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# Welcome

## Writing an Effective School Development Plan and Self-Improvement Document

What are the aims of the session:

- To review why we create these documents and discuss best practice in terms of their usage
- To utilise best practice methodology to simplify the processes you need to write both documents
- To enable you to share practice amongst yourselves
- To provide some examples of both wording and format in writing effective SDP and SEF documents

## School Development Planning(SDP or SIP)

What is it?

- 1) The school development planning process should fit naturally with, and complement, the school's ongoing quality assurance policies and practices.
- 2) The SDP is a strategic plan for improvement. It should bring together, in a clear and simple way, the school's priorities, the main measures it will take to raise standards, the resources dedicated to these, and the key outcomes and targets it intends to achieve.



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## **Whose document is it? Who is responsible for it?**

Article 13(3) of the 1998 Education Order places a duty on Boards of Governors, through the scheme of management, to prepare, and periodically revise, a SDP. In doing so, Boards of Governors are required to consult the head teacher and consider any guidance provided by the Department of Education, Education Authority (EA), and, in the case of Catholic/Church of England maintained schools, their local diocese, and also any inspection findings.



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## Why have a School Development Plan?

Professor David Hopkins, Professor Emeritus at the Institute of Education, University of London (2006) defined the purpose of the school improvement process as being:

*“... to improve the learning and achievement of all students and enhance the school’s capacity to manage continuous improvement. The focus is upon school level factors (e.g. leadership, planning, professional development) and classroom level factors (teaching, learning and student feedback). These two areas are united through a process of enquiry.”*



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The process helps a reflective school to:

- take ownership of monitoring and evaluating its own performance and to plan effectively for improvement
- gather information and evidence to review progress in terms of the whole-school experience as well as learner outcomes
- build up a picture of the quality of provision in the school over time – this will provide the school and its community (the stakeholders) with a measure of how well learners are performing and the standards being achieved
- identify good practice so that it can be shared throughout the school.
- The development plan maps out how issues identified during the self-evaluation phase are followed up.



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They should be a response to the following questions:

- What specific aspects of our work do we need to develop (priorities and intended outcomes)?
- How are we going to develop them (processes)?
- What resources do we need to achieve this (resources)?
- How long will it realistically take to achieve (timescale)?
- Who is going to lead and manage the achievement of each objective and the overall plan (responsibilities)?
- How will we know that we have achieved the plan (evaluation)?

## What does research tell us about effective school development plans?

**Many educators doubt the efficacy of school improvement plans:** According to a RAND survey of schools where SLT created the document; only 44% of teachers and 67% of principals believe school improvement plans change teaching practices. However, where all staff were engaged in the process; 62% of teachers and 81% of principals believed school improvement plans improve schools over a period of five years (Doss, et al., 2020).

**Teachers with more knowledge of their school's improvement plan were more likely to believe in its effectiveness:** The same RAND study found a significant disparity between how teachers felt about school improvement plans when they were familiar with the plan's major points vs. when they were not. See figure 1 (Doss, et al., 2020).

So what does this look like in graphic form:

## How teachers' knowledge of SIPs affects their belief in SIPs (data from Doss, et al., 2020)

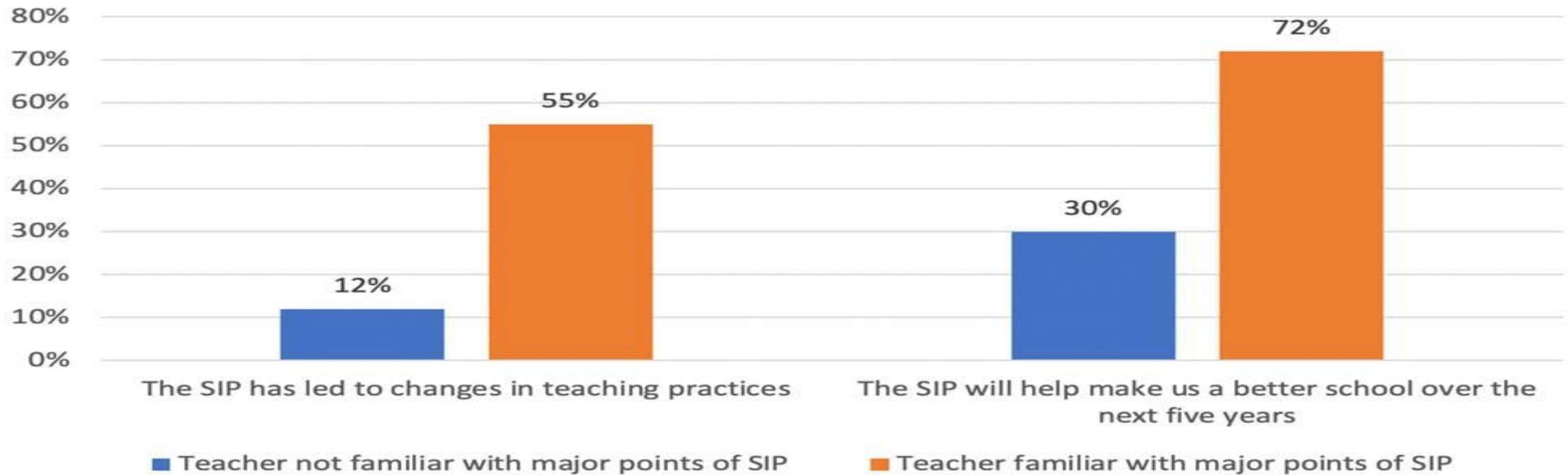


Figure 1. When asked if the school improvement plan would lead to changes in teacher practice, more teachers who were familiar with the major points of the plan agreed (55%) compared to those who agreed but were unfamiliar with the major points (12%). Likewise, when asked if the school improvement plan would make the school better over a period of five years, teachers were more likely to agree if they were familiar with the major points (72%) vs. those who were unfamiliar (30%).



## So what do some typical SDP goals look like?

At this stage I would like you to look at your SDP and some of the goals in them.



Are you looking at astronomical pupil achievement targets like a 30% increase in reading and English proficiency or 54% increase in math proficiency?

Or are you more reasonable, with targets like 4% and 6% increases in reading and English and maths proficiency, respectively.

**Regardless, however, it may well be that these targets are just a shot in the dark and not based on substantive goals, action steps, and strategies.**



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**I am sure you are asking, why is that last comment often true?**



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Experience through reading hundreds of SDPs, has shown that in many cases, but not all of course, key aspects are missing, such as the following:

Not enough of the work load is effectively distributed as part of other's responsibilities

There is insufficient weekly information on which to base progress and so make adjustments

Schools often lack robust, easily, manageable monitoring and tracking processing systems

There are insufficient classroom observations, learning walks & proactive feedback

There are too few continuous improvement meetings where feedback, new strategies etc. are discussed.



So what can you do? Well for a start, don't sacrifice your own wellbeing, be a distributive leader. Empower your team to take ownership of some of the school improvement goals.

For example: A section of your SDP might say, **'Through the weekly team meetings and learning walks, the maths lead will track progress data so that by the end of the school year at least 75% of pupils will have made at least 1 yrs. progress in maths.'** This approach gives a clear target, clear timescales, and names the lead person.



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However, this could be taken even further by stating, something like, **‘the maths lead will facilitate subject-area planning with all teachers during their planning periods, focusing on improving target/task alignment during each half term. During learning walks, the maths lead will measure progress using school data systems. They will specifically identify strengths and weaknesses of each lesson, learning targets and quality of the level of pupil work being produced and track whether the levels are in line with short term targets. Each teacher will add to the weekly data sets being compiled.’**

In order to ensure a manageable and replicated way to ensure a consistent approach to collecting information, the following methodology could be considered:

*Have a weekly coaching calendar for each lead, a common agenda for meetings, include examples of pupil’s work, a common methodology for learning walks, utilize the same data system and share information using common practices, ensure commonality of how information is used to ensure progress.*



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Ensure weekly classroom/learning observations/walks are carried out by the lead person.

The head must also carry out their own quality assurance processes to enable them to ensure progress is as required.

Leads should regularly attend training to ensure they are fully up to date.

Finally as a distributive head:-

use regular meetings or even daily briefings to keep staff abreast of what is happening and progress.

Use staff meetings/SLT meetings for update briefings and ensure all is on track.

## What to include in your SDP

My advice would be to create your School Development Plan around [Ofsted's four inspection categories](#):

1. Quality of education
2. Behaviour and attitudes
3. Personal development
4. Leadership and management

Under each category, map out your key objectives with actions and targets associated with each of them. Obviously a good model is to use SMART Targets (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-framed), which means making clear the associated costs, timescales and resourcing needed to achieve each of your objectives. It might also prove useful to consider other Ofsted considerations:

Intent

Implementation

Impact



## Possible example

Intent	Implementation	Lead Person	Evaluated when, by & how	Timescales	Resources/Costs	Success Criteria (Impact)	Evidence Sources	Rag Rating
<p><b>Improve the quality of maths teaching and learning across the school</b></p>	<p>Through the weekly team meetings and learning walks, the maths lead will track progress data.</p> <p>They will facilitate subject-area planning with all teachers during their planning periods, focusing on improving target/task alignment during each half term.</p> <p>Each teacher will add to the weekly data sets being compiled</p>	FA	<p>During learning walks, the maths lead, a member of the SLT and GB will measure progress using school data systems. They will specifically identify strengths and weaknesses of each lesson, learning targets and quality of the level of pupil work being produced and track whether the levels are in line with</p>	<p><b>Half termly from Sept. 22</b></p>	<p><b>1 day per half term of maths lead time,</b></p> <p><b>1 staff meeting per half term</b></p> <p><b>SLT time for observations etc.</b></p>	<p>By the end of the school year at least 75% of pupils will have made at least 1 yrs. progress in maths</p>	<p><b>Data sets, pupil work, pupil, staff and parent surveys,</b></p> <p><b>Staff planning and assessments, learning walk reports</b></p>	



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## School Self-Evaluation Document

### What is it?

A written summary of the school's self-evaluation process which enables a school to draw together the assessment of different areas of its work and draw conclusions about its overall effectiveness. It is a clear record of the success of the school's drive for continuous improvement and an honest account of its failures.

**It is the key document**, that should inform the school's approach to identifying priorities for the school improvement plan. Without effective self-evaluation there is no effective school development planning.

However, does a school have to complete a School Self-Evaluation form? The short answer is no you don't. However, the inspection framework/handbook clearly outline that during an inspection school leaders will have to demonstrate that they know their school and have evaluated all aspects of the school. There is no set way to writing a SEF but, ensure it is short, to the point, evaluative and provides key evidence to support judgements made. So what does research suggest a good SEF contains:-





Positive Points	Negative
They are evaluative, they assess and summarise the accuracy and value of the work done in each area of the school.	Are full of cliches and read like a set of values or a manifesto and have too many of the dreaded <b>'So what?'</b> statements
They should be honest and inclusive.	Are incomplete or, worse, dishonest, with a sense of 'What do you expect with kids like this?'
They should be short, sharp and to the point and take into account any inspection report recommendations – this is crucial.	Often they are too long, too wordy and/or vague. There is often too much detail, especially so around achievement. Ignore Ofsted recommendations. Often, far too much time is spent on actually writing them.
Good SEFs are well written.	Poorly presented as a whole.
Have a long term view i.e. at least 3 years.	Only focused on recent events/data.
Is consistent throughout, for example, what is said about progress in achievement mirrors what is said about it in teaching.	Have contradictory areas.
Give clear reasons for why things are why they are, or at least your best ideas.	Do not give reasons for why things are that way or vague ideas.



Take a synoptic view, evaluate the big picture as well as the component parts	Are too random, contain loads of detail with no concept of how it fits the whole picture.
Is evaluated and agreed collectively by and with all stakeholders.	Are virtually written in secret, no shared.
Evaluations are linked to good evidence bases at all levels which can be quantifiable where appropriate.	Are too descriptive: they tell you what the provision is, rather than how effective it is.
Are externally moderated through rigorous sampling and/or external examination i.e. SATs, etc.	Are entirely reliant on internal judgements and can not be compared accurately to external data etc.
Are crystal clear as to the school's judgements, why/how do they know and what are they going to do to improve even further.	Promise a lot but with no idea as to how, what the priorities are and/or even worse, lack understanding and demonstrate complacency about current standards.



### Examples of initial paragraphs for key areas

<p>Core subject areas have been greatly enhanced with clearly communicated, rigorous approaches to maths, reading and now writing have been introduced. These are consistent across the school with clear expectations for planning and quality assurances in place. <b>[see single action plan and planning resource file]</b></p>	<p>Quality of Education is good because there is a broad and balanced curriculum in place, teachers have good subject knowledge and reading is given a high priority. Outcomes are very good and children make accelerated progress, particularly in English and maths, by the time they leave KS2.</p>
<p>Mentoring staff new (1 ECT &amp; 2 NQTs in second year from 2021) and new staff to leadership role (continual challenge in 1 form entry school)</p>	<p>Pupils enjoy school, have positive attitudes to learning and behave well. Consequently, attendance is very good. (OFSTED, March 2018)</p>
<p>Alongside the vision, the curriculum promotes the school's values of creativity, bravery, respect and kindness. The values are celebrated weekly and discussed regularly in assemblies and circle time. <b>[see vision and curriculum policy]</b></p>	<p>The school has a clear vision, detailing 8 values, which have been selected by all school stakeholders, which are taught, developed and celebrated through our weekly achievement assemblies. These are enhanced further by our simple yet effective school motto <i>Work Hard &amp; Be Kind</i>.</p>



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So how do you begin writing a SEF?

Best practice is to carry out a rigorous and honest self-evaluation with all staff – asking what are our strengths and weaknesses – how do we know that is the case, can we prove it – work in a macro and micro manner.

Don't rely on just the school data – a dip in maths may be tempting use as a reason to say, 'maths in the school has dipped this year and so will be developed further next year.' Is it maths in general which is the problem or is it a very specific aspect or reason?

How have you as a school carried out a self-evaluation process? Was it really effective, did you really highlight the real issues?



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As a result of highly effective leadership, provision in the EYFS is outstanding as evidenced by the significant improvements in pupil outcomes over time.

Strengths include:

- The AHT for Early Years has an uncompromising and resolute drive for excellence, starting on initial entry to Nursery – this vision is shared by all members of the senior team and staff, which ensures consistency of approach and ethos.
- The curriculum is challenging and broad, built on the highest expectations and resourced appropriately. The expectation is a curriculum which excites, challenges and motivates children from Nursery onwards, leading to all children being engaged and developing a clear love for learning.
- Safeguarding is excellent and children learn and know how to keep themselves and their peers safe.
- Stakeholder engagement is far-reaching, and this has been highly instrumental in fostering positive relationships with parents, who now have a better understanding of how to help their children at home, which in turn has helped raised standards by over a further 3% above national in all areas.
- Assessment procedures track progress accurately and efficiently and this informs planning to support the needs of different children and ensures rapid ‘pick-up’ of those who lag behind or accelerate in their learning.
- High quality teaching has delivered outstanding outcomes for learners.



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## **Quality of Education: Good**

### **Strengths Areas for Development**

- The standard of teaching and learning across the school is good with teachers showing they have a deep knowledge of understanding of the subjects they teach (Triangulation June 2021 shows 98% of teaching is consistently good or better).
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and use well-crafted questions to deepen and reinforce pupils' learning and to spot pupils' misconceptions (Triangulation June 2021 shows average rates of progress are at least 4% above expected rates).
- Teachers use effective planning to help pupils learn well, this is checked by subject leaders on a weekly basis to ensure consistency across the school (Triangulation 2021; Planning checks 2021 shows teaching is linear and progressive).
- Teachers use questioning skilfully to further pupils' learning (Triangulation 2021 learning walks showed all pupils understood their learning).
- Feedback is given in line with the school's assessment policy and moves learning on (Book monitoring 2021).
- The curriculum has been further strengthened to ensure skills can be embedded over time (Knowledge and Skills Progressions 2021 shows previous gaps in learning have narrowed by an average of 8% across the curriculum).
- The teaching of phonics and ensuring all children are able to read fluently is a strength of the school (Triangulation 2021, Phonics screening 2020 shows all pupils are above national and/or achieved progress rates above expected).



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### **Intent:**

The learning needs of all pupils are met through 3-way differentiation across all curriculum areas.

All groups of learners are supported and challenged through the use of cut-away groups and split teaching.

Children have opportunities to deepen their learning through investigative and reasoning work.

Comprehension and vocabulary are a key part of the teaching of reading across the school.

Clear learning journeys build upon pupils' prior learning.

Pupils retain prior knowledge through the use of well-planned dashboards to re-visit prior learning.

Any pupils falling behind will be flagged through the use of watch lists which track progress and attainment closely.

Teachers are able to assess all areas of the curriculum confidently and can use exemplification folders to support this process.

### **Implementation:**

A three-stage approach will be adopted for each area of development with time being given to introduce, embed and sustain each of the approaches.

Staff meetings, high quality CPD and peer coaching will support staff in improving teaching, learning and outcomes.



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Finally:

Writing a good SEF really comes down to a simple formula:

State where you are – The curriculum is outstanding

Say why – because it enables all children to engage in a wide range of learning opportunities from core subjects to the world of work. It develops a love of learning which has resulted in pupils making well above expected rates of progress for the past 3 years.

Say what you intend to do next – To continue developing the curriculum further we intend to introduce a wide range of sporting qualifications, such as coaching awards to our older pupils.

Say how you will implement this – This will be done by commissioning a local sports coaching company who will provide the relevant expertise. The quality of which will be overseen by both the school and their senior personnel.