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FOREWORD

This booklet is a guidance document prepared in support of regulations made under Articles 13(3) and 90(3) of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 requiring Boards of Governors to prepare and maintain a school development plan for their school.

Support and Advice

Fundamental to the success of the development planning process is the ability of the school to self-evaluate against identified quality indicators. How a school sets about the process of self-evaluation is a matter for itself; however, a range of information and evaluation tools is available to help schools to review their provision, eg published statistics, research and in particular ‘Together Towards Improvement – A Process for Self-Evaluation’ (TTI) published recently by the Education and Training Inspectorate as well as a series of DVDs.

Other factors that will assist schools in the operation of the planning process include:

- a growing ability among teachers to use self-evaluation to monitor, evaluate and improve the nature and quality of curricular provision, the experiences of the pupils and the standards they attain;

- the enhanced development of staff, and especially leadership management training, which has led to a growing awareness among teachers of the factors which contribute to school effectiveness and improvement;

- the greater availability of information and data which schools can use to monitor, evaluate and improve the quality of their work;

- the increased use in schools of information and communication technology (ICT) hardware, software and support systems, such as Classroom 2000 (C2K) management information systems, to analyse the school’s performance in public examinations and other performance indicators of individual pupils or groups of pupils, and to compare these with other pupils in the school, and with local and national trends in performance;
In addition, schools may find it useful to refer to the Chief Inspector’s Report, ‘Evaluating Schools’, ‘Evaluating Pre-School Education’, ‘Evaluating Pastoral Care’, SETAQ, EFQM, IIP and/or the Charter Mark. At departmental/subject levels, schools could use ‘Evaluating Subjects’, ‘Improving Subjects’, and in the primary phase ‘Children and their Learning’. At an individual teacher level, ‘The Reflective Teacher’ could be used.

The Education and Library Board in which the school is located will, on request, support schools by way of advice and guidance on the preparation of a school development plan. In providing this service, Boards will be able to not only use the skills and expertise of their staff across a wide range of functions (e.g., curricular, financial, and property management) but also draw on their experience of working with other schools.

The Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) has provided a guidance booklet on School Development Planning that can be accessed at www.onlineccms.com. If requested to do so, officers of CCMS will provide advice and guidance on the production of a school development plan in Catholic maintained schools.

The Regional Training Unit is currently piloting an online software product called ‘School Centre’. This software provides online tools to support school development planning. In particular, it provides opportunities for all those in a school community to create the development plan, to develop subsequent action plans, and, significantly, to allow those tasked with taking forward specific actions to provide evidence and reports of progress which can then be shared with all those within the defined school community.

Finally, there is relevant guidance in the booklets on school development planning and target-setting in the primary and post-primary sectors which formed part of the School Improvement Programme ‘6-pack’. There are also some further case studies of how some schools set about the process of school development planning in the appendices of this booklet.

The Education and Training Inspectorate, as part of its inspection activity, will continue to assess the quality and operation of school development planning.
1. INTRODUCTION

What is school development planning?

The School Development Plan is primarily a working document for use by the school. It will be based on the school’s analysis of current levels of performance, its assessment of how current trends and future factors may impact on the school and set out priorities and targets for improvement for the period ahead.

1.1 An effective planning process is an essential feature of every successful organisation. In the case of schools, the process will involve:

- the confirmation of the school’s ethos, culture and aims;
- an assessment of the school’s current position, its strengths, areas for improving the quality of learning and teaching and the various factors which will influence the management and development of the school over the next 3 years;
- the anticipated level of resources and its management;
- what the school wants to achieve within a defined number of years, in most cases expressed in terms of quantifiable targets for future performance;
- how it intends to bring about these achievements; and
- when, and how, it will measure progress.

1.2 The legislation places a duty on the Board of Governors to prepare and from time to time revise the school development plan. While Governors may chose to delegate the preparation of the plan to the Principal, it is the Board of Governors that must formally approve the plan and in doing so their formal approval should be minuted. Where the Board of Governors prefers to undertake the preparation of the plan, they must consult with the Principal. The Board of Governors must also approve formally any subsequent revisions to the plan.
1.3 The regulations require the following to be included within the plan:

1. A statement of the ethos of the school.

2. A summary of the strategies in place for:
   
   (i) learning, teaching and assessment; and
   
   (ii) the promotion of pupils’ attendance, good behaviour and discipline.

3. An assessment of:
   
   (a) the nature and quality of:

   i. the general progress of pupils including in the case of schools other than nursery schools, the pupils’ work and the standards of their attainment;

   ii. the management, structures and responsibilities within the school;

   iii. the teaching provided by the school;

   iv. the arrangements for the professional development of staff;

   v. the curricular and extra curricular provision made for pupils;

   vi. the provision made for pupils with special educational needs;

   vii. the provision made for the pastoral care of pupils;

   viii. the strategies for promoting pupils’ attendance, good behaviour and discipline;

   ix. the arrangements for managing attendance and promotion of health and well-being of staff and pupils;
1.4 The key purpose of school development planning is to contribute to the continuous improvement of the quality of learning and teaching through a process of regular and ongoing planning, evaluation and review. It is important to stress that school
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development planning is not just about the curriculum, but includes all aspects of the school that contribute to improvement (e.g., ethos, equal opportunities, staff development, behaviour, buildings). In particular, school development planning should:

- promote school effectiveness and help ensure that all those involved in the planning process and delivery have a shared understanding of policies, procedures and practices within the school;
- provide a mechanism for the prioritisation and allocation of resources;
- improve the quality of learning and teaching;
- improve the quality of experiences of the pupils; and, most importantly,
- serve to raise the standards which the pupils attain.

1.5 The plan itself provides a framework for the Board of Governors, the Principal and the staff:

- to monitor and evaluate the school’s progress against identified success criteria;
- make informed decisions in matters such as expenditure, deployment of resources and use of time;
- harness the collective skills and talents of all the staff into a high-performing team;
- develop objectives and targets for the Principal and individual teachers in the context of the school’s Performance Review and Staff Development (PRSD) Scheme;
- in the same context, to identify priorities for the professional development of staff; and
1.6 The process of school development planning involves 4 key stages:-

**Stage 1**  The confirmation of the school’s ethos, culture and aims.

**Stage 2**  An audit of current provision and identification of areas for improvement.

**Stage 3**  Prioritisation for action and the implementation of development planning.

**Stage 4**  The determining of the arrangements for monitoring and the review of the plan in the light of that monitoring.

1.7 There are 2 fundamental features of successful development planning – first and foremost, the commitment to self-evaluation and improvement from those leading the organisation; and second, the use of effective consultation with, and the involvement of, the wider school community in drawing up and implementing the plan.

**Commitment by the Board of Governors and Principal**

1.8 Effective planning requires effective leadership from the Board of Governors and the Principal. It is essential that both demonstrate a strong commitment to the principle of school development planning and continuous improvement. They can do this through:

- being actively involved with, and engaged in, the process of improvement;

- understanding the process and the contribution required of Governors, management and members of staff;

- establishing and agreeing the processes for monitoring and review and ensuring that the arrangements put in place fulfil their function.
1.9 The production of a school development plan is not a task that can be undertaken by an individual working in isolation, irrespective of whether that person is a Governor, the Principal or a member of staff. It requires close involvement of all staff, particularly teaching staff, in the process and consultation with others, especially parents and pupils:

a. The inclusion of the school’s staff in both the planning process and its implementation is crucial to its success. If development planning is to lead to higher standards of pupil attainment and improvement in the quality of learning and teaching, staff must:

- understand the planning process;
- take ownership of the process and be involved at all stages;
- recognise that the focus is on the pupils’ attainments, progress and experiences, and how practice, not only within but also beyond the classroom, contributes to the improvement of both attainment and enjoyment of learning;
- engage in appropriate professional development;
- be prepared, if necessary, to change their approaches to learning and teaching.

b. Parents should be given an opportunity to contribute to the plan. This contribution can range across all aspects of school provision – the timing of the school day, school closures, communication, how parents can support learning strategies, the homework policy, the school’s policy on discipline and behaviour, and the active promotion of the health and well-being of their children.

c. Pupils, irrespective of age, will have likes/dislikes that will inform the plan positively, they will have their own views on, for example, after-school
provision, the organisation of their day, homework, uniform, lunch facilities. Older pupils can be expected also to have views on issues such as curricular choices, careers education and guidance and enrichment courses/activities. The quality and value of pupils' contribution to improving the life of the school is potentially very great, even among the younger children. It is dependent on the extent to which the Principal and staff are able to create opportunities and the climate for constructive and positive debate. Consultation can be organised in a variety of ways, such as:

- by speaking directly with the pupils;
- the establishment of a School Council;
- the discussion of a particular area as a class activity;
- the setting up of focus groups for the particular purpose; or
- the use of feedback sheets or questionnaires.

1.10 The regulations require that the school development plan covers a period of 3 years. Year 1 of the plan will be the most detailed, with targets, actions, timescales and responsibilities recorded. Future years will be higher level, focusing more on targets and actions to be taken forward in Years 2 and 3. This arrangement allows the plan to be rolled forward. Thus at the end of Year 1 progress on the plan will be reviewed and more detail provided on Year 2 of the original plan, since it now becomes Year 1. Year 3 of the original plan now becomes Year 2 and, once this has been updated, another set of high level actions and targets can be developed for what will now be the new Year 3.

1.11 It should not normally be necessary to conduct a full audit of provision every year – in most cases it will be sufficient to simply update any performance information and confirm that actions set out in the plan remain appropriate. However, a full audit should be undertaken at least once every 3 years as part of the process of revising the school development plan.
1.12 The regulations also require the Board of Governors to revise the school’s development plan –

a) no later than 3 years from the date on which it completed the preparation or last revision of the plan was completed by it; and

b) following an inspection of a school under Article 102 of the 1986 Order no later than 6 months from the date on which the report of such an inspection is published by the Department.

1.13 While the regulations set out the range of matters to be included in the development plan, these are not intended to limit the school, should there be other issues that it wishes to address. For example, schools may wish to incorporate the development of issues to address diversity, improve the extent to which the school library is used across the curriculum or develop outreach support.

1.14 A school development plan need not be an extensive document. Indeed, it has been found that the more extensive the plan, the less its value in influencing the day-to-day practice in the classroom. The school development plan should be a living document which every member of staff can and does use, routinely, as a reference point in how they develop, improve and carry out their work. It is the improvement in the quality of learning and teaching in the classroom and the pupils’ attainments, and all the learning and development experiences of the pupils in their charge which should lie at the heart of every school’s development plan.

2. **STAGE 1: SCHOOL ETHOS, CULTURE AND AIMS**

2.1 The plan should start with a clear statement of the school’s ethos and underpinning values, together with any distinctive characteristics. The strategic aims of the school will flow from these statements. This part of the plan will normally remain fairly constant but nevertheless requires review as part of the development planning process to ensure that the aims and values of the school are up to date and relevant.

2.2 Evidence from inspection, research and the experience of previous curricular initiatives have identified factors that make for a good school. These include:

- a positive ethos;
- effective leadership at all levels;
- committed teachers with an agreed vision for the school;
- realistically high expectations of behaviour and attainment among the teachers, the non-teaching staff, the pupils and their parents;
- a high quality of learning and teaching;
- a clear focus on the learning experiences of the pupils and the standards which they attain;
- a well-developed system for monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision;
- a culture of continuous improvement through effective self-evaluation and development planning; and
- an awareness of the need for staff to update their professional expertise through well-focused staff development reflecting the curricular and other needs of the school.
2.3 The Department would expect schools to have regard to these areas of evidence as they review performance, engage in the planning process and decide on priorities for action.

2.4 The documented plan should also include a brief summary of the strategies in place for:-

- learning, teaching and assessment; and
- the promotion of pupils’ attendance, good behaviour and discipline.
3. STAGE 2: AUDIT OF CURRENT PROVISION AND IDENTIFICATION OF KEY ISSUES

3.1 This stage involves a school in evaluating, in a constructively critical manner, the nature and quality of its provision across a wide range of areas, especially the standards attained by its pupils. As a minimum, this review must examine the areas set out in the regulations. In particular, in schools other than nursery schools, this exercise needs to involve an analysis of the performance of pupils, comparing:

- current performance, across the school and in each subject, with that of previous cohorts;
- the performance of the same cohort across different subjects; and
- current performance against the performance of pupils in schools of similar size and/or characteristics\(^2\).

3.2 In managing this stage it is important to strike a reasonable balance between allowing all interested parties an opportunity to make their contribution and the need to advance the process. Much depends on the individual school – in some cases it will be sufficient for the Principal to present an analysis to the Board of Governors as a first step to stimulate discussion as to where the school is succeeding and where it needs to improve. In other instances, it will be more beneficial to have staff and Governors engaged in the analysis itself.

3.3 Many internal and external factors will influence the effectiveness of provision within a school and, as such, need to be identified and their potential impact assessed.

\(^2\) Guidance may be found in the Department of Education circular, ‘Target-Setting and Benchmarking’, which is issued in June each year.
The Internal Environment

3.4 This aspect of the audit should include a review of the performance of the school by focusing on its effectiveness in terms of the learning and the experiences of its pupils. The school needs to address the following questions:

- how does our performance compare with that of other schools operating in similar circumstances?
- how does our present performance compare with the achievement of the school in previous years?
- in schools other than nursery schools, is there evidence that the pupils’ work and attainments in certain subjects/areas of study/key stages/year groups are better than others? If so, why?
- are some groups of pupils doing better than others? If so, why?
- how does the performance of boys compare with that of girls?

3.5 In schools other than nursery schools, it will involve:

- analysing the statistical and other data available to the school through the C2K management information system and other sources, such as the annual benchmarking data provided by the Department of Education. Evidence from published research can also be used. Of particular concern will be current performance in areas such as:
  - the levels attained by the pupils in key stage assessments;
  - the outcomes of standardised tests;
  - for post-primary schools, examination outcomes at GCSE, Occupational Studies, AVCE and GCE AS and A2 level or equivalent and other qualifications taken by pupils in the school; staying-on rates post-16; the pupils’ destinations at the end of Years 12 and 14;
  - attendance.
In nursery schools it is more difficult to quantify outcomes. Schools should use their assessment arrangements, including frequent observations of the children’s responses to play and other activities, in order to gain a clear overview of the progress made by individuals and groups of children. Although language, physical, and personal, social and emotional development may be of particular interest, good progress is important in all areas of young children’s development.

- the extent to which the current organisation and management of the school supports the delivery of the school’s priorities; this will include:
  - examining the current distribution of responsibilities and contact ratios;
  - assessing staffing levels, teaching and non-teaching;
  - assessing the attendance levels of teachers and other staff;
  - considering the degree of match between teachers’ qualifications and the subjects they teach;
- an assessment of the teaching provided by the school;
- an assessment of the contribution of non-teaching staff;
- review of the professional development of staff, teaching and non-teaching:
  - any evidence of need emerging, eg special needs, ICT, curriculum change, introduction of new qualifications;
  - any needs arising in the context of succession planning;
- review of curricular and extra curricular provision, asking questions such as:
  - does the curriculum meet the needs, stages of development and aspirations of pupils?
  - is there evidence of a change in demand for certain subjects?
School Development Planning

- to what extent is provision in line with strategies for literacy, numeracy and ICT?
- to what extent is the school able to adapt to curriculum change?
- in post-primary schools, what changes will be required in the coming 3-4 years to put the school in a position to offer the Entitlement Framework, and what timetable of action will be necessary to achieve this?
- what extra-curricular provision is available?
- is there scope for greater utilisation of resources such as the school library?
- how well is it supported? Is there a demand for any new developments?
- how can extra-curricular provision be used to raise standards of achievement and/or reinforce school work generally?

- review of the provision for those pupils with special educational needs, including:
  - the extent to which the school can be regarded as being inclusive;
  - the changing number of pupils on the Special Educational Needs Register;
  - the effectiveness of the measures to address special educational needs;
  - the evidence that there is early identification of those pupils with special educational needs and that such interventions are successful.

- consideration of pastoral care for pupils, including:
  - general support provided for pupils such as guidance and counselling and mentoring schemes;
  - the review of the school’s Child Protection procedures, with regular updates to all parents;
the reporting to parents on the progress of their child, and the work of the school.

- The strategies for promoting pupils’ attendance, good behaviour and discipline, including:
  - the attendance levels of pupils;
  - the behaviour of pupils;
  - the promotion of good behaviour, and the use of the school's disciplinary procedures;

- The arrangements for managing attendance and promotion of health and well-being of staff and pupils, including:
  - pupil and staff absence rates and arrangements to effect improvement;
  - work-life balance issues for staff;
  - the contribution made by the school to promoting healthy lifestyles, including, health education initiatives, physical education, school meals and links with the statutory and voluntary sectors.

- outlining any accommodation or equipment issues, and identifying actions which the school could take to address these;

- an assessment of recent enrolment trends and any changes in community housing or work patterns, and the implications for the level of resources likely to be available to the school. This should include:
  - in the case of nursery or primary schools, looking at the general population in the area, baptismal rates and planned housing changes; and,
  - in the case of post-primary schools, looking also at enrolments in feeder schools and staying on rates;
School Development Planning

- an assessment of the profile of the current enrolment, any trends in the last few years and likely future trends. This should include:
  - an assessment of any change in the numbers or percentage of children with particular support needs, eg children from disadvantaged backgrounds, children in care or at risk, children with special educational needs or children for whom English is an additional language;
  - in the case of post-primary schools, any evidence that pupils are choosing some curricular options in preference to others.

- encouraging the pupils and their parents to provide insights and information on important aspects of the school’s work. Their opinions on such issues as learning, teaching, standards, homework, extra-curricular activities and wider aspects of provision can provide an evidence base of the school’s strengths and areas for improvement.

- the school’s current financial position and what assumptions have been made for the future. This should include:
  - details of the school’s surplus or deficit;
  - the impact of strategies to bring the school’s expenditure into balance;
  - assumptions as regards future income levels and an assessment of the resources available for the planning period.

3.6 In monitoring the standards of pupils’ work, many schools routinely review their outcomes, and post-primary schools often focus in particular on examination outcomes. There is, however, also a need for schools to monitor and evaluate the learning, teaching, and other processes that help the pupils to achieve on a broad range of fronts. A review of such processes might include a consideration of:

- the quality of the pupils’ involvement in their learning;

- the expectations held by the teachers, the pupils and their parents, and how these influence the nature and quality of learning and teaching in the schools;
the effectiveness of leadership and management in promoting action to improve learning;

the school’s effectiveness in promoting the pupils’ personal and social development, including their self-esteem and self-confidence;

the degree to which teaching strategies address the needs of individual pupils;

the nature, quality and effectiveness of the school’s policy on assessment for learning, including procedures for marking for improvement in performance;

the account taken of assessment information as part of the teachers’ planning for learning;

the use made of homework as a means of reinforcing learning;

the effectiveness with which independent learning is promoted in the school;

the quality and effectiveness of the special educational needs provision;

the effectiveness of the teaching of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum;

the use made of ICT to enhance learning and teaching across the curriculum;

the extent to which the school is successful in engaging the parents in supporting their children’s learning; and

the school’s staff development policy, and the extent to which it ensures that teachers’ professional expertise is kept up-to-date.

The school should consider a combination of several of these areas in addressing an area for improvement within the school development plan.

3.7 There are, of course, many factors beyond the school that may affect the performance of pupils, such as the socio-economic background of the area. The
School needs to know how effective it has been in raising the performance of the pupils during their time in the school. To answer this question in schools other than nursery schools, a ‘value-added’ approach may be a useful complement to an analysis based on ‘raw’ examination data or assessment or test results.

3.8 A ‘value-added’ approach may involve using a measure of achievement on entry, and a comparable measure at the end of a given period (for example at the end of the key stage) to measure the value added by the school. Additionally, the school may measure ‘value added’ in qualitative terms which relate to personal and social development such as self-esteem, confidence or the ability to use initiative.

**The External Environment**

3.9 The school needs to be aware of a range of factors that may impact on its work. These will include:

- government policy and priorities related to education;
- local policies and their likely impact on the school;
- changes in the community served by the school. In addition to any population change these factors might include:
  - areas for collaboration with other schools, especially, for post-primary schools, in the context of ‘Entitled to Succeed’;
  - young families moving into the area, with a likely increase in demand for nursery provision, breakfast clubs or after-school provision;
  - for post-primary schools, new businesses in the area seeking certain skills;
  - scope for improved collaboration with other agencies or the community sector.
4. STAGE 3: PRIORITIES FOR ACTION AND IMPLEMENTATION PLANNING

4.1 Having identified, in a systematic manner, the school’s strengths, areas for improvement, challenges and opportunities, the next stage is to determine priorities for the future and decide how the work will be taken forward.

Determining Priorities

4.2 It is essential to remember that the ongoing work of the school must not be neglected in order to bring about change. Care should, therefore, be taken not to attempt to take forward too many major developments concurrently. The Board of Governors, Principal and staff should work together to determine the areas where current levels of performance need to be maintained, and those areas to be given priority for development or improvement.

4.3 In determining its priorities for action, the school needs to take full account of its financial position, including, importantly, making provision for any foreseeable expenditure that the Board of Governors is legally or contractually obliged to incur. If the school is in deficit, or if there are likely to be reduced income levels, then the school also needs to identify actions which may be necessary in order to ensure that the income and expenditure balance. A school with falling enrolments will often have no option but to reduce the number of teaching staff, if it is to contain expenditure within its budget. It is appreciated that this is a very difficult decision for a Board of Governors to take, especially when a school has been well served by committed and enthusiastic teachers, but experience shows that deferring such action often leads to even greater financial problems. Under LMS arrangements schools may apply to their area board for additional financial support in order to manage any downsizing.

4.4 In deciding on priorities for improvement the school might also wish to consider:

- previously identified strengths or areas for improvement;
- areas for improvement identified during an inspection;
areas relating to national or local initiatives; or

an area of particular interest to parents such as pastoral care.

Setting Targets

4.5 Target-setting has been a statutory requirement since 1998. All schools other than nursery schools, should therefore be familiar with the process of setting targets, expressed in pupil attainment terms, against which they can judge their own performance. The Department issues annual benchmarking information which primary and secondary schools can use to assess how their own performance relates to that of other schools of similar size and with similar levels of free school meals entitlement. Such data can inform the target-setting process. The new school development planning regulations embed target-setting formally within the school’s own development plan for improvement. Although nursery schools are not required to set targets for pupils’ achievement, they should use the process to help improve the quality of learning and teaching, the pupils’ learning experiences and the progress that they make.

4.6 The generally accepted mnemonic for objective and target-setting is SMART, ie targets should be:

- Specific - clearly expressed;
- Measureable – delivering an outcome which is quantifiable;
- Achievable – reasonable and realistic yet challenging;
- Relevant to the school’s values and priorities within its development plan;
- Timebound – aimed at a date by which the target should be achieved.

It is also essential that objectives and targets be:

- informed by an accurate evaluation of what is currently being achieved; and,
- affordable, in terms of human and other resources.
4.7 The targets set should first and foremost help to raise the quality of learning and teaching, the pupils’ learning experiences and the standards that they attain. The capabilities of the pupils should not be underestimated, nor should unrealistic targets be set which have little likelihood of success. The targets should lead to real improvements in performance, while taking account of what can reasonably be expected in the timescale set.

4.8 The Education (Target-Setting in Schools) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1998 state that the measures of performance, or targets that schools must include are as follows:

1. **Primary Schools**

   The measures of performance in respect of which targets must be set by the Board of Governors of a primary school are as follows:

   a) the proportion of pupils which should be achieving Level 2 (or above) of the Northern Ireland Curriculum, in English and mathematics (in the case of an Irish speaking school, in Irish and mathematics) at the end of Key Stage 1;

   b) the proportion of pupils which should be achieving Level 3 (or above) of the Northern Ireland Curriculum, in English and mathematics (in the case of an Irish speaking school, in Irish and mathematics) at the end of Key Stage 1;

   c) the proportion of pupils which should be achieving Level 4 (or above) of the Northern Ireland Curriculum, in English and mathematics (in the case of an Irish speaking school, in Irish and mathematics) at the end of Key Stage 2;

   d) the proportion of pupils which should be achieving Level 5 (or above) of the Northern Ireland Curriculum, in English and mathematics (in the case of an Irish speaking school, in Irish and mathematics) at the end of Key Stage 2.

2. **Post-Primary Schools**

   The measures of performance in respect of which targets must be set by the Board of Governors of a secondary school (including grammar school) are as follows:
Key Stage 3 Performance

a) the proportion of pupils which should be achieving Level 5 (or above) of the Northern Ireland Curriculum, in English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 3;

b) the proportion of pupils achieving Level 6 (or above) of the Northern Ireland Curriculum, in English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 3.

Performance in Examinations

In the case of a secondary school which is not a grammar school:-

a) the proportion of Year 12 pupils which should be achieving:-

   i. 1 or more GCSEs, or an equivalent vocational qualification;

   ii. 5 or more GCSEs at grades A*-G, or Foundation GNVQ or NVQ level 1;

   iii. 5 or more GCSEs at grades A*-G, or Foundation GNVQ or NVQ level 2.

b) the proportion of Year 14 pupils which should be achieving 2 or more GCE A levels at grades A-E or equivalent, or Advanced GNVQ or NVQ level 3.

In the case of a grammar school:-

a) the proportion of Year 12 pupils which should be achieving 5 or more GCSEs at grades A*-C or Intermediate GNVQ or NVQ level 2;

b) the proportion of Year 14 pupils which should be achieving:-

   i. 2 or more GCE A levels at grades A-E or Advanced GNVQ or NVQ level 3;

   ii. 3 or more GCE A levels at Grades A-C.
4.8 The targets should reflect the areas for improvement identified as part of the school development planning process. Every target should have clear steps as to how the school is going to progress towards achieving it. In a 3-Year school development plan, targets for Years 2 and 3 should be supported by milestone targets in Years 1 and 2 respectively.

4.9 It is essential that all anticipated costs of delivering the school development plan, including the costs associated with specific actions including teacher time, are identified accurately, and that a judgement is made regarding the implications which approval may have for the overall financial position of the school.

4.10 Target-Setting is addressed more fully in the booklets *Target-Setting in Primary Schools* and *Target-Setting in Post-Primary Schools* in the School Improvement series (1998), DENI Circular 1998/24 and *Education (Target-Setting in Schools) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1998* and DE Circulars 2005/15 (Primary), 2005/16 (Post-Primary) *Target-Setting and Benchmarking* June 2005 (revised and reissued annually).

**Planning Implementation**

4.11 Integral to the school development plan is an action plan which supports the targets and sets out clearly the actions required to achieve them. Action plans are therefore the formal expression of a school’s strategies for improvement. It is especially important that, once created, appropriate attention is given to ensure that they are implemented effectively and efficiently.

4.12 An action plan should include clear statements of the intended improvements in learning, as well as:

- the aspects which have been identified for development;

- the action to be taken to effect the improvement;

- the staff who will be involved;

- the resources required, including those for staff development needs;
School Development Planning

- the time the process will take;
- the success criteria to be used to evaluate improvement; and
- the strategies for monitoring and evaluating the progress made.

4.13 It is important that the Governors, the Principal and all staff are aware of, and accept, the implications that a proposed action plan might have for the way that the school is organised and that the classroom practice is conducted. Where teaching and learning is the focus of the proposed action plan it is important that a distinction is made between improvements in the classroom experiences of the pupils and the improvements expected in the standard of their work.

4.14 Action planning will require the school to:

- have realistic intentions;
- be clear on its strategies and the impact they will have on the staff and the pupils;
- select appropriate staff to provide leadership for the implementation of each aspect of the action plan;
- ensure the availability of the resources, training and other requirements needed to implement the action plan successfully;
- secure and maintain the commitment of the staff involved;
- have clear targets and success criteria against which intended improvements can be measured; and
- make changes in learning and teaching and school approaches and procedures to address identified priorities.

4.15 An action plan can be drafted once decisions have been made on the priorities. Appendices 1 and 2 set out a possible format for developing priorities and
formulating an action plan, but schools should feel free to customise the templates to meet their particular needs.

4.16 The Board of Governors should formally minute the adoption of the agreed action plan and, when doing so, establish the frequency of progress reporting, including the performance criteria against which they wish to monitor progress. At least annually, these performance criteria should include measures of pupil attainment. Boards of Governors may find it useful to prepare a checklist setting out the key elements of the process – a model checklist, based largely on one devised by the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools, is included at Appendix 3. Schools should feel free to develop their own checklists to meet their own particular requirements.
5. STAGE 4: IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW

5.1 In many respects the monitoring and the review of the implementation of the action plan is the most important stage. Many organisations prepare good plans but fail to implement them effectively. It is vital that once the action plan is agreed, arrangements are put in place to track progress. These arrangements will differ from school to school.

5.2 In deciding on the frequency of reporting progress, the Board of Governors must take account of the relative priority of the activity. The generally accepted approach would be to agree monthly, termly or annual reports, with the proviso that the Principal alerts the governors if there is substantial slippage on any activity, or if performance changes dramatically for better or worse. In larger schools there may be detailed reporting to a Committee of the Board of Governors and higher-level reporting to the Board itself.

5.3 These procedures help to emphasise that the school’s development plan belongs to the Board of Governors and the staff and that it has a real and important purpose in driving continued improvement in the quality of teaching and learning. The school development plan is the central document that underpins the work of the school and drives it forward.

5.4 The Principal will need to have internal arrangements in place to monitor progress so that he or she is in a position to report to the Board of Governors. As a minimum:

- all goals, objectives, strategies and measures outlined in the school development plan should be understood by teachers and, where appropriate, other staff;

- all staff should be aware of their responsibilities as specified in the school development plan;

- the Senior Management Team should prepare and regularly review progress reports against actions; and
in larger schools, Heads of Department and other managers should supervise completion of tasks assigned to named individuals.

5.5 At the end of the summer term, at minimum, the Principal should present to the Board of Governors a review of the year, setting out the school's performance against each target; highlighting areas of good performance and also those where performance fell short of the planned target. Any “lessons learned” should be recorded and fed into the preparation of the plan for the incoming year.

Example: Once a term the Principal provides the Board of Governors with a Monitoring Report with all the information they need to maintain a clear picture of how the school is progressing. Most reports go to the full Board of Governors, but much of the more detailed work is done in committees, particularly Curriculum, Premises and Finance and Personnel.

The Principal’s termly Monitoring Report offers simple headline facts in a number of areas including attendance, curriculum developments, pupil performance and summary reports from all heads of departments covering all areas of the curriculum. At year end the report also includes a section on staff performance management and staff development, and an overview assessment of progress across the development plan over the previous year.
6. CONCLUSION

6.1 The processes of self-evaluation, action planning and target-setting are essential and interrelated elements in the development of a school as it sets about improving standards. Taken forward with commitment and application by the Board of Governors and staff as a whole, the school development plan can have a significant impact on:

- the experiences of the pupils;
- the quality of learning and teaching; and, most importantly,
- the standards which the pupils attain.

It can also improve:

- the motivation and morale of all staff; and
- the ethos of the school.

6.2 Evidence from inspection indicates that the development plans in many schools are improving in quality and increasing in sophistication year on year. Boards of Governors, management and teachers are growing in confidence and competence in the process, and, in the most successful schools, there is evident improvement in all areas of the school’s provision.

6.3 The Education (School Development Plans) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005 apply to all school development plans prepared after 1 September 2005. They state that a school development plan shall be published by –

(a) a copy of the plan being provided for each member of the Board of Governors of the school, the principal of the school and each of the teaching and non-teaching staff of the school;

(b) a copy of the plan being provided for the board for the area in which the school is situated and (in the case of Catholic maintained schools) the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools; and
(c) a copy of the plan being made available on request at all reasonable times, free of charge, by any person.

6.4 The case studies included in this guidance indicate how some schools have approached some aspects of the development planning process. The Department of Education wishes to record its thanks to all the schools who kindly agreed to share their experiences as case studies in this booklet, and to colleagues in the Education and Library Boards, the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools and the Regional Training Unit who contributed to its preparation.
APPENDICES
### School Development Planning

(Note: This is a sample layout and schools should feel free to customise to meet their particular needs)

#### Determining Priorities

Identify areas for improvement, you may wish to consider:
- Previously identified areas for improvement
- Areas identified as a result of an inspection
- Areas relating to national or local initiatives
- An area of particular interest to parents such as pastoral care

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Areas for Improvement in order of priority</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Cost Implications</th>
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</table>
### School Development Planning

**School:** 
____________________________________________________________________________

**Action plan for the period:** 
____________________________________________________________________________

**Area/Issue identified for development:** 
____________________________________________________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current level of performance/where are we now?</th>
<th>Action to be taken to effect the improvement</th>
<th>Who is to take the lead &amp; which other staff will be involved?</th>
<th>Resources required, including staff development needs</th>
<th>Timescale</th>
<th>SMART targets &amp; success criteria against which intended improvements can be measured</th>
<th>Strategies for monitoring and evaluating the progress made</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>Year 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Note: This is a sample layout and schools should feel free to customise to meet their particular needs.)
## Checklist for Boards of Governors Involved in the School Development Planning Process

(Note: This is a sample layout and schools should feel free to customise to meet their particular needs)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
1. Has the guidance for devising a school development plan been followed? |     |    |
2. Does the plan state the general ethos of the school? |     |    |
3. Have the schools strategies for learning, teaching and assessment and the promotion of pupils’ attendance, good behaviour and discipline been summarised? |     |    |
4. Has a whole school audit or review taken place? |     |    |
5. Has the audit identified strengths and key areas for improvement? |     |    |
6. Have all the appropriate people been consulted? |     |    |
7. Have priorities been determined and agreed? |     |    |
8. Have monitoring and evaluating arrangements been made for the Board of Governors? |     |    |
9. Has the Board of Governors delegated monitoring and evaluating responsibilities to its relevant sub-committees? |     |    |
10. Is the progress of the school development plan included on the agenda of each meeting of the Board of Governors? |     |    |
11. Has the Board of Governors agreed the school development plan for the forthcoming school year and minuted this decision? |     |    |
12. Do all members of the Board of Governors have a copy of the school development plan? |     |    |
13. Has an approved copy of the school development plan been sent to Education and Library Board (and if appropriate CCMS)? |     |    |
Glossary of Terms

**School Development Plan**
A school development plan is a staged and coherent strategy which outlines the:

- areas for improvement;
- the action to be taken;
- the staff involved;
- the timescales;
- resources required including costings; and
- monitoring and evaluation strategies.

**Success Criteria**
The measures of evidence to be used to ascertain whether or not the intended learning outcomes have been achieved.

**Self-Evaluation**
Self-evaluation is a process through which an individual teacher, group of staff, staff as a whole and senior management reflect on the quality of learning and teaching to identify strengths and areas for improvement.

**School Development Planning**
A process whereby a school reviews:

- the quality of provision;
- identifies strengths and areas for improvement;
- prioritises areas for improvement;
- plans and implements action to address priorities; and
- monitors and evaluates the outcomes.
School Development Planning

**Action Plan**

The action the school is going to take to achieve its identified priorities for improvement. The action plan needs to be agreed by all involved, and should set out clearly the:

- current level of performance;
- action to be taken to effect the improvement;
- staff who will be involved;
- resources required, including staff development needs;
- time the process will take;
- SMART targets & success criteria against which intended improvements can be measured;
- strategies for monitoring and evaluating the progress made.

**Monitoring / Evaluating**

The systematic and manageable procedures which enable the staff to make valid judgements about the quality of the school’s provision.

**Benchmarking**

Benchmarking is a process which enables schools to compare/measure their performance/quality against other organisations. DE provides benchmarking data each year.

**Attainment**

The standards achieved by the pupils in both qualitative and quantative terms.
### Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AVCE</td>
<td>Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2K</td>
<td>Classroom 2000 (hardware, software and support systems)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DE</td>
<td>Department of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DENI</td>
<td>Department of Education Northern Ireland (now DE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ETI</td>
<td>Education and Training Inspectorate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFQM</td>
<td>European Foundation for Quality Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCE AS</td>
<td>General Certificate of Education - Advanced Subsidiary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCSE</td>
<td>General Certificate of Secondary Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GNVQ</td>
<td>(General) National Vocational Qualification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information and Communication Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IIP</td>
<td>Investors in People</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NVQ</td>
<td>National Vocational Qualification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRSD</td>
<td>Performance Review and Staff Development Scheme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDP</td>
<td>School Development Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SETAQ</td>
<td>Self-Evaluation Through Attitude Questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TTI</td>
<td>Together Towards Improvement – A Process for Self Evaluation (ETI published document)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CASE STUDIES

Brookfield Special School

A case study using the self-evaluation process to influence the school development plan.

Brookfield is a controlled co-educational primary school for pupils from the Greater Lisburn Area who have moderate learning difficulties.

Central to the educational philosophy of Brookfield is the belief that pupils should acquire skills needed to live an active, varied and independent life.

Through the School Development Plan we aim to provide a stimulating professional learning community where initiative, co-operation and participation by staff in the establishment and maintenance of appropriate school policies is valued and encouraged.

In Brookfield the School Development Plan is a working process, not a document to be written, filed and reviewed once a year. Self-evaluation keeps the process of development proactive and enables us to improve the nature and quality of our curricular and pastoral care provision.

Process

- All staff and the Board of Governors are involved annually in the evaluation of the current year’s development plan and in setting the priority areas for the following academic year. In consultation with officers from SEELB, any CASS support is identified.
Action plans are written, containing objectives and a timescale for expected outcomes.

Responsibility for the achievement of the objectives is assigned to appropriate members of staff.

A team of teachers meets regularly to continuously evaluate progress.

A timetable of meetings is compiled for each term. Time for additional development work is allocated to Baker and Exceptional Closure Days.

Parents are informed of school developments through the Annual Governor’s Report, the Principal’s Termly Newsletters and updates to the school website.

The School Management Team monitors the progress of the School Development Plan.

**An Area of Focus Identified for Development During 2002-2003: Autism**

Teaching children with ASD requires teachers to re-think their teaching methods. It was necessary to develop the use of structured teaching methods and visual communication systems. We wanted to find ways to best support these children and their parents.

**Aim:** *To create an environment within which children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) achieve their fullest potential.*

**Objectives:**

- To develop staff expertise in structured teaching and to keep staff abreast of current developments in the field of autism.

- To structure the learning environment appropriately in each classroom.

- To adopt an eclectic approach using a variety of strategies such as social stories, TEACCH, and behaviour modification.
To create a baseline knowledge of pupils’ abilities and skills.

To design and implement an individual profile for each child with ASD.

To establish a parent support group.

**What we achieved:**

We trained staff on an in-house programme and used the SEELB/Down Lisburn Trust TEACCH courses to increase their knowledge of autism and so best help the children access the curriculum. We introduced new structures and strategies into all classrooms, including appropriate interventions to meet individual needs. A profile was designed and completed for each child with ASD. These profiles provided detailed information on each child’s strengths, weaknesses, needs and progress. A parent support group was established and met regularly to discuss relevant issues. We provided information to parents and staff through meetings, newsletters and the school website.

**Further Developments:**

In moving these developments forward we adopted a shared responsibility approach and so established closer links with parents, which we have maintained. The teachers involved were enthusiastic and grew in self-confidence and competence. This cascaded to other members of staff and so the work was viewed as being exciting and relevant, not as something extra and burdensome. Some of those involved have moved on from Brookfield to share their expertise as ASD Support Teachers and others have joined the team as we continue to improve our skills.

For the past 2 years we have been running a social skills training programme for our year 7 pupils. This has heightened our awareness of the great need to develop the social skills of all our pupils.

Our parent support group continues and we invite speakers to share their expertise on such subjects as managing children’s behaviour at home.

We have shared our practice with groups of teachers from mainstream schools and would like to extend this further.
How Self-Evaluation Has Influenced the School Development Plan

We feel that self-evaluation has been the starting point for all our new and extended planning. It has helped us to take control of the way forward and to adopt shared ownership of our developments. In our evaluations we try to be objective and methodical, using action plans to identify areas of responsibility and targets and timescales to keep the achievement of those targets realistic.

Of course we have made mistakes along the way, but we continue to review and make the necessary adjustments to plans and can therefore look back at our achievements and celebrate our successes. We acknowledge that as teachers we are also learners and must always strive to develop our skills so that we are continuously improving the standards of teaching and learning at Brookfield.

This reflects our school motto: ‘Caring, Striving, Learning Together’.
Magherafelt Nursery School

A case study which reflects the school’s commitment to reflect critically on current practice in order to improve on previous best.

Stage 1 – Review & Assessment

Each June teaching staff complete a curriculum review document to identify curricular areas that they feel could be further enhanced. These are then discussed with all staff – teachers and nursery assistants, during Baker days in August.

Stage 2 – Establish Priorities and set Targets

In August staff quickly reached a consensus that a priority issue was to undertake a revision of our current child assessment techniques currently used to assess and record pupil progress, into one system that was coherent and concise with clear procedures to monitor and evaluate each of the 156 children’s progress equitably throughout each term of the nursery school year. Staff also felt that a key issue within this to be addressed were new follow-up procedures for children with additional/special needs. Magherafelt Nursery School has an experienced staff, so any reviewed system needed to introduce new challenges, yet at the same time, be realistic and time efficient given that each teacher taught for 5 hours a day and was responsible for 2 classes of 52 children daily.

Staff concluded that the targets of the new system needed to be:

- Time efficient and straightforward to complete.
- Focus on teaching and learning opportunities at the pre-school level.
- Easily trainable (as this would include students on training).
- Capable of enhancing staff awareness about the pre-school child’s cognitive and emotional development.
- Able to inform the staff immediately of the nature of a child’s difficulties.
This information would also be shared with parents and outside agencies.

Include strategies for intervention with children identified with additional needs.

**Stage 3 – Action Planning & Implementation**

It was agreed that staff would use an exceptional closure day to allow uninterrupted time to focus on the main issues, review current literature and research, set targets, and prepare exemplars for pupil assessment.

As preparation for the first closure, the Principal attended an Intensive Seminar on Experiential Education held in England in early October. She then personalised a training pack on child assessment opportunities for Magherafelt Nursery School staff based on the course materials.

The Exceptional closure day was used to:-

a. Familiarise all staff with the key concepts and purposes of child assessment drawing on recent research and literature.

b. Develop a differentiated view of instruments and strategies available for use in preschool assessment and discuss their viability in our school.

c. Agree which strategies would be used and when during the school year.

d. Personalise our own performances for use over the 3 terms.

Review meetings were held twice termly. This provided an opportunity for staff feedback and allowed us to make revisions as we worked out way thorough the assessment proformas during the first year. A further exceptional closure was used to assess critically the impact that these revised assessment procedures was having on the child, teacher and the learning environment. All staff attended a one-day in-service course linked to the new assessment techniques used. A Baker day was used later the following August to evaluate the assessment.
Using the exceptional closures and Baker days as school based training days, allowed all staff the luxury of having a period of uninterrupted time, not only for dissemination of background information and research, but equally importantly to encourage discussion between staff allowing them time to become thoroughly familiar with the rationale behind the revised assessment procedures as well as opportunities to measure success. This brought us naturally into a new cycle of review, target setting and action planning for the new school year.

The extent to which expected outcomes were realised

Over the first year, a number of important outcomes were immediately realised:-

- The entire process of revising current assessment procedures, the ensuring discussion, compilation of new strategies and pro-formas allowed staff to talk with confidence and apply cognitive theories to describe children’s stages of development in their assessments.

- The new approach to class and individual child screenings, as assessment strategies, were quickly established as a useful tool for teachers and Nursery Assistant.

- There was further improvement in the quality of planned learning experiences available in the nursery classrooms as staff matched developmental level with resources and activities.

- Above all, the enthusiastic responses of the children were not only seen to empower themselves, but also gave staff a great sense of professional and personal satisfaction and after all, isn’t that what teaching is all about?
Antrim Primary School

Raising Standards in Literacy

This case study is based on ongoing self-evaluation, designed to inform and plan for school improvement, the Literacy Co-ordinator headed an audit into the quality of teaching and learning within Literacy.

Involved in audit:-  Principal and 24 teaching staff
Governors
Parent Representatives
Pupil Representatives
NEELB English Advisory Team
Reading Recovery Advisor

Included in audit:-  Open discussion
Samples of pupil work P1 – P7
Teacher planning
School Scheme
Samples of resources P1 – P7
NFER Progress in English results
Key Stage results
Benchmark statistics from DE

Issues raised:-  Development of standards in reading and writing
Further development of teaching methods and strategies
Quality of Literacy resources P1 – P7
Quality of Literacy resources for special needs pupils
Integration of ICT within Literacy
Use of Standardised Assessment results
Central Library provision

Following dissemination a number of foci were agreed, prioritised, costed and included in a 2 year Action Plan within the School Development Plan.
School Development Planning

**Foci:**

- Provision of a new whole school Literacy Scheme
  - Development of Shared and Guided Reading to include:
    - a) use of Big Books to address different strategies, eg prediction, expression;
    - b) availability of fiction and non-fiction in both Big Book and guided reading format;
    - c) focus on boys by increasing provision of non-fiction and use of male role models;
    - d) wide range of reading situations within classrooms environment e.g. captions, labels;
    - e) more resources to provide variety of text.

- Review and development of structured novel scheme P4-7.
  - Development of independent and extended writing opportunities to include:
    - (a) writing for purpose and audience;
    - (b) writing forms;
    - (c) modelled writing;
    - (d) secretarial aspects (in particular spelling);
    - (e) structured use of high frequency words.

- Development of ICT to support Literacy.
Use of Assessment results to identify weaknesses and guide planning.

**Year Group and Key Stage Targets** were set and reviewed annually – monitored and supported by Key Stage Co-ordinators and Senior Management Team.

**Staff Development needs** were identified and requests were made to the CASS Team at NEELB. Directed Time, Baker and Exceptional Closure Days were utilised.

**Communication** - Literacy became a regular agenda item at Staff and Governors meetings, parents were kept informed of developments through talks and News Sheets and focused Literacy displays of work highlighted the priority we were giving to this area.

**Costings**

1. Governors earmarked funding within the School Budget for additional/new resources and staff development.

2. The PTA organised fund raising events.

3. A request was made to NEELB re improved accommodation for central Library provision.

At the end of Year 2 the School accepted an invitation by NEELB to enter Cohort 2 of the Literacy Strategy.

Cohort 2 was linked with our action plan and provided:-

- Additional financial support for resources.

- Further CASS INSET for all staff to develop teaching strategies in:
  - Early Years Reading
  - Writing
  - Teaching the novel
  - Non-Fiction
  - Oral and written language
School Development Planning

- Opportunity to identify learning outcomes.
- Improved intervention strategies for lower and higher achieving pupils.
- Opportunity to revise the literacy scheme and to identify progression in more detail.
- Increased awareness in the use of ICT to support Literacy.
- Further development of the role of co-ordinator in monitoring and evaluating.

An assimilation of reviews and evaluations carried out over the 4 years has concluded that:-

- Standards of reading improved.
- New resources and teaching strategies raised levels of satisfaction amongst staff, pupils and parents.
- Pupil motivation for, and confidence in, writing tasks increased.
- Literacy planning has become an integral part of the Learning and Teaching process.
- Key Stage and Standardised results show improvement.

Following Cohort 2 Development the school was given notice of a Focus Inspection. The choice of English or Mathematics gave staff and Governors the opportunity to avail of external assessment and evaluation of the school’s developments in Literacy.

The Inspection Team endorsed the School’s self-evaluation that one of the school’s significant strengths was the progress achieved in English/Literacy.

Recent addition to accommodation has resulted in the provision of a central library resource room. This has now been furnished and stocked and has proved to be an excellent support in the development of all curriculum areas including literacy.

Further developments of literacy will be planned in light of new curriculum recommendations from CCEA.
St Luke’s Primary School, Twinbrook

A case study on a whole school audit, focusing on identifying strengths and areas for further development, which would be presented on a 3 year school development plan.

The newly appointed Principal in position for 6 months initiated a whole school self-evaluation audit with the full involvement of all staff.

The process we undertook was in 5 stages:

1. reviewing current practice;
2. identifying and prioritising areas for improvement;
3. action planning;
4. implementation;
5. evaluation.

School-Based Self-Review

Stages 1 and 2  Reviewing current practice and identifying and prioritising areas for improvement

Over a 6-month period the staff undertook a school-based self-review. Every curriculum co-ordinator was facilitated through class release and effective use of directed time to become more fully informed about the curricular, staff development and resource needs for each subject. Co-ordinators used questionnaires, one-to-one discussions, year group and key stage meetings and first hand evidence including children’s work, bench marking and the previous inspection report, to audit the strengths and weaknesses within each subject and to identify possible areas for further development.
With a more informed knowledge, each subject co-ordinator gave a synopsis of how well their subject was doing in a series of full staff meetings. Co-ordinators also produced a full report on their subject, which was disseminated to all teachers. Following this period of feedback all teachers were divided into 4 groups and over 2 full staff development days each group identified the strengths and areas needing further development in each of the following areas:

- curriculum;
- staff;
- Governors;
- parents;
- school and community;
- school management/organisation;
- building;
- environment;
- resources for learning.

Although SMT was represented in each of the 4 groups, the Principal invited middle managers to take the lead in each group and to take the responsibility of focusing discussion. Prompts were provided within each area to assist with this process, as outlined in the SEELB school audit manual. SMT met with group leaders prior to the 2 staff development days to discuss the format of the audit days and their role in guiding staff through discussion to identify strengths and areas for development.

Following discussion, all groups presented 3 priorities in each of the above areas. Emerging issues identified by each group were collated, and over 2 further meetings, staff agreed on the priority of ICT with a specific focus of information handling. Alongside ICT, ancillary matters were also highlighted to be addressed in the forthcoming years.
All other emerging issues identified in the school audit were further prioritised for years 2 and 3 and presented on a school development plan.

**Action Planning**

**Stage 3  Addressing the main priority area of ICT - Information Handling**

An ICT team was established and with the assistance of an SEELB ICT advisory officer began the action planning process. The team re-examined the ICT audit report and revised the expectation and requirements of the programme of work for information handling. A baseline reference point from the ICT audit was established and specific objectives were set to cover the school year. *From the outset, success criteria and monitoring and evaluating strategies were established and agreed with the full teaching staff as outlined in the table below.*

With expectations clear, the ICT team detailed the necessary actions to be taken, the length of time and resources needed before the completed action plan was presented and agreed with staff and Governors.

In the summary the action plan succinctly outlined:

- the specific objectives/targets and when we hoped to meet these targets;
- our baseline reference point;
- success criteria with a timescale;
- actions (with dates) to be taken in order to reach our targets;
- monitoring arrangements with a timescale;
- resources/personnel;
Support required;

Evaluation strategies.

Please see page 33 for action plan.

**Implementation**

**Stage 4  Achieving the Agreed Targets**

With the action plan in place and the specific objectives and actions agreed by staff it was important that the engagement and commitment of the staff was sustained.

Accordingly:

- The necessary resources were ordered in the third term in readiness for the implementation of the action plan at the start of the academic year;

- The Principal and SMT organised a directed time grid in collaboration with staff, outlining dates, times and main purpose of meetings which kept the main school priority a feature and focus of key stage and whole staff meetings;

- The main item on all staff meeting agendas was entitled “update of school development plan” with the ICT team given the opportunity of keeping staff fully informed of progress made, and seeking feedback and evaluation of progress to date;

- 2 staff development days were organised in the autumn term to give the ICT team the opportunity of familiarising staff with the relevant information handling activities appropriate to each year group, and giving time to staff to explore the activities themselves before being expected to use them in the classroom;

- Key stage cover enabled the ICT team to meet on a weekly basis and plan activities for in-class support and draft a range of activities appropriate to each level for key stage and year group meetings;
resources were utilised to deploy 2 members of the ICT team to work in class (4 days per term) to support teachers with the new software and to work closely with children, monitoring their progression in line with the draft plan of activities;

- at an early stage in the process, teachers were invited to bring selected sample of children’s work to key stage meetings to share ideas and discuss good practice before more formal first-hand evidence of pupils’ work was requested form each teacher for monitoring purposes.

**Evaluation**

**Stage 5  How we measured success**

Having set out specific objectives, success criteria and monitoring and evaluating strategies at the start of the year, examining our practice and the impact on children’s learning became an ongoing process. In both the many informal opportunities that arose and the planned monitoring sessions, practice was adjusted keeping constantly in sight of the agreed targets. A monitoring feedback sheet was devised which recorded each teacher’s adherence to the targets with recommendations given, where needed, for further development. Recommendations were followed-up prior to future monitoring sessions.

At the end of the school year the ICT team conducted interviews with staff (individual, year group and key stage), before writing up a final report in the success of the priority area. This report noted what had been achieved in line with our success criteria, what evidence had been gathered of that success, and most importantly - what improvements had been identified for the children, staff and school since our baseline reference point.

Our baseline reference stated that –

“While all staff were currently using ICT to support teaching and learning information handling was being addressed to varying degrees across key stages one and two. Staff indicated that new resources were required and personal skills needed to be developed in order that adequate provision be made for children to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills in this strand of ICT”.

At the end of the process (Sept – June), evidence gathered from monitoring, ongoing formal and informal feedback sessions and an end of year ICT questionnaire for each teacher showed that:

- the line of progression in information handling developed for P1 to P7 was clearly reflected in teachers’ planning, with planning showing where and when information handling was being used;

- all teachers were confident in using at least 2 information handling programmes with the children in their class;

- all children were given opportunities every term to use information handling activities appropriate to their level;

- children were able to demonstrate their ability to present and interpret data.

Summary

The school development process was viewed by staff as the most effective way implementing change and bringing about school improvement. From the start all staff were involved and effective communication throughout the process was paramount in keeping targets focussed and ensuring that the momentum remained strong. Prioritising and planning time for staff to meet, with a clear focus established in advance, became a further essential aspect of addressing targets. The ICT team needed quality time to meet and address actions, as did the teachers when they were becoming familiar with software and implementing new information handling programmes.

From the start of the process, monitoring strategies were agreed and set alongside targets and success criteria with expected outcomes clear for all staff – Principal, SMT, ICT team and teachers. With ongoing criteria, an ethos of adaptability needed to prevail to ensure that necessary changes were made and reviewed.
## MAIN SECTIONS OF ACTION PLAN FOR INFORMATION HANDLING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specific Objectives</th>
<th>Success Criteria</th>
<th>Monitoring</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>By June 2002:</strong></td>
<td><strong>By June 2002:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Formal and informal feedback at year group, staff and key stage meetings:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- To have a line of progression in place for P1 to P7 in information handling;</td>
<td>- A line of progression will be in place for P1 to P7 in information handling;</td>
<td>- Six weekly planners to state where and when information handling is to be used by the children.</td>
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<td>- All teaching staff will be familiar with the use of 2 information handling programmes which will be incorporated in their planning in terms 2 &amp; 3;</td>
<td>- Information Handling will be incorporated in teachers’ planning and practice and will indicate use of the recommended programmes at the appropriate level;</td>
<td>- Two members of ICT team released 4 days per term to support work in each classroom and to assist and guide as needed.</td>
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<td>- All children will be given opportunities to use information handling at appropriate levels, which relate to real life experiences.</td>
<td>- All teachers will have at least 3 pieces of first-hand evidence (samples of children’s work) of each child’s information handling activities;</td>
<td>- First-hand evidence of children’s work to be retained for monitoring at key stage level. This will be collated by December, March and June.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Children will interpret data presented in a variety of forms, which relate to real life experiences.</td>
<td>- Classroom displays of children’s work to reflect use of appropriate information handling programmes and should relate to real life experiences.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Children will demonstrate their ability to present and interpret data, which will be assessed during in-class support.</td>
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Glenlola Collegiate is an all-girls’ grammar school of approximately 1,100 pupils and 70 staff. A feature of the school is the extent to which teachers place a significant emphasis on the continuous development and dissemination of good practice.

Following the publication of ‘Strategy for Education Technology in N.I.’ (1997), the staff identified the need for further development of ICT throughout the school. The school had long been committed to equipping its pupils with ICT skills; the Senior Management Team now wished to place it in a position to take full advantage of technological innovation to promote teaching and learning. An added incentive was the announcement of the building of a new school which would be opened in 2003.

The School Development Plan of 1998 identified ICT as a priority and an area that should impact positively on many aspects of teaching and learning. It was recognised that this would be an on-going process but it was planned that most targets would be achieved by September 2004. Targets were identified for pupils and staff as follows:-

Pupils will:-

- be equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to use the technology effectively, so that they have a basic understanding of how the technology works and how it can be applied in a range of contexts;

- be equipped with information search, retrieval and handling skills so that, with increasing degrees of independence, they are able to locate and use information from a range of sources and interpret and apply it appropriately;
be able to apply these skills routinely in their own learning, both within and beyond the classroom;

apply their knowledge and skills across all subjects.

Staff will:-

have the personal ICT skills and expertise that is at least equivalent to those of the pupils;

be encouraged to gain necessary ICT qualifications and attend a range of appropriate in-service ICT courses;

be able to apply these ICT skills to enhance and support teaching and learning.

The success criteria were considered to be the development and use of ICT across the curriculum.

In 1999 the Headmaster invited staff to join an ICT core team lead by the senior teacher (administration). This team met regularly; progress, and the emerging whole school policies and strategy, were evaluated and appropriate adjustments made. It was recognised that the developmental work in ICT presented significant challenges to the staff and the pupils. It was agreed that any development work had to be set within a realistic time frame but was ultimately dependant on ready access to an appropriate range of hardware and software resources.

An action plan was produced which identified as priorities the need to:-

provide appropriate training for the core team and, subsequently, the remaining staff in the use of e-mail and the Internet;

conduct an audit of ICT hardware and software and develop a planned approach to the upgrade of ICT equipment and improve the level of connectivity within the school;
School Development Planning

- develop a school web site;
- conduct an audit of staff and pupil competence in the use of a range of ICT applications;
- review the ICT policy and develop a policy on the appropriate use of the internet;
- roll-out the recently acquired laptops to all staff.

In addition, a 12-week module for year 8 pupils in the use of computers was developed and implemented. A range of in-service training courses, targeted at addressing the individual training needs of staff was developed. These were organised in school in the teachers’ own time and were facilitated by the South-Eastern Education and Library Board (SEELB) Curriculum Advisory and Support (CASS) staff. Additional courses were arranged to address specific developmental needs. The combination of these training courses, complemented by in-school peer support, ensured that staff were prepared to undertake the training provided under the auspices of the New Opportunities Fund (NOF).

On completion of the NOF training staff were prepared to incorporate a range of ICT applications into their teaching. Once again, a feature of the NOF training was the willingness of the staff to support one another, both within and across departments.

After extensive review, progress can be summarised as follows:-

- ICT is used more extensively in teaching and learning programmes, by pupils and staff; schemes of work reflect an increased emphasis on IT in lesson planning;
- More effective use is made of ICT for administrative purposes; Year Heads, for example, have access to MIDAS for individual pupil monitoring etc. Performance Analysis assists in the Target setting process;
The number of pupils following courses in ICT at GCSE, AS and A2 level has increased;

Newer technologies have been integrated more effectively; an example is the increased use of interactive white boards; each department has now access to this technology and the training model adopted, in addition to the staff receptiveness to new developments in ICT, has ensured staff are willing to adapt their teaching strategies and resources to take advantage of the additional opportunities provided by the technology;

All pupils at KS3 are entered for the CCEA Accreditation Scheme for ICT; in addition, all year 13 pupils are entered for an element of the ICT Key Skills course; the success of the school in these programmes has been recognised by the awarding bodies through the designation of the school as an Accreditation Centre;

Staff are willing to continue their professional development in the use of ICT;

Departments continue to integrate ICT into their schemes of work; each department has generated a 3-year development plan for ICT; departments continue to focus on ICT as an element of the school’s own cycle of evaluation and improvement.

The staff and pupils have come a long way in a relatively short time. In 7 years the school has moved from a position where computers were located in computer suites and were for the use of specialist teachers and IT examination classes. We are now at the position where all teachers have ready access to a range of hardware and software resources. Every classroom has internet access and has access to a range of software on the school’s own intranet. However, the important point is that these facilities are used! Teachers now plan for teaching and learning with ICT in mind. They are more receptive to new developments in hardware and software and are not as fearful of the future! Who knows where we will all be in the next 7 years?
Corpus Christi College

A case study outlining the impact of self-evaluation on the development of teaching strategies and the improvement of learning experiences.

The Context

The College was opened in 1988 as the product of a 4-school amalgamation. The initial years were very difficult as the staff came to terms with the effects of severe demographic downturn and the impact of over 20 years of civil unrest in the community. The context of the College can be even more keenly determined when consideration is taken of the NOBLE indicators of social deprivation. On reflection it could be argued that the staff was more involved in teaching for control and less focused on the learning of the children and their own professional development.

A General Inspection Report in 1994 was to become an initiator of change. The response by management and staff laid the foundation of a changed culture, ethos and self-belief. The process embarked upon at that time, became known as the College Development Plan and continues in the same form today. The structure is simple but its impact can be extremely effective given that the process is staff initiated, monitored and delivered. While many partners can be involved it is the staff and the SDC that sets the agenda for the subsequent evolutionary progress.

At the core of the process is the activity of action research and review. A culture of whole-school and personal and professional self-evaluation has become embedded into the life of the College.

While many areas or aspects of the College have been influenced by the rigour of the action planned approach one area can be set apart for its potential for constantly bringing about improvement over a period of time. Since the inception of the process staff have continually heard that while the College maybe improving on a number of fronts it is what happens in the classroom that is the most effective influence on the development of our pupils and their learning.
The Process of self-evaluation – addressing the problem

In an open session staff were asked to reflect on what they considered constituted an effective lesson. While the ensuing discussion raised many concerns about the culture in the College at that time the staff identified a common framework of areas which they agreed were the components of a lesson. Fourteen areas identified at that time included, classroom management, resources, teaching strategies, pupil teacher relationships and assessment.

The recognition of the importance of quality in these area raised the question of what the current position was across the College and how the staff may ascertain a baseline understanding upon which to build, broaden and improved quality experiences within the classroom.

While a systematic whole-school approach was the aim it was important that staff accepted ownership of the process and over a number of meetings and department discussion the staff developed a means of assessing the quality using a continuum measuring approach. A range of descriptors (quality statements) were devised for each of the component areas based on the staff’s perspective of what they consider to be a poor performance in each component area. An example of the descriptors used in some of the areas is shown below:

Variety of teaching approaches / method selected:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>A wide range of appropriate learning activities is used. They can organise their own work.</th>
<th>A variety of teaching approaches is used. Pupils are active. Methods are not always appropriate to the task or time available.</th>
<th>Teacher relies on few approaches. Pupils are involved. Some account is taken of the needs of individuals, groups or whole class.</th>
<th>Lessons are teacher lead. There is no partnership. Pupils are not involved. They have little chance to respond and are mostly passive.</th>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
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The central purpose of this labour intensive exercise was to encourage the staff to reflect on the possible range of experiences within the classroom. The next and more important stage was to request that the staff apply the instrument of measurement to their own particular teaching in their own classroom within a suggested time frame. The majority of staff engaged with the activity and knowingly began the process of self-evaluation in a non-threatening manner.

The eminent arrival of SDPR served to focus the minds of staff and the process became more professionally rigorous with the suggestion that a trusted colleague should be invited in to the classroom to observe and record a teachers’ performance in a selected number of component areas of the lesson.

The intended outcome of this activity was to engender some inter-departmental debate and of course begin to prioritise areas for improvement, either for the teacher, the department or on other general whole-school issues. During the course of this activity across the College and as a direct result of it several initiatives were developed to improve the experiences of the pupils. A whole-school reading programme was introduced along with a programme of dissemination of good practice within the College. Even at this early stage in the process staff were working together towards improvement through the process of self-evaluation.

| Tasks are varied and interesting and are completed on time. They are challenging and give all pupils a measure of success. | Tasks are varied and interesting. Most are completed on time. Most pupils experience a measure of success. | Tasks are dull. Too little or too much is attempted. Some people cannot cope with their work. Some have some success. | All pupils perform the same task. They are unable to cope with their work and achieve a low level of success. Tasks are often unfinished. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
As Colleague observation continued at this level improved communication resulted and the level of professional debate was raised. Accordingly the need to engage appropriate professional support from the Education and Library Board was identified and duly delivered.

With this willing support from the ELB came a readiness of staff to initiate a change in practice were it had been identified. Given the benefit to staff of a more open approach management became involved in the process for the first time. Heads of Departments were introduced to take the process forward from colleague observation to a more accountable level. This was obviously an important step and was carefully promoted as a means of identifying support rather than an inspectorial exercise.

The process had now reached a level of acceptance and was implanted into the scheme of SDPR. The self-evaluation instrument, while not totally accepted by all staff, had achieved a means of assisting teachers in assessing their own performance against a set of agreed professional criteria.

The value of the process is evident in the fact that it remains to be a cornerstone in the annual target-setting and action-planned activities of each department in the College. Each year a department is asked to identify 2 component areas and address them during the academic year. This exercise serves to encourage the staff of the College and to continue to be self-evaluative practioners and thus maintain a focus on the development of learning and the progress and improvement of teaching strategies as experienced by our pupils.

The College would like acknowledge the expertise of Mr Michael Breen (BELB at that time) and former Principal of the College Mr Frank Kelly, in the development of the process.
This case study focuses on targeting and addressing underachievement in GCSE.

Following on from the school’s analysis of GCSE results for the period 1994-06, performance in the 1997 GCSE examinations rose by 10.7% over 1996. The Principal and staff decided to build on the strategies which had been put in place in 1996/97 academic year and agreed to continue to focus on underachievement in GCSE. This involved a collaborative approach by both the academic and pastoral teams and the following strategies now form an integral part of the work done in Key Stage 4:

- **Key Stage 4 Induction**
  - All pupils begin the year with a study skills session delivered by a member of the teaching staff with expertise in this area which is followed up by a further study skills session after the mock exams.
  - All pupils have an interview with their Form Tutor before normal class resumes in September at which they are encouraged to set personal targets.

- **Academic Board Meetings**

As in all of the Key Stages, Subject Teachers/HODs attend meetings to receive and provide information regarding the underachievement of pupils.

During the first Academic Board meeting of the year, much time is spent by the Year Head informing staff of special/mitigating circumstances which may affect the performance of pupils in the Year Group. Equipped with such information, subject teacher are asked to indicate those pupils in their class who need intervention from the Year Head. The following categories are used in targeting pupils:

a. Underachievers
b. Pupils who would benefit from encouragement

c. Pupils whose behaviour/attitude need to be addressed

Returns by subject teachers are recorded and become the focus of the Year Head/Head of Key Stages’ work prior to Christmas examinations.

In the second Academic Board Meeting of the school year, exam performances are discussed and an analysis provided. Strategies to address underachievement are discussed and include:

- Highlighting pupils who achieved less than 5 grades C+ who are to be interviewed.

- Subject teachers are asked for an up-to-date record of pupils’ coursework to be used for discussion as part of parental interview. The importance of coursework is highlighted and stressed to all subject teachers re the vital role it can plan in enhancing pupils’ grades.

- A pro-forma is used at interviews of all pupils who by end of February/early March will have interviewed by Year Head/Head of Key Stage/Deputy Principal with responsibility for Key Stage 4.

- Pre-mock examinations (Year 12)

Each pupil in Year 12 is issued with a Revision package which contains:

1. Useful revision tips.

2. Suggestions re the effective use of time for study over the Christmas holidays.

3. A proposed revision timetable.
Targeting Underachievers in Mock Examinations

- Any pupil gaining 5 or less passes in targeted.
- Those pupils giving the greatest cause for concern are invited to an interview with their parents.
- All remaining Year 12 pupils are interviewed to discuss course work submission/progress before the end of February.

Study Facilities Offered

Night Study

Every Tuesday and Wednesday, 6.30 pm – 9.30 pm

Held in school’s Sixth Form Centre and is supervised by the Sixth Form Supervisor/clerical staff of the school. The facility is open to Year 12 pupils.

School Library

Monday – Thursday, 3.30 pm – 5.00 pm

Pupils are actively encouraged to use this facility as assemblies/through posters displayed in the school. The school Librarian is in attendance and pupils form any Year Group may attend.

After School Homework Club

Up to June 2004 was offered 3 days per week and received NOF Funding. It was supervised by 3 members of the teaching staff and provided opportunities for pupils to complete homework/coursework, develop IT skills and increase self-esteem through a selection of visits/activities that were organised.
Easter Holiday Supervised Study

Offered in April 2004 for the first time and came about from a request by the pupils. It ran from 9.00 am – 2.00 pm and was held in the school’s Exam Centre. The facility was supervised by the Sixth Form Supervisor and clerical staff and was warmly welcomed by pupils. Said one Year 12 pupil: “I would not have studied as much at home as I did in school. It made me focus on my revision for the rest of the holidays”.

After School Revision Classes

Offered in a number of subject areas including Maths, Science and English. This initiative, which was funded through the NOF After School Homework Club, benefited both Year 11 and Year 12 pupils.

Year 11 Revision Days

Opportunities to improve pupil performance in Year 11 module exams/terminal exams were also created. Last year in May 2004 pupils of Double Award Science were given a Revision Day prior to their 3 Science modules, and at the beginning of June 2004 pupils taking a GCSE in Maths at the end of one year of study had their normal timetable suspended to facilitate the delivery of a maths revision day.

As a result of these strategies/innovations, the GCSE pass rate in 5 or more subjects at Grade A* to C has risen quite significantly. In 2003, it stood at 73% with a new school record of 79% being set in the summer of 2004.
St Mary’s Grammar School, Magherafelt

This case study is based on the use of learning outcomes as a strand of the quality teaching and learning initiative in the school.

St Mary’s Grammar School, Magherafelt has an enrolment of over one thousand pupils drawn from a wide area which includes the town and surrounding rural areas in counties Derry, Tyrone and Antrim.

Following the appointment of a new Principal in 1995 and in the context of continuing improvement, the staff drew up and agreed a framework to articulate their view of quality in teaching and learning. The framework was used to identify the strengths and weaknesses of subject departments and to bring about improvement.

This movement towards self-evaluation was given impetus by the General Inspection of 1999 which commended the staff’s efforts and commented that:

“A climate of professional self-reflection is being nurtured systematically and it is appropriate that the teachers’ attention should now focus more vigorously on the effectiveness of their classroom practice.”

(General Inspection on St Mary’s Grammar School, February 1999)

A QTL (Quality Teaching and Learning) committee was set up, under the Chairmanship of the Vice-Principal (Curriculum). Its remit was to maintain oversight of and to evaluate Quality Teaching and Learning developments in all subject departments in the school. The Vice-Principal (Staff Development) worked closely with the committee to facilitate a planned programme of professional development focusing on teaching and learning styles.

A key development in the school’s history of self-evaluation was the introduction of the annual Head of Department review which included:
- analysis of examination results in the context of each teaching set, departmental targets and estimated grades;

- action planning to include the department’s focus on teaching and learning and the department’s development and training needs.

This allowed Heads of Department to focus clearly on a department’s strengths and areas for development with clear, measurable, time-bound strategies for improvement. Each year, the QTL committee identified a focus for improvement, for example questioning techniques, success criteria for homework/coursework and differentiation.

Following the introduction of DENI’s document “Together Towards Improvement” the school focused even more clearly on evaluation in accordance with the thrust towards promoting a culture of self-evaluation and embedding the process of self-evaluation into a school’s way of working.

It was decided that, to assist with the departmental QTL evaluation process, to focus on learning outcomes.

The focus on learning outcomes was chosen to link with one of the Quality Statements of the St Mary’s QTL document which states:

“Learning activities are purposeful, with pupils being actively involved in, and encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning.”

The performance indicator states:

“Lessons are well planned and managed” with the evidence that:

“All lessons are carefully planned with clear objectives which are communicated to pupils so that they understand what they are doing and why.”

During a professional development day in August the Chair of the QTL committee introduced the focus of “learning outcomes” to all staff. This was followed by input
from 2 Heads of Department who were already using them successfully. Departments set out a framework by which each subject specification could be divided into clear and distinct descriptors of what pupils should know, understand and be able to do at the end of the learning process. This would also allow subject teachers to highlight areas for revision and/or remedial action.

It was anticipated that using learning outcomes would help pupils to understand what they were doing and why and to allow them to become more actively involved in their own learning.

At this initial stage, the QTL committee recommended to Heads of Department that the concept of learning outcomes should be discussed at departmental level in order to establish a shared understanding. This would enable subject teachers to familiarise pupils with the term so that it became embedded in their learning.

Each department was asked to focus on learning outcomes with 2 selected year groups, from 2 different key stages. Evidence in the form of clear written learning outcomes, as presented to the pupils was to be forwarded to the QTL Committee by the end of Term 1 and again at the end of Term 2. A departmental evaluation of the value of learning outcomes was to be submitted by the end of Term 2. The QTL committee undertook to draw up a whole school evaluation, to be made available to all staff.

The key points of the evaluation highlighted the need for standardised presentations of learning outcomes and the usefulness of cross-referencing them to work sheets and/or textbooks.

As a result of this evaluation all departments in the school are now using learning outcomes with every class at every Key Stage.

Learning outcomes have been incorporated into all departmental schemes of work.
From monitoring and evaluating this quality teaching and learning task, the committee and Senior Leadership Team:

**identified the gains for pupils as:**

- they achieved a sense of the “big picture”, ie they were able to connect their learning to what had gone before and what was to come;
- opportunities were created for all pupils to experience success and to use positive language that is, they were able to say, “I know ………” “I can do…….”
- they learned how to set performance goals and use them regularly;
- the 3 types of learners – visual, auditory and kinaesthetic – were assisted by **learning outcomes**;
- they were given opportunities for testing their own understanding and revising their work accordingly;
- teachers and pupils provided with a safe environment in which to give and receive educative feedback.

**They identified the gains for staff as:**

- expectations of pupil learning were raised which influenced pupils’ performance;
- use of **learning outcomes** created a framework for a mutual exchange of positive assessment.
- use of **learning outcomes** allowed teachers to create the best environment to sustain high-quality learning;
- that within departments, **learning outcomes** helped to monitor progress through schemes of work and specifications.
They identified the gains for the school as:

- the use of learning outcomes is further embedded in the teaching and learning process;

- learning outcomes support the learning of subject content and deepens pupils' understanding of their own learning (meta cognition).