

How a school develops one aspect of its School Development Plan: a report that critically reflects on the actions, impact and evidence base. (2,500 words)

	Targed/target	Yr hyn yr wyf wedi'i wneud yn yr aseiniad hwn What I have done in this assignment...
Targed/Target 1	Read widely, considering the relevance and credibility of sources, ensuring you discuss them in an accurate way.	I made sure I read many documents which commented extensively on SDP's throughout, making sure they were all relevant.
Targed/Target 2	Justify comments and make your reasons for choices clear.	I clearly demonstrated what the school is doing, evaluating this and then gave concise areas for improvement.
Targed/Target 3	Make sure sentences (and word choices) are clear and accurate; this will allow you to demonstrate full understanding.	I have read my work over to make sure the words I have chosen to use are accurate.

Introduction

A School Development Plan (SDP) is a strategic plan for improvement (Welsh Gov, 2014). The importance of an SDP is paramount to implement strategies aiming for future success. This report will critically reflect on the actions in place to drive one aspect of a schools SDP. For the purpose of this report the school is identified as 'School X'. The impact of the aspect will also be reviewed. Evidence will be critiqued to see the impact of a particular aspect within the schools SDP. The aspect I have decided to write about within School X's development plan is 'To change our approach to behaviour management and create a whole school commitment and ethos that is invested in relationships'. School X looks to guide both learners and parents down a positive path, allowing students to seek their full potential in later life. Due to the school's location and all that goes on within the Community the SDP looks to seek a family feel throughout the ethos of the school. This aspect of the SDP has a monumental influence on the school across all ages. School X is in a deprived area, the school has 36% free school meals. This is 19% above the average within the UK.

Literature Review

Schools are required to obtain a SDP allowing them to implement strategies to achieve both short and long term goals. An SDP is a working document which should develop throughout the school years. It is a reflective tool so stakeholders can judge whether targets are met through the strategies implemented. Stakeholders vary from the Vicar and Chief Governor to the parents included in and around the school. The UK government (2014) have regulations in place to create a successful School Development Plan which all schools have to adhere to. The Welsh Government (2014) have coincided with the expectations from the UK government and have released a SDP guidance report for schools. The guidance outlines the expectations from the Welsh Government in order to achieve a successful SDP. Bennett et al (2000) agrees with Earl (2001) suggesting that Numeracy and Literacy goals are the core of SDP's and schools can implement strategies to hit targets within these areas as soon as their SDP is live. Poverty is an issue which schools need to try their best to control, reducing the impact of this variable is also embedded within a SDP. Kim and Watts (2005) recognise this issue within communities suggesting that schools need to be realistic when they set goals as the community could impact on results. Schwahn and Spady (1998) recognise the importance of strategies as they imply that a successful strategy brings back positive results. A school development cycle (Welsh Government, 2014) is set against exactly what each school is looking to achieve. Schools use this cycle to construct an effective and concise SDP with a clear purpose. The cycle aims to raise standards within the school and improve the outcomes

of the learner. Schools are reflecting on their strategies, their vision and actions to better themselves consistently. This cycle is a visual representation of how reflective practitioners use the SDP to better the school setting.

Graham and Phelps (2003) recognise reflective learning as a intuition which optimises future results. The researchers illustrate a deep understanding of reflection and suggest that a reflective learner is going to enhance their repertoire of professional knowledge within a specific setting. The Welsh Government (2014) guidance promotes all stakeholders to reflect on their SDP consistently in order to adjust any variables within it, backing up Graham and Phelps (2003). The importance of critical reflection to begin a focused SDP is vital to apply the correct strategies going forward. Dinkelman (2000) proposes that critical reflection is a negotiation about the moral and ethical elements of education, agreeing with Finlay, (2008). The researcher suggests throughout that critical reflection is an extremely important tool to better themselves and other practitioners for future practices. The research gathered backs the importance of SDP's as schools can then reflect critically on their practice, judging whether the strategies previously used were effective. This allows stakeholders to critically evaluate what strategies can be used to achieve positive results faster. The Welsh Government Cycle (2014) is in full motion once schools have critically reflected, linking the two variables. Schools would then introduce strategic planning, it is essential at this stage to involve all school partners and stakeholders; this ensures that everyone has a commitment to the school's improvement agenda. Dooris et al (2004) has suggested that all professionals within an environment need to appreciate the driving force of planning collectively and precisely. The impact strategic planning has on a school is significant. It allows schools to gather a focus, execute strategies to attain the vision collectively (Bell, 2002). As all SDP's are different each school will have a different vision, resulting in different strategies implemented. Applying these strategies and turning practice into action is what makes each SDP grow (Dalin, 2004). It is important to remember that an SDP is a working document. If strategies are applied however ineffective, the school critically reflects on what is going wrong and recognise what variables they would need to adapt.

The aspect focused upon is changing the approach to behaviour management and create a whole class commitment and ethos that is invested in relationships. Giles et al (2012) recognises relationships within education as the heart of educational encounters. Throughout schools, behaviour management is recognised and approached in various ways. Davis (2001) recognises the impact of relationships between students and teachers suggesting that behaviour is often reduced because the respect between students and teachers is greater.

Students are less likely to show poor behaviour if they have a positive relationship with their teacher. It is often the case where the teacher understands the stimulus which attracts the poor behaviour. Both researchers agree that positive relationships within a school setting affect behaviour. If the strategy implemented within this aspect is successful, the results the school could demonstrate would have an extremely positive outlook on their school in future years.

Action point

The school has introduced a whole school approach to combat behaviour management through relationships. Wyn et al (2000) implies that the whole school including parent groups and local service providers help promote awareness of mental health, impacting on their behaviour within a school setting (agreeing with Rogers, 2000). Relationships throughout the school are at the heart of the SDP and the new strategies implemented allows them to continue to grow relationships with a focus to improve behaviour. First the school self-evaluated this aspect of their SDP. Devos and Verhoeven (2003) define school-based self-evaluation as a process mainly initiated by the school to collect systematic data about the school's functioning, to judge this information regarding the quality of the school's education and to make decisions impacting on future recommendations. School X has identified their location and the poverty present within the Community as a potential barrier. Through reflecting School X has recognised that many of the students struggle with relationships and show attachment disorders. Staff within the school have identified concerns around children and parents' ability to socially engage and indications of social defence could prevent learning from happening. This evidence gathered promotes reflective practitioners who are honest about the success and limitations of their current strategies; making them open to change (agreeing with Finlay, 2008). It is recognised through the school setting that students are not benefiting from their experiences outside of school as much as first anticipated. Reflective practitioners identify the issue as well as recognise the lack of impact previous strategies have had. To overcome these issues stakeholders have introduced different strategies. Once the School has recognised these barriers it is important to analyse and dissect the different approaches the school could use to overcome these issues (Sainato, 1992).

The data gathered to create this self-evaluation is soft data. Graham and Hall (2012) recognise soft data as immeasurable data which can be perceived differently by each viewer. An example of soft data would be an informal interview, this planned environment allows the subject to express their opinion without the results being measurable. Data was also gathered

through observations. Stringer (2008) recognises observations as a research action to incorporate on future recommendations. Teachers observed behaviour patterns at the beginning and end of the school day to analyse the difference of behaviour throughout the process of changing environments. Chang (2008) implies that strategic planning is a variable where you analyse and identify the input, process and potential output of a strategy to see if it successful. In order to measure the impact of the SDP School X will use the Kirk Patrick approach (Kirkpatrick, 1994) and the CSC self-evaluation tool for reflection at interim points throughout the cycle. The cycle is broken into four components. The first is 'reaction' to see how the students have adapted. Next is 'Learning' to analyse how the well the learning environment has progressed. Then the change in behaviour is critiqued and finally the performance of the students in recent times. As a result of strategic planning, the school has released a Relationship Policy as an alternative to the behaviour policy. This is recognised throughout the school environment where all stakeholders are welcome to enter the school grounds at any given time of the day (open door policy). This promotes relationships between parents, students and other stakeholders so the students are comfortable to confide in more than one person. To evaluate the impact of this, the Senior Leadership Team have a meeting each term to honestly discuss how effective the strategy is. Stakeholders live, breathe and promote positive relationships with all students throughout the school. As a result of strategic planning stakeholders have identified the Summer term as a gap within the year that they can utilise. Throughout the Summer term the SDP focuses on retaining a strong relationship with parents and children in need to help them in any way possible, backing up Sirvani (2007) research. The school assists families in raising their awareness of the environment their children are in throughout the summer. The school helps families to justify when their children deserve rewards in the home setting, this is applied through coaching. To measure the impact of this the Senior Leadership Team will have an informal conversation at the beginning of the next academic year to reflect on the parent's experiences throughout the summer. The engagement of various stakeholders is crucial in order to cater for the implementation of sustainable growth (Leal Filho and Brandli, 2016). All stakeholders work together to achieve the schools both short term and long-term priorities (Welsh Government, 2014). The school aim to have a safe environment and a community feel which supports behaviour, physical and emotional well-being (Donaldson, 2015). There are many parents/carers on school grounds throughout the day seeking to achieve the priorities focused upon. The senior leadership team develop a series of activities to promote positive relationships for children and parents who need support throughout the Community. This approach aims to solidify the relationship between staff, parents and students. To assess the impact of this strategy staff have weekly meetings with the facilitators of these activities to judge whether relationships are growing at a consistent rate. Students will experience positive outcomes through these activities which in

turn create a positive relationship between the teacher and students, improving their behaviour.

Reflection

School X has introduced many strategies to overcome behaviour through relationships. Hogarth (2008) appreciates the introduction of new strategies suggesting that students benefit from new ideas. It is very clear how the school aims to work collaboratively, increasing relationships to overcome behaviour issues however some of the strategies used could be more affective if they are tweaked. The relationships policy introduced is an extremely beneficial strategy to provide evidence to show the different approach the school is taking. To transfer from behaviour strategies to a whole school approach based on relationships can have a negative impact on some students. Lombardi (2007) recommends authentic learning as a positive experience so students learn by doing. Introducing a whole class behaviour system throughout the school creates an authentic realisation that students will have consequences for their poor behaviour, this would be a result of the arm around the shoulder not working. It is recognised through the SDP that relationships will prevent a lot of poor behaviour before it happens however there also needs to be a contingency plan if the behaviour is shown after this approach is unsuccessful. An example of this could be the loss of 'golden time' at the end of the week, again it is critical this strategy is consistent throughout the school. Bentham (2005) also recognises consequences as a form of behaviour management within the classroom as it shows the students that there are boundaries, making the environment authentic (agreeing with Lombardi, 2007). The open door relationships policy to all stakeholders and guardians is another strategy which the school has recently introduced in an attempt to improve students' behaviour. This is beneficial to those parents who can access the school grounds during the times as well as those with any issues regarding their child. Galindo and Sheldon (2012) recognise attaining a positive relationship with all parents is a barrier due to the lack of engagement the parents are willing to show. This is an issue as children can behave extremely well throughout the day and then as soon as they leave the grounds they can misbehave. Donaldson (2015) promotes four purposes, one of them being 'to create ethically informed citizens who are ready to be citizens of Wales'. Based on the targets of the SDP this needs to change. Whalley (2007) dives into the different approaches schools can draw parents into their child's learning. The researcher conducted an activity aimed at the parents at the start of the academic year and found it was an effective way of breaking the ice, reducing anxiety resulting in the beginning of a positive relationship between parent and teacher. The parents had to create a video presenting their enthusiasm for their

childrens' learning. The results showed the parents were stimulated by their involvement in the project showing high volumes of enthusiasm. Applying this would allow more parents to feel comfortable approaching the teacher at pick up/drop off times during the school day, promoting parental interaction within their childrens' academic future, essentially lifting the aspirations they have for their children throughout school life. The open-door policy would then prove to be even more beneficial as more parents will come and speak to the school regarding concerns, without feeling anxious to do so. Building a good rapport between the teacher and parents allows both stakeholders to work together to influence the childrens' behaviour in a positive way. If the student can see both individuals are working collaboratively the likelihood of the students' attitude to change outside of the school gates is reduced, this is because the student knows the teacher is always in contact with their parents and vice versa.

Conclusion

This assignment has recognised the importance of a school development plan. This report has recognised all stakeholders involved as well as the guidelines present from both the UK government and the Welsh Government. Critically evaluating the strategies previously implemented is the beginning of the process. Stakeholders working collaboratively to strategically plan and create approaches which strive towards the schools targets. Applying the strategies and assessing the impact on the strategies is then paramount to continue to develop a successful SDP. Writing this assignment has opened my eyes to the amount of work that stakeholders do to strive towards success. It wasn't recognised the amount of work that goes on behind the scenes to make an effective SDP. I have learnt that all stakeholders come together to create both short and long term targets. Before writing the assignment, I didn't know that school development plans focus in so much depth on every aspect of the school which could be improved. The opinion of every stakeholder is recognised and appreciated to steer the SDP towards success. Going forward as a teacher I will identify what the SDP aims are before I start work. I will work collaboratively in promoting all aspects of the SDP to better the students' experiences within the school setting.

References

- Bell, L., 2002. Strategic planning and school management: full of sound and fury, signifying nothing?. *Journal of Educational Administration*.
- Bennett, Megan Crawford, Rosalind Levačić, Derek Glover, Peter Earley, N., 2000. The reality of school development planning in the effective primary school: technician or guiding plan?. *School Leadership & Management*, 20(3), pp.333-351.
- Bentham, S., 2005. *A Teaching Assistant's Guide to Managing Behaviour in the Classroom*. Routledge.
- Chang, G.C., 2008. Strategic planning in education: Some concepts and methods. In *Directions in educational planning: symposium to honour the work of Françoise Caillods*.
- Dalin, P., 2004. *School development: Theories & strategies*. A&C Black.
- Davis, H.A., 2001. The quality and impact of relationships between elementary school students and teachers. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 26(4), pp.431-453.
- Devos, G. and Verhoeven, J.C., 2003. School self-evaluation—conditions and caveats: The case of secondary schools. *Educational Management & Administration*, 31(4), pp.403-420.
- Dinkelman, T., 2000. An inquiry into the development of critical reflection in secondary student teachers. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 16(2), pp.195-222.
- Donaldson, G., 2015. Successful futures: independent review of curriculum and assessment arrangements in Wales: February 2015.
- Dooris, M.J., Kelley, J.M. and Trainer, J.F., 2004. Strategic planning in higher education. *New Directions for Institutional Research*, 2004(123), pp.5-11.
- Earl, L.M., 2001. Watching and learning: OISE/UT evaluation of the implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies.
- Finlay, L., 2008. Reflecting on 'Reflective practice'.
- Giles, D., Smythe, E. and Spence, D., 2012. Exploring relationships in education: A phenomenological inquiry. *Australian Journal of Adult Learning*, 52(2), p.214.
- Graham, A. and Phelps, R., 2003. Being a teacher: Developing teacher identity and enhancing practice through metacognitive and reflective learning processes. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 27(2), p.11.

Graham, J.L. and Hall, D.L., 2012. *The use of Analytic Decision Game (ADG) methods for test and evaluation of hard and soft data fusion systems and education of a new generation of data fusion analysts*. PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIV STATE COLLEGE COLL OF INFORMATION SCIENCES AND TECHNOLOGY.

Hogarth, A., 2008. Introducing a collaborative technology strategy for higher education students: Recommendations and the way forward. *Education and Information Technologies*, 13(3), pp.259-273.

Kim, J.C. and Watts, C.H., 2005. Gaining a foothold: tackling poverty, gender inequality, and HIV in Africa. *Bmj*, 331(7519), pp.769-772.

Leal Filho, W. and Brandli, L., 2016. Engaging stakeholders for sustainable development. In *Engaging Stakeholders in Education for Sustainable Development at University Level* (pp. 335-342). Springer, Cham.

Lombardi, M.M., 2007. Authentic learning for the 21st century: An overview. *Educause learning initiative*, 1(2007), pp.1-12.

Rogers, B., 2000. *Behaviour management: A whole-school approach*. Sage.

Sainato, D.M., Goldstein, H. and Strain, P.S., 1992. Effects of self-evaluation on preschool children's use of social interaction strategies with their classmates with autism. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, 25(1), pp.127-141.

Schwahn, C.J. and Spady, W.G., 1998. *Total leaders: Applying the best future-focused change strategies to education*. American Association of School Administrators, 1801 N. Moore St., Arlington, VA 22209 (Stock No. 234-001; \$12.95 members; \$15.95 nonmembers).

Sirvani, H., 2007. The effect of teacher communication with parents on students' mathematics achievement. *American Secondary Education*, pp.31-46.

Stringer, E.T., 2008. *Action research in education*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall.

UK Government (2014). The Education (School Development Plans) (Wales) Regulations 2014. [online] Legislations.gov.uk. Available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2014/2677/regulation/3/made> [Accessed 25 March. 2020].

Welsh Government, (2017). National School Categorisation System. A Guide for Parents and Carers. [online] Available at: <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019->

01/national-school-categorisation-system-guidance-for-parents-and-carers.pdf [Accessed 25 March. 2020].

Whalley, M., 2007. New forms of provision, new ways of working—the Pen Green Centre. *M. Whalley, Involving Parents in their Children Learning*, pp.1-9.

Wyn, J., Cahill, H., Holdsworth, R., Rowling, L. and Carson, S., 2000. MindMatters, a whole-school approach promoting mental health and wellbeing. *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, 34(4), pp.594-601.