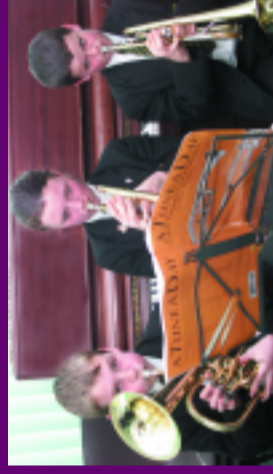


# School Development Planning

A Guide for Principals  
& Boards of Governors



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The process and practice of School Development Planning is not new to most schools. However, even where it is an accepted part of school life there is a need to look again, from time to time, at how the plan is visioned, planned for and realised as well as its foci and priorities.

*"It is a bad plan that admits no modification".  
Publicus Syrus 319 A.D.*

This quotation may suggest that there is no such thing as a new idea but it also challenges schools, even those who consider that they are already doing all that can be done, to take another look.

In education the changes are many and multi dimensional: a revised Northern Ireland Curriculum including the introduction of new curriculum areas such as Citizenship, the Review of Post Primary Education, Empowering Schools, Special Education Needs and Disability, Review of Child Protection, increased knowledge about how children learn and the new dispensation to co-operate and collaborate rather than compete – need I go on?

Neither the system nor individual schools can handle these changes without a plan that is not just well conceived but that is open to rational modification to deal effectively with the unexpected.

We are all now part of the knowledge society and the children in our schools more than ever need to be prepared to deal with the uncertainties of the future. They need to develop creativity and flexibility by being educated in an environment which displays these characteristics.

The world is changing and schools cannot avoid or ignore the fact that dealing with change is the most pervasive of all the challenges to leadership.

Leadership now needs to be evident throughout the school from the classroom to the Governors' Boardroom. The School Development Plan is both influenced by and influences this body of leaders who use process to identify challenges, prioritize areas for improvement, monitor progress and evaluate outcomes to ensure enhanced achievement. The School Development Plan can only be effective through a staff development strategy which promotes and values leadership at every level and, in so doing, provides the means to develop sustainable leadership.

The purpose of this document is to support schools in the process of School Development Planning. It is a headline approach aimed at identifying briefly the main elements. We in CCMS hope that Governors, Principals, Senior Managers and leaders at every level find it useful in helping schools develop the capacity to manage change and achieve excellence.



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# School Development Planning





Little Flower Girls' School, Belfast  
Board of Governors.

## Preface for Boards of Governors of Catholic Maintained Schools

The fundamental purpose of governorship is to provide quality education for children and young people in our schools and this role is exercised through partnership.

The genesis of this partnership is in the legal framework of the Education Reform Order of 1989 and the subsequent documents such as the CCMS Scheme of Management.

In paragraph 10 of the Scheme of Management it is stated that the Board of Governors has the responsibility to 'manage and control schools for which it is appointed in accordance with the scheme' and further states that it must, 'assist the principal in such a manner as is reasonably necessary to enable him to control the internal organisation and management of the school'.

It is the combined commitment to the education and well being needs of our young people that forges the strong partnership between staff, Principal, Governors and Parents which characterises the dynamic school.

Within the 'Partnership for Quality' document published by CCMS which is an essential companion to this guidance, it is cited that:

'The most successful School Development Plans provide a flexible responsive framework for collaborative activity'.

This guidance will illustrate how effective collaboration can convert shared vision and mission into learning environments which place the holistic well-being, progress and standards achieved by the pupils at the heart of the school strategic development planning process.

"In order that Boards of Governors and Principals develop a shared vision of the future progress of schools, we recommend that Governors in all schools should play an active role in the approval of school priorities through the Development Planning process."

(2004, Northern Ireland Audit Office Report on Local Management of Schools.)

It is also essential for effective management of the LMS budget that the link is made between the allocation of resources to support the improvements identified in the School Development Plan. "It is important that schools adhere to this principle in setting their budgets in order to guard against the ineffective use of resources."

(2004, Northern Ireland Audit Office Report on Local Management of Schools.)

Governors have a pivotal role to play in the formulation, monitoring and evaluation of School Development Plans. (See Appendix 6 for a checklist

for Governors involved in the School Development Planning process). Governors can avail of further assistance from Officers of the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools and training programmes in conjunction with the Education and Library Boards and the Regional Training Unit.

## Preface for Principals of Catholic Maintained Schools

While it is the responsibility of the Board of Governors to ensure high quality curricular and pastoral provision for all the children attending a school, many of the outworkings of this responsibility are delegated to the Principal, who in turn is accountable to the Board of Governors.

It is widely accepted that the Principal is the single most important person within a school, with the remit for leading and guiding the school towards the best possible provision for its young people.

A school Principal will have:

- clear and appropriate vision for the school, including high expectations of both pupils and staff
- the ability to lead by example, and to ensure collaborative working arrangements that will lead to a shared vision and a team ethos
- the ability to involve staff in developing the educational and pastoral provision available to pupils
- a clear, strong commitment to the pupils and staff
- a commitment to distributed and sustainable leadership at every level.

The School Development Planning process, which formed part of the School Improvement Programme documentation (1998, revised 2004), allows Principals a suitable vehicle for practising and refining their leadership skills and those of their colleagues in the best interests of their pupils.

While School Development Planning is now a legal requirement, it has long been considered to be good practice in that it helps a school to continually strive for excellence and self-evaluation.



Holy Family Primary School, Belfast  
Senior Management Team



Good Shepherd Nursery School,  
Poleglass

## School Development Planning

### 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this document is to provide step by step guidance for both Governors and Principals of Catholic Maintained Schools in the production of a School Development Plan.
- 1.2 School Development Planning will become statutory in Northern Ireland from September 2005. The Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 states that it is the 'duty of the Board of Governors of the school to prepare, and from time to time revise, a School Development Plan' (Part IV, 13. – (1)). This responsibility is also identified in the Scheme of Management for Catholic Maintained Schools, A Handbook for Governors, Section 5.
- 1.3 Boards of Governors may delegate much of this responsibility for preparing the School Development Plan to the Principal as 'The Principal will have a key role in helping the Board of Governors to formulate a management plan for the school and in securing its implementation with the collective support of staff' (DENI Circular 1990/20).
- 1.4 School Development Planning is a process which involves partnership and collaborative working of the highest quality as exemplified in the document 'Partnership for Quality' (CCMS, 2000).
- 1.5 It is also the role of the Board of Governors to 'provide for the Council any information, reports and returns as the Council may reasonably request for the exercise of its functions in relation to the school' (Scheme of Management, Article 22). It is requested, therefore, that schools submit copies of their School Development Plan to their local Diocesan Office by the end of June in the year that the Plan has been devised/ revised and approved by the Board of Governors. Council Officers will be available to provide any advice or information to Governors or Principals upon request.
- 1.6 The School Development Plan may identify a range of management and curricular training and support needs. Many of these can be met within the expertise of departments, groups or individuals in the school. The Curriculum Advisory and Support Service (CASS) of the Education and Library Boards should be consulted in relation to others where specific training and advice is required. In circumstances where there is a designated Link Officer, this person should be the first point of contact. The roll-out of training to implement the Revised Northern Ireland Curriculum will identify a range of training and support needs and opportunities. Schools must ensure that these are incorporated appropriately into the School Development Plan and the Boards are informed of the priorities and proposed timescales to help them plan effectively for delivery. Some specific management training for senior staff may require the support of the Regional Training Unit.

## 2.0 Characteristics of the School Development Plan

### A School Development Plan

- is set in the context of the school's ethos and values as set out in the mission statement
- evolves through collaboration and teamwork and the establishment of agreed priorities
- is an agreed, practical, time-bound and working document used to facilitate and manage change which leads to improvement
- plots the course of action a school will take to improve the quality of learning opportunities and teaching strategies
- is cyclical and flexible, including short and long term goals
- is realistic and unique to the school
- is the vehicle to manage external as well as internal change including staff development emanating, amongst other things, from the revised curriculum proposals
- may include reference to the school's E-Learning Development Strategy
- incorporates the outcomes and actions emanating from the impact on the school of the Post-Primary Review
- reflects a range of pastoral policies and practices to be developed in the school
- takes account of SEND legislation by identifying policy and practice to be developed
- takes account of the continuum of professional staff development from Early Professional Development (EPD) for newly qualified teachers, Continuing Professional Development (CPD), to Professional Headship Qualifications (PQH/PQSH) as appropriate.





Lismore Comprehensive,  
Craigavon

## 3.0 Process of School Development Planning

### 3.1 Whole School Audit (Analysis of Information, Identification of Strengths and Areas for Development)

3.1.1 The School Development Planning process should begin with a baseline analysis of the school's current position in relation to the effectiveness of its educational provision. This is achieved through the use of tools such as the ETI document 'Together Towards Improvement' which provides step by step guidance for reflective self-evaluative auditing. It should contribute to creating a context on which all change is purposefully managed, monitored and evaluated so that the school is always an improving and self-evaluating organisation.

3.1.2 This audit process involves the generation and interpretation of a wide range of relevant, quantitative and qualitative data. It may also include the use of existing school performance indicators and the generation of data from pupils, staff and parents. Performance indicators may include end of Key Stage assessment outcomes, benchmarking data, standardised test results and in-house assessment and classroom test outcomes. The use of qualitative, attitudinal surveys such as SETAQ for teachers, pupils and parents or Q Builder may help to develop a comprehensive picture of the school including its ethos and values. Information gained in response to areas such as the pastoral care policy and procedures would also assist in this aspect of self-evaluation – indicators might include for example an increase in pupil attendance or an increase in participation in community events. Schools may also incorporate their own surveys and monitoring procedures such as the outcomes of classroom observations.

3.1.3 The importance of involving all relevant personnel is essential in ensuring that everyone has a commitment to the school's improvement agenda. It also creates a collaborative ethos and shared ownership which is the most successful context for school improvement.

### 3.2. Prioritisation

3.2.1 Once an audit of the available data has been carried out, schools will find that there may be numerous areas that may require some level of development. It is, therefore, essential that the staff of the school, led by the management team, prioritise the issues and be realistic about those that can be successfully addressed by the school in the time covered by the School Development Plan. Some may need to be deferred to a future plan.

3.2.2 Research indicates that the School Development Plan needs to focus on two main areas. These are a strategic focus on pupil well-being, progress and achievement in designated areas and revision of the management arrangements, including staff

development used to facilitate that achievement. Each priority identified on the School Development Plan should have a positive impact on the education and well-being of the children.

3.2.3 Although there are six recognised areas (see pro-forma Appendix 1) identified in the School Development Plan, following an audit the school will identify a manageable and limited number of those areas for action. Schools are encouraged to be reflective and use the self-evaluation model of improvement as an effective vehicle for raising standards. In best practice, schools identify their selected area for self-evaluation in their strategic planning.

### 3.3 Formulation of Plans (short, intermediate and long term planning)

3.3.1 Once priorities have been identified, consideration should be given to what can be carried out in a reasonable time-frame. This can be achieved by refining the priorities in the context of a three year plan such as the one shown in Appendix 2. This is long term planning.

3.3.2 If required these priorities can be detailed in a yearly School Development Plan.

3.3.3. A school may consider it appropriate to further refine the priorities in a more time-bounded fashion. This can be achieved through termly planning for the immediate year (see Appendix 3) and can help the school visualise the rollout of the development and identify appropriate stages for monitoring and evaluation.

3.3.4 Priorities on the School Development Plan should then be actioned by the establishment of targets.

**It is important that schools use a planning template and detail the information required in accordance with their individual needs. The templates included in this document are for guidance only.**

### 3.4 Implementation of Plan (Action Planning)

3.4.1 It is essential to identify what needs to be done to bring about the proposed improvements. This is the action planning stage. As with the audit and identification of priorities, all staff should have an input into and experience of action planning.

3.4.2 The priorities are addressed through setting targets and initiating actions.

3.4.3 Enclosed is an example of a format for action planning (Appendix 4). The various Education and Library Boards have developed different templates but with agreed generic headings. The areas identified are:



Holy Child Nursery School,  
Belfast



# School Development Planning



St. Brigid's Primary School,  
Knockloughrim

## a) Baseline Position

The audit material should be examined to formulate the baseline position – where are we now? This information could include quantitative or qualitative statements.

## b) Targets

Targets should, as far as is possible, be framed in terms of attainable outcomes rather than vague aspirations.

(For information Appendix 5 contains the statutory target setting requirements).

These should be:

- Specific - concise, explicit and focused on the particular developmental needs of the school in the area identified.
- Measurable - so that progress and achievement can be evidenced and, if appropriate, shared and celebrated.
- Achievable - manageable within the time and resources available.
- Realistic - practical rather than idealistic, reflecting on where we are now and what can be accomplished.
- Time-bound - clear deadlines for action and completion.
- Evaluated - to ensure fitness for purpose of the methodologies employed.
- Reviewed - monitored on an ongoing basis to inform future cyclical planning and action.

## c) Success Criteria

Formulated in advance, these will help identify whether or not targets have been achieved. These will assist in determining the extent to which targets have been met. For example, quantitative and qualitative data, follow-up ETI reports, improvements in attitudinal questionnaire results, improvements in children's behaviour, increased pupil or staff attendance and changes observed in classroom practice may be used as success criteria. Qualitative factors such as morale, engagement and a more positive climate may also be considered.

**d) Actions**

Actions need to be carried out to achieve the target and ultimately, enhance learning and teaching. These may relate to staff development and revision of teaching and learning strategies to include, for example, consideration of pupil learning styles and knowledge of research evidence on multiple intelligences. They may also relate to the review of policies and schemes of work, consultations to be carried out, and implementation of agreed activities.

**e) Timescale**

In order for progress to be made in the delivery of the target, those involved will benefit from guidance in relation to the expected dates of completion of the various tasks. The time-bound nature of targets helps to keep those responsible focused on the tasks at hand and manage their own time most effectively. Monitoring may contribute to a revision of dates but this should become less frequent as the process is embedded.

**f) Responsibility**

A critical element of school leadership is empowering the individuals who have the relevant knowledge, expertise and ability, to lead developments for learning within the school. It is important that co-ordinators or teams become the facilitators for improvements and avail of the support and guidance to undertake this task. Accountability for the implementation of the actions, in order to achieve the target, resides with the named person or team. Boards of Governors and Principals have the overall responsibility for the progress of the Plan.

**g) Resource Implications**

Resources may be human and physical and may or may not incur a financial cost. Human resources could incorporate the allocation of time for staff development, additional teaching or support hours or release time for leaders to facilitate the process. Physical resources could include equipment, materials, books and necessary changes to the classroom/school environment.

**h) Monitoring and Evaluation**

It is imperative that all involved in School Development recognise both the difference between and the importance and purpose of monitoring and evaluation.

Monitoring is the ongoing analysis of progress. It involves the skills of observation, testing, collation and analysis of data, record keeping and reflection. It is the attempt to answer the questions, how are we doing and how do we find out?



# School Development Planning



St. Colm's High School, Twinbrook  
Senior Management Team

Evaluation is the summative analysis of progress made against the defined target and it includes evidence to support the findings.

To evaluate ask:

- What have we achieved?
- How was it achieved?
- What have we learned?
- Have we failed to meet, met or exceeded our targets?
- How can we build on what we have learned?

Following evaluation of the targets, the school should review the process, identify lessons learned and include any adjustments that need to be made to the Plans. These will include the acknowledgement of strategies that did and did not work and an analysis of why some targets were not achieved. The evaluation should be used to inform future planning and continue the improvement agenda in the school. It is vitally important that the entire school community recognises and celebrates the successes and improvements achieved.

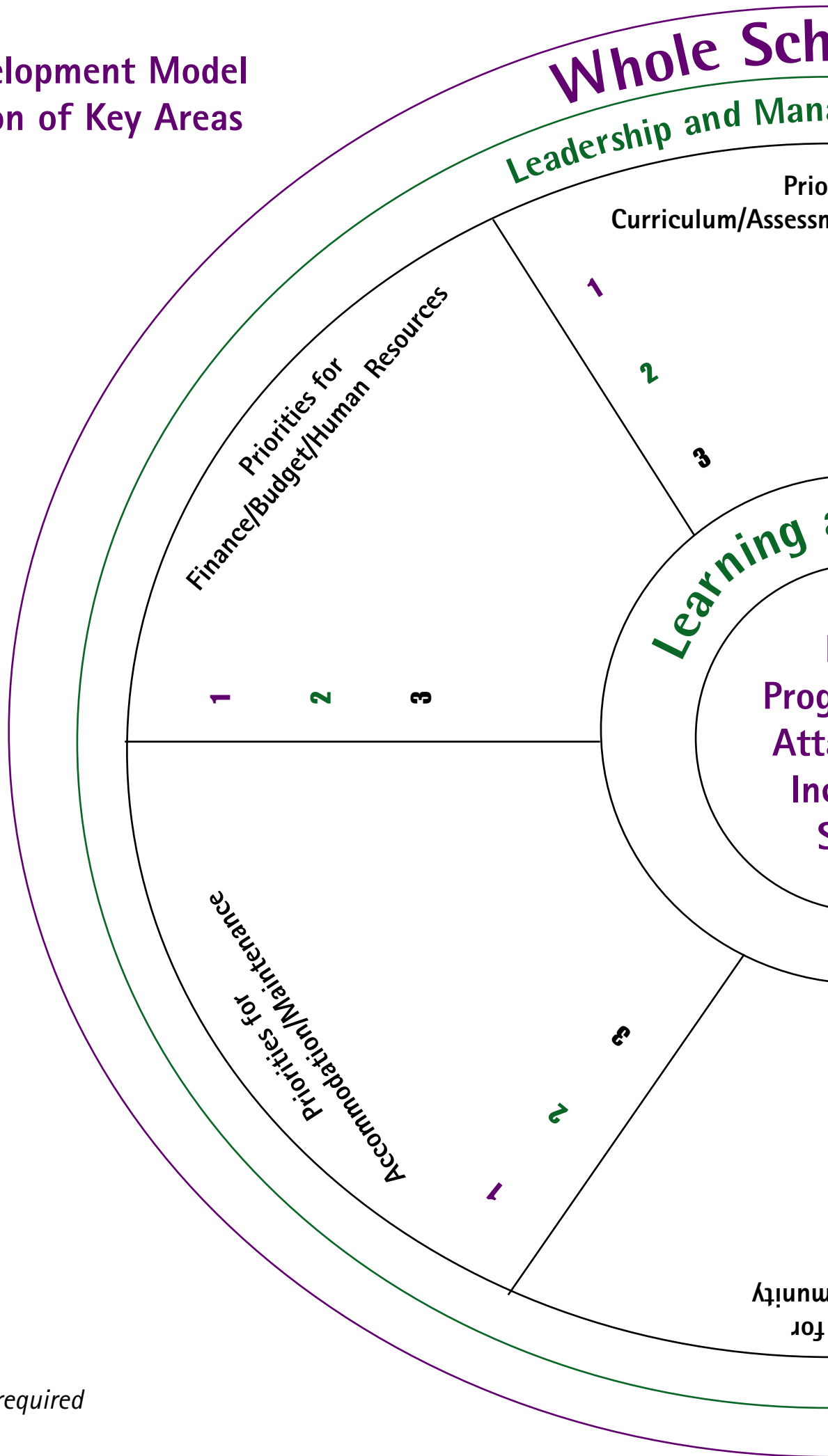
## 4.0 Conclusion

The School Development Plan is an important tool for organising the range of educational and administrative priorities identified by a school. It is particularly useful with regard to the implementation of major changes such as the Review of the Curriculum or the introduction of Staff Development and Performance Management.

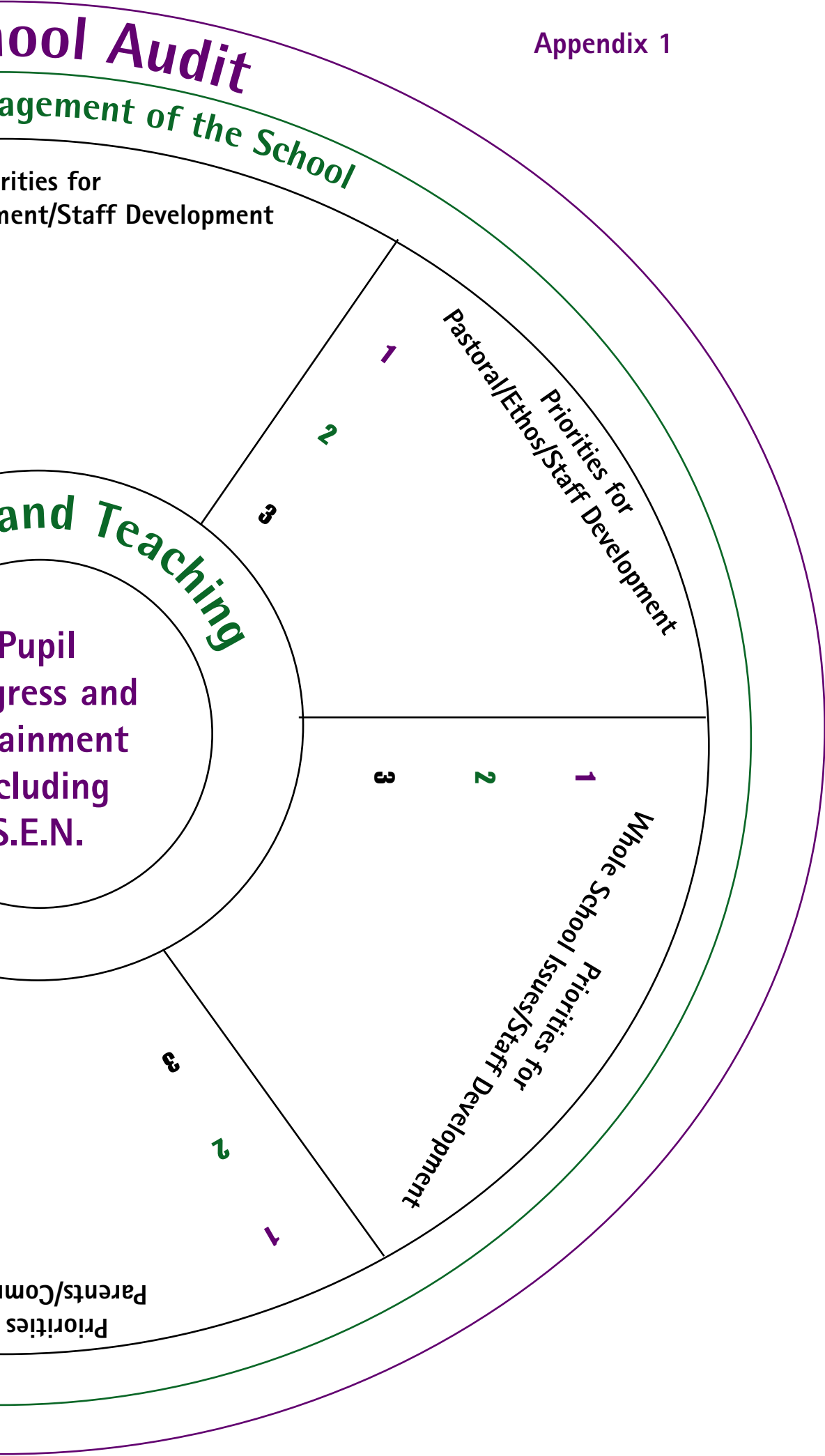
School Development Planning, incorporating target setting and action planning, is an essential pre-requisite to raising standards in schools. When approached with commitment and application by Governors and the whole staff, it can have a significant impact on pupil progress and attainment. It also can be a considerable source of motivation for teachers and have a positive impact on the ethos and values of the school. School Development Planning is above all, an ongoing process, a way of working to ensure that the key areas are identified, agreed and addressed in a planned and balanced manner which takes into account the capacity of the staff and the school as a whole to deliver improvement.



# School Development Model Identification of Key Areas



*Photocopy as required*



# Appendices

School Development Plan Overview of Priorities and Timescale

School Development Plan	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Curriculum and Assessment/Staff Development			
Pastoral/Ethos/Staff Development			
Whole School Issues/Staff Development			
Parents/Community			
Accommodation/Maintenance			
Finance/Budget/Human Resources			

*Photocopy as required*

## School Development Plan for Period \_\_\_\_\_

	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3
Curriculum and Assessment			
Pastoral/Ethos			
Whole School Issues			
Parents/Community			
Accommodation/ Maintenance			
Finance/Budget			



*Photocopy as required*

SCHOOL: \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix 4

Action Plan for the period: \_\_\_\_\_ Issue/Focus: \_\_\_\_\_

BASELINE POSITION	TARGETS	SUCCESS CRITERIA	ACTION TO BE TAKEN	TIME SCALE	STAFF - LEAD RESPONSIBILITY	MONITORING /EVALUATION	RESOURCING AND COST

## Appendix 5

### Target setting requirements

Target setting can be a positive step in helping a school to ensure that the pupils achieve as much as possible. Setting targets enables both teachers and pupils to focus on what can be achieved with effort, and enables the realisation of that achievement.

While the setting of end of Key Stage targets is statutory, it is good practice for teachers to work with parents and/or pupils to set small individual or group targets that will contribute to the achievement of statutory targets. These might relate to specific pieces of work to be completed within given timeframes, or to areas of individual need. It can prove useful to involve parents in both the setting and realisation of individual targets.

The statutory requirements regarding target setting in both the primary and secondary sectors are outlined on the next two pages. Schools are also advised to refer to the following documents for more detailed information:

- DENI Circular 1998/24 'Education (Target Setting in Schools) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1998'.
- DE Circular 2003/8 'Target Setting and Benchmarking' June 2003.

The Department of Education issues a 'Target Setting and Benchmarking' circular each year, giving advice on how to use benchmarking information in the target setting process. It also issues a booklet containing comparative performance data allowing schools to compare their own achievements with other, similar schools. Individual schools are not identified in this document.





St. Paul's Primary School,  
Irvinestown

## Primary Schools

There is a requirement for all primary schools to set targets for end of Key Stage assessments in the following areas:

### Key Stage 1

- Percentage of children expected to achieve level 2 or above in English
- Percentage of children expected to achieve level 2 or above in Mathematics
- Percentage of children expected to achieve level 3 or above in English
- Percentage of children expected to achieve level 3 or above in Mathematics

In Irish medium schools/units achievements in Irish will be measured at the end of Key Stage 1 and not in English.

### Key Stage 2

- Percentage of children expected to achieve level 4 or above in English
- Percentage of children expected to achieve level 4 or above in Mathematics
- Percentage of children expected to achieve level 5 or above in English
- Percentage of children expected to achieve level 5 or above in Mathematics

In Irish medium schools/units achievement in Irish will be measured as above as an additional requirement to English and Mathematics.

Schools are advised to set targets that are challenging, yet realisable. The following can be helpful in determining such targets:

- Base-line information on the pupils eg end of KS1 results for setting KS2 targets for the same cohort of children
- Results of standardised tests
- Performance in end of Key Stage assessments for the school over the past three years
- Formative assessments
- Benchmarking data, provided by the Department of Education each year. This allows a school to compare its achievements against other schools of similar size and/or free school meal band, and will enable a school to position itself in a continuum of achievement ranging from lower quartile to 95th percentile.

## Post-Primary Schools

There is a requirement for all post-primary schools that are not grammar schools to set targets for end of Key Stage assessments in the following areas:

### Key Stage 3

- Percentage of children expected to achieve level 5 or above in English
- Percentage of children expected to achieve level 5 or above in Mathematics
- Percentage of children expected to achieve level 6 or above in English
- Percentage of children expected to achieve level 6 or above in Mathematics

### Key Stage 4

- Percentage of children expected to achieve 1 or more GCSEs, or an equivalent vocational qualification
- Percentage of children expected to achieve 5 or more grades at A\* to G, or Foundation GNVQ or NVQ level 1
- Percentage of children expected to achieve 5 or more grades at A\* to C, or Intermediate GNVQ or NVQ level 2

### Year 14

- Percentage of children expected to achieve 2 or more GCE A levels at grades A to E or equivalent, or Advanced GNVQ or NVQ level 3

Schools are advised to set targets that are challenging, yet realisable. The following can be helpful in determining such targets:

- Base-line information on the pupils, including previous end of key stage assessments and packages such as YELLIS, MIDYIS and ALIS where desired
- Performance in end of Key Stage assessments for the school over the past three years
- Formative assessments
- Benchmarking data, provided by the Department of Education each year. This allows a school to compare its achievements against other schools of similar size and/or free school meal band, and will enable a school to position itself in a continuum of achievement ranging from lower quartile to 95th percentile.



St. Mary's College, Clady  
Portglenone





## Appendix 6

### Checklist for Boards of Governors Involved in the School Development Planning Process

	Yes	No
1. Has the Board of Governors consulted the Scheme of Management for Catholic Maintained Schools, A Handbook for Governors, Section 5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Has a whole school audit or review taken place?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Has the audit identified strengths and key areas for development?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Have all the relevant people been consulted?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Have priorities been determined and agreed? (Appendix 1)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Have all the procedures for devising a School Development Plan as outlined in CCMS guidance been followed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Have monitoring and evaluating arrangements been made for the Board of Governors?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Has the Board of Governors delegated monitoring and evaluating responsibilities to its relevant sub-committees.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Is the progress of the School Development Plan included on the agenda of each meeting of the Board of Governors?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Has the Board of Governors agreed the School Development Plan for the forthcoming school year?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Do all members of the Board of Governors have a copy of the School Development Plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Has an approved copy of the School Development Plan been sent to the CCMS Diocesan Office?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



## For Additional Information

### Internet References

<a href="http://www.onlineccms.com">www.onlineccms.com</a>	Council For Catholic Maintained Schools
<a href="http://www.deni.gov.uk">www.deni.gov.uk</a>	Department of Education
<a href="http://www.ofsted.gov.uk">www.ofsted.gov.uk</a>	Ofsted Schools Inspection/Standards London
<a href="http://www.dfes.gov.uk">www.dfes.gov.uk</a>	Department for Education and Skills, Great Britain
<a href="http://www.ncsl.org.uk">www.ncsl.org.uk</a>	National College for School Leadership, Great Britain
<a href="http://www.ioe.ac.uk">www.ioe.ac.uk</a>	University of London Institute of Education

### Recommended Reading

CCMS, Partnership for Quality

CCMS, Life to the Full

Catholic Bishops of Northern Ireland, Building Peace, Shaping the Future

ETI, Together Towards Improvement

Further copies of this document may be accessed through  
[www.onlineccms.com](http://www.onlineccms.com)

## School Development Planning



St. Mary's College,  
Irvinestown





## Acknowledgements

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St Brendan's Primary School, Moyraverty

St Brigid's Primary School, Knockloughrim

St Colm's High School, Twinbrook

St Joseph's Primary School, Slate Street, Belfast

St Mary's College, Clady, Portglenone

St Mary's College, Irvinestown

St Mary's Primary School, Divis Street, Belfast

St Paul's Primary School, Irvinestown

St Patrick's College, Dungannon

St Rose's Secondary School, Belfast

And the Board of Governors of Little Flower Girls' School, Belfast

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