

Targets	How you have worked on this	An example can be found on
Target 1 Referencing	I have read the harvard referencing guide.	Throughout this assignment
Target 2 Using credible literature	I have read and used a range of academic literature.	Throughout this extract. For example, PISA.

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

Total Word Count: 2,478

Component 2

Introduction

This assignment will centre on the thorough critical analysis of a School Development Plan (SDP) and its successful implementation in enhancing a certain objective within. An SDP is a strategic plan implemented by the school to enhance its overall performance and progress. This type of document outlines the measures that a school will take to enhance learners' achievements. An SDP is based on the frequent self-evaluation that a school conducts to assess its own performance and contextual data. It includes the school's improvement priorities as well as short- and long-term targets (Welsh Government, 2014a). All schools are legally obligated to have an up-to-date SDP and it is the responsibility of the governing body of maintained schools, including Pupil Referral Units and maintained nurseries, to regularly assess and update their SDP (Welsh Government, 2014b).

This report is centred around the development of the SDP of a community English medium primary school in South Wales. At the time of the report made by Estyn in 2022, it stated that the school had a total of 240 learners enrolled, with 28.8% of the learners recognised as having Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and 5.5% of the learners having English as an Additional Language (EAL) (Estyn, 2022). The school referenced in this assignment shall be addressed as 'School A' to safeguard both the staff and learners' confidentiality and identity (BERA, 2018).

This report will focus on assessing how the school has implemented various interventions to facilitate progression of the first aim a part of its SDP, addressing the target of "Improving opportunities for pupils to write more extensively and independently" as a long-term goal recommended by Estyn (2022) and identified through the school's self-evaluation, (School A, 2023).

Literature Review

SDPs are action plans that are developed by schools with the purpose of informing educational settings about their objectives and the activities that should be taken by the school to make progress within these priorities. Recent Estyn inspections are used by the majority of schools to inform their SDP as well as the priorities that are selected from the report that Estyn produces as their recommendations in addition to the school's own self-assessment. However, in recent years the Welsh Government has placed greater emphasis on schools using self-evaluation, rather than relying on Estyn inspections providing the recommendations and schools following blindly.

"Estyn's annual report for 2012–13 concludes that self-evaluation and planning for improvement could be improved in just over a quarter of those schools in Wales inspected"
(Welsh Government, 2014b).

The Department of Education (2015) further emphasises that efficient self-assessment, along with the subsequent measures taken, should result in enhanced educational achievements and experiences for all learners. Self-assessment should be a fundamental component of the process of planning for school growth, with the ensuing actions and goals documented in SDPs.

While the purpose of developing SDPs is to enhance goal development, alignment, and completion in schools, there is evidence suggesting that the process often lacks rigour and may be constructed in ways that are counterproductive (Mintrop and MacLellan, 2002, p.288). Donoff and Rosser (2016) also emphasise the issues that may arise when developing an SDP due to the absence of well-defined procedures for establishing SDP goals and actions complicates the process of developing and overseeing the SDPs.

School A has used a collaborative approach in their SDP, both in their self-assessment and in their efforts to achieve their specified vision and priorities. Slater (2004) states that collaboration is crucial for school development initiatives as it serves as the basis and focus of these endeavours. Through collaboration, School A has been able to involve all stakeholders in the decision-making process, ensuring that the SDP reflects the needs and

goals of the entire school community. This inclusive approach has led to a more cohesive and effective implementation of strategies aimed at achieving their vision and priorities. Additionally, collaboration also fosters a sense of ownership and commitment among stakeholders, leading to increased motivation and dedication towards the school development goals. By working together, School A has been able to leverage the diverse expertise and perspectives of its community members, resulting in a more comprehensive and well-rounded SDP.

According to Estyn (2020), it is considered good practice to involve the entire school community when creating an SDP. They propose that schools can more efficiently attain their goals and objectives by utilising a collaborative method to both establish and assess the school's progress towards these goals. This collaborative approach can help ensure that all stakeholders have a voice in the decision-making process, leading to a more inclusive and comprehensive SDP. By involving teachers, learners, parents, and community members in the development of the plan, schools can create a sense of ownership and commitment to its successful implementation.

School A used recent PISA assessment results to also identify the priorities named within their SDP. PISA tests are used globally to assess the maths, reading and science skills of children aged 15. Wales had an average reading score of 466 in the PISA 2022 assessment. This was considerably below the average of 476 for the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Wales' mean reading score for PISA 2022 was notably lower than the mean score in 2018 (483) (Ingram et al., 2023). These results (See Appendix One) show that Wales has the lowest attainment across all three areas compared with the rest of the United Kingdom which are assessed during a PISA assessment, thus highlighting the need for further intervention within these areas.

One primary objective of School A is to cultivate proficient and independent writing skills, emphasising accuracy in spelling, punctuation, and grammar (SPaG). School A tries to prioritise this objective by providing learners with increased opportunities for independent writing on a weekly basis. For learners in key stage two, this activity is known as a 'free write Friday'. Teachers have also been requested to participate in Continued Professional Development (CPD) courses to enhance their ability in teaching SPaG in their own classes for their learner's progress. This initiative aims to ensure that learners are consistently exposed to high-quality writing experiences, leading to improved literacy skills overall. By equipping teachers with the necessary tools and strategies, School A is committed to

fostering a supportive learning environment where the learner can thrive in their writing abilities.

In 2022/23, the government recorded that 71% of pupils in Year Six met the expected standard. While the Year Six students at School A achieved a 77% achievement rate in writing over the specified period, the overall attainment rate for the entire school was 57.2%. Therefore, the SDP has identified the improvement of learners' independent writing skills as its top priority. The SDP aims to implement targeted interventions and strategies to enhance writing proficiency across all year groups, with a focus on providing personalised feedback and opportunities for extended writing practice. By addressing this area of development, School A seeks to raise its overall attainment rate and ensure that all learners are well-prepared for future academic challenges.

Developing an action plan

School A has identified the following stakeholders as being responsible for the independent writing priority: the headteacher, school governors, the curriculum lead (deputy head), and the lead and deputy lead for the Area of Learning and Experience (AoLE) of Language, Literacy, and Communication (LLC). The SDP outlines the responsibilities of the lead and deputy lead of the AoLE LLC with regards to the primary objective of promoting independent writing skills in learners. Their duties involve ensuring that each teacher develops captivating termly subjects that influence their selected writing style, which learners will complete at the end of the term as part of the evaluation process to assess the learner's progression in their writing. Additionally, the SDP emphasises the importance of providing ongoing support and professional development opportunities for teachers to enhance their own writing skills and teaching strategies. By fostering a culture of collaboration and continuous improvement, the lead and deputy lead aim to create a dynamic learning environment that nurtures confident and independent writers among learners. Furthermore, the SDP also includes regular feedback sessions to help teachers reflect on their teaching practices and make necessary adjustments. This holistic approach ensures that both teachers and learners are supported in their writing journey and encourages a growth mindset towards writing development. "Research shows that effective CPD helps children succeed and teachers thrive" (Teacher Development Trust, n.d.).

The SDP indicates the self-assessment procedure that the school uses to evaluate the progress they have achieved in relation to the selected priorities. According to the SDP, learners are expected to complete one assessed piece of extended writing per half term. These results will then be entered into the school's progression spreadsheet, which will be

presented and discussed during staff meetings held by the literacy coordinator to inform all stakeholders of the next steps. (School A, 2023). This process allows for transparency and accountability within the school community, ensuring that all staff members are aware of the progress being made in literacy development. By regularly reviewing and analysing these results, School A can make informed decisions on how to best support their learners in achieving their academic goals and working towards the priorities discussed within the SDP. They can also identify areas for improvement and implement targeted interventions as needed.

School A has allocated specific amounts of money in its SDP for various components related to their independent writing priority. These include £120 for a new SPaG scheme aimed at enhancing learners' writing skills, £75 for a new handwriting scheme, and £214 for assessing learners' spelling levels and overall attainment (School A, 2023). Although this does not appear to be a financial problem within the school context. The Welsh Government (2024) has declared a drop in the funds allocated to schools of £13.9 million, representing a loss of 2.1% compared to the previous budget. This reduction in funding may impact School A's ability to continue investing in resources for independent writing, potentially affecting the progress of learners in this area. It is essential for School A to carefully reassess their budget and prioritise their spending to ensure that the quality of education provided is not compromised.

According to Starling (2023) budget cuts result in increased class sizes, less access to student support services, reductions in extra-curricular activities such as after-school clubs and trips and decreased specialised help for learners with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

These consequences can have a detrimental impact on learners' learning outcomes and overall well-being, as learners may not receive the individualised attention and resources they need to succeed. Additionally, teachers may also face increased workloads and stress levels due to larger class sizes and fewer support services available.

During my Practical Teaching Experience (PTE), I actively participated in the school's initiative called 'Free Write Fridays'. This technique employed the use of Fridays to provide Key Stage Two learners with the chance to engage in independent writing, with a specific emphasis on a SPaG (spelling, punctuation, and grammar) element, using a provided stimulus (usually a video or part of a film). This activity aimed to enhance learners' creativity, critical thinking, and writing skills in a fun and engaging way. It also allowed me to observe the learners' progress and provide feedback for improvement. These pieces of writing were

assessed against a success criteria created at the beginning of the lesson as a whole class, and the feedback from myself and the class mentor was then used to inform the focus of the next Free Write Friday lesson.

Overall, the Free Write Friday initiative proved to be an effective tool for improving learners' writing abilities while keeping them engaged and motivated. The feedback loop created through assessment and reflection helped tailor future lessons to address specific areas of improvement identified in the learners' work. Moving forward, it would be beneficial to continue incorporating peer feedback and self-assessment into the Free Write Friday sessions to further enhance the learners' writing skills. Additionally, providing opportunities for learners to set personal writing goals and track their progress could help them take ownership of their learning and strive for continuous improvement.

One potential limitation of the 'Free Write Friday' initiative is that it only focuses on developing learners' writing skills during the designated Friday sessions. To address this limitation, practitioners could consider incorporating more frequent writing exercises throughout the week to provide consistent practice and reinforcement of skills. This approach could help learners further improve their writing abilities beyond just Fridays. By integrating writing exercises into daily routines, learners can have more opportunities to practice and refine their skills. This consistent practice can lead to greater improvement and confidence in writing across various genres and styles (Zhang and Quinn, p., 553, 2017).

Conclusion

Strategically, SDPs are documents that schools must collectively generate, utilising their own self-assessment procedures to propose their forthcoming objectives and areas of concentration. These documents serve as roadmaps for schools to improve learner outcomes and overall performance. By involving all stakeholders in the process, schools can ensure that their SDPs are comprehensive and reflective of their unique needs and goals. Additionally, SDPs provide a framework for schools to allocate resources effectively and prioritise initiatives that will have the greatest impact on learner success. Regular monitoring and evaluation of the SDP can help schools stay on track and make necessary adjustments to achieve their desired outcomes.

Within my teaching career, I aim to undertake a shared responsibility for the creation of my future school SDP and provide rigorous evaluations to inform decisions about naming priorities. I believe that by actively participating in the strategic planning process, I can contribute valuable insights and perspectives that will ultimately benefit the entire school community. Additionally, I am committed to fostering a culture of continuous improvement and accountability within the school environment. By setting high standards for learner achievement and holding myself and my colleagues accountable for meeting those standards, I strive to create a culture of excellence that will drive positive outcomes for all learners. Through collaboration and open communication, I am dedicated to working towards a school environment that values growth, innovation, and success for every individual involved. By promoting a sense of belonging and empowerment, we can ensure that every learner can reach their full potential.

Educators Wales (2024) encourage all professional practitioners to engage with CPD opportunities to continuously improve their practice and contribute to the overall success of the education system. This commitment to ongoing learning and development will ultimately benefit both educators and learners alike. Continuing education and professional development are essential to keeping up with the ever-evolving landscape of education. By staying informed and engaged, educators can better support their learners and foster a culture of lifelong learning within the school community. The Qualified Teaching Standards set out by the Welsh Government, (2019), also ascertain that practitioners should stay up to date with new practices by taking the opportunity to participate in CPD.

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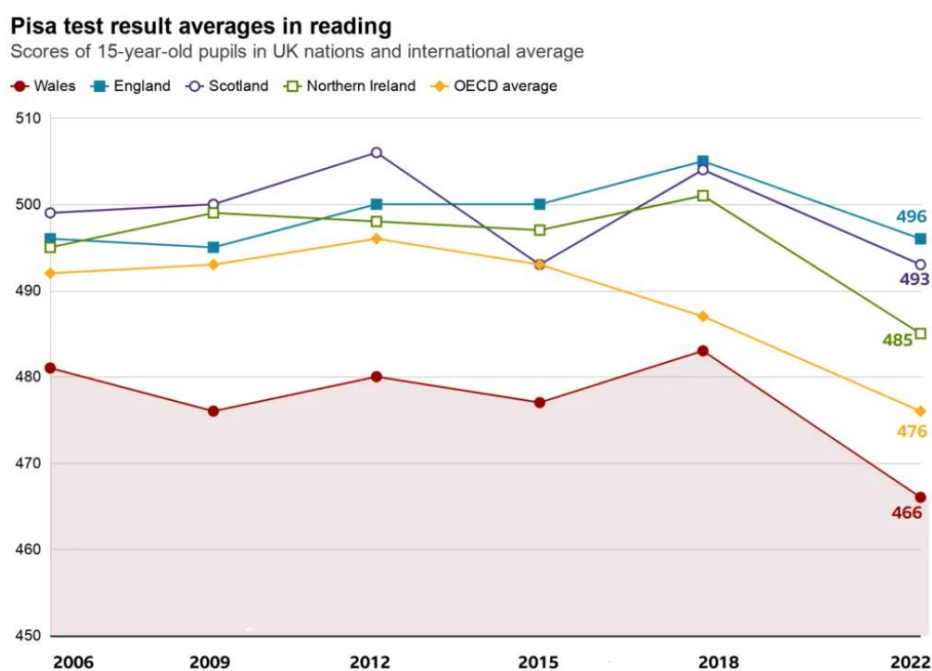
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Appendices

Appendix One



[Summary | PISA 2022 results \(oecd.org\)](#)