

	Targed/target	Yr hyn yr wyf wedi'i wneud yn yr aseiniad hwn What I have done in this assignment...
Targed/Target 1	Make greater use of journal articles at this level of writing.	I have aimed to access more peer-reviewed journals as part of my reading.
Targed/Target 2	Consider the context and background of literature you discuss, using this consideration to demonstrate critical awareness.	I have considered the context of literature discussed and its pertinence to the topic.
Targed/Target 3	Make greater use of evidence collected to support/consider points (e.g. comments from pupils in the interviews).	I have aimed to focus on Welsh Government and school documents as part of my assignment.

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

Introduction

The aim of this report is to consider a School Development Plan (hereafter referred to as SDP) and how a school might develop one aspect of their SDP. The school referred to in this report is a mixed 11-18 comprehensive school in a suburban area of South Wales (Estyn, 2018). In accordance with anonymity and confidentiality guidance (BERA, 2018), the school will hereafter be referred to as School X. School X is also a pioneer school for the draft curriculum for Wales 2022 (Welsh Government, 2020), which is based on recommendations given in *Successful Future* (Donaldson, 2015).

School X's current SDP was produced following a successful Estyn inspection in 2018 where School X achieved "Excellent" in all areas of assessment – the highest level of achievement given in an Estyn inspection report (Estyn, 2018). The objective of the SDP for School X was then to maintain this high level of achievement into the future. To this end, the new SDP was created to cover academic years 2018 to 2021. At the time of writing this report, School X is at the halfway point of this SDP.

The Development Priority Areas identified in School X's SDP are based on Estyn's areas of inspection. This report will focus on the delivery of the "Teaching and learning experiences" aspect of the SDP (School X, 2018).

Literature review

It might be reasonable to assume that a successful school like School X would not need much of the SDP. Indeed, successful Estyn reports as well as strong performance as evidenced by key performance indicators such as literacy, numeracy and science test scores may be the result of previously successful SDPs. However, the implementation of an effective SDP is as important in maintaining the high standards of a successful school as it is in improving the standards in less successful schools (Brighouse and Woods, 1999).

While the SDP is created with the express intention of improving a school's performance, it is important that the SDP is planned efficiently and that proposed actions are founded on a firm evidence base. Time must also be given for the proper management and support needed to fulfil the SDP (Wright, 2013). Without this, the SDP could ultimately damage the school's success. This is supported through accountability to all stakeholders within and without the school achieved through consistent tracking and reporting of action taken as a result of the SDP. Revisiting the SDP in this way allows for quality assurance (Wright, 2013). When looking at teaching and learning experiences as a measure for the success of any school, attention should be paid to the standard of teachers and learning assistants. Lasting changes to teaching and learning can only be achieved through consistent classroom practice, as well as practice in other learning areas. Despite this, schools will not often have concrete policies for teaching and learning even if they have policies targeting all other areas of school life (Brighouse and Woods, 1999). This can be a problem when building the SDP as it might not be clear whether the efficacy of teaching is down to individual, departmental or whole-school practice.

One facet of the teaching and learning experience that School X includes in their SDP is the use of formative assessment or assessment for learning (hereafter referred to as AFL). AFL is defined as the use of assessment to inform a learner's progress and development, rather than treating assessment as the goal of education. Several studies have provided evidence showing that learners benefit substantially from effective and regular feedback (Black and Wiliam, 1998). Resultantly, teachers and other stakeholders have continued to develop formalised procedures in schools for the delivery of AFL (Black, 2003). Studies also indicate that AFL as a systematic approach is not only effective but receives a positive response from learners. A study suggests that learners value formative feedback from their teachers and prefer it to feedback received from peers. Despite this, the same study indicates that AFL is

a learned behaviour and must be taught explicitly to learners in order to be effective (Deluca et al, 2018).

Another facet of School X's teaching and learning experience action plan for the SDP is the focus on cross-curricular responsibilities outside of their own pioneering curriculum.

Specifically, these are the digital competency framework (hereafter referred to as the DCF) and the Siarter Iaith (Welsh Language Charter) framework.

The DCF is a cross-curricular framework designed to reflect the increasingly digitised world that learners begin navigating from a young age. It is designed to incorporate digital skills and resources into all classrooms. Conscious effort must therefore be afforded to the digital competencies of teachers using specialised courses and education, as well as a focus on digital competency as a part of teacher training. It has been proven that managerial decisions in schools to support the digital competencies of teachers increases the effectiveness of delivering the DCF (Josef and Kostoloanyova, 2017).

The Siarter Iaith framework is another cross-curricular framework focused on increasing learners interaction with and exposure to the Welsh language by embedding Welsh throughout schools in Wales. This was developed as part of Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 scheme, which aims to produce a million Welsh speakers by 2050 (Welsh Government, 2019). Siarter Iaith provides schools with accreditation based on the embedding of opportunities for learners to engage with the Welsh language in classrooms and throughout school life. While this might have previously been the purview of Welsh-medium schools, English-medium schools are now encouraged to use Welsh both formally and informally outside of the setting of a Welsh class. It has been observed that Siarter Iaith and similar strategies to embed Welsh throughout the curriculum in Wales have yielded positive engagement from both teachers and learners (Estyn, 2018).

Developing an action point

An effective SDP requires action points modelled with focus on assessing and prioritising the school's needs based on qualitative and quantitative data (Hanover Research, 2014). The action points for teaching and learning as defined in School X's SDP for 2018 to 2021 focus on evaluating their pioneer curriculum to ensure that it delivers the "four purposes" (Donaldson, 2015); developing an assessment model that supports the new curriculum; embed DCF; aim to achieve the Bronze Siarter Iaith Award; and assess and develop the school's collaborative learning culture and its effect on learners' experiences in school (School X, 2019). As highlighted above, School X received a positive Estyn report prior to the SDP and this is reflected in action points above, which focus on developing and embedding teaching and learning strategies already proven to be successful in School X (Estyn, 2018).

The pioneer curriculum produced by School X is based on *Successful Futures* by Donaldson (2015) and has been in place long enough that learners in Y10 are the first cohort to pass through KS3 entirely under the pioneer curriculum instead of the current Welsh curriculum. As the pioneer curriculum focuses on KS3, this means that it is now fully embedded in School X, however refinements are continuously made based on evidence gathered by School X and other pioneer schools in Wales. This will ultimately form the basis of the national curriculum for Wales in 2022.

School X achieved previous success with cross-curricular responsibilities when embedding the Literacy and Numeracy Framework (hereafter referred to as LNF). Included as part of the pioneer curriculum, School X achieved well in key performance indicators for both literacy and numeracy following the embedding of the LNF (School X, 2019). Now that this has been achieved, development of cross-curricular responsibilities is focused on the DCF and Siarter Iaith framework. School X's DCF development plan is led by the Digital Literacy Coordinator, who will ensure that teachers have the resources and training needed to deliver the DCF. It is vital when effectively delivering the DCF in schools that staff are up to date with the rapidly advancing digital tools available to them and their learners (Josef and Kostoloanyova, 2017). The Siarter Iaith framework provides accreditation to schools based on their embedding of the Welsh language throughout school life. This plan is still very much under development, but as the academic year 2020-21 approaches, Welsh Government is beginning to put in place further assessment and accreditation of teacher's individual Welsh language skills (Welsh Government, 2020). This accreditation further bolsters Welsh Government's scheme to increase the number of Welsh speakers in Wales by providing a framework to allow teachers to develop their own Welsh language skills. This may be a consideration for School X as it develops a plan to achieve the Siarter Iaith Bronze Award in the next academic year. School X also records great success in its assessment model. This is based on a method of AFL that has been standardised across the school. An ethos has been developed around marking which focuses on the provision of feedback that makes learners aware of what they achieved as well as tangible areas for improvement instead of grading work. This is in line with the recommendations given in *Successful Futures* (Donaldson, 2015). School X's SDP indicates that a two-year research project into AFL has yielded positive results reinforcing their current assessment approach. Moving forward this will be fed back to Welsh Government to inform the draft curriculum for Wales 2022, in School X's capacity as a pioneer school.

Reflection and evaluation

School X is in a position of success, with the highest possible accreditation by Estyn forming the basis of its three-year SDP. The target for School X should therefore be the maintenance

of this excellent standard. School X should also focus on maintaining its position as innovator, pioneering curriculum reform ahead of other schools. Both of these targets are plain to see in the SDP.

At the halfway stage of the SPD, School X continues to achieve success in relevant indicators. It is acknowledged in the SDP that the curriculum continues to be changed and refined in line with the draft curriculum for Wales 2022. Despite this, School X is measuring efforts focused on developing, embedding and evaluating already successful methods of teaching and learning.

Despite this success, when looking at cross-curricular responsibilities, there is a clear disparity between the DCF and the Siarter Iaith development plans. While the DCF development plan includes very clear, tangible goals and indicates which members of staff in School X are responsible for the delivery of the plan, the Siarter Iaith development plan is still under development, with no further description provided. This is despite the SDP already being in its second year. This is perhaps surprising for a school pioneering a draft curriculum that focuses on the importance of preserving Welsh language and culture.

Given these points, I would recommend a more proactive approach to bilingualism and the Welsh language in the school. This is already a cross-curricular responsibility and seems likely to gather significance with each academic year. I would perhaps consider mapping out a plan with tangible goals for increasing learner exposure to Welsh language as well as culture and national identity. I would also standardise the requirements for teachers engaging with the Welsh language across the school, as this currently seems to be based on individual preference.

As a successful pioneer school, it might also be worth School X providing greater focus and resources towards new ideas for teaching and learning. While there is potentially greater risk of losing high attainment at the next Estyn inspection, providing teachers with the means to further explore research into teaching and learning may be beneficial to other schools in the wider area. This could also create an ethos in School X of confident experimentation beneficial to both teachers and learners.

Conclusion

For this assignment, I had to consider the strategic targets for School X's SDP and produce this report. I chose to focus on the action points related to teaching and learning. This allowed me to consider the development of plans related to delivery of the curriculum, assessment and cross-curricular responsibilities.

I have concluded that School X's SDP is likely to be typical of one belonging to a successful school. Targets are focused on the development of achieved goals rather than a fundamental need for change. School X also focuses on its duty as a pioneer school, with

action points focusing on curriculum and assessment designed to be fed back to other schools and stakeholders.

This assignment has allowed me to consider my role in any SDP, whether that is as a coordinator directly involved in delivering the various action points, or simply as a member of staff working with the school to enact change. I understand that it is important to consider a school not as a static organisation, but as one with fluid targets and goals. It is therefore essential to maintain an up to date knowledge of the school's SDP as well as the research-led basis behind any action points. To this end, continuing to keep abreast of developments in education, and being open to change whilst preserving a professional scepticism is also important. Finally, I have learnt to consider my own contribution to the school as a whole, offering skills, expertise or working hours to benefit a school-wide SDP, rather than simply focusing on my own subject area or classroom.

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