

School Improvement Plan – Alternative Placement School

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

	Target	What I have done in this assignment
Target 1	Use a wider range of literature.	I have ensured to research legislation and government documents for this assignment.
Target 2	Use a larger selection of academic writing rather than books.	I have used an increased number of academic papers written by scholars as well as writing about theorists and reading books.

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List of Abbreviations

AfL – Assessment for Learning

ALN – Additional Learning Needs

DoE – Department of Education

EWC – Education Workforce Council

HMI – Her Majesty's Inspectorate

IEP – Individual Education Plan

SDP – School Development Plan

SEN – Special Educational Needs

SER – Self-Evaluation Report

SIPT – School Improvement Plan Team

SMT – Senior Management Team

SSE – School Self-Evaluation

WAG – Welsh Assembly Government

Introduction

This school is situated in a deprived area within the Rhondda, Cynon, Taff Borough. The school contains 179 mixed gender pupils, ranging from ages of three to nineteen. All pupils at this school have ALN and the school budget per pupil is £14,665 (MyLocalSchool, 2019).

For this report I have been given the opportunity to access the School Development Plan (SDP) of my alternative placement school and I was able to identify targets in which I wish to discuss throughout this paper. The aspect I have chosen to conduct further research into is the development of Assessment for Learning (AfL) strategies to support pupils with Additional Learning Needs (ALN).

Bradley (2020) stated that before any school improvement processes begin, it is imperative that school leaders are clear with their 'mission' statement, and highlights that unless you know what you are trying to achieve, you will never truly achieve excellence or be effective in what you are doing (Bradley, 2020).

*"At *** our mission is – Learning and Working together to Promote Excellence and Enrich Lives" (Bradley, 2020).*

Assessment for Learning was identified as an area for development during lesson observations and became apparent within the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) and subsequently became an SDP target.

Literature Review

School Development Plan

DoE (no date) state how school improvement is the most important responsibility for schools and is based on the understanding of areas for improvement and to implement changes that positively influences pupil outcomes. DoE (no date) highlight how the SDP is a strategic plan for improvement and should collate in a simple way the priorities of the school, main measures it will take to raise standards and the resources needed in order to achieve targets set. In addition to this, Education Authority (2019) express how school self-evaluation is the foremost integral part of the school development planning process and this will be discussed further on in my report, during the developing an action point section.

A study was carried out by Dunaway, et al., (2012, p. 161) regarding perceptions and the implementation process of SIP's by teachers and administrators through using a questionnaire. The results were positive and relate to my own findings that are discussed further on in this report. 67% of participants reported that the progress of SIP targets was reviewed several times throughout the year and were adjusted based on the results demonstrated. However, 32% of participants expressed how their SIP targets were measured throughout the year but no adjustments were made. Some scholars, however, might argue that because this was a small-scale study involving 10 participants, it cannot be deemed reliable and account for the rest of the population. The results from this study are evident that a school development plan would seem meaningless if targets are being set but not actioned appropriately. WAG (2014) disagree with the minority of the results found in the above study by stating that governing bodies must capture how the school is implementing effective strategies to

meet targets set. If targets are not set, the reason for this should be explained by the school and necessary changes are made to ensure standards are being raised and the school are gaining improved outcomes for all learners (WAG, 2014).

Assessment for Learning for pupils who have Additional Learning Needs

“Assessment for learning (AfL), also known as formative assessment practice, is the effective use of knowledge of what has been learned and assessed to inform teaching and future learning” WAG (2013).

According to Broadfoot et al. (2002) the goal of AfL is for the teacher and student to decide where the learner is in their learning, where they need to go and the best way to get them there. In correlation with this statement, Stiggins (2002, p. 760) highlights AfL involves both pupils and teachers to work collaboratively together to establish learning targets and success criteria, and then to provide self, peer and teacher feedback on pupils' learning to ensure they are working towards achieving targets.

Dexter (2019) emphasizes that AfL is a joint process between the teacher and the pupil. The priority of any task should be to promote the student's learning and should allow the pupil to assess their own learning. This is continuously used throughout my placement school through using the traffic light system or smiley faces. This strategy is supported by WAG (2013) who believe that the traffic light system should be used to monitor progress and establish which pupils may need more support with regards to the success criteria. Involving pupils in their own learning can otherwise be identified as inclusive education. According to Ainscow (2013) there are two types of education: Integrated Education and Inclusive Education. Integrated education where the focus is on pupils with additional learning needs attending school. Whereas, the focus of inclusive education is to ensure all pupils are learning, whatever their disability and

learning needs. Personally, from discussions with the head teacher and having access to the SDP, I have identified that my placement offers inclusive education, as all pupils are able to access the same learning opportunities as mainstream pupils.

Brown (2019) suggests that teachers often misunderstand a student contribution without any exact intention and respond based on that misunderstanding, simply because the teachers do not have enough time or the resources to respond appropriately. This statement suggests that teachers may assume a pupil has met a target, based on a one time observation. However, this is contradicted by Bradley (2020) who highlights that all targets set within the pupils' IEP's have to be observed and recorded at least three times to show consolidation before the target is achieved.

Within a report written by EWC (2020) a study carried out by a Year 8 SEN teacher was discussed. The purpose of this study was to discover effective AfL strategies to aid pupils achievement in order to access information provided in both oral and written feedback. The study involved implementing a visual scaffolding system to illustrate subject specific terminology. Bradley (2020) agrees with visual scaffolding to aid pupil achievement as he believes that this is the most effective method to support AfL within an ALN setting. The results demonstrated an increased understanding of subject knowledge, an increased level of confidence and improved quality of work (EWC, 2020). This study suggests that allowing pupils to access AfL strategies through visuals, provides them with the opportunity to succeed at their own level. This study can be reliable and informative for my own professional development, as it was based within the South Wales area, therefore it is relevant to my own study. In support of this study, Watkins and Alessio (2009, p. 179) agree with the idea of using visuals as a form of Assessment for Learning as they suggest that differentiated methods can be

used providing they are adjusted to meet the needs of the individual pupil as many ALN pupils are non or pre-verbal communicators.

Developing an action point

The school development plan is developed using a systematic and strategic approach, where the head teacher utilises a number of evaluative measures:

- ❖ School self-evaluation
- ❖ Involving stakeholders
- ❖ Data analysis
- ❖ Monitoring, evaluation and review processes
- ❖ Assessment, reporting and recording processes.

Bradley (2020) believes that SSE is an ongoing process throughout the year and involves measuring against the targets within the SDP through formative and summative assessments. Within my alternative placement school, a SIPT was devised that consisted of one senior leader and one middle leader, who are responsible for each inspection area; this is called distributed leadership.

The targets within the SDP are utilized through a long process, beginning with evaluating the performance against indicators that Estyn have identified and used during inspection to make judgements against the school (Bradley, 2020). This is imperative as McAleavy, Riggall and Fitzpatrick (2018) stated, because these scholars carried out a study based on school improvement plans and all teachers interviewed, expressed visits of HMI were the most beneficial form of external support (McAleavy, Riggall and Fitzpatrick, 2018).

Once the evaluation of performance against indicators identified by Estyn have taken place, descriptors are then shared with staff to complete through a questionnaire format. Finally, the head teacher collates all the data, then quality assures the staff feedback to his own and the SIPT; this is otherwise known as triangulation. According

to Scarth (2018) triangulation can validate assessment data so that it can be used diagnostically to drive school improvement.

WAG (2014) states how the effective use of qualitative data being used can have a major impact on the development of the school's plan. Qualitative data being used involves consultation with staff from other schools, outside organisations and agencies that the school may be working with as part of the wider community. Bradley (2020) has ensured to do this within his school as stakeholders are also involved, such as the challenge advisor, teachers and headteachers from other schools to quality assure the school's processes for external validation (Bradley, 2020). McAleavy, Riggall and Fitzpatrick (2018) stated within their study that whilst most schools involved were in collaboration with other schools, 38 considered this cooperation to have a major contribution to the SDP, 42 considered it to have some contribution and 6 indicated that it made no contribution to their SDP. Only 6 out of 70 participants believed that collaborating with other schools had no impact on their school's development, therefore this study somewhat recommends that collaboration with other schools' can be beneficial for school improvement. However, this study only involved headteachers of other schools and no other stakeholders were involved, therefore it cannot be deemed as a reliable source.

The results from processes such as monitoring, evaluation and review will feed into the self-evaluation report explained above. WAG (2014) have stated that the SDP should be considered as live documents and should be monitored regularly during the development cycle. Bradley (2020) has ensured to follow this advice by explaining how the monitoring, evaluation and review processes are identified on the school calendar and include learning walks, lesson observations, work scrutiny and

performance management. Through these processes being carried out, assessment for learning was identified as an SDP target.

According to the WAG (2014) the governing body is responsible for monitoring and reviewing the progression of SDP targets. The school must be able to demonstrate that their improvement planning and strategies reflect the up-to-date context of it. The governing body are required to write an annual report as to whether the SDP targets from the year before, have been met. If targets were not met, then justification must be made by the school (WAG, 2014). In addition to this, Estyn (2015) highlight that the governing body is very supportive of the school and have received training on classroom observations and attend school council meetings on a regular basis as part of their role.

Estyn (2015) identified that the school collates a range of first-hand evidence to monitor and review the progress of pupils. This statement suggests that being able to track the progress of pupils will allow opportunity for recommendations to be made with regards to future improvement.

There are multiple ARR methods that take place and are highlighted within the school calendar. These include IEP target setting (appendix 4) and assessment, B squared assessment updates, reading/comprehension assessments, annual report to parents, summative assessment recording, individual pupil assessment profiles, one page profiles and communication profiles (Bradley, 2020). This demonstrates that both academic and non-academic results are collated by the SMT to formulate the most beneficial targets to be set for teachers and pupils. As stated by Ofsted (2001) assessment results from pupils should be used to inform curriculum planning. It is important for teachers to review the school ARR document to ensure it offers detailed

guidance on the use of assessment by class teachers to inform short term planning (Ofsted, 2001).

Reflection and evaluation

From discussing the development of targets with the headteacher, he highlighted that a formal mid-year review takes place to measure progress and that a designated person is responsible for leading and managing the target (Bradley, 2020). Bradley (2020) also stated how the school has been fortunate enough to have final year university pupils who needed to complete an action research project focused on the SDP. These pupils provided the school with a report which can also be identified as external validation. Internal validation has also taken place within the school, as AfL has been one of the main focuses during lesson observations and work scrutiny.

Upon the completion of placement at this school, I have recognised different methods of AfL being used throughout all Key Stages to enhance pupil learning development. Examples of these AfL strategies can be viewed in appendix 1, 2 and 3.

Bradley (2020) has expressed how during learning walks and lesson observations, practitioners are able to identify the strengths and weaknesses of teaching practice with regards to a specific target and provide beneficial feedback in order for the classroom teachers to enhance their professional development and contribute to meeting targets set within the SDP. However, I believe that in order to achieve this target within the SDP, there are a number of other measures that could be taken. Firstly, visits to other special educational needs schools could be undertaken so that practitioners can identify and share good practice with regards to AfL. Cameron (2009, p. 42) suggest that sharing good practice with other educational practitioners allows them to adopt a wider range of pedagogical approaches to enhance their teaching practice and allows them to explicitly acknowledge and discipline specific skills. In

addition to this, AdvanceHe (2019) highlight how sharing good practice provides creditable outcomes with regards to planning and teaching effectiveness.

AfL should also be observed when it is most effective so practitioners can identify how to positively impact the pupils' learning. Lastly, I believe it is important that all practitioners identify and trial different AfL strategies within their classroom and share successful strategies with other members of staff.

Conclusion

To conclude this report, I have briefly discussed School Development Plans as a whole within my literature review and evaluated how Assessment for Learning is undertaken within an Additional Learning Needs setting. I have written a detailed and critical section based on the implementation of School Development Plan targets and how these targets are recorded and utilized to inform better practice for the school. Reflection and evaluation of my placement school's development plan has been discussed, and I have considered areas which are currently going well and areas which could be improved or developed differently.

This paper has definitely influenced my future practice as an educational practitioner. I am now aware of the significant time it takes to carefully plan and select areas for development, and I have discovered there are many different aspects to be considered when identifying targets that need to be achieved. My research of the SDP has improved my understanding and I will be able to confidently contribute towards the future development of my school.

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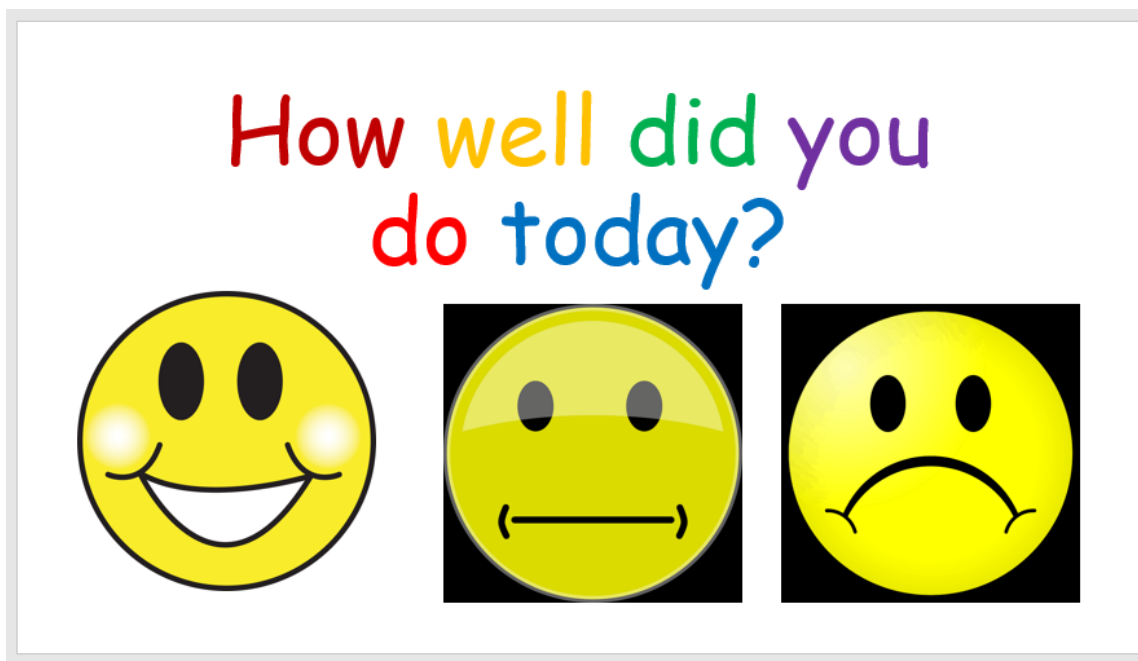
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Appendices

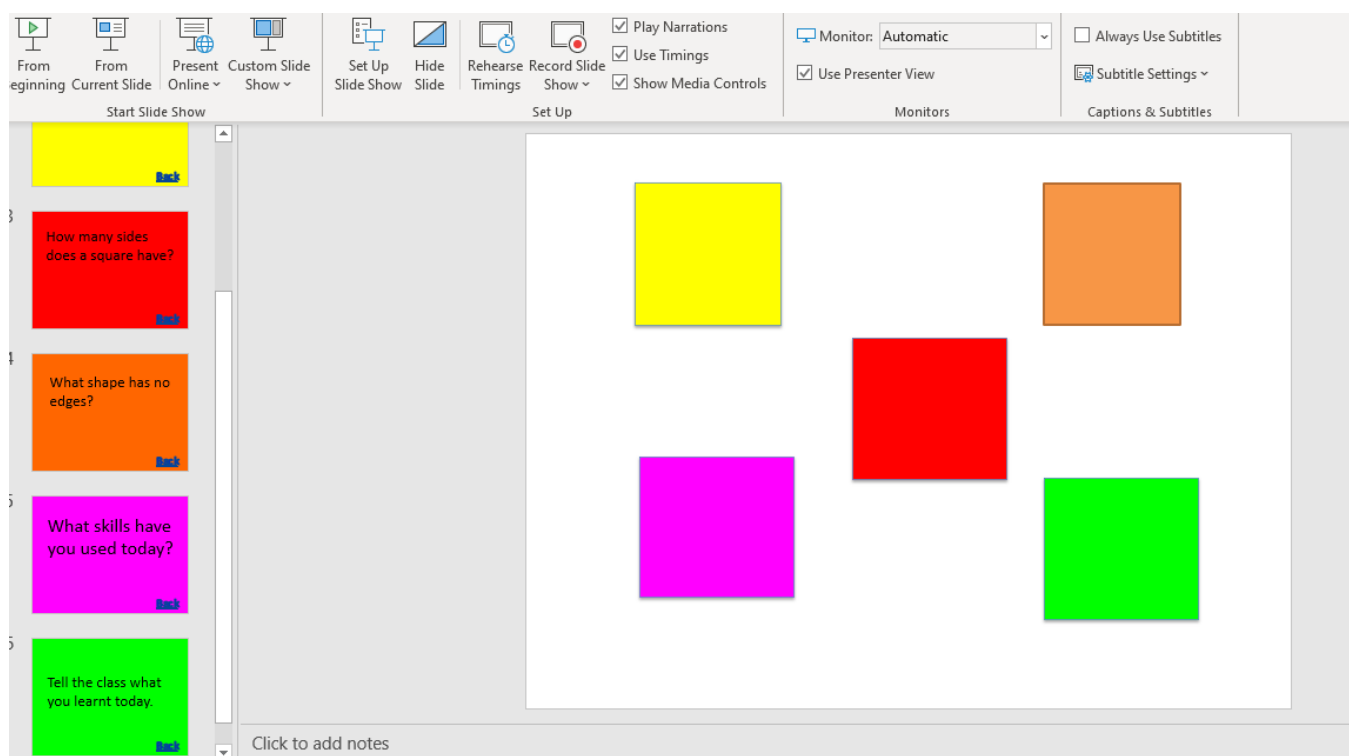
Appendix 1 – Foundation Phase

Using happy and sad faces for the pupils to self-assess themselves.



Appendix 2 – Key Stage 2

Using a plenary square to assess pupils' understanding on a specific topic.



Appendix 3 – Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4

Using peer and self-assessment to gain feedback on a completed piece of work.

Key	Not achieved Experienced/Understood Mastered	
Subject Skill	Able to give examples of foods for healthy teeth and bones.	✓
ESW Skill	Writing: Use written words and phrases to record or present information. EL2	✓
DCF Skill	Use text when searching for information and use an internet browser independently.	✓✓
Way Forward	Talk about other foods which provide Calcium.	

My Friend says...	My Teacher says...	I say...	Next Step
Perfect! ★★★★★ Great! ★★★★★ Good Effort ★★★★★ OK ★★★★★ Better next time ★★★★★	Perfect! ★★★★★ Great! ★★★★★ Good Effort ★★★★★ OK ★★★★★ Better next time ★★★★★	Perfect! ★★★★★ Great! ★★★★★ Good Effort ★★★★★ OK ★★★★★ Better next time ★★★★★	To give examples of foods that should only be eaten in small amounts. 22.11.18

Appendix 4 – Evidencing a pupil's IEP target.

