

ECAD7003: Where am I teaching?

	Targed/target	Yr hyn yr wyf wedi'i wneud yn yr aseiniad hwn What I have done in this assignment...
Targed/Target 1	Think carefully of the writing prose, the text needs to reflect academic views not personal.	I have only used factual information and studies to highlight my points, ensuring that my own points of view aren't coming across in arguments.
Targed/Target 2	Use a deeper analysis.	I have tried to critique the schools SDP plan by finding sources which state what a good SDP should look like.
Targed/Target 3	No need to reference items that have been referenced previously.	I have tried to only use the literature once in the text with the exception of Welsh Government documents.

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This paper will discuss how a school develops one aspect of its school development plan (SDP) and what components make an effective SDP. One element of the SDP shows that the school is preparing for the implementation of the new curriculum, focusing on implementing the health and wellbeing area of learning and experience (AoLE). This aspect was chosen as all schools should be on track to deliver the new curriculum on time as Donaldson (2015) has made it compulsory in Wales by 2022. It is also crucial to note that the national curriculum has not undergone any significant reforms since 1988, therefore this is one of the most exciting changes to happen to the education system in a long time.

The school in question is an English medium, two-form entry school situated in a deprived area of Swansea, Wales. It is a large school with over 400 pupils and 34.% of these pupils have free school meals (FSM). This is over the average number of FSM in Wales which is 18.4% (My local school, 2018). The school is also a level 2 rights abiding school which informs students that they have a right to express their views in all matters concerning them (My local school, 2018).

Literature review on wellbeing

The Department for Education (DfE) recognises that in order to help their pupils succeed, schools have a role to play in ensuring that they are mentally healthy and resilient (DfE, 2014; Nevo, 1995). The main components of the health and wellbeing AoLE are physical development, mental health and social and emotional wellbeing (Hwb, 2019). The AoLE's aim is to inform students and staff that all these components are interlinked and that without good physical and mental health, their learning and cognitive development will decline, leading to a long-term impact on them in adulthood (Anderson et al., 2018). In order to promote student's wellbeing, specifically their social and emotional wellbeing; the school has adopted empathy lab. In education there is an increasing demand that students should be encouraged to think and empathize (Moore, 2004; Lloyd and Bahr, 2010). However, research by Elliot and Dweck (2007) found that pupils' intellectual capabilities to establish positive relationships are not being achieved at a substantial level in regular schooling. Empathy lab is an organisation which uses the power of stories to build children's literacy, empathy skills and social activism for ages 4-11. An Empathy Lab Pioneer Evaluation (2016) found that 100% of teachers report that they saw an increase in children's six key empathy skills such as empathizing with other's emotions; therefore, it has been implemented at the school.

Furthermore, Elliott, Malecki and Dermanay (2001) highlight that children who are unable to conform to common social-communicative rules such as, allowing people to speak without interruption and displaying appropriate body language in conversation, will find it difficult to build relationships and maintain friendships which can detrimentally impact their achievement. Studies also suggest that poor social- communication skills lead to self-regulatory and behavioural issues which may hinder pupils' academic performance (Segrin and Flora, 2000; Osofsky and Osofsky, 2001). In contrast, children who have good communication and social skills are generally happier individuals who achieve greater academic achievements (Andrade, Brown and Tannock, 2014; Anderson et al., 2018). Therefore, without combating wellbeing issues such as these, academic success will not be achieved regardless of which teaching strategies are used.

Self-evaluation and priorities

School development planning is now an essential part of the annual cycle of work in both Wales and England (Hopkins, 2008). The school development plan is designed after a school undertakes an evaluation of its performance which will allow them to identify their strengths and their areas for improvement (Welsh Gov SDPs, 2014). For example, the SDP shows that the school has made strong progress since the last inspection on distributing leadership responsibilities appropriately, improving outcomes for more able pupils and improving outcomes at the end of the foundation phase. Furthermore, Hargreaves et al., (1989) defines an SDP as 'capturing the long-term vision of the school within which manageable short-term goals are set' (p.4). As they have made strong progress in these areas, they are able to move on to a long term vision of implementing the new curriculum, whilst setting short term targets of implementing Empathy lab, developing speech and communication skills, and improving their knowledge on the health and wellbeing AoLE as a whole.

The school have decided to focus on the implementation of the health and wellbeing AoLE due to Estyn (2014) rating the school as 'adequate' in terms of wellbeing during their last inspection. Pupil's attendance was noted as a concern as the school has been placed in the lower 50% when compared with similar schools for a few years running. Also, it was noted that an alarming number of pupils were arriving at school late on a regular basis, suggesting that pupils may not want to attend school. Additionally, through reading responses to parent questionnaires published by Estyn (2014); when parents were given the statement "Pupils behave well in school" only 46% agreed, suggesting that there's a lot of anti-social behaviour

between pupils in school. Also, only 58% of parents felt that the staff treated all pupils fairly and with respect, suggesting that staff aren't building positive relationships with all pupils.

Furthermore, pupil's performance in mathematics has increased dramatically from the lower 50% of similar schools to the top 25%; however, language and literacy levels have plateaued and remained in the upper 50% with no sufficient changes (Estyn, 2014). FSM pupil's outcomes were lower than their peers in terms of their language, literacy and personal and social development skills. However, it is crucial to note that the last Estyn report was completed in 2014, therefore the school has had a substantial amount of time to improve pupils' wellbeing.

Strategic planning and cost

The school in question's development plan is written by its senior members of staff along with the headmaster. However, Hopkins (2008) points out that SDP's are rarely formed based on the perceptions of 'ordinary' school staff such as teachers and teaching assistants and it is widely acknowledged that if it took their views into account then they would have different outcomes. Nias et al., (1992) states that this leads to teachers being detached from the document and they don't deem it as a key part of their work. On the other hand, the school in questions did meet with staff regularly to outline priorities and collaboratively monitor progress. However, the Welsh Government (2014) strongly suggests that in preparing for the SDP, learners and the community should all have an input, however there is no proof of this on the schools SDP. It is also crucial to note that an SDP should be viewed as a live document in which all staff can update based on reflecting and developing strategies each term (Ramjhun, 2013). Article 13 of the 1998 Education Order (DoE, 2010) support this and states that schools should periodically revise their school development plans.

Hargreaves and Hopkins (2004) state that once the SDP has been agreed as a whole, there will be then a set of detailed action plans for each priority. They also state that each priority should be designated to a group of staff members, ensuring that responsibility is shared.

The school in question has assigned two teachers to be in charge of each AoLE. The school is confident that responsibilities are shared equally as they were praised for their leadership skills in their latest Estyn report as 'distributing responsibilities appropriately' was rated as 'strong progress' achieved (Estyn, 2014).

The school's senior staff have discussed the steps needed to take to develop pupils understanding of empathy and through this develop reading for pleasure by implementing Empathy lab. This is a cluster project that other schools are taking part in and these cluster schools will all have training together. The Welsh Government (2014) stated that schools should be alert to opportunities where they can share good practice from other schools and these training days provide opportunities to do so. Furthermore, there will be workshops to model and support parents in encouraging reading for empathy. There will also be leaflets and resources handed out to support parents.

As recommended by the Welsh government, (2014) costs are outlined in the school development grant and each focus has been given a budget. The last Estyn report states that the school manages its budget effectively and spending relates well to the priorities for improvement. Every priority is given a cost and it is outlined what the money will be spent on. Library development will take place in order to support empathy lab with a budget of £20,000 allocated. An inset day will be used for whole school training on empathy lab and a budget of £750 will be provided for physical resources such as DVD's and leaflets. A further £750 will be spent on books for empathy lab and £5000 will be spent on 8 training days where the teaching staff will undergo courses which will deepen their understanding of the AOLE's.

In order to tackle speech and communication difficulties upon entry to school, the learning support assistants will provide early speech, language and communication support up until pupils are in year 3. Staff will form close links to outside agencies such as speech and language specialists and strategies will be provided for parents to use at home. In order to meet these needs a budget of £27,984 has been provided.

In terms of deepening an understanding of the health and wellbeing AoLE as a whole, present learning will be mapped against 'what matters statements' and teachers' lessons plans will be overseen by the headmaster. KS2 pupils will be asked to use Speakr regularly and recognise the health and wellbeing benefits of its use, whilst the foundation phase and KS1 will use emojis to check in each morning and describe how they are feeling.

Predicted outcomes and measuring impact

If empathy lab and reading for pleasure are effective, the pupils should have a good understanding of what empathy is and be able to identify the feelings of others. This will be measured by learning walks and empathy questionnaires. Another way they will measure the impact of empathy lab is to observe active listening by pupils across the school and provide them with opportunities for deep conversations and debates. These will then be measured by monitoring the teachers planning, book reviews and learning walks.

Additionally, pupils should be able to demonstrate improved confidence and an increase in reading for pleasure whilst also ensuring that parents understand and support its benefits. This will then be measured by the reading for pleasure audit and parental feedback through questionnaires. The use of Speakr will also be reviewed regularly and any concerning incidents will be passed on to the safeguarding officer and logged using 'My concern'.

Lastly, in order to measure pupil's speech, language and communication skills, their progress will be tracked through SIMS and be given a score each year. They will also be assessed by speech and language therapists. The staff will then discuss what is going well and what they need to improve on and add this information to the ongoing everchanging SDP.

Recommendations for improving the SDP

Whilst qualitative methods such as questionnaires are effective in gathering data on wellbeing; Cheminais (2010) suggests quantitative ways in order to measure pupil wellbeing such as logging the percentage of persistent absentees, the rate of exclusions, the rate of FSM, the take up of extended services and the percentage of pupils eating healthy packed lunches. If this data is gathered, the school will be able to compare and contrast its results by the end of the three years. Previously, the only data related to wellbeing shown on the SDP was the attainment gap between FSM and non-FSM pupils.

Whilst these strategies are all effective ways to gather data, Day, Madfield and Harris (2000) state that schools have a long history of adopting innovations one after the other, however very few take the time to understand the impact of the current processes in place.

Alarming, if schools fail to see a positive difference within the first 12 months, they change tactics rather than wait the recommended two years (Bernhardt, 2013). This is concerning as whilst the school only has two main focuses for the next three years which are focusing on implementing the new curriculum and improving challenge for MAT pupils, these targets are

very broad. The school has set out up to nine targets each year spread out over three years (see appendix 1). With all of these interventions put in place, it may become difficult to measure which strategies are most successful, therefore the school should focus on around 3 targets per year.

Reflection and evaluation

As well as the children's social and emotional wellbeing; in order to combat the children's physical development, the school is a strong advocate for the daily mile and religiously carries it out daily. The daily mile initially started to increase children's fitness levels as they were required to run or walk outside for 15 minutes (Chesham et al., 2018). However, studies have shown that the daily mile doesn't have a significant impact on children's fitness, but it is found to have a positive impact on children's emotional wellbeing and academic achievement as it increases concentration levels (Breheny et al., 2018). The teachers also noted that the daily mile gives troublesome pupils time to 'cool off' as they become disengaged if sat at a desk for hours.

Previously, health in school has been separated from other aspects of school life (Konu and Rimpela (2002). However, a whole school approach has been adopted resulting in health and wellbeing being spread across the whole curriculum, organised in to the six areas of learning and experience, rather than being viewed as a single subject as requested by Donaldson (2015). For example, in a humanities lesson, the children were learning about Buddhist's culture and were required to write their own Tibetan prayer flags on which they wrote their own mantras to spread good will to others. This task allowed them to be aware of others' feelings as recognised in the health and wellbeing AoLE. Another example during a science lesson, the pupils were studying the space and were asked to empathise with the space rover 'Curiosity'. They then produced work highlighting how alone Curiosity felt being thousands of miles from home. This shows that not only does the health and wellbeing AoLE allow the children to express emotions, but it also provides authentic learning contexts as recommended by Donaldson (2015) as they are asked to relate topics to themselves or people they know. Additionally, in key stage 2, the pupils regularly view Newsround and participate in discussion about current issues and global news, ensuring that they are ethically informed citizens as Donaldson (2015) wishes them to be.

The use of Speakr is a good strategy to adopt as children use this to communicate their feelings without having to have a face to face discussion with the teacher. A

recommendation to improve the use of Speakr would be if the pupils could take their log in details home as they may be having issues at home during the summer holidays as this long period without support can leave pupils feeling isolated. McCombs (2011) supports this and states that over the summer holidays pupils, specifically from low income backgrounds' wellbeing declines and they academically perform on average one month behind where they initially were.

Conclusion

Whilst the school is clearly taking the right steps to implement the health and wellbeing AoLE. Hargreaves and Hopkins (2004) highlight the real outcomes of a school development plan apart from the successful implementation of specific priorities. These include, improved communication and co-operation amongst schools and the community; staff development and raising expectation of what should be achieved rather than what can be achieved. This task has shown the steps taken when writing an SDP such as self-evaluation, data analysis, strategic planning and measuring impact (Welsh Gov, 2014). This will be useful to student teachers as they begin their professional roles as it ensures they are informed of what is expected of them in terms of contributing to their own schools SDP in the future.

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