for planning long – term progress (Welsh Government, 2022b). Welsh Government (2022c) have identified four approaches that schools take throughout the self – evaluation process. These include examining teaching and learning, interacting with stakeholders, assessing pupil development, and organising and carrying out improvements.

Miles (2022) has discussed the new framework surrounding the obligations of schools now needing to condense their intended improvements and development plan, in order for it to be published and made available for the public to view. This will ascertain the information as it will be transparent for everyone. This aims to give parents/carers and the wider community a clear vision of the school's plan, therefore enabling learners to progress and practitioners to modify their pedagogical approaches to support this.

Literature review

According to Main (2022a) White Rose Maths is an innovative educational program that prioritises a thorough comprehension of maths. Its educational goal is to improve pupils' mathematical and problem-solving abilities. The foundation of White Rose Maths is the mastery technique, which prioritises extensiveness of the subject over acceleration, and makes sure that fundamental concepts are fully understood before continuing. Moreover, the program is anchored by key ideas of early maths instruction (EEF, 2023). This suggests that pupil's needs and interests are considered, whilst ensuring to include meaningful and authentic contexts within the learning, this making it more relevant for learners.

Despite White Rose Maths allowing prior knowledge to be built upon, the scheme adopts a linear curriculum, which indicates that certain themes are not covered as often as they would be under a spiral curriculum (Bessemmer, 2025). The spiral curriculum is supported by the theory of Bruner, as he describes it as a model of learning where basic concepts are covered again throughout the curriculum, but with lessons that are more sophisticated and challenging and that reinforce prior knowledge (Main, 2022b).

Whilst some schools might use White Rose Maths and follow it word for word, other schools may take a more flexible approach. In many schools, teachers are advised to address the needs of both individual pupils and the whole class, rather than relying only on White Rose materials. Likewise, they are encouraged to modify the scheme, spending more or less time on specific topics, depending on the progress of the class ([REDACTED], 2023). This is supported by Dhungana *et al*, (2021) as they state that teachers are given the freedom to explore their pedagogical approaches through decision making, in order to identify the next steps. Additionally, Ciampa and Reisboard (2024) discuss the liberty it provides practitioners with, regarding their ability to administrate the implementation of the scheme and how it is taught.

Contrary to this, Nelson *et al*, (2020) argues that while strict commitment to a plan is necessary, other elements like pupil participation play a pivotal part in the successfulness of the intervention. However, Dr Shea (2023) has highlighted the extreme rigidity's detrimental effects on teacher's well-being, thus leading to teacher burnout.

Developing an action point, reflection and evaluation

School X decided on the implementation of White Rose Maths in order to reduce the workload for teachers, as well as enhance learner's outcomes regarding maths. Following an internal book look that was carried out with the senior leadership team, it was identified that a clearer focus was needed surrounding maths and the topics that are taught within it. The school tried and tested various maths schemes and interventions for a period of time, allowing them to recognise what they want from it, and which one would best suit their needs. They chose White Rose Maths as the intervention to be used, this highlighting the reason for it being a target on the SDP. They want to continue to make use of the plans and lessons that the scheme has to offer, in order to support the development of learners.

Following spending time in the school, it is clear that school X are still getting used to the scheme, with some teachers using it continuously, and some using it occasionally for inspiration. However, due to the implementation of White Rose Maths being relatively recent in the school, there are currently no sufficient evaluations with regards to the effectiveness of it. Although, the school did take part in a self-review day, which consisted of Headteachers from various schools in the area come and observe different classes in school X. An element of the feedback from this, consisted of comments on their execution of the White Rose scheme, and the positive impact it is having on pupil's learning.

It could be argued, that in order to effectively evaluate the effectiveness of White Rose Maths across the whole school equally, all teachers and classes need to be using it as their main hub for maths lessons, as well as implementing the ideas into the tasks they teach. It needs to be a whole school approach, in order to determine its value for maths lessons for different ages. This is reinforced by Goldberg *et al*, (2018) as they highlight how changes carried out throughout the whole school enable more consistent and quantifiable results.

Conclusion

This report has emphasized the importance of an SDP and why each target is different and unique to each school and their needs. The implementation of White Rose Maths has been an interesting focus, highlighting the impact it has already had on teacher workload and pupil progression in a short space of time. Despite the scheme incorporating a small amount of differentiation ideas (Tang *et al*, 2024), it provides lessons and worksheets that teachers can adapt to make more accessible for their pupils. The eminence of evidence-based decision making has been eye opening, as it is clear that school development can only take place or is more prominent when whole school collaboration is present, and evaluations take place to consider the effectiveness of a process.

Following this report, it will have an impact on future practice as it puts into perspective the significance of pupil progress as a result of an intervention. Furthermore, it will allow for

pedagogical approaches to be measured against targets on an SDP, to inform practitioners of the best approaches to take to meet these aims and goals.

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