

## **School Development Planning – The experience in Ballyholme Primary School**

The term 'self-evaluation' trips easily off the tongue and during the past few years has become a mantra for many in education as we seek to improve the educational experiences of our pupils. It is not however, a 'quick fix' but rather a process which should become part of the culture of the school organisation and habitual practice on the part of those working in it. Like any process it is a journey – with many different starting points (depending on the individual) and signposts along the way but no definitive destination.

In the following exemplar I will attempt to document the process we are currently going through. It is by no means the perfect model (if indeed one exists) but is one schools attempt to shift the emphasis from teaching to learning in an effort to ensure pupil needs are met.

The trigger for much of the work was the situation that the school found itself in:

- The imminent introduction of a Revised Curriculum.
- The appointment of a new Principal.
- The need for a new school development plan.

Initially a number of foundation elements were introduced, some had previously been in use by a few teachers.

Teachers were encouraged to evaluate individual lessons. Year groups (3 teachers) evaluated a topic taught – what worked / didn't work etc and then examined how this information could improve teaching and pupil learning, the focus being on improving the learning. Over time (18mths) this evolved into a formalised process where the topic was evaluated and this was recorded.

Simultaneously the VP and head of KS1 embarked on a programme of classroom observations and feedback on specific literacy elements. There was a clear focus for these observations and this was discussed with teachers prior to the observations. These were the initial steps and were built on the established practice of PRSD by peers in a supportive and collaborative manner.

As a management team we read and evaluated current school practice against The Indicators of Effective Performance (Every School a Good School), asking ourselves 'How did we measure up?' and 'In what areas was development / improvement required?'

The same exercise was then carried out by Key Stage groups and year groups leading to the incorporation of issues into appropriate action plans by co-ordinators and the management team.

The aim in these activities was to refine the process of self-evaluation to become more focussed on data gathering, the use of such information and how it can lead to improvement in individual pupil performance.

The use of positive and supportive language was vital in ensuring that teachers saw the drive for improvement coming from a desire to improve pupil performance rather than an accountability exercise on their teaching.

### **Data Gathering**

Data gathering to this point had been a bit 'ad hoc' with tests being administered at various times during the year, results collated but no real use made of the information gathered other than to back up teachers judgement – which it should be stated, was quite accurate.

The decision was taken to use September as a month when teachers would carry out a series of pupil assessments. The shift to completing NFER tests online proved very positive. Teachers no longer had to spend hours inputting data from answer sheets, they were unable to influence a child's performance in any way and the time saved was a positive factor in encouraging greater data analysis.

In September, teachers carried out the following assessments:

- Running Records for reading
- NFER – PIM & PIE
- INCAS
- Spelling Quotient

Key Stage Results were also available.

### **Analysis of the data**

An INSET day was spent at the end of September in order to analyse all the data. The aim being to look for common strands of strengths and weaknesses and to identify issues which needed to be addressed by individual teachers. Staff spent time, under the direction of a very proficient assessment co-ordinator, in year groups examining the data and identifying issues. The management team also presented issues that they had previously identified.

From these 3 sources common issues were then identified by the whole staff. Action Plans were then drawn up by the appropriate curriculum team and incorporated into the School Development Plan.

The INSET day was invaluable. It gave quality time to deal with an important self-evaluative issue – data analysis. Teachers were able to work as a whole staff collaboratively. They took ownership of the data as it was analysed.

Subsequently the plans were evaluated on a 6 weekly basis and progress charted.

The School Management Team carried out a mid-year review which ensured the focus was retained, progress indicated and the action plan refined.

The process was well received by the majority of staff as they began to see how it would benefit the pupils and their attainment. However, the process is still driven by SMT and it will take some time to become a cultural, whole school change embedded in practice.

The process requires refining and targeting of individual children will only really become possible once progress scores have been gathered in subsequent years.

There are cost implications for schools on a limited budget – we decided that the quality of the information returned from NFER was worth the spend and that staff required quality time – the process cannot be ‘tagged on’ to the end of a teaching day.

**In conclusion:**

A positive process.

Money well spent.

Process provided a greater focus on issues.

Led to improvements - not only in tests results – the process has actually become a vehicle for change.

The School Development Plan should be a ‘living’ document. We have found, that by using this model and building in regular reviews the document has become a much more useful tool in leading to a raising of standards over time.

## **St Paul's High School, Bessbrook, School Development Planning 2006-10**

### **Case Study: Performing Arts; Music, Drama and Dance.**

#### **A How well are we doing? (2006)**

- Early stages of implementation of the curriculum.
- Drama limited to an after school post of responsibility.
- Dance was an after school activity,
- Very limited provision of SELB peripatetic tuition.

#### **B What do we want to achieve?**

##### **MUSIC:**

- Provision of Revised Curriculum at Key Stage Three in class sizes of no more than twenty.
- Additional music teachers.
- Significantly increased choral provision.
- Increased numbers of boys participating in choral and instrumental work.
- Increased numbers undertaking music to examination level.
- Greater use of SELB resources; peripatetic tuition; AMMA centre.
- Increased use of music technology made available with the new building.
- Development of culture of Annual Spring Concert and Bi-Annual School Musical.
- Participation in local Feiseanna.
- Development of Irish Traditional music, a resource within the local community.
- Development of other cultural music, e.g. African drumming.
- Provision of Wind instruments.
- Provision of additional private peripatetic tuition in all areas of orchestral instruments.
- Provision of initial tuition at KS2 in feeder primary schools to give new intake a head start with music tuition.
- Collaborative links within the community at both primary and secondary school level.
- Developed role reflected in management structure.

(The above detail was contained in Department Development Plan and a brief synopsis included in the School Development Plan.)

##### **DRAMA**

- Provision of Revised Curriculum at Key Stage Three.
- Appointment of Drama specialist(s).
- Weekly opportunities for after school Drama.
- Development of Drama at examination level.
- Collaborative links within the community, initially at secondary level.
- Collaborative links with Rathore Special Education School for shared teaching and shared productions.
- Cross curricular links; with Learning for Life & Work Department, Irish Department, Music Department etc.
- Developed role reflected in management structure.

## **DANCE**

- Appointment of Dance Specialist.
- Provision of new Curriculum at Key Stage Three.
- Weekly opportunities for after school Dance.
- Participation in Dance competitions.
- Development of Dance as an examination subject.
- Collaborative links within the community.
- Development of cultural Dance disciplines and peripatetic tuition.
- Improved facilities.
- Developed role reflected in management structure.

## **C What must we do to make it happen?**

- Review of curriculum at Key Stage Three; led by V.P in charge of Curriculum
- Appointment/Redeployment of Specialists.
- Dedicated, increased budget to meet targets.
- Through Area Learning Community, and CCMS, strategies developed to allow for collaboration, e.g. with Rathore Special School, in Music (choral work, and African Drumming) and Drama; with St Joseph's High School, Crossmaglen, for collaborative teaching of A Level Drama.
- Departmental Planning with SMT.

(Our involvement in the Specialist School Initiative empowered us financially to make significant headway in these areas.)

## **D Monitoring and Evaluation.**

- Each Head of Department, with his/her teachers, sets out the department's priorities for the coming year and its targets at examination level.
- Each H.O.D meets principal, V.P in charge of curriculum, and V.P. in charge of Standards in September to evaluate the year past and to discuss the year coming. Specific reference is made to public examination results and targets are set in the light of these.
- This is followed by an updating of the Departmental Development Plan at departmental level.
- A common assessment policy is in place, with Assessment Manager being used by each teacher and to inform parents via its Statement of Results. HODs monitor assessments and homework within their department each term and across departments once a year.
- The school Bursar meets the HODs when appropriate, and at least once a year, to review their spending and its place within the School Development Plan.
- Staff Development Senior Teacher meets HODs, and liaises frequently with principal to ensure that Inset training and professional development within departments reflect the Dept. Development Plan.

## **E Impact on Pupils**

Our vision, through the Performing Arts (and Sport also) was to raise the profile of what we believed to be the public face of St Paul's High School. We are absolutely confident that this has been achieved. Together with our refurbished and extended building programme, our facilities are top of the range and our provision within these facilities is also top of the range. We have an enormous range of after school events; curricular links with our local primary schools, large numbers taking the three

subjects under discussion at both KS4 and KS5. Success is consistently ours in local Feiseanna and we are perceived as being on a par with “the best of Newry”.

Any child who wishes to avail of any area of Performing Arts may do so; our timetable is now arranged in such a way that any pupil at KS4 can sit any of these subjects at GCSE. Our provision for our own learning Support Centre is rich and our collaborative provision is generous. All of this combined, creates a very positive and healthy ethos, with enhanced self esteem on the part of pupils and staff. It ensures that our school is a good school.

## **Braidside Integrated Primary and Nursery School, Ballymena**

### **Context**

Braidside Integrated Primary and Nursery School opened in 1989, moving to temporary buildings on a permanent site in 1992. The school currently has 26 Nursery and 335 Primary pupils, having grown from an early start with an enrolment of less than fifty.

### **Development Planning**

Establishing and maintaining a vision for the school and setting a strategic plan has helped to manage growth and development. We typically have a number of broad development issues to accommodate during the life of each plan. Some of these are specific to the circumstances and ethos of the school (such as developing policies on integration and managing a school housed in aging mobile buildings) and others are the common concerns of developing and maintaining an effective approach to education and bedding in curriculum initiatives.

Having an agreed school development plan has been critical in managing time for each issue, and defining delegation and responsibility. Where possible the plan is focussed to prioritise teacher attention on continuing to develop learning and teaching, with issues to do with the broader life of the school taken on by senior staff and Governors.

The development journey has helped to bed in some effective habits. Staff have needed a creative and open-minded attitude to change, and a collegiate approach has been useful in fostering involvement and motivation. An investment of time in exploring the school ethos and defining core values has helped to develop a sense of team within the staff and between staff and Governors. This has allowed the development plan to be focussed on important agreed objectives.

While the broad context information needed for a development plan is important in setting the parameters and defining where the school is, the effective engine has been the working section of the development plan. This sets out key objectives, responsibilities, expected outcomes, and a broad schedule for a rolling three year plan. A more detailed action plan is written for each key area.

### **Action planning**

Action planning for most learning and teaching developments is delegated to the lead coordinator. Coordinators draft an action plan, usually in a simple grid format which includes the target outcomes, dates and responsibilities.

### **Self-evaluation**

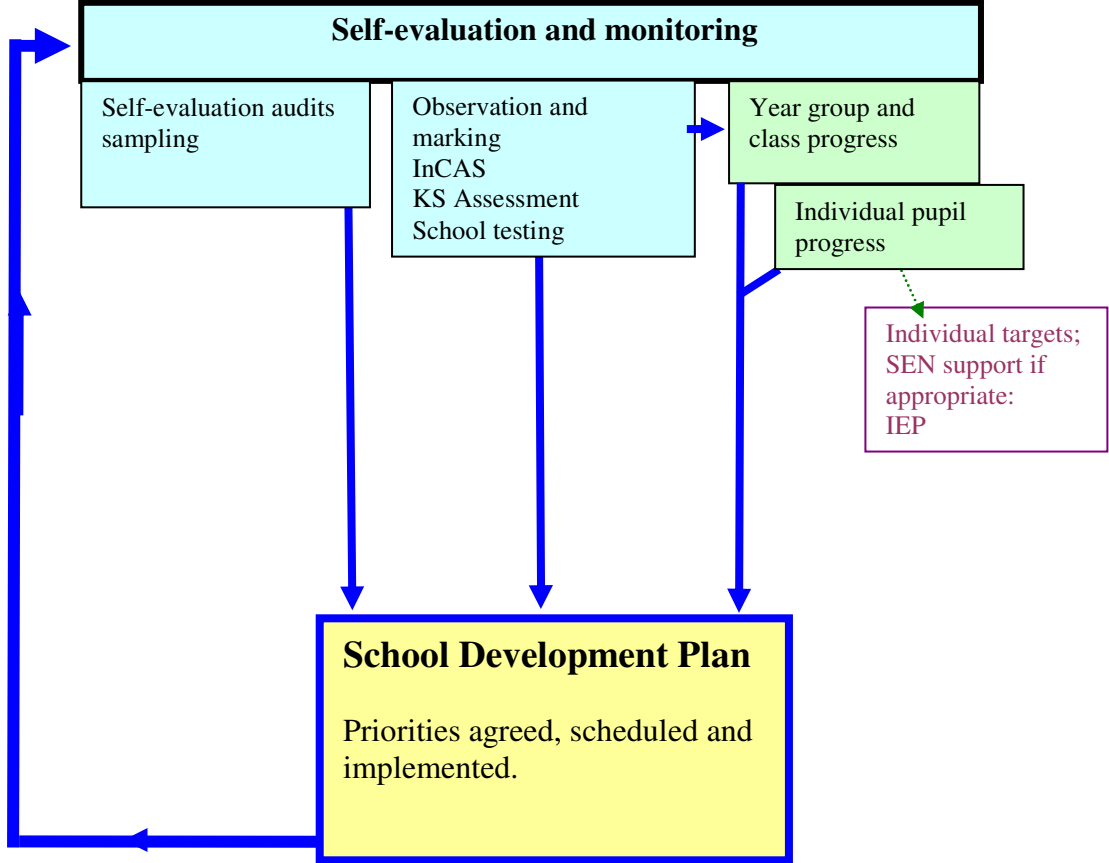
A significant area is set as a self-evaluation focus each year, usually a curriculum area led by a coordinator. An audit is used to establish where we are and to match current practice against the N.I. Curriculum. An action plan is written to structure agreed development work based on the needs identified. Progress in some areas has largely involved the dissemination of existing effective practice, with some CASS involvement in others.

The school uses formal tests for literacy and numeracy once a year. End of Key Stage assessment and InCAS outcomes provide further useful data. Outcomes inform the class teacher and are analysed by senior staff and subject coordinators. This process helps to identify strengths and areas for development, and an analysis is discussed with the staff, which informs the setting of realistic literacy and numeracy targets for the next school year. Governors are given a formal report on outcomes each year.

Use of data:

- InCAS, end of Key Stage, and annual testing outcomes analysed.
- Monitor year group and class progress.
- Identify and set targets for any children not making appropriate progress relevant to where they were.
- Identify areas which need development, and incorporate these into the development plan.
- Report to Governors.

*Self evaluation and the school development plan.*



## **Monitoring**

The senior management team which includes the Principal, Vice Principal, and curriculum leaders in each key stage take responsibility for guiding and monitoring progress. Sampling, coordinator release to support other class teachers, staff review meetings and assessment outcomes provide feedback on progress.

The development plan operates as a working document and may be adjusted if, for instance, substantial progress can be made in key areas at the cost of deferring some other tasks into the next school year.

## **Case Study- Developing Numeracy**

Numeracy was a key feature of the school development plan over the course of a number of school years. This was led by the Deputy Principal (who is also the subject coordinator). A summary of developments follows.

### Conclusions from self-evaluation (observations, staff audit and test outcomes)

- Some less able children were not engaging as confidently as they could with numeracy tasks.
- Too many of the more able children were under confident when applying their maths skills and knowledge in problem solving.
- Many pupils were performing straightforward computation well and had a good understanding of mathematical symbols, but needed to develop a broader mathematical vocabulary to cope well with applying maths and problem solving.
- We needed to create space within the teaching day for numeracy to be taught in a more practical way in keeping with the N.I. Curriculum.

### Action

- The Coordinator introduced CASS guidance on reviewing the numeracy line of development. The review was given time within the development plan and the line of development was adjusted to better match the stage of development of pupils in each year group.
- Staff agreed and implemented a more active approach to teaching numeracy based on the N.I. Revised Curriculum and recent INSET. A teaching strategy was developed which relied less on published maths schemes and more on structured learning activities and a topic-based approach. A budget was allocated to allow resources to be updated.
- Developing a broader mathematical vocabulary was given more presence in the curriculum. Teaching strategies were discussed and agreed and appropriate mathematical vocabulary was displayed in the classrooms.
- Assessment outcomes and observation have indicated that children are becoming more confident in engaging with maths, and more likely to use and apply their knowledge effectively.

## Harberton Special School

Moving from a large, suburban, primary school to a small inner city primary school, I felt totally ill equipped to cope with the demands of my new post and by the Halloween break was ready to run for the hills. Then, through the RTU first time principal's programme, I was introduced to and received training in School Development Planning (a new initiative). This was a life changing experience for me as it very firmly put me in a position to lead and manage my school effectively.

Once the plan was in place I no longer felt totally overwhelmed (just overwhelmed) by the demands of the job. But more important than the finished product of a development plan with accompanying action plans was **the process** that I and my staff went through to achieve the end result. A process which included: collaboration, consultation, cooperation, the sharing of responsibility and most importantly the feeling that each member of staff had a say, something to contribute which resulted in a degree of ownership which wasn't prevalent in schools at that time.

I audited all staff using a simple proforma. The audit forms were completed individually. We then came together as one group to collate our responses and decide those issues which we would address through the school development plan, which was simply stated using the headers What, Why, Who When How.

Six years later I moved to Harberton Special School. At that time there were over thirty teachers and thirty plus classroom assistants in the school but the same approach worked very well. The difference was that instead of coming together as one group of staff to collate the response, I divided the staff into eight groups. It was then the job of the SMT to collate the responses from the eight groups and decide what should be included in a viable School Development Plan. Once again I cannot stress enough that **the process of consultation and collaboration** was every bit as important as the end result.

In an era when there is continual change in the education community the School Development Plan can be used as a tool by school leaders to manage what is often the barrage of external demands. It is also a tool for evaluating the success of the school on an annual basis (the evaluated SDP is our Annual Report to Parents) and for prioritising those areas that will lead to a more fulfilling school experience for all pupils.

Much emphasis is currently being placed on the importance of Strategic Planning often at the expense of the School Development Plan. In our school we have embraced the notion of strategic intent statements, but rather than shelving the School Development/Improvement Plan, we are using the process of school development planning to assist us in realising the six strategic intents that we have outlined on our strategic plan. These intents will guide and lead the school forward for the next ten years.

Last Year the SLT drew up a proforma to be completed individually by all staff, asking them what they thought the school's strategic direction might be and what needed to be done to get there. We held a staff workshop, which began by looking at our school mission statement and how that aligned with the aims of the revised NI

Curriculum. In groups of eight individuals outlined what they had written. The group leader led discussion and got consensus on what should go down on the group response form. Each group was asked to give a summary which was discussed in open forum.

The SLT (through the RTU SMT training programme) collated the responses and drew up six strategic intents which would lead and guide the school forward for the next ten years.

What we now do to draw up our School Development Plan is:

- Audit staff in the normal manner
- Match agreed targets for the year under our strategic intent statements
- Draw up the School Development/Improvement Plan with the additional Column "Financial Implications"

Our strategic intent statements and School Development Plan can be viewed on our school website [www.harbertonschool.co.uk](http://www.harbertonschool.co.uk)

## Self Evaluation in Drumnamoe Nursery School

The process of self-evaluation is at the heart of everything we do in Drumnamoe Nursery School. It is the means by which we reflect on and review our practice in every aspect of school life and so make changes to ensure that the quality of our provision is improved upon year after year. As a staff we are very aware that we too must engage in the process of learning, and it is only through focusing on monitoring and self evaluation that we can impact positively upon the lives of the children in our care.

As a leader, the principal must ensure that he/she has an understanding of the strengths of the school and a good awareness of the areas for development, thus he or she must lead the process. However, any effective self-evaluation will only occur where the entire staff are totally committed to its aims and value its effectiveness. In addition to improvement in standards, staff confidence and morale should be two of the main benefits, as the staff is recognised for their good practice, their skills and their expertise. Ultimately then the outcomes for self-evaluation should be that the school becomes more effective and that the quality of teaching and the experiences of the children/the progress that they make is improved upon!

In Drumnamoe we believe that Self Evaluation is a process which helps staff members and the management team of a school [BOG] to:

- clarify what the school is hoping to achieve;
- focus on the quality of the learning and teaching;
- identify and celebrate where the provision is good and should be maintained;
- identify and prioritise areas which need to be developed;
- plan for future development;
- engage in personal and professional development; and
- raise the standards of the educational provision

In starting to self evaluate, the main focus should be the teaching and learning. The rich and varied Nursery Curriculum we offer is delivered because we want the children we care for to develop social competence and the skills which they will need to succeed as learners. Positive results can best be achieved when our curriculum is implemented and planned by ourselves collectively as a team.

Questions which we must ask ourselves then are:

- What does an effective curriculum look like? and
- What elements need to be in place, and are they evident to all those who visit the school and those responsible for ensuring its implementation?

To answer these questions, we have designed a self-evaluation checklist, which will be used on an annual basis by the staff of Drumnamoe and focuses on practices relevant to our school. This tool includes a form to assess the implementation of the Curriculum framework, as well as detailed questions about each interest area and methods to assess overall quality. The Principal, teacher and Nursery Assistants can use the checklist to assess the degree to which each of the criteria are in place, partially in place, or not yet in place and whether the interest areas have the materials and supplies needed to ensure that they are wholly effective. Based on the results of this assessment process, we consider some short term goals that can be

realistically accomplished and develop a plan to address those aspects of our practice that need improvement. These will be included in the next year's Action Plan and ultimately in The School Development Plan.

## **Self-evaluation and School Development Planning in Gaelscoil Uí Néill**

Gaelscoil Uí Néill is an average-sized, rural primary school and, as an Irish-medium (IM) school, we face particular challenges in addition to those faced by monolingual schools. The most significant additional challenge faced by Irish-medium schools is that of curriculum development in a bilingual setting.

With this in mind, we used *Together Towards Improvement (TTI)* and *School Development Planning (SDP)* guidance to begin the process of self-evaluation and school development. One of the most pressing issues in the IM sector has been language planning for both Irish and English. As you may or may not be aware, the vast majority of pupils in Irish-medium education (93% in Gaelscoil Uí Néill at the time) come from homes that do not speak Irish, or at least speak very little. The challenge faced by Irish-medium schools is to help the pupils develop their literacy skills in both Irish and English and to do so quickly enough and to a high enough standard to allow for the delivery of the other areas of the curriculum through the medium of Irish.

While *TTI* offers a very structured approach for the identification of priorities, it is clear to anyone involved in the IM sector what the immediate challenges are. The staff were in full agreement that the focus should be on developing a well-resourced biliteracy programme. Consultation was carried out with the parents and they were in agreement with the priorities the school had identified.

Having identified our main focus for development, we drew up a three year plan in line with *TTI* and began to look at specific targets. *TTI* recommends that there should be three areas of focus each year; ethos, learning & teaching and management. For the first year of the plan, and each subsequent year, we drew up action plans related to these areas.

In the first year, all three action plans were related to one another and, while this is not a necessary component of *TTI*, the use of three separate action plans to develop a complex and inter-related issue allowed us to approach each element in a structured and planned way. Each action plan involved: establishing a baseline, setting targets and success criteria, outlining actions to be taken (we found it useful to be very specific about timescale and included the specific month by which the actions had to be completed), deciding on the support and resources required (personnel and financial), establishing monitoring procedures and allowing time for the evaluation of the whole process.

As a small school (six teachers, including the Principal), it was straightforward enough to monitor the implementation of the action plans. This was done through regular, but not frequent, staff meetings in which all staff had opportunities to review milestones and discuss outcomes. The involvement of all the teaching staff in the process from the very beginning ensured that they approached the programme for development with enthusiasm and even creativity.

The result of the work carried out, in the long term, has been very positive. Until the introduction of InCAS, there had been no standardised test for assessing pupil's reading ability in Irish. Our first opportunity to evaluate the impact of the plan

quantitatively on pupils' attainment came with the introduction of InCAS and, from Primary 4 to 7, whole-class averages were all above averages in the first year of the test, in comparison to other IM schools. Similarly, following the implementation of a similar plan for reading in English, the pupils' reading in English in Primary 7 was above average on a whole-class basis in comparison to English-medium schools, which is despite the fact that pupils do not begin English formally until the third term of Primary 3 in Gaelscoil Uí Néill.

The impact of the planning process on the teachers has also been very positive. The practice of self-evaluation and school development planning is embedded within the school and teachers seem to find that the implementation of three realistic and reasonable action plans each year does not get in the way of the learning and teaching and, in fact, the long term impact on the learning and teaching is clear for all to see.

## **Ballymena Academy**

Ballymena Academy, a non-denominational Voluntary Grammar School of 1,200 boys and girls “cares for the individual and inspires learning and achievement.” Development planning focuses on:

- staying focused on learners, moving systematically from strategic statement to specific planned action;
- building consensus about plans for the future - agreeing process as well as product – as part of target setting;
- self-evaluating to sustain high standards, or to guide and promote improvement;
- developing a learning organisation, proactive in its approach to leadership and management of change; and
- generating robust evidence that available resources have been used efficiently and effectively

An important distinction is this school’s emphasis on planning, implementing and evaluating; on process as well as product. This entails:

- adhering to structures and procedures, alongside a willingness to reform structure and process;
- using relevant information on best practice or comparative data for benchmarking purposes;
- including externally-sourced as well as internally-generated evidence of performance;
- enabling staff to be involved in, and to have a working knowledge of, both plan and process; and
- supporting individuals through 1:1 discussions and interviews as well as larger meetings.

The Action Plan, the ‘meat’ of the SDP, is structured in 3 sections: Learning and Teaching, Pastoral Care and Leadership. An SMT subgroup has oversight of each area and reviews progress. Departmental development plans are generic, annualised alongside the School Development Plan, with scope for specific focus. SDP priorities are discussed at meetings of Heads of Department and Heads of Year. (Members of the Head of Department Committee meet in smaller groups in June to carry out an in-depth evaluation of the year’s developments and identify/reaffirm priorities.) The outcomes of these and other discussions inform revised action plans for the incoming year, which are drafted at a year-end SMT conference dedicated to review and development planning.

This demands time, energy and expertise. There are three specific staff groups central to the process: Senior Management Team, Heads of Department/Heads of Subject and Heads of Year. These groups meet regularly; they consider matters relevant to the planning process and provide, in turn, natural channels to other staff through such meetings as those of Departments, Pastoral Teams, Communication Groups and Working Groups. Agenda items related to planning and development matters are included in these meetings and minutes provide a written record of staff views and preferences. SMT and Governors’ meetings have a ‘rolling agenda’, matched to the plan itself. This work is supported by SMT members discussing issues with individuals, an aspect of our work which we continue to seek to refine, along with increased involvement of our young people and their parents in this process.

What follows are some examples of the nuts and bolts of this approach.

- Linking to agreed PRSD objectives is essential, as is tailoring staff development to agreed priorities.
- 'Monitoring' has unhelpful associations, yet self-evaluation and careful self-scrutiny are essential. We emphasise constructive and inclusive discussions at various levels; openly and honestly addressing strengths of an approach or issues with less successful practice. Time for such discussion at departmental and interdepartmental level is invaluable, helps disseminate good practice and build consensus on standards of outcomes to be attained.
- Using internally-generated questionnaires and audits, augmented by externally-derived data such as value added analysis of 'A' Level results or independent survey of pupils', parents' and teachers' perceptions of the pastoral care service and standards of behaviour.
- Gathering data, not just to measure, but also to recognise and celebrate achievement and to identify areas for development. Heads of Department, at target setting interviews with the Principal, discuss raw examination results and value added data.
- Achieving IIP status and receiving an EFQM Excellence Award means the school's approach to leadership, management, and development planning, has been evaluated and affirmed by two reputable organisations. More pertinent, however, are the analysis and reflection integral to making application, the experience of external assessment, and the recommendations for further development in the findings.

It would be wrong to pretend planning, implementing and evaluating are seamless activities. Communication with staff, for example, can always be improved, as can efforts to include the pupils' voice. Effective planning enables us to build on strengths, to retain what we regard as the vital aspects of our work whilst implementing planned developments with confidence. Specific details and significant aspects of the school's approach will change but the effort is to promote and to reinterpret as appropriate, Ballymena Academy's ethos, culture, aims and practice. This is entirely in keeping with a familiar paradox: "If we want things to stay as they are, things will have to change."