

**Subject:**

**SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AND TARGET SETTING (PRIMARY)**

**Circular Number:**  
2016/03

**Date of Issue:**  
10 May 2016

**Target Audience:**

- Principals and Boards of Governors of all grant-aided primary schools;
- Education Authority;
- Council for Catholic Maintained Schools;
- Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment;
- Teachers' Unions; and
- General Teaching Council Northern Ireland.

**Summary of Contents:**

This circular provides information to support schools preparing or revising their school development plans. It also sets out details of the annual key stage outcomes data and the way in which the 2014/15 averages have been calculated.

**Enquiries:**

Any enquiries about the contents of this Circular should be addressed to:

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Standards and Improvement Team  
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**Governor Awareness:**  
Essential

**Status of Contents:**  
Information for schools

**Related Documents:**  
DE Circular 2010/22: "School Development Planning – Regulations & Guidance".

**Superseded Documents:**  
2015/01

**Expiry Date:**  
Not applicable

**DE Website:**  
<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk>

Tel: 028 9127 9568  
Fax: 028 9127 9100

**Additional copies:**  
Tel: 028 9127 9568

## School Improvement

1. Every School a Good School – A Policy for School Improvement emphasises that school improvement is first and foremost the responsibility of the school. It is based on the premise that schools themselves are best placed to identify areas for improvement and to implement changes that can bring about better outcomes for pupils. A copy of the policy is available on the DE internet site at;  
<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/every-school-good-school-policy-school-improvement>
2. Effective self-evaluation, and the actions that flow from it, should deliver improved educational outcomes and experiences for all pupils. Self- evaluation should be an integral part of the school development planning process with the resulting actions and targets captured in School Development Plans (SDPs).

## School Development Planning

3. The SDP is the school's strategic plan for improvement. It brings together the school's priorities, the main actions that will be taken to raise standards, the resources dedicated to these actions, and the key outcomes to be achieved.
4. The Education (School Development Planning) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010 set out the detailed requirements relating to the preparation of SDPs and the matters they should include. Each year the Board of Governors should review the progress that has been made against the SDP and revise it, as they consider necessary. As part of the annual review of the SDP, the Board of Governors will be involved with producing a summary and evaluation of the school's strategies for learning, teaching, assessment, and promoting the raising of standards of attainment among all pupils, in particular in communication, using mathematics and using Information and Communications Technologies (ICT).

The Regulations and Guidance on School Development Planning are available on the Department's website at;

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/school-development-planning>

5. As part of the C2k Education Network contract, a School Development Planning tool by Wholeschool is available to all schools. This is an on-line tool which can be used to create a dynamic, rolling, three-year plan. Information about the tool and how your school can activate it can be accessed via C2k Exchange using the following link when logged on in school;

<https://www.c2kexchange.net/software/User%20Manuals/Primary/Wholeschool%20Flyer.pdf>

In addition, Information sheet EN110 available on C2k Exchange provides detail about the School Development Planning tool. Schools can contact the C2k service desk (0870 6011 666) to have the SDP tool activated.

## **Target Setting**

6. When setting targets for improvement, schools will wish to take into account a range of factors, including:
  - i) the priorities set in the School Development Plan;
  - ii) the context within which the school is operating;
  - iii) overall performance and the gap between the highest and lowest achievers and between the most and least disadvantaged pupils; and
  - iv) the prior attainment of each year group.
7. Targets need to be challenging, yet achievable, and informed by robust and reliable information. School-level and pupil-level data will inform self-evaluation and help to identify areas where action might be taken to bring about improvement.
8. To assess trends and identify priorities for action, schools are encouraged to use information held within the school (including whatever additional assessment data the school uses to complement the statutory arrangements), information in the Department's statistical bulletins and information provided by the Education Authority.

## Calculating the NI averages

9. The table below provides Key Stage One and Key Stage Two benchmarking information which you may wish to use to inform target setting. The averages presented in the Annex are based on returns from a proportion of schools. Further details of how these have been calculated are available in the Key Stage Assessments: Levels of Progression 2014/15 Methodology Paper.
10. As they are based on a sample, the average is the best estimate and the actual value may lie between the higher and lower confidence limits provided in the table.

% pupils achieving the expected level			2014/15			2013/14
			Best Estimate	Lower Estimate	Higher Estimate	Best Estimate
KS1	Level 2 or above	Communication (English)	88.7	87.7	89.7	91.1
		Using Maths	90.3	89.4	91.2	92.2
KS2	Level 4 or above	Communication (English)	76.8	75.5	78.1	79.8
		Using Maths	77.4	76.1	78.7	80.3
KS2	Level 4 or above	FSME pupils:				
		Communication (English)	62.6	59.6	65.6	65.1
		Using Maths	64.1	61.2	67.1	65.6
		Non-FSME pupils:				
		Communication (English)	83.3	82.0	84.6	86.2
		Using Maths	83.6	82.2	84.9	86.8

## The use of end of Key Stage data

11. The primary purpose of the statutory assessment arrangements is as a tool used to raise the quality of the provision for numeracy, literacy and using ICT and to advance the skills of pupils in these crucial areas. Schools provide information to parents on

their child's assessment outcomes in Communication and Using Mathematics. The Department will not hold Key-Stage assessment data identifiable at school level, only at anonymised pupil level. It should be recognised that the collation and reporting of end of Key Stage outcomes centrally are a means by which the Department is held to account, as well as a means by which it demonstrates improvement.

12. Schools may be assured that the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) does not use Key Stage outcomes in isolation, or indeed those from any other test or assessment, as an external measure. The interest of the ETI is in how the Key Stage assessment arrangements work in schools as an assessment tool used for improvement in order to raise the quality of the provision for numeracy, literacy and using Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and to advance the skills of pupils in these crucial areas.<sup>1</sup>
13. A copy of this circular has been placed on the DE website. Any enquiries about the 2014/15 data or its interpretation should be addressed to **Patricia Wyers in the Analytical Services Unit** telephone number 028 9127 9213.
14. Enquiries about any other aspects of this Circular should be addressed to **Garry Phillips, Standards and Improvement Team**, telephone number 028 9127 9568.



**Karen McCullough**  
**Standards & Improvement Team**

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<sup>1</sup> Joint letter to schools end of key-stage outcome data, January 2015

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/joint-letter-schools-department-education-use-end-key-stage-outcome-data>