

# Guidance to Support School Improvement Planning

*Update March 2017*



# Guidance to Support School Improvement Planning

The Welsh Government has placed the duty of the governing body to 'prepare, monitor, review and revise a School Development Plan' on a statutory footing.

The Welsh Government guidance [Guidance document 155/2014 – School development plans] clearly sets out the school development planning cycle as shown opposite. (Regulations The Education (School Development Plans) (Wales) Regulations 2014 – <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2014/2677/contents/made>)

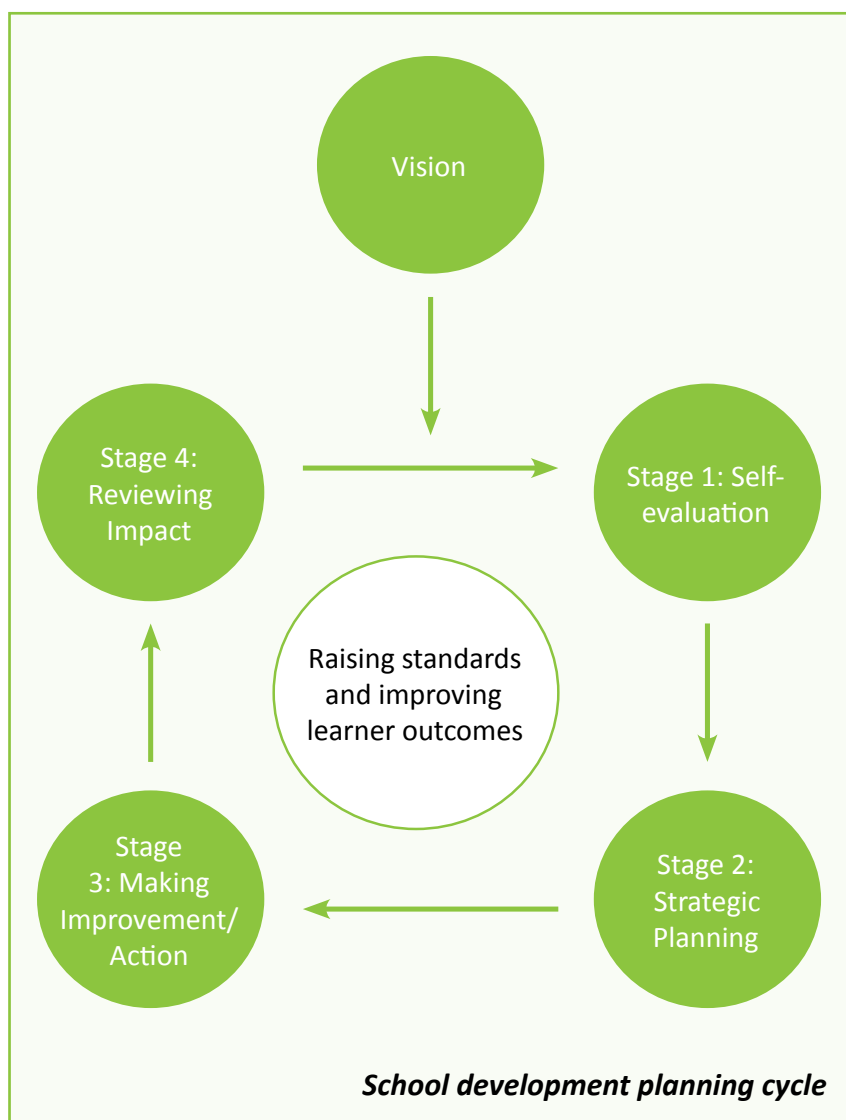
The guidance uses the term School Development Plan. Central South Consortium's (CSC) guidance and documentation uses the term School Improvement Plan (SIP) as this makes it clear that all priorities and actions should lead to improving learner outcomes. While the regulations identify various features that should be included as part of the plan they do not prescribe a format or a layout for the plan.

The **CSC outline format for a School Improvement Plan** (page 7) and **Checklist for a School Improvement Plan** (page 8) provide a framework that

addresses Welsh Government's requirements. The exact layout of the plan is for schools to decide. The quality of planning should be judged in terms of its impact on improving learner outcomes rather than the volume of detail it contains.

There is now no longer any need to have a separate spending plan for the use of grants. The single SIP will become the main focus for all challenge and support. The use of the Education Improvement Grant (EIG) and Pupil Deprivation Grant (PDG) should be integral to the school's improvement planning.

The glossary and frequently asked questions below provide some definitions of terms to support effective improvement planning. If schools would like further advice or guidance on the content and layout of a plan or on the planning process, their challenge adviser will be able to support them with this.



# Glossary and Definitions

<b>The School Improvement Cycle</b>	<p><b>The school's cycle of activities for raising standards and improving learner outcomes</b></p> <p>The annual process and timetable of self-evaluation – strategic planning – implementing plans - reviewing impact</p>
<b>Vision</b>	<p><b>The school we want to be</b></p> <p>The school's ambitions and values, set in the context of the school's own circumstances.</p>
<b>Priority</b>	<p><b>So what do we need to improve?</b></p> <p>Clearly defined objectives that the school identifies as important to achieve. These will be in the context of the school vision and derived from self-evaluation, local and national priorities and any Estyn recommendations.</p>
<b>Pupil Performance Targets</b>	<p><b>What quantitative targets are we aiming for our pupils to achieve?</b></p> <p>Targets relate to performance at the expected level and above expected level in key performance measures. These targets should relate to the achievement expected of individual pupils and will be aggregated for the whole cohort and specific groups of pupils e.g. boys/girls, eFSM.</p>
<b>Success criteria</b>	<p><b>How we evaluate the impact of our improvement work?</b></p> <p>Success criteria include quantitative (such as the targets above) and qualitative outcomes that will indicate whether the actions in the plan have had the desired impact.</p>
<b>Milestones</b>	<p><b>Measures for tracking and evaluating progress towards the end of year success criteria</b></p> <p>The success criteria for a priority broken down (termly or more frequent). What the school would expect to see at these points if the school is on track towards achieving the targets and success criteria identified for the priority. These are important for in-year evaluation of progress by leaders and governors.</p>

<p><b>Action Plan</b></p>	<p><b>What will we do to achieve our priorities and targets?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An action plan sets out strategically how the school intends to achieve a priority and its associated success criteria. School, subject and departmental improvement plans are made up of a number of action plans. These identify:</li> <li>• The actions / activities to be carried out</li> <li>• The expected impact of these actions (and/or positive changes we'd expect to see as a result of the action)</li> <li>• Who is responsible for the activities, with timescales</li> <li>• The resources needed to implement the plan along with costs and funding source</li> <li>• The monitoring arrangements - how the school will check that the action is on track and is being implemented in accordance with the plan and whether any changes are needed.</li> <li>• Evidence sources of the impact/progress</li> <li>• When and how overall progress with the action plan will be evaluated during the year</li> </ul>
<p><b>Evaluation</b></p>	<p><b>What impact have we made and what have we learned?</b></p> <p>Evaluation involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• making professional judgements about progress towards meeting the expected outcomes stated in the plan's success criteria and associated milestones</li> <li>• judging the impact of the improvements on standards, provision and leadership</li> <li>• considering what has contributed to achieving the outcomes;</li> <li>• recognising the reasons why some aspects of the plan were less successful</li> <li>• drawing on the lessons learned to inform future priorities and targets</li> </ul>
<p><b>Partnership Working</b></p>	<p><b>The School Improvement Plan must contain details of how the governing body will work with the wider community to achieve the school's strategic priorities.</b></p> <p>Partners and stakeholders include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• pupils</li> <li>• parents</li> <li>• governors</li> <li>• other schools, for example through the SIGs, pathfinder pairings, hubs and other collaboration</li> <li>• businesses and agencies</li> <li>• the local community</li> <li>• the local authority/CSC</li> </ul>

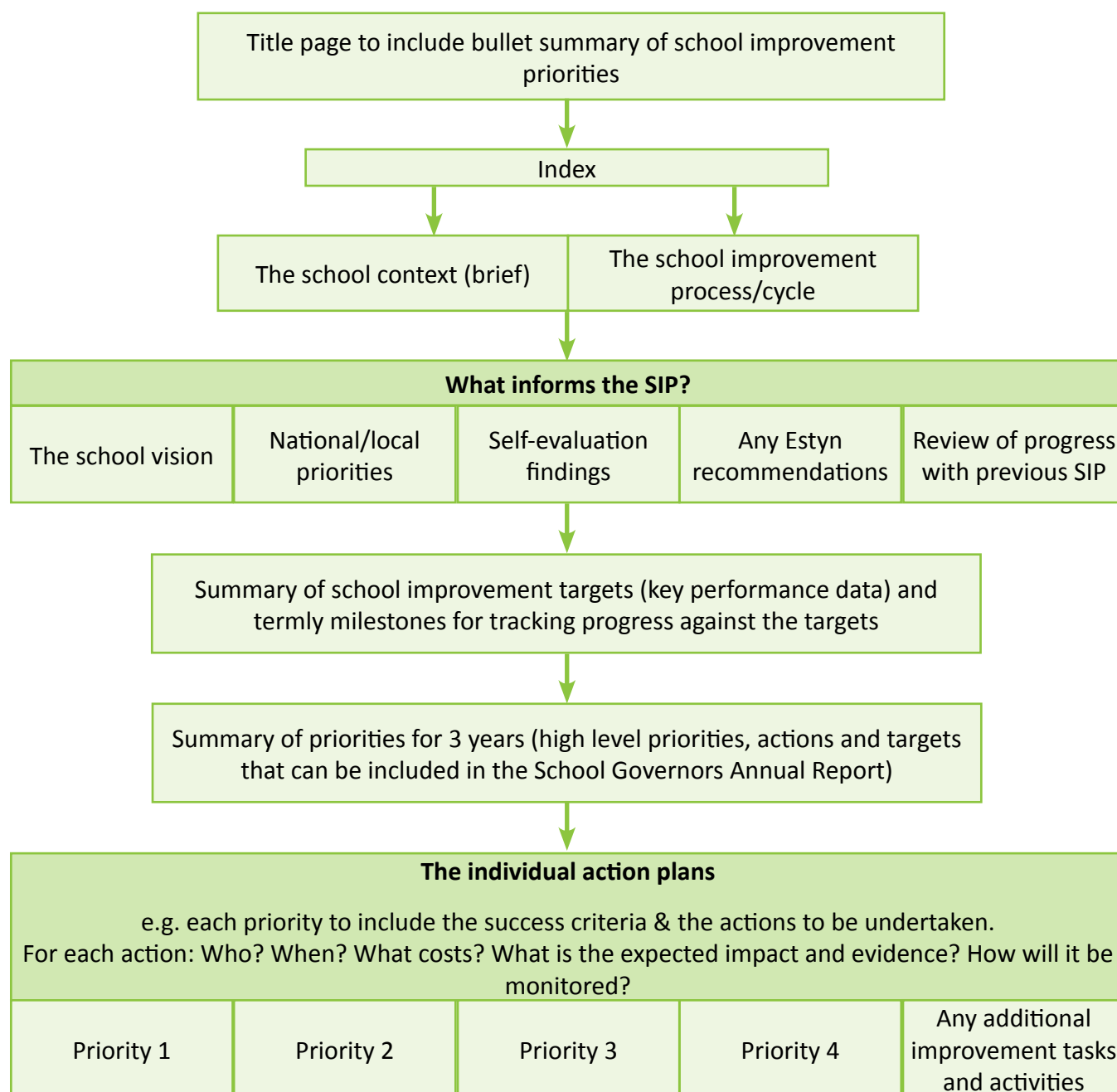
# School Improvement Planning - FAQs

<b>Is it a School Development Plan or a School Improvement Plan?</b>	Welsh Government use the term School Development Plan. However, schools are free to call it a School Improvement Plan. CSC guidance and documentation uses the term School Improvement Plan as this makes it clear that all priorities and actions should lead to improving learner outcomes.
<b>Do I need a separate plan for the use of EIG and PDG grant funding?</b>	No – schools only need one strategic improvement plan. However, schools need to clearly identify how they are using the grants in their plan and evaluate the impact of their spending. The CSC guidance suggests a summary of expenditure as an appendix to the plan.
<b>Who is responsible for preparing the School Improvement Plan?</b>	It is the duty of the governing body to ‘prepare, monitor, review and revise’ a SIP. The governing body are responsible for agreeing and ‘signing off’ the plan. In preparing a plan the governing body must consult with the headteacher, school staff, learners, parents/carers and others involved in the life and work of the school.
<b>What happens to the previous School Improvement Plan?</b>	The SIP should include a statement setting out the extent to which the school improvement targets for the previous school year were met. If targets were not met, a brief statement must be included as to the reason for that and any corrective action to be taken should be outlined.
<b>What time period does a School Improvement Plan cover?</b>	The SIP will usually run on the cycle of the academic year (although associated grant funding will be over the financial year). The SIP should cover 3 years: Year 1 will contain detailed priorities, targets and strategies, Year 2 and 3 will capture high level priorities and targets. The SIP is required to function as a rolling 3 year plan.
<b>How long should the plan be?</b>	The plan needs to contain sufficient detail to drive all strategic planning for improvement in the school. The number of priorities is for the school to determine. However, the quality of planning should be judged in terms of its impact on improvement and learner outcomes rather than the volume of detail it contains.
<b>Must the SIP contain priorities in relation to literacy, numeracy and closing the gap?</b>	<p>Yes, priorities should include literacy, numeracy and reducing the impact of poverty on educational attainment.</p> <p>However, individual schools will use their self-evaluation determine the precise focus of their planning in these areas to secure improvement alongside any other priorities identified by the school.</p>



<b>Should the SIP only focus on areas of weakness?</b>	The school will wish to give priority to those aspects where the need is greatest. However, planning can also support a process for identifying strengths, building on these and celebrating and sharing best practice, both within school and more widely. The key test of all plans is the impact they have on improving pupils' outcomes.
<b>Do schools in an Estyn category still require a Post Inspection Action Plan (PIAP)?</b>	The SIP is intended to be the single focus for all planning, support and challenge. Following inspection a school will need to demonstrate that it is addressing the inspection's recommendations appropriately. The school's leaders will determine how best to meet this requirement and the extent to which an existing SIP will need to be amended to accommodate planning in response to inspection. Schools in a statutory inspection follow-up category (significant improvement and special measures) are required to submit an action plan in response to the inspection's recommendations. This plan is called a PIAP and needs to be submitted to Estyn.
<b>How are challenge advisers involved in the process?</b>	The school's challenge adviser will be able to provide advice on the process, format and content. The SIP will inform the engagement of challenge advisers in their challenge and support role with schools. The challenge adviser will support and challenge schools in identifying and implementing the actions necessary to bring about improvements.
<b>Who needs to see the report?</b>	Welsh Government require that the SDP is in place by the 1st September each academic year. The SIP should be uploaded via Cronfa to CSC by 8th September as challenge advisers need to consider it as part of the national categorisation process.
<b>What is meant by working with the 'wider community?'</b>	The SIP must contain details of how the governing body will work with the wider community (e.g. parents/carers, local residents, agencies and businesses, the LA/CSC) in seeking to achieve the school improvement priorities. This also includes the school's work with other schools through, for example the SIGs, pathfinder pairings, hubs and other collaboration.

# An Outline Format for a School Improvement Plan



## Appendices

1. Full school targets and benchmarks – all groups of pupils (gender, eFSM etc.)
2. Monitoring, evaluation and review – arrangements and timetable – including governing body monitoring & review
3. Details of staff structure and roles/responsibilities & key external challenge & support
4. Summary of deployment of school finances including EIG & PDG
5. Summary of how the school intends to develop all staff (leadership, teaching, other)
6. Summary of partnership proposals to engage wider community including work with other schools through, for example, the SIGs, pathfinder pairings, hubs and other collaboration.

# A checklist for a School Improvement Plan (SIP)

The SIP should be the single strategic planning document that drives all aspects of improvement in the school and the single reference point for all key information and data relevant to the school improvement process.

SIPs should be uploaded via Cronfa to the CSC by 8th September 2017. The following is a checklist of the key features of an effective SIP that meets the expectations of the WG regulations.

Features		HT	GB	CA
School context (brief)				
What informs the SIP?	The School Vision			
	National/Local priorities			
	Review of progress with previous SIP			
	Self-evaluation findings from SER that relate			
	Any Estyn recommendations			
Pupil performance targets – expected level and above expected level + breakdown for groups of pupils (e.g. eFSM, gender) & attendance. All targets should match those agreed with CSC				
Termly milestones for tracking progress against the pupil performance targets				
Summary of key priorities for next 3 years - related to the areas identified above and clearly focused on improving standards				
Action Plans for each priority area/objective that contain:	The focus for improvement			
	The success criteria (quantitative and/or qualitative) for the priority + relevant milestones			
	Who will be leading on the priority + lead governor			
	Strategically planned and sequenced actions/activities to be undertaken			
	The expected impact and/or progress success criteria - source of evidence of this progress			
	Responsibilities for individual actions			
	Resources and costs and relevant funding stream			
	Timescale for beginning and completing the actions			
	Monitoring arrangements (+ evidence source)			
	Progress with action (e.g. current RAG status)			
	Built in evaluation of progress at intervals against milestones			
MER arrangements + timetable outlining exactly how leaders (including governors) will monitor and track progress against the actions and success criteria				
Summary of expenditure as an appendix to the plan will be used to support the SIP (including deployment of EIG, PDG and other grants)				
Whole school staff structure with roles and responsibilities				
Summary of how the school intends to develop their staff (leadership, teaching, other)				
Partnership working (other schools, local community and other partners)				
All staff and governors have a copy and are aware of the content and a summary copy is available via the School Governors' Annual Report				
The governing body have agreed the plan and have clear processes/ timescales in place for monitoring and reviewing progress with the plan				