

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

Targets	How have I worked on this	An example can be found
Ensure to properly critically engage with the sources that I cite, including an evaluation of competing perspectives.	I did this by ensuring that I cited any literature included in my assignment and ensured that I included a reference list at the end of the assignment.	Paragraphs One
Proof-read to ensure that my meaning is clear and that my grammar is accurate.	I checked my work after completing each section and at the end of the assignment.	

The purpose of this report is to highlight one area of the school development plan (SDP) and critically reflect on the extent of the impact that this has had on the school. The Welsh Government (2014) states that 'The school development plan (SDP) is the school's strategic plan for improvement.' In addition to this, the Welsh Government (2014) also states that 'A SDP will be informed by the regular self-evaluation a school undertakes of its own performance and contextual data, and will contain the school's improvement priorities together with short- and longer-term targets.' The school that I will be discussing was created in 2015 as a result of the amalgamation of two smaller schools to make this new build that and is located in Urban Swansea, with 33.4% of pupils entitled to free school meals. This is above the Welsh national average of 21%. The school caters to the needs of roughly 600 pupils from nursery to year six and includes two Specialist Teaching Facilities (STFs) specialising in assisting children with their Speech and Language Development (SLD). Furthermore, the school is part of the Special Needs Provision of the Education Authority (SNPEA). The aspect of the school development plan that I will be discussing throughout this assignment is the alternative provision that the school has been working on composing to support the development of pupils who cannot access the mainstream curriculum.

As stated previously, the SDP provides the opportunity for schools to practice self-evaluation to assist in the development of staff and the school, providing better support for the pupils. Estyn (2018) carried out several case studies to determine how effective schools informed their practice. The study suggested that the most effective schools 'were external facing, regularly discussed research, and learnt from best practice in their own and in other organisations.' (Estyn, 2018). When taking this into consideration, it is clear that practitioners should be constantly looking to see how other schools are targeting certain areas and should take into account whether this strategy has been effective prior to incorporating it into their practice. The Welsh Government (2014) states that 'The SDP will set out how the school will achieve its targets, in relation to its priorities, and how it will use

the resources it has available, including funding.’ Therefore, according to the guidelines set out by the Welsh Government an SDP is required by every school as a way of planning the schools next steps and tracking their progress.

‘In setting out the overall plan for improvement for the three years ahead, the SDP will contain sufficient detail to enable actions to address the priorities for the current school year to be identified and implemented, along with high level priorities and targets for years two and three. It is a live document that should be regularly refreshed to reflect the school’s progress in meeting its priorities, taking account of the latest performance data.’

(Welsh Government, 2014)

This highlights the importance of tracking the progress that is being made and emphasises the fact that it is an ongoing working document that is accessible to all staff. Additionally, The Welsh Government also highlights that this document is written collaboratively amongst staff based on findings from data, with self-evaluation playing a vital role in the creation of the SDP. Estyn (2018) put ‘effective pedagogy at the heart of school improvement and say that this must be the driving focus for school leaders,’ highlighting the importance of the SDP and developing an approach that allows the continual growth of teachers, pupils and as a result the overall school. Bryk et al (2015) provides a conflicting view that argues that ‘these solutions are often oversold, under-implemented, and soon replaced with little learned in the process.’ Although it is imperative to consider the conflicting views, for practitioners to take into account Bryk et al (2015) there must be clear data to support his theory as there has been extensive research that highlights the importance of the SDP.

The term ‘additional learning needs’ (ALN) has a legal definition and refers to children and young people who have learning, physical or sensory needs which make it harder for them to learn than most children of the same age.

(Dewis Cymru, 2018)

As can be seen above Dewis Cymru (2018) provides a brief definition of ALN in accordance with The Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales (ALNCW) 2021. Stating that a child is considered ALN if they have any developmental delays that may hinder their learning and make it difficult for them to access mainstream curriculum. Thus supporting the importance of providing ALN pupils with Individual Development Plans (IDP) and an Alternative Learning Provision where necessary. The ALNCW (2021) defines an Individual Development Plan as ‘a document that contains a description of a child or young person’s learning difficulty or disability.’ Thus, stressing the importance of all pupils with diagnosed additional learning needs having an individual development plan to support their learning journey. The literature discussed in this assignment further emphasises the importance of planning to meet the needs of the learners. When taking this into consideration, it is clear that schools

that do not already have provision in place to support ALN pupils need to make a movement towards implementing a curriculum that is accessible to pupils with ALN.

Additionally, the Welsh Government (2022) states that the 'Routes for Learning materials support practitioners in assessing learners with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD).' As stated above, the route for learning is an alternative framework designed to support the learning of pupils who cannot access mainstream curriculum as it focuses on the cognitive, social and emotional development of pupils who have ALN. Practitioners must use pupils' IDPs to inform the areas that are targeted within the Routes for Learning curriculum. Welsh Government (2020) states that the IDP is a flexible document that will change as the learners' needs change overtime. This ensures that the learners' needs are always being met providing practitioners with a record against which a child or young person's progress can be monitored and reviewed.

Developing an action point is essential as it allows practitioners to develop a clear understanding of what steps are required to be made to ensure that they are staying on task and meeting the needs of the school development plan. It is imperative that practitioners are fully equipped with the knowledge of effective self-evaluation strategies to assist them with the formulation of the School Development Plan. This is imperative as the School Development Plan is based on the self-evaluation of all staff across the school in order to determine next steps to further progress the school. The report 'The National Strategy for Educational Research and Enquiry' carried out by the Welsh Government (2022) states that 'in order for school self-evaluations to be effective it is imperative that schools undertaking continuous, democratic, inclusive, transparent and future-orientated enquiries.' Thus, supporting [REDACTED] decision to implement an action plan that is to be carried out over the course of three years to allow time to properly meet the targets in place. Although, it is crucial to consider the idea that due to a change in circumstances the action plan may need to be reviewed.

In addition to this, North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL) (2013) states 'Educators need a process for data-driven decision making that helps them focus on the essential pieces of information to identify priority areas and select realistic goals.' Suggesting that it is imperative that practitioners consider the best course of action when gathering data. Conducting research provides practitioners with a better insight into what steps should be implemented to properly meet the targets set within the SDP. Furthermore, by collecting data regularly, and comparing it to previous statistic it provides a better understanding as to how targets are being met and whether any changes are required to be made. Again, there are also potential downfalls to constantly reviewing data including teachers spending less time on teaching and ensuring pupils needs are met and more time concerned about different ways of gathering hard data. NCREL (2013) also suggested that practitioners were not properly equipped with the knowledge to collect and examine data as they lack formal training in data analysis.

An article found on LinkedIn (2024) suggests that identifying who the key stakeholders are is the first step to creating a good SDP. These are the people that serve to benefit most out of achieving the targets created. Some of the people that serve to benefit from the overall development of the school are; the school including teachers, pupils and governors, and also the local community. When taking this into account it is vital that stakeholders are included in the creation of the SDP as it should be worked on as part of a collaborative project ensuring that all stakeholders receive what they need upon the completion of the action plan in place. Although, the idea of working alongside all stakeholders seems beneficial it is imperative we take into account the potential drawbacks such as how time consuming it would be to collect data from the community as well as data from parents, staff and children. This would require rigorous planning as well as training to ensure that the outside agencies within the community understand how the SDP works and how they may be able to assist.

After determining who the stakeholders are, practitioners must conduct research that focuses on gathering intel from stakeholders; in this instance the stakeholders are the ALN pupils and their guardians, teaching staff and the community. To determine the best course of action, practitioners must undertake research into case studies that have taken on a similar approach as what they would like to implement as part of the newly introduced provision. Furthermore, Department of Education (2011) draws attention to the importance of gathering data in order to create an effective action plan that will simplify tracking the progress of the target highlighted within the SDP. This emphasises the importance of carrying out thorough research.

Prior to creating the SDP, the staff and governors worked collaboratively to determine the areas that require focus to allow space for development. One of the areas emphasised was the development of an alternative provision that can be implemented to assist ALN pupils to benefit their learning development. This area was highlighted after statistics collected by the school showed there had been an increase in the number of pupils which were showing signs of having additional learning needs. In light of these findings, the teaching staff from progression step one worked as a team in order to carry out research that will support the development of the new curriculum. The staff that conducted research of other schools' provision and collaborated to create their own provision was selected as according to the school's development plan the first place to implement the new curriculum should be in nursery and reception years. These classes were chosen to trial the curriculum as the majority of the pupils that were ALN were in their classes therefore they had a better insight into what strategies and activities would work best to support the pupils. In addition to this, by implementing the provision in these classes on a trial basis it provides the opportunity to support young ALN learners from the beginning of their learning journey. The staff involved in the research went to several schools within their cluster including a school specialised in

ALN in order to see what they had in place as an alternative provision. The findings suggested that pupils with severe ALN and behavioural difficulties benefit from smaller sized classes as they can receive more support from teaching staff. Therefore, the decision to introduce a room that will serve as a intervention room for ALN pupils will allow pupils to receive the added support that they require. Although, the school will have to receive permission from guardians to remove pupils from the mainstream class. Thus, the intervention will not be able to be implemented if parents do not give consent. Another account to take into consideration is the influence of positive role models; according to Bandura children benefit from having positive role models. Therefore, pupils will not receive the same benefits to progress as the new intervention classes will separate pupils from mainstream classes. When taking this into account it is clear that the newly developed curriculum must take into consideration the importance of ensuring ALN pupils are not being secluded therefore the decision to develop opportunities for pupils to join the mainstream classes where possible such as for creative arts lessons or well-being where possible. This idea also provides parents and guardians with the reassurance that their children will not be isolated from other pupils in their class.

After determining the areas for improvement for the school development plan it was imperative that children were assessed in order to specify the areas in which they require support. This was done using a combination of their IDPs and the routes for learning criteria developed by the Welsh Government. Although, in theory this works well as teaching assistants will be the ones rolling out the new provision it must be made clear exactly what is expected of them. One way in which this may be done is by creating a booklet that highlights where pupils should be in their development and different activities that could be done to assist them in this development.

To conclude, after carrying out research into the ways in which the school plans to develop an alternative provision for ALN pupils, I was able to gain a better insight into the possible approaches I could take to support the needs of learners. In addition, this assignment allowed me to gain a better understanding of the Welsh Government policies in place to support practitioners and learners. Furthermore, I now have a clearer understanding of the process that is taken when creating the school development plan and how this has changed in order to create a more collaborative approach to ensure that all stakeholders are involved. Therefore, this assignment has given me the required tools so that moving forward I will be able to contribute towards my own school's development plan in order to ensure that I am providing the best school environment and resources for learners. Finally, I will also continue to conduct more research into ways to support ALN pupils as this assignment has instilled an interest in this area.

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