

	Target	What I have done in this assignment...
Target 1	Use graphics wisely in your assignments. Consider placing them in an appendix or inserting them as you are discussing the content.	Target not applicable to this assignment

Component 2: How a school develops one aspect of its SDP: a report that critically reflects on the actions, impact and evidence base.

Introduction

This report will outline the actions, impact, and evidence base of the placement school's updated development plan for the 2022/2023 academic year. The school will be referred to as 'School X' within the report in line with ethical guidelines regarding confidentiality and anonymity (British Educational Research Association, 2018). School X outlined five aspects in their school development plan (SDP) but the one aspect that will be focused on is 'Wellbeing' with the intent of 'Improving attitude to learning.' Within this aspect there are three action points which are learning & teaching, using data and additional intervention. Each of the three action points contain specific implementation strategies to achieve the desired outcomes as will be further discussed in this report. School X is a Welsh-medium secondary school of mixed gender. The average number of students receiving free school meals (FSM) was thirteen point nine per cent at the beginning of the academic year of 2022 and the average student attendance rate was ninety-four point five per cent (94.5%) throughout the academic year of 2019 (My Local School, 2022). School X's most recent inspection report provides context of the school and found that "thirty point two per cent (30.2%) of pupils live in the 20% most disadvantaged areas in Wales" (Estyn, 2019).

Literature review

The purpose of a school development plan (SDP), as outlined by the Welsh Government's (2014) guidance document on 'School Development Plans', is a "school's strategic plan for improvement" which focuses on improving the wellbeing and academic achievements of their staff and students while analysing progress on a termly and annual basis. The document strongly advises the use of a school development planning cycle for effective planning which

entails identifying a vision for the school, self-evaluating on factors surrounding the vision such as the reason for focusing on it, strategic planning on how to implement the vision, implementing the necessary strategies to achieve the vision and reviewing its impact and success. The cycle is intended to repeat until evidence-supported improvements have been made to the satisfaction of stakeholders such as school governors, teachers, students, and parents. More recently, the Welsh Government (2014) document has been replaced by the Welsh Governments (2021) "School improvement guidance" which is supportive of the school development planning cycle and elaborates on how to create effective SDPs in the context of the Curriculum for Wales and the four purposes (Welsh Government, 2020a). The new Welsh Government (2022) guidance document encourages continuous self-evaluation and collaboration of different bodies within the education system to ensure expectations are met and improvements are made. The document also announces the ending of the national categorisation system and deem this decision to be constructive in promoting transparency between different bodies as it removes the competitive culture present prior that meant schools may not have felt comfortable seeking guidance as not to tarnish their reputation.

The Welsh Assembly Government's (2015) 'Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act' outlines seven major goals including the aim to make Wales more prosperous, resilient, healthy, equal, and globally responsible with more cohesive communities, vibrant culture, thriving Welsh language. The Welsh Assembly Government urge the collaboration of the nation and emphasise the duty of businesses, schools included, to help achieve the goals of this act. As such, outlining wellbeing as a key aspect within a school development plan adheres to the demands of this law. School X's most recent Estyn (2019) report was used as a guide when self-evaluating on the potential improvements that could be made to the school. Estyn judged the school to be "excellent" in the inspection areas of "wellbeing in attitudes to learning" and "care, support and guidance." The school was also judged to be "good" during inspections of "standards," "teaching and learning experiences," and "leadership and management." In response to the Estyn (2019) report, school X produced an action plan to address recommendations made by Estyn and the school was invited by Estyn to prepare a case study demonstrating acknowledgement and improvements based on these recommendations. However, at the beginning of the Covid-19 global pandemic, decisions were made by Welsh officials to suspend school inspections (Estyn, 2020), suspend the national school categorisation system (Williams, 2020), suspend basic curriculum requirements (Welsh Government, 2020b), and provide predicted grades to students based on prior attainment data (Qualifications Wales, 2020) for the academic year to relieve pressure from school staff and allow them to focus on adapting to the change in circumstances. Masonbrink and Hurley (2020) highlighted how the Covid-19 global pandemic negatively

affected children's health and wellbeing globally and affected those from disadvantaged areas the worst. Physical health effects have been observed such as sleep disturbances, weight changes and visual fatigue, whereas additional sleeping and studying time have been beneficial to students' (Yousof et al, 2021). Moreover, Hasan and Bao (2020) show that the distance from peers and teachers has had negative effects on students including psychological distress and anxiety related to academic achievement. Hampton and McAuley (2023) reported the results of a national survey distributed to groups of primary and secondary students in Wales and found that secondary students experienced a lower level of satisfaction with school in several ways compared to their primary counterparts. These include low satisfaction with feeling listened to by teachers, feeling like their teachers cared about them, and their quality of friendships. While the cause of this level of dissatisfaction may not be directly related to Covid-19 pandemic, the survey results highlighted by Hampton and McAuley's (2023) and the work of Masonbrink and Hurley (2020), Yousof et al (2021) and Hasan and Bao (2020) all indicate wellbeing issues for students that should be considered when developing an action point as part of an SDP.

Developing an action point

The wellbeing aspect within the SDP of school X focuses on improving attitude to learning and outlines several action points regarding learning and teaching, use of data, and additional intervention. School x intends on improving attitude to learning and teaching by raising ambition for the future, improving behaviour, developing positive relationships, and improving the whole school's attendance. School X intends on improving the use of data regarding staff and student wellbeing by conducting a 'Whole school approach to wellbeing' assessment on staff and students' and by conducting questionnaires on students', staff, and parents of students' in relation to their thoughts on overall school behaviour. School X will create an integration plan following the responses of these assessments/questionnaires and collaborate with the school's research team to assess and improve the welfare of everyone in the school. School X also intends on strengthening links between the school and home by adding a welfare area to the school website in order to providing necessary support to parents such as important contact details, information about useful external agencies and the new ALN Act etc. The school also intends on expanding the influence of the 'Parents' Voice Forum' by meeting seasonally and inviting them to contribute to the policy and strategic direction of the school.

School X's SDP aims to raise students' future ambitions by firstly prompting staff to ensure that the class work is representative of knowledge that will be important to their futures. For

example, Van Straaten, Wilschut, and Oostdam (2016) discussed that many students believed the subject of history to be irrelevant to their lives. They recommend an understanding of the past, present and future to directly benefit their qualification, socialisation, and subjectification (Biesta, 2010, cited in Van Straaten, Wilschut, and Oostdam, 2016). This suggestion indicates that a broad understanding of human history is beneficial to students in several ways as it can help them achieve academically, understand how to interact with others in an informed way, and to help them form their own thoughts, beliefs, and identities. Therefore, in reference to school X's SDP, literature is strongly supportive of combining education with real-world contexts and this ideology is also encouraged in the Curriculum for Wales (2020a). Furthermore, each department within school X is required twice per academic year to invite guest speakers or former pupils to the school to discuss their experiences and promote the value of education. Numerous bodies of literature (Musto, 2008; Beecher and Sweeney, 2008; Percy et al, 2019) discuss the opportunity of using former students to inspire current students within education and have found that current students claimed to feel inspired, motivated and enlightened by the experience.

Regarding student behaviour, Cameron (1998), an educational psychologist, acknowledged the reoccurring issue of problematic behaviours within schools in the UK. They identified several development areas for schools such as an alternative curriculum for some pupils and the effective use of pastoral and safeguarding strategies to build students, confidence, self-regulation, and motivation. The promotion of positive student behaviour in school X can be seen in their relationship policy which encourages all members of staff to build a rapport with students to gain their respect and secure a positive learning environment. School X also operate an effective behaviour management system whereby there are consistent rules and boundaries set by staff school-wide with clear consequences to negative behaviour being made clear to all students. For example, minor class disruption will be met with up to three warnings, but major class disruption will result in class removal and reprimanding by a member of the leadership team with the possibility of being sent to an isolation room, school suspension or expulsion. However, a meta-analysis of 53 cases found a significant relationship between school suspensions, and academic achievements and dropouts indicating lower academic achievements in students who have previously been suspended and a higher dropout rate in students who have previously been suspended (Noltemeyer, Ward and Mcloughlin, 2015). Based on these findings, recommendations are made to carefully consider the decisions of suspending students and to seek alternative consequences where possible. As such, school X has a functioning facility within the school in which students spend an extended time at but are still expected to complete schoolwork. Students that frequently display undesirable behaviour are closely monitored by specialist

members of staff such as the safeguarding officer so that relationship sessions, mentoring, pastoral team support or an improvement unit can be offered if deemed appropriate. Data monitored includes attendance reports, behaviour points tracking and reporting from members of staff across the school. Education-supported systems like 'Class Dojo' have been found to be highly useful in data collection when used effectively within schools (Robacker, Rivera, and Warren, 2016). Rewarding both positive and negative behaviour with an online points system has evolved school's data reliability on individual students and their progress. However, some concerns were expressed on the potential limitations of behaviour management systems including ineffective use of the system to humiliate students and ignite strong negative feelings. School X encompasses the positive aspects of behaviour management systems by encouraging positive behaviour to be praised considerably and has expressed their support of Dix's (2017) book called "When the adults change, everything changes: Seismic shifts in school behaviour." School X has adopted Dix's strategy of "PIP" and "RIP" which means to praise in public and reprimand in private. The aim of this strategy is to acknowledge undesirable behaviour within the classroom in a way that doesn't humiliate the student and intends to focus on the negativity of the behaviour itself rather than the student being a negative person. Dix proposes that privately disciplining a student by removing them from the class for a private conversation means that a teacher is more likely to maintain a positive and respectful relationship with the student. This literature inspired the school's relationship policy which enforces these ideologies.

An additional target of school X is to improve the standard of wellbeing within the school by raising the average school attendance percentage to above ninety-four per cent (94%). Kim et al (2020) found that school attendance has a direct effect on academic success rates. The school has identified that pupil attendance has not returned to the same level since the Covid-19 pandemic and intends to monitor this closely by collecting frequent data by accurate registration reporting, including documenting the number of minutes late if applicable, and telephoning/text messaging pupils' parents/guardians within a half hour of the beginning of the school day to query the reasoning for the pupil's absence. School X has established a team of staff within the school to research relevant literature surrounding these factors to collect and distribute data, interpret, and identify causal factors, and discuss improvement strategies to develop an action point. For example, school X monitors attendance data weekly and hold weekly meetings to discuss and identify any immediate concerns. Competitions and rewards for strong attendance are arranged throughout the academic year to encourage student cooperation with the school. Estyn's (2021) annual report found a trend of lower attendance rates in school after the Covid-19 pandemic compared to before. Furthermore, students from disadvantaged areas were reported to have particularly lower attendance rates. School X has

identified long-term online learning and a lack of attendance monitoring during the Covid-19 pandemic accountable for the changes in attitude towards learning and as a result monitor attendance weekly since the reopening of the school post-pandemic.

Reflection and evaluation

As previously explained, the SDP's focus is improving the wellbeing and academic achievements of a school's staff and students while analysing progress on a termly and annual basis (Welsh Government, 2014). School X has effectively implemented the use of the planning cycle as demonstrated in their SDP with acknowledgment to stakeholders funding decisions, clearly stating the sources of funding and cost of implementing targets. Donnelly (1999) proposed that strong relationships between school governors and the schools' leadership team whereby both have mutual understandings, and a similar ethos will result in more effective procedures and improvements. School policies are clearly presented and continuously enforced to all teachers and other members of staff promoting consistent professional guidance. Frequent staff meetings, and sporadic class observations throughout the academic year to provide recommendations or guidance for professional improvement. Hargreaves (2019) emphasised the importance of collaboration between teachers claiming it is essential to create a positive environment for members of staff, and for the student's wellbeing and achievement. School X has engaged in this strategy by incorporating teachers into whole-school decisions such as school day structure and lunch break times during staff meetings. Regarding observation as a way of implementing SDP targets, all teachers are observed around three times per academic year by a member of the leadership team that provides them with recommendations for further professional development. However, Ingham and Greer (1992) identified behavioural changes in both teachers and students when being observed indicating unnatural or unusual behaviours may occur. This means that recommendations made by formal observations may not be indicative of the teachers' usual behaviour and therefore may not be helpful to the teacher in a real-life context. However, observations may be helpful to the leadership team who may identify areas of concern or trends across the whole school that need attention.

Questionnaires are annually distributed to members of staff, students, and parents/guardians of students regarding their views on the school's behaviour. Data collected is used to alter, improve, and develop strategies intended to improve the overall behaviour and wellbeing of the school. Many researchers in recent years (Fenton, Ocasio-Stoutenburg, and Harry, 2017; Vincent, 2017; Faddar et al, 2021) have discussed the value of the parents' voice regarding whole-school decisions, highlighting a unique perspective that may benefit the

school when self-reflecting on their SDP and making decisions to improve in the future. Moreover, Bubbs and Jones (2020) discussed that the parents voice is arguably more relevant than ever before due to the recent global Covid-19 pandemic and the changes of in-person learning to online learning which has meant that parents have had to play a more active role in their children's education than before. As such, school X expresses their gratitude for parent/guardian feedback and encourages communication by providing an online forum. Overall, school X has successfully identified and implemented numerous strategies of collecting data that represents the schools progress regarding developmental targets by providing stakeholders, students, teachers, and parents/guardians the opportunity to contribute to planning decisions.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the way school X has decided to develop, plan, and implement wellbeing targets within their SDP is empirically supported in numerous ways. There is an abundance of literature in support of the decisions that they have made regarding and the incorporation of various avenues of feedback and contributions is highly plausible, as supported by the. Adhering to aspects of school development plans by implementing and adjusting strategies each school term and annually will be a vital part of teachers' professional development. Consistent reflection, as emphasised by their target of improving attitudes to learning by raising ambition for the future, improving behaviour, developing positive relationships, and improving the whole school's attendance. While the accurate use of the Welsh Government's (2014) school development planning is imperative for progression, collaboration is also a vital strategy, as supported by Donnelly (1999) and Hargreaves (2019). As such, I intend to engage in a collaborative mindset within my professional teaching by contributing thoughts, ideas and strategies to discussions and meetings where appropriate to contribute to the collective goal of developing a school of high quality and standards.

2,659 words

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