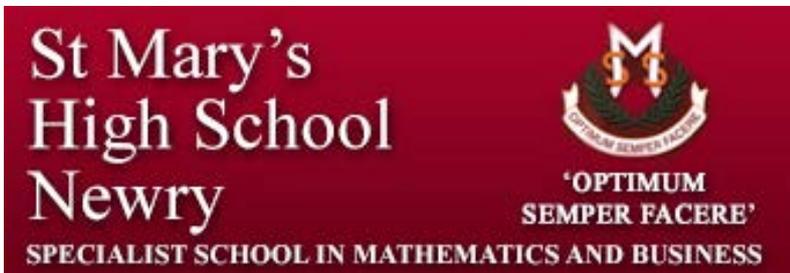


# Assessment Report

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## Investors in People Review Report for St Mary's High School Newry

Upper Chapel Street  
Newry  
BT34 2DT



**Product: Investors in People Generation 5**  
**Project Type: Three Year Review**  
**Award Level: Gold**

**Undertaken by Andy Galloway**  
**On behalf of Investors in People**

**Project Reference Number: NI-16-00035**

**Date: 21 April 2016**

**Commercial in Confidence**

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# 1. Executive Summary

Organisations that meet the world-recognised Investors in People Standard reflect the very best in people management excellence. Underpinning the Standard is the Investors in People Framework. Based on 20 years of leading practice, the Investors in People Framework is organised around ten key indicators of high performance. Your organisation's performance has been measured against the Framework to determine your organisation's level of accreditation.

Having planned, managed, coordinated and conducted the assessment process in accordance with the guidelines provided by UKCES and IIP Northern Ireland, I am satisfied that **St Mary's High School continues to meet the requirements of the Investors in People Core Standard and has demonstrated sufficient compliance with the Investors in People Extended Framework to continue to be recognised at the gold award.** You are to be congratulated on retaining recognition at this level.

It is rare to encounter an organisation that embraces the Investors in People Framework to the extent demonstrated by St Mary's High School. You have provided compelling and comprehensive evidence that you have embedded IIP into your organisation and place significant value on using it as your guide for people management. The range of evidence examined during review is too great to be reproduced in its entirety in this report. Rather this report seeks to highlight some excellent practice.

Considering each of the ten Indicators, the following is observed:

- **01 Business Strategy** – you comply with the requirements of the Education Authority in the construction of your School Development Plan, and you go above and beyond expectations with a comprehensive engagement process that includes the whole school and a range of stakeholders. Your approach to planning, monitoring and evaluation would put many a large business to shame. It is commendable and demonstrates best practice. Some recommendations have been made that will help you align your practices to the terminology of the 6<sup>th</sup> Generation Investors in People Framework.
- **02 Learning and Development** – you plan and execute a range of learning and development activities, linked to your School Development Plan and focused on developing your people with a view to improving performance. You effectively use internal methods such as coaching, mentoring, shadowing and cascading, and you are not afraid to invest in external training.
- **03 People Management** – people are supported, they can bring forward ideas, and they are listened to. You promote pastoral care for your staff, you take an interest in supporting a good work-life balance. There are robust strategies and policies in place for equality and diversity, and recruitment and selection with linkage to your School Development Plan. You make the most of people's talents and have created a culture where people give and receive constructive feedback.
- **04 Leadership and Management** – you take a proactive approach to develop leadership and management at all levels and in all roles, and it is notable that each person views themselves as a leader in their area of responsibility.
- **05 Management Effectiveness** – there is an excellent culture of giving constructive feedback, the senior management team demonstrates inspirational leadership and are role models to their staff. You have embedded coaching into the culture of the school. People work together collaboratively and share knowledge freely.
- **06 Recognition and Reward** – whilst you are unable to develop reward and recognition strategies, you do ensure people are recognised for their contribution to school performance. People feel valued. You celebrate success collectively and inclusively.

- **07 Involvement and Empowerment** – your people are trusted, they have delegated responsibility and they are empowered to make decisions, solve problems and try out new ideas. You are active in consultation with a whole school approach.
- **08 Learning & Development** – people take responsibility for their own learning and development. They can access courses, there are innovative and flexible options and all learning is valued.
- **09 Performance Measurement** – your ability to quantify the return on your investment is excellent and your systems for recording and measuring are outstanding. Your people have a clear understanding of how their development has improved the performance of their team and of the whole school.
- **10 Continuous Improvement** – you and your team can list improvements to the way people are managed, and you make good use of information from external reports. You demonstrate yourself as a reflective community who evaluate and act on the results. .

You have clearly demonstrated how Investors in People can be effectively used to bring about excellent people management practices. There are many examples, some of which to retain confidentiality could not be used in this report but nonetheless provide context and confirmation that you are an excellent example of an Investor in your People. Congratulations on presenting an excellent review and demonstrating St Mary's High School to be an organisation that fully embodies the spirit of 'Investing in People' to the highest standard.

You are in a strong position to continue your Investors in People journey through use of the Investors in People Sixth Generation Framework and this report provides links to enable you to make the transition as you begin your next planning cycle early in 2016.

## 2. Organisation Overview

St Mary's High School is a maintained, all girls, non selective, all ability 11 – 19 school for girls in the city of Newry, Co Down. A high performing school, St Mary's was designated in 2009 with specialist status in Mathematics and Business through the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust. Recognised as both an 'Eco School' and a 'Rights Respecting School' St Mary's achieved IIP recognition on May 2010 and on its first review in June 2013 achieved the prestigious award of IIP Gold. Opened in 1961 the school currently has a staff of 48 and 570 pupils. In the ETI 'Report of Inspection' dated October 2015, St Mary's High School achieved the highest performance level of '**Outstanding**'.

### **Mission Statement**

Optimum Semper Facere 'Always To Do One's Best'

*We will work in collaboration with other educational institutions and in partnership with parent and students to maximise academic and creative potential of students, enabling them to achieve the highest educational standards, thereby enriching their lives, the community and the economy.*

### **Vision**

*Our vision is to educate and develop the students in our school to the highest possible standard and as a Catholic School, to awaken them to the challenge of living according to the Catholic Faith whilst also appreciating diversity.*

### **Strategic Aims**

#### *Valuing Education*

- To promote the value of education through the celebration of achievement and personal endeavor
- To engender a love of learning as a lifelong process and an appreciation of its relevance in everyday life

#### *Fulfilling Potential*

- To provide young people with learning opportunities suited to their needs and abilities
- To maximise the academic and creative potential of students by challenging them to be independent thinkers and lifelong learners
- To provide students with the opportunity to develop competence and confidence in eLearning
- To give students opportunity to learn about factors which impact on learning e.g. learning styles, techniques to improve learning, healthy lifestyles
- To prepare students for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life and equip them with the skills to manage their career development
- To foster the personal and social development of students as responsible members of society
- To collaborate with other schools and colleges to improve learning and extend opportunity

#### *Promoting Equality and Inclusion*

- To ensure all members of the school community are treated with respect and that there is equality of access to resources
- To encourage tolerance and respect for others and to promote the value of diversity

#### *Resourcing Education*

- To use resources effectively to support and improve learning
- To ensure procedures are in place to appoint and develop skilled and motivated staff
- To seek opportunities to provide additional funding to support and improve learning
- To provide a safe, healthy, stimulating and well-equipped learning environment
- To actively promote the welfare of pupils and staff

**Current business priority:** Sustaining a curriculum that allows pupils to engage due to:

- English exam boards pulling out of Northern Ireland
- New applied subjects
- The momentum of change increasing

During our planning discussion and in line with your overall school priorities, we agreed this assessment presented an opportunity to review how St Mary's High School is currently working with the Investors in People Core Standard and the Extended Framework, and as a result we identified the following six development priorities to frame the review:

**1. Involvement of staff in developing the School Development Plan, including strategies and plans to facilitate proposed changes**

- Indicator 01 - A strategy for improving the performance of the school is clearly defined and understood through the School Development Plan (SDP)

**2. To acknowledge the changes St Mary's face and explore methods to support staff**

- Indicator 03 - Strategies for managing people are designed to promote equality of opportunity in the development of the School's people (staff)

**3. Meeting the challenges to current curriculum and new curriculum pathways through learning and development**

- Indicator 02 - Learning and development is planned to achieve the School's SDP
- Indicator 08 - People learn and develop effectively to deliver the SDP

**4. Examine the impact of coaching to further develop leadership and management in the school**

- Indicator 04 – the capabilities needed to lead, manage and develop people effectively are clearly defined and understood
- Indicator 05 – The School Leadership Team is effective in leading, managing and developing people

**5. Evaluate performance management through PRSD, review and reflective practice on an all-staff basis**

- Indicator 06 – People's contribution to the school is recognised and valued
- Indicator 07 – People are encouraged to take ownership and responsibility by being involved in decision making

**6. Raising standards through evaluation**

- Indicator 09 – The investment in people improves the performance of the school
- Indicator 10 – improvements are continually made to the way people are managed and developed

This is your third review against the Investors in People Standard and the Investors in People Extended Framework.

### 3. Outcome of the assessment

This report confirms the outcomes of on-site interviews and a review of relevant documentation submitted by St Mary's High School during assessment in April 2016, and that sufficient, reliable and valid evidence was gathered to conclude **St Mary's High School fully meets all criteria within the Investors in People Core Standard.**

An additional 157 evidence requirements were explored and assessed from the Investors in People Extended Framework. 141 of these were met in full. (6 more than in 2013)

Consequently this review confirms that a total of 180 evidence requirements have been met, and a recommendation is made that **St Mary's High School should continue to be recognised as an Investors in People Gold organisation** for meeting the defined quota of additional evidence requirements.

St Mary's High School is to be congratulated on an excellent review against the Investors in People Framework. There is good evidence that you are using Investors in People as a people management methodology and you are on a journey of continuous improvement of people management practices.

Appreciation is extended to the Principal Margo Cosgrove, Vice Principal Denise Crawley and the Leader of Learning Maurice Fitzpatrick for accommodating the on-site schedule and co-ordinating all stages of the assessment, and to all the staff who took part in the meetings, for their openness, candour and constructive comments.

Mr Maurice Fitzpatrick greatly assisted the review through the cataloguing and provision of a comprehensive range of documents providing supporting evidence, and is due a particular word of thanks and appreciation.

St Mary's High School is a truly inspirational place. It has been a privilege to review your school against the full IIP Framework and I look forward to working with you in the future.

## 4. Areas of Strength

- The use of 'Plan, Do and Review' is explicit in your processes. Business planning takes the format set out by the Education Authority, and is a comprehensive process involving a whole school approach, where all staff contribute appropriately. All plans are linked directly to the School Development Plan. Measuring and monitoring is continuous and there is room to make adjustments as issues emerge. The evaluation and review is also a continuous process, with summative evaluation twice yearly. St Mary's demonstrates the plan, do, review principal at the highest level.
- Policies such as equality and diversity, recruitment and selection and addressing work life balance are robust and appropriate to the sector and shape of the organisation, and there is a proactive approach to ensuring people are managed in such a way as to enable them to achieve their full potential. Pastoral care and support is excellent.
- Developing leaders and managers for the future is a particular strength. There are options available for people to pursue, there is support from senior managers, mentoring is implicit throughout, and there is guidance and advice on career progression.
- Sharing knowledge, information and practice takes place organically, informally and formally through a range of methods and channels. St Mary's demonstrates itself to be a 'learning organisation', people collaborate, explore, adapt and are not afraid to make mistakes and learn from them.
- Celebrating success as a 'whole school' – St Mary's is a high achieving school and has been recognised as such by a number of external bodies. Success is celebrated collectively with a whole school approach.
- Continuous improvement of people management practices which are measured and assessed through cost benefits analysis, evaluation and reflection. St Mary's continues to strive for improvements.

## 5. Areas of Development

- Clarification around the terminology used in the strategic documents (including School Development Plan) to ensure it is commensurate with the 6<sup>th</sup> Generation Investors in People Framework
- Review of analytical tools used to establish both the strengths and development needs of the school, and to analyse the challenges of the external environment
- Develop tools and people to steer the school through anticipated changes to the educational landscape in the coming years.

## 6. Findings

The following narrative provides a summary of the findings against the objectives agreed as part of the review planning process. Feedback has been provided against each of the people management and development priority areas identified, with links to the evidence requirements.

### **People Priority - Involvement of staff in developing the School Development Plan, including strategies and plans to facilitate proposed changes**

**Indicator 01 - A strategy for improving the performance of the school is clearly defined and understood through the School Development Plan (SDP)**

St Mary's High School demonstrates an exemplary approach to school planning. The School Development Plan (SDP) 2014-2017 clearly sets out the vision and aims for the school with a supporting strategy to achieve those aims through a process of continuous improvement, both in school results (pupils) and in people management practices (staff). It is acknowledged planning is an ongoing activity within schools, and St Mary's presents a very strong inclusive and collaborative 'whole school' approach to the planning process. Teacher, classroom assistants and support staff are appropriately involved. People consistently have an understanding of the plan commensurate with their role and responsibility and can describe how they contribute towards achieving aims and objectives.

St Mary's takes cognizance of the representative groups (Teacher's Unions) and indicates minimal input from the unions into planning and development activities. The evidence suggests a strong relationship with representative groups.

Values are shown on the plan as the four strategic aims:

1. Valuing education
2. Fulfilling potential
3. Promoting equality and inclusion
4. Resourcing education



"I would confidently say our values are lived"

The values were developed some twelve years previously but are reviewed in each planning cycle. Senior management describe how the values are essential to school life, providing structure and stability, and apply equally to pupils and staff. Conversations with senior and middle managers, teachers, classroom assistants and staff provide compelling evidence that the values of the school are intrinsic to the school in all its activities, both classroom based and people based. The IIP review findings on values are consistent with those found by the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) who carried out a thorough review of the school in October 2015.



"Our staff are involved through a whole school approach"

The SDP is completed with the involvement of a range of stakeholders. Consultation takes place with pupils, parents, governors, primary schools, the Newry & Mourne Area Learning Community (ALC) as well as regulatory bodies such as the Education Authority (EA) to ensure the plan is comprehensive and has ownership across the board. Involvement of staff is the primary activity and it is noted there are good strategic activities involved including forecasting and analysis of the external environment.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are set within the framework of the SDP and are reviewed continually. KPIs are employed as part of the 'Raising Standards' strategy, and there is strong evidence of base-lining data and monitoring performance. Teachers describe the school as being 'data rich' and using the data as a performance management tool. They can give examples of putting in place interventions to address gaps in performance and there is an explicit culture of continuous

improvement through active use of performance indicators. The range of performance documents submitted for (desktop) review is commendable and demonstrates a comprehensive approach that involves people from all areas of school life.

St Mary's High School has a proactive approach to social responsibility, embedded in the school values. Commensurate with the ethos and teachings of the Catholic Church the school is actively involved in supporting a number of projects which include establishing links with and supporting school projects in Nigeria, raising funds for missionary work with Zambian street children, and at a local level supporting charities such as The Simon Community, St Vincent De Paul and Davina's Ark. The range of social, community and parish activities of the school were presented in documentation for IIP review, including the findings of UNICEF in their report recognising St Mary's as a Level 2 Rights Respecting School.



"We support the idea that as a school we have both a local and global responsibility"

**Future Focus:** You are in a strong position to use the new Generation 6 Investors in People Framework in your future planning processes and it is worth introducing it into your people management policies as you move forward from this assessment. This report will make linkage to the new Framework to facilitate your progress.

St Mary's High School has presented compelling evidence of a business strategy entirely and comprehensively in keeping with the Investors in People Extended Framework. You demonstrate a number of strengths and approaches that can be considered as best practice in your sector, including your use of values which act as the adhesive that galvanises your 'whole school' approach to planning, improvement to performance and ethos of social responsibility.

In considering IIP Gen 6, the following actions are particularly relevant:

Your values whilst comprehensively understood by staff, are shown in your SDP as strategic aims. This is a moot point. Strategic terms are interchangeable within the understanding and narrative of the organisation. However it would be advantageous to term your strategic aims as 'Values' to ensure there is no ambiguity whenever your next review takes place.

In a similar fashion, ensure you can distinguish between the terms 'purpose', 'vision' and 'objectives'. This is perhaps most relevant when you construct the SDP for 2017 – 2020. There is nothing wrong with your current terminology (vision, Aims, Mission Statement), though it is worth noting that across a number of sectors and industries these terms are increasingly changing. The new IIP Gen 6 Framework has been designed to reflect the most up-to-date thinking, practice and terminology, and uses 'purpose, vision and objectives' and 'values'.

Finally, your people and your documentation refer to completing SWOT analysis in your approach to planning. SWOT is a tool best used as a framework to capture the internal resources and capabilities. It can introduce negative connotations (weaknesses, threats). The approach taken by Investors in People is to identify 'Strengths' and 'Areas for Development', which is much more positive and proactive in its terminology.

You may find the use of the use of STEP Analysis (*Fahey and Narayanan 1986*) as a more effective model to analyse the external environment. This tool simply considers the sociological, technical, economical and political changes that are taking place or are anticipated in the environment outside the school, which will impact on the school's performance. It is a tool that lends itself really well to a whole school approach including the contribution of non-teaching staff.

With this in mind, the following recommendations are made to enhance your current practice and help you integrate IIP Gen 6 into your planning processes:

**Recommendation:** Review the terminology you use in your School Development Plan to ensure there is no ambiguity for your people when describing your purpose, vision, objectives and core values when you next complete a review against the Investors in People Framework (Generation 6). This ideally would take place prior to constructing your School Development Plan September 2017 – June 2020.

**Recommendation:** Consider adapting the tools you use in your planning process – namely replacing SWOT with the simpler version of ‘Strengths and Areas for Development’ for your internal analysis, and introducing STEP (Sociological, Technical, Economic and Political) for your external analysis.

### **Links To the Investors in People Framework Generation 6**

#### **Indicator 1 Leading and inspiring people:**

- Creating transparency and trust
- Motivating people to deliver the organisations objectives
- Developing leadership capability

#### **Indicator 2 Living the organisation’s values and behaviours:**

- Operating in line with the values
- Adopting the values
- Living the values

**People Priority - To acknowledge the changes St Mary's face and explore methods to support staff**

**Indicator 03 - Strategies for managing people are designed to promote equality of opportunity in the development of the School's people (staff)**

St Mary's High School is facing significant changes to its curriculum and the provision it offers to pupils as the EA phase out continuous-assessment based A Levels in favour of summative assessment-based awards. Whilst this is outside the control of St Mary's, it has necessitated senior managers and teaching staff to source alternatives that are suitable for the school demographic. This is acknowledged as a stressful time for teaching staff.

In facing the challenges St Mary's demonstrates its ability to involve everyone in seeking solutions and there are strong examples of people bringing forward ideas and suggestions to improve performance. One such example is a proposed A level (mathematics) that will be introduced in September 2016. People confirm they can bring forward ideas to senior management and they will be listened to. Teachers are encouraged to be innovative and explore new avenues in the pursuit of continuous improvement. Classroom assistants cite examples of making suggestions to adapt lessons for pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN).

"I feel very comfortable suggesting things to my line manager and to the Vice Principal"

The size of the school very much facilitates a small community where people work closely with the senior leadership team and are on personal terms with all of their colleagues including the Principal and Vice Principal. This enables a relationship where people are supported, their pastoral and professional needs are met and there is equality of opportunity. It is apparent that there is a strong team approach and that all roles and responsibilities are valued, respected and appreciated. The people management practices are effective and conversations with staff consistently suggest they feel personally supported by the management team. The school has a structure that allows people to make the most of their talents and there are good examples of teaching staff using their experience in other subjects and classroom assistants running extra curricula activities for pupils who need additional support in literacy and numeracy.

"From the way this school is set up pastorally from the top down, there is systems to support and an open door policy"

Feedback is a constant activity. There are formal mechanisms such as Performance Review and Staff Development (PRSD), and appraisals for non-teaching staff. However informal and formal feedback conversations between peers, managers and senior managers are part of the fabric of school life, from the staffroom, to the corridors to scheduled meetings. There are good examples of departmental meetings, in sharing practice and through peer observation (Trusted Colleague).

Recruitment and selection (externally) is commensurate with the guidelines issued by the EA and the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS). Vacancies are advertised, candidates are shortlisted and interviewed. People consistently believe the process is fair and transparent, and with a current over-supply of teachers in Northern Ireland the school is able to recruit to achieve organisational needs. In addition, the school is able to recruit specific skill sets and make linkage to its organisational strategy. Internal recruitment is considered fair and takes place in an open and transparent manner, with vacancies advertised and equality of opportunity. Where people are recruited for part

"It is fair. Everyone would be encouraged to go for it, everyone has an equal chance."

time positions, for example providing extra tuition for art students completing A Level portfolios, there is evidence that teaching staff and Heads of Departments can have an input into the process.

St Mary's High School demonstrates a strategic approach in promoting equality and diversity, as a Rights Respecting School (RRSA) at Level 2. This award from Unicef supports schools across the UK to embed children's human rights in their ethos and culture. The award recognises achievement in putting the 'UN Convention on the Right of the Child' at the heart of a school's practice to improve well-being and help all children and young people realise their potential. The award is based on principles of equality, dignity, respect, non-discrimination and participation.

Embedded as a school value (Promoting Equality and Inclusion) this is a significantly proactive approach to equality and diversity, and is reflected in how staff treat each other and interact together as well as how they deliver education to pupils. There are explicit links to the SDP and it is embedded in people management practices. Diversity is reflected in the makeup of the school staff, including people of different faiths and nationalities.



"Diversity is cherished, promoted and celebrated"

There is a proactive approach to work life balance in St Mary's. Timetables are constructed to give teachers additional time for departmental and pastoral team meetings. There is additional support in place for teachers taking students through GCSE and A Level course work, and the senior management take time to listen to staff to ensure the workload can be spread. Teachers and classroom assistants cover for each other knowing that it will be reciprocated. With a large number of staff with family commitments there is an understanding that occasionally family issues (sick children etc) will emerge and staff feel free to ring the principal to ask for time off, rather than having to take other measures, such as annual leave or sick leave. There is a 'whole school' approach to team building days which incorporate a social element and this is an annual event. Health and Wellbeing is explicitly addressed in the SDP which states *"The vision for health and wellbeing of staff is to create a safe and supportive environment for staff in which they as individuals, supported in maintaining good health and treated with dignity and respect."*



"We don't have people ringing in sick!"

**Future Focus:** You demonstrate a very strong people management strategy and you adequately cover some areas not always apparent, such as equality and diversity and work-life balance, both of which are embedded in your SDP. It is noted you have made improvements since your last IIP Review. Looking forward to IIP Gen 6 you will find the new Indicator 6 'Structuring Work' is very relevant and will enable you to ensure your structure allows you to achieve your organisational ambition.

## Links To the Investors in People Framework Generation 6

### Indicator 6 Structuring work

- Designing roles
- Creating autonomy in roles
- Enabling collaborative working

## People Priority - Meeting the challenges to current curriculum and new curriculum pathways through learning and development

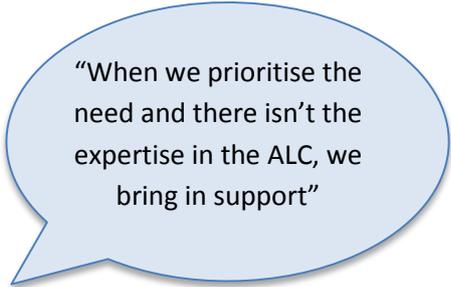
Indicator 02 - Learning and development is planned to achieve the School's SDP

Indicator 08 - People learn and develop effectively to deliver the SDP

St Mary's High School is a 'learning organisation' with the professional development of staff explicit in its SDP. The plan defines '*Professional development is concerned with the needs of the staff as individuals with particular interests and career aspirations*'. There is an explicit commitment to support staff wishing to undertake professional development including post-graduate, senior and middle management, leadership, and training courses using both external and internal sources. The school has a professional development policy, and maintains a professional development profile for each member of staff. There is comprehensive documentation to demonstrate linkage to business objectives and the evaluation of the impact. This allows middle managers and people to have an involvement in identifying learning and development needs and putting in place activities or interventions to build and enhance capacity.

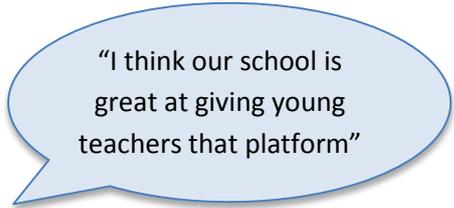
A member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) holds the portfolio of 'Professional Development Leader and is responsible for coordinating CPD within the school, ensuring opportunities are offered and people are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning. There is strong compelling evidence that St Mary's has created a culture of continuous learning.

Whilst opportunities exist to source training and qualification from external sources, the school actively uses internal learning through coaching and mentoring activities, peer review and sharing practice. St Mary's is a member of the Newry and Mourne Area Learning Community (ALC) with 16 other post primary schools, and maximises the opportunity to learn from other schools, sending both teachers and classroom assistants to observe and share with colleagues. Often the support or learning is available within the ALC, but where that is not the case St Mary's buys in training from external sources.



"When we prioritise the need and there isn't the expertise in the ALC, we bring in support"

Managers and staff view the sharing of practice that takes place at inset days as being invaluable, and often consider the internal training as much more effective than external training. There is a range of experience amongst the teaching staff, and it was noted that experienced teachers were keen to 'learn' from those who are more recently qualified. For example one Head of Department described how she asked a newly qualified teacher to deliver in-department training for her colleagues on the use of the electronic whiteboard, and views this as a great way of keeping older teachers up-to-date and developing new teacher's confidence and leadership skills.



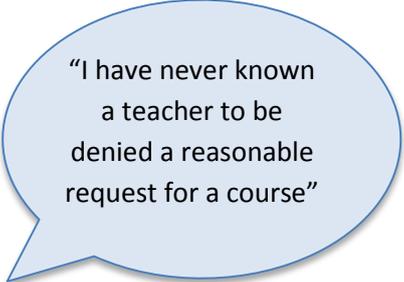
"I think our school is great at giving young teachers that platform"

Heads of Department have plans in place to build the capability of their teams, either through external training, access to the ALC or through sharing good practice. There are good examples cited – attending a 'Literacy Conference' in Edinburgh and disseminating the learning across the school, bringing in trainers from to provide bespoke courses and using mentoring opportunities.

People indicate that both senior managers and Heads of Department are considered to be role models for continuous learning and they are aware there is an assumption they will take responsibility for their own learning and development, and an expectation they will be supported by the SLT. The culture of continuous learning applies equally to non-teaching staff and classroom assistants, and whilst they acknowledge they do not have the same opportunities as teaching staff, they do have access to training

should they require it and it is available. There is some evidence that a variety of methods is used to take account of different learning styles, though this may need further exploration.

The evidence from discussions with Heads of Department, teachers and classroom assistants is conclusive in that people's learning and development needs are identified and met, through a range of activities and solutions. People are motivated to learn. There are examples of teachers and classroom assistants engaging in training that has closed a gap in school performance or has enhanced current provision.



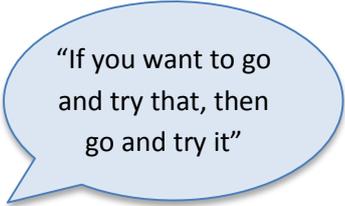
"I have never known a teacher to be denied a reasonable request for a course"

There is an adequate and effective induction for new staff. During review two teachers described how they were inducted into the team before the school term commenced in September 2015, and considered it to be a very comforting, supportive process where they were made very welcome and quickly integrated into the team.

Mentoring is part of the culture especially amongst teaching staff. There are examples of mentoring taking place within departments, for example one departmental Head stood down and mentored her replacement over the following year to ensure she developed the skills and competency. There is clear evidence of the SENCO mentoring classroom assistants.

There is evidence of acknowledging and celebrating success within departments – described as '*celebrating with a chocolate cake*' and acknowledging people's achievements in meetings. There are examples of acknowledgment in whole school forums.

There is a willingness to experiment and learn from mistakes as much as successes. Knowledge is cascaded and shared between colleagues. St Mary's demonstrates itself as a school that embraces, promotes and encourages continuous learning as an every day activity.



"If you want to go and try that, then go and try it"

**Future Focus:** St Mary's High School embodies continuous learning and demonstrates itself as a learning organisation. You have a challenge in adapting to a new curriculum, but your staff are up for the challenge and are already seeking new, innovative and cost-effective ways to prepare themselves and the school for change. Looking forward to IIP Gen 6 you will find the new Indicator 7 'Building Capability' puts a renewed focus on people's capabilities, realising potential and enables you to ensure you have the right people at the right time in the right place.

## Links To the Investors in People Framework Generation 6

### Indicator 7 Building capacity:

- Understanding people's potential
- Supporting learning and development
- Deploying the right people at the right time

## People Priority - Examine the impact of coaching to further develop leadership and management in the school

Indicator 04 – the capabilities needed to lead, manage and develop people effectively are clearly defined and understood

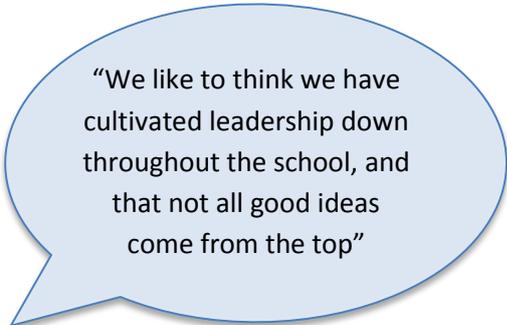
Indicator 05 – The School Leadership Team is effective in leading, managing and developing people

The knowledge, skills and behaviours required to lead, manage and develop people in schools is defined by the EA and integrated into staff development programmes such as the Professional Qualification for Headship (PQH) and the National Standards for Leadership (schools), and these skills and standards are integrated into performance management tools such as PRSD. St Mary's has demonstrated itself as a school that encourages its teaching staff to formally pursue and develop school leadership skills, though it is also noted that once qualifications are achieved teachers are reluctant to move on to leadership opportunities arising in other schools, such is the commitment to St Mary's.

All teachers are considered to have a leadership role and the school structure is established to ensure each member of teaching staff has a leadership responsibility for year group, subject area or specialism. A number of teachers actively support colleagues in other schools through the ALC, and a small number are completing post-graduate degrees in education. Non-teaching staff also take on leadership roles in literacy, numeracy and extra curricula activities.

School leadership is explicitly addressed through the SDP and there are metrics to measure effectiveness through the 'raising of standards' programme. This is supported by additional documentary evidence, for example the 'Whole School Review June 2015' which presents a comprehensive review of leadership and management with explicit linkage to strategies and plans.

St Mary's approach to leadership and management was recognised during the ETI 'Report of Inspection' dated October 2015 where it was noted '*A significant strength of the SLT is their commitment to empowering, supporting and enabling all members of the school community to lead effectively in the areas for which they have responsibility*'. This was reinforced by staff who during interviews described an environment where they are encouraged to take the lead, to develop leadership skills, and benefit from mentoring programmes from more experienced colleagues and from the SLT. There is a tacit appreciation of the guidance provided by the Principal and Vice Principal, and people believe they have good opportunities to develop and progress.

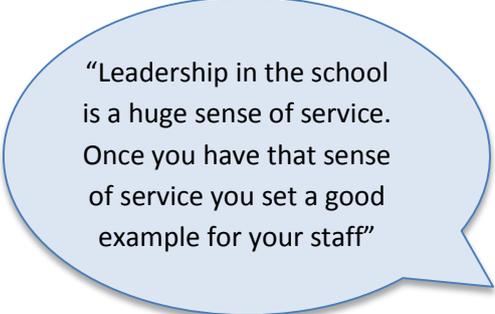


"We like to think we have cultivated leadership down throughout the school, and that not all good ideas come from the top"



"It's a school that is very innovative and I can see how each of the senior management team contribute"

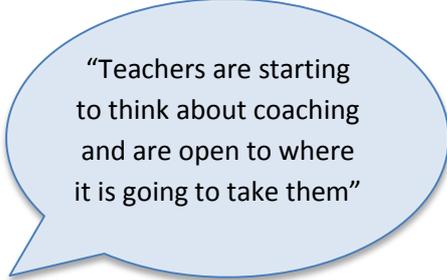
St Mary's High School has a performance management system with objectives and KPIs that are regularly measured, monitored, reviewed and discussed. People receive regular constructive feedback on performance and the outcomes are published both within the school and to outside agencies and stakeholders. During review a raft of data was examined demonstrating both measurement and feedback mechanisms. St Mary's is to be commended on presenting robust performance management, which is directly linked to the SDP and integrated into school strategies, including Leadership and Management.



“Leadership in the school is a huge sense of service. Once you have that sense of service you set a good example for your staff”

The SLT demonstrate themselves as role models for leadership and management. The Principal describes her role as a ‘sense of service’, which in turn cultivates a sense of creating ‘a good example for staff’. There is an understanding by the SLT of the need to not only ‘talk the talk’ but also ‘walk the walk’ and they make a concerted effort to create a culture of leadership throughout the school. Inspirational leadership is evident and this is reinforced by conversations with middle managers and both teaching and non-teaching staff.

People agree they are managed and developed commensurate with school values, they receive advice and guidance that allows them to plan and develop their careers and they have progression opportunities. Formal training in coaching is currently taking place for teaching and non-teaching staff over an 18 month programme and this will ensure coaching is firmly embedded into the school culture. However it could be argued that coaching at an informal level is already very much part of the school culture, though it may be referred to as ‘mentoring’ or ‘observations’ and is not always recognised by staff as coaching activities. Coaching is considered as an opportunity for progression and opens up development opportunities not only in St Mary's, but within other schools within the SLA. Staff cite examples of the Principal, Vice Principal, and Leader of Learning as coaching them through development or issues that arise.



“Teachers are starting to think about coaching and are open to where it is going to take them”

There is a strong culture of giving feedback within St Mary's High School, with line managers regularly engaging through both formal processes such as PRSD and the ‘Trusted Colleague’ programme, and informal channels such as ad-hoc observations, sharing practice and departmental meetings. Staff describe feedback as an ongoing process, something that takes place organically, and can happen in the staff room or corridor as much as in a formal feedback session. This collaborative, reflective approach works really well and people respect and trust not only their managers but each other. People believe feedback is acted upon, they are listened to and there is a culture of openness and trust across the school team which is implied in the school values.



“I think as valuable as trusted colleagues are the conversations we have in the corridor”

A teacher completing her third year of professional development (EPD2) provided an excellent example of coaching, mentoring and continuous development through timely and effective feedback. She is supported by the Professional Development Leader, receives feedback on her performance, is supported in completing folders and action plans, is signposted to teaching resources and is set realistic SMART targets. She describes a supportive process that is allowing her to flourish and develop, whilst at the same time receiving guidance and advice on how to progress her career.

**Future Focus:** You demonstrate yourself to be a school that promotes and develops leadership and management across your team and there is a tacit culture of coaching, supporting and developing people at all levels. Your staff recognise that this comes from the top and you lead by example. St Mary's High School has been recognised as a leading school by the ETI. This review examined the impact of coaching to further develop leadership and management in the school and it was found to be highly effective and a model of best practice. You are good at giving feedback through a range of methodologies and there is a robust performance management system.

Looking forward to IIP Gen 6 give consideration to Indicator 4 'Managing Performance' which considers the measurement of performance against objectives and provides feedback. There are also links to Indicator 7 'Building Capability' with a focus on understanding and developing your people's full potential.

The new Indicator 9 'Creating Sustainable Success' focuses on the future and proactively addresses change. Managing change is an area you have previously not been tested on through IIP Review, but is an area you may wish to give some attention to over the next three year period. This is timely – the school is currently experiencing change being forced upon it by external exam boards and by government regulation. Embracing change, communicating change, capturing and measuring the benefits and actively managing change are all elements you need to take cognisance of looking to the future.

**Recommendation:** Review how you manage change within the school and in particular consider how change is communicated, measured and reviewed. You may find it useful to appoint a 'change champion' and engage in a relevant change management process, such as Kotter's 8 step model.

See <http://www.kotterinternational.com/the-8-step-process-for-leading-change/>

## Links To the Investors in People Framework Generation 6

### Indicator 4 Managing Performance:

- Setting objectives
- Encouraging high performance
- Measuring and assessing performance

### Indicator 7 Building capacity:

- Understanding people's potential
- Supporting learning and development
- Deploying the right people at the right time

### Indicator 9 Creating sustainable success:

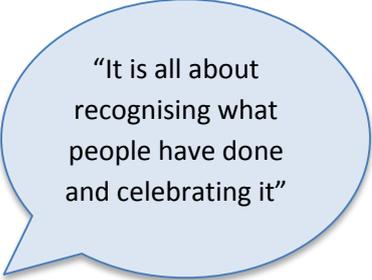
- Focusing on the future
- Embracing change
- Understanding the external context

## People Priority - Evaluate performance management through PRSD, review and reflective practice on an all-staff basis

Indicator 06 – People’s contribution to the school is recognised and valued

Indicator 07 – People are encouraged to take ownership and responsibility by being involved in decision making

People feel valued and they understand that as a team they share in the success of the school. This is not just about exam results, though that is a strong motivational factor, and both teaching and non-teaching staff want to see all their pupils achieve good grades. There is a strong view that student’s success acknowledges staff contribution. It is also about the successes of the school in other areas. St Mary’s is proud of being recognised as an IIP Gold school and is aware that only a few schools hold this level of accreditation. The school holds other awards and standards, for example it is a Rights Respecting School, a Welcoming School, an Eco School and is a member of the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust (for business and mathematics). Managers and staff agree this recognises the contribution, commitment and passion of all of the staff. Perhaps this is best illustrated with the school achieving the highest performance level of ‘Outstanding’ in its ETI Inspection of October 2015. As a celebration all of the staff, both teaching and non-teaching enjoyed a celebration meal in a local hotel.



“It is all about recognising what people have done and celebrating it”

People have an awareness of their contribution and can describe in detail how they make a positive difference to the performance of the school. Managers at all levels and colleagues are prone to positive reinforcement, thanking people and showing appreciation, whilst commenting favourably and ensuring the right people receive recognition. One classroom assistant spoke favourably of the Principal’s approach of inclusion and team recognition, ensuring that in school events everyone is included.



“She recognises what we do, she makes sure we are included in the staff trips and at the Christmas dinner – she is very good”

As a public sector organisation St Mary’s does not have the freedom to develop reward and recognition strategies that are linked to the SDP or to performance, however the SLT does have a clear understanding of what motivates their staff, take steps to ensure people’s contribution is recognised, and adopt a whole school approach to celebrating success. All staff spoken to during review indicated enthusiastically that they feel valued and are personally motivated working in the school. It is apparent St Mary’s enjoys a very positive, rewarding work environment.

St Mary’s is structured to ensure everyone takes a leadership role, and therefore takes ownership and responsibility for at least one aspect of the school. Both managers and staff enjoy an environment where they can make appropriate decisions, engage in problem solving and implement interventions that improve the performance of the school. There are good examples from Heads of Departments, classroom assistants and even teachers who are providing temporary cover (maternity leave). One classroom assistant presented an example of taking responsibility for a literacy club, including appropriate decision making and sourcing the resources for pupils.

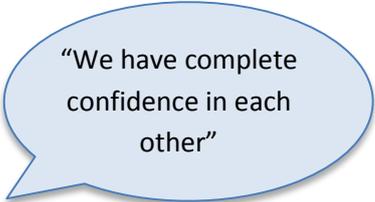


“I can make the decisions and I am sourcing the material for the girls”

A member of the SLT described how communications are managed across the school, ensuring there are effective and robust internal systems that allow knowledge and information to be freely shared with both teaching and non-teaching staff. This includes staff meetings,

department meetings, emails and both formal and informal discussions and briefings. There is ongoing dialogue between teachers who share knowledge, experience, lesson plans and resources. People collaborate together, pool resources, give feedback and critique, and work together to achieve continuous improvement.

Consultation in the school is highly effective. It is apparent consultation is not always designed, often it 'just happens' and is part and parcel of the daily activities of the school. The Principal advocates a team approach and many reviews take place as 'whole school'. St Mary's takes pride in being a 'reflective school' and this facilitates ongoing consultation to inform decision-making. Often people are consulted and given time to consider before asking for their response. There is an explicit culture of striving for continuous improvement and people demonstrate trust in each other to make the right decision.



"We have complete confidence in each other"

**Future Focus:** St Mary's High School is an award winning school and holds its own against other high-performing schools. Staff are both passionate and proud of the school and it is obvious their primary motivation is the success of the girls they teach. The mission and values of St Mary's are overwhelmingly explicit when discussing recognition and motivation. Your people are confident, competent and trusted. You demonstrate involvement and empowerment to a high standard. You have effective systems, both formal and informal, to share information and knowledge.

IIP Gen 6, Indicator 3 'Empowering and Involving People' considers building a culture of trust and ownership where people feel empowered to make and act on decisions. You have a culture that fits that indicator really well. You will find Indicator 5 'Rewarding and Recognising People' does not emphasise creating strategies, but rather develops an 'approach', and this will fit your structure and sector much more easily than the outgoing IIP Standard (Gen 5).

## Links To the Investors in People Framework Generation 6

### Indicator 3 Empowering and involving people

- Empowering people
- Participating and collaborating
- Making decisions

### Indicator 5 Recognising and rewarding high performance

- Designing an approach to recognition and reward
- Adopting a culture of recognition
- Recognising and rewarding people

## People Priority - Raising standards through evaluation

Indicator 09 – The investment in people improves the performance of the school

Indicator 10 – improvements are continually made to the way people are managed and developed

During IIP review St Mary's High School presented comprehensive, up-to-date data to quantify their overall investment of time, money and resources dedicated to learning and development using cost benefits analysis. This is linked directly to the Professional Development Policy and there are annual plans in place for learning and development activities. The school can draw on evidence to show how improved performance in exam results can be attributed to staff development. This is explicitly connected to the SDP and subsequent annual plans.

Evaluation is an ongoing activity through the SDP with two primary periods for inputting data – at the start of the academic year and at mid-year. The evaluations take place at class, department and whole school levels and this allows St Mary's to consider it's overall performance. As a data-rich school there are a range of measures such as KPIs, test results at KS3 and KS4, and overall exam results. The approach is both flexible and efficient, and is embedded firmly in the fabric of school life.

The school also has an effective approach to evaluating the learning and development activities staff have completed, using Google Questionnaires as a central source of data. Informally there are discussions around how effective training has been, whether the learning can be cascaded and whether it is worthwhile investing in more staff being trained.

Outputs and benefits are included in regular reports to the Board of Governors, and other stakeholders including the ALC and the EA. During review St Mary's presented comprehensive sample documents of previous evaluations of the SDP, operational plans and school priorities. There were samples of reports to the Board of Governors, the evaluation of internal training courses and coaching, of school events by pupils and parents and the evaluation of the 'Extended Schools Programme'.

Heads of Department, along with their staff can give examples of how learning and development has improved their performance as teachers, including the use of ICT and the use of reflective practice.

There is an ongoing process of evaluating action plans which teachers and classroom assistants contribute to, through literacy and numeracy teams, individual plans for students with Special Education Needs, and in subject areas. People point to the annual exam results for St Mary's to demonstrate how performance continues to improve.



"We have created a community of reflective practitioners"

Formal evaluation of the plans commences in May. All staff completes the year with an evaluative interview with either the Principal or Vice Principal, and this qualitative data is fed into the overall evaluation process. The analysis of exam results (August) is the final piece.

Whilst self-review is very strong, St Mary's uses external reports as much as possible. There is excellent evidence of using the IIP review report (2013) and improvements in performance against the IIP Framework are noted in this report. The school takes cognizance of key audits, such as the ETI Inspection of October 2015. There is explicit evidence of using the 'Rights Respecting Schools' report to improve school strategies around equality and diversity and pastoral care, not only for pupils but also for staff. The school surveys pupils and parents to seek their views.

It would be true to say most of the improvements take place around enabling school performance but there is also a focus on improving the way people are managed and developed. Both middle

managers and staff confirmed their views are taken on board. For example one member of staff suggested taking a year group through year 9 to year 12. In effect this should improve teacher's practical and pastoral care skills.

Staff suggested that some of the improvements to people management include:

- Sharing information
- A better use of data
- Improved communications
- Better training for middle managers
- Better support for middle managers
- Taking on board suggestions and piloting new ideas
- Better collaboration between teachers
- Having the ability to problem solve
- Continuous training for staff
- Ability to access technology



"It is just about improving yourself and improving the school"



"Communications is fantastic – its very 'open door'"

One teacher gave an example of being allowed to visit other schools in the ALC to examine their management systems and to identify benefits that could be introduced into St Mary's. This facilitates the school to benchmark against other schools in the area, drawing from the same or similar demographic. Benchmarking also takes place via the Irish News league tables for schools and via EA and ETI results published on their website



"We are constantly looking for improvements – the school achieved outstanding it its last inspection, but we are not stopping at that"

There is a consistent reference to the open door policy of both the Principal and the Vice Principal, and staff overwhelmingly believe the management are committed to improving the way they are managed and developed.

People consistently stated they loved working at St Mary's and confirmed it is a great place to work, with continuous improvement to the way they are managed and developed.

**Future Focus:** Your approach to continuous improvement is commendable, backed up with a culture of evaluation. There is no doubt you have developed St Mary's as a community of reflective practitioners.

You will be able to continue your journey with the IIP Gen 6 Framework built around the concept of continuous improvement and employing a model that ranges 'developed' to 'high performing' across all nine indicators. Indicator 8 'Delivering Continuous Improvement' aligns with your process of evaluation, reflection and improvement.

## Links To the Investors in People Framework Generation 6

### Indicator 8 Delivering continuous improvement:

- Improving through internal and external sources
- Creating a culture of continuous improvement
- Encouraging innovation

## 7. Recommendation

- i. **Recommendation:** Review the terminology you use in your School Development Plan to ensure there is no ambiguity for your people when describing your purpose, vision, objectives and core values when you next complete a review against the Investors in People Framework (Generation 6). This ideally would take place prior to constructing your School Development Plan September 2017 – June 2020.
- ii. **Recommendation:** Consider adapting the tools you use in your planning process – namely replacing SWOT with the simpler version of ‘Strengths and Areas for Development’ for your internal analysis, and introducing STEP (Sociological, Technical, Economic and Political) for your external analysis.
- iii. **Recommendation:** Review how you manage change within the school and in particular consider how change is communicated, measured and reviewed. You may find it useful to appoint a ‘change champion’ and engage in a relevant change management process, such as Kotter’s 8 step model.

## 8. Next Steps and Key Dates

A feedback meeting will be arranged to discuss the findings and recommendations as part of the assessment process. This will help to focus on where St Mary’s High School could potentially develop further and provide ideas and support to help move forward.

The objectives for this meeting are to:

- Answer any queries arising from this report;
- Discuss the potential areas for development identified;
- Support action planning for continuous improvement.

Accreditation as Investors in People is subject to a review every three years. Therefore the organisation will be required to be reviewed no later April 2019.

An integral aspect of Investors in People accreditation is the on-going support and engagement with clients to maximise the value of working with the Framework. Accredited organisations are required to utilise an 18-month interaction, the content and scope of which will be planned in advance. This approach will be discussed during the feedback meeting.

Accreditation	6 week follow up	18 Month follow up	Accreditation Expiry
14 April 2016	27 <sup>th</sup> May 2016	14 October 2017	14 April 2019

## Annex 1 – Evidence Requirements Assessed

	INDICATOR											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
1	CORE	CORE	CORE	CORE	CORE	CORE	CORE	CORE	CORE	CORE	CORE	1
2	CORE	CORE	CORE	CORE	CORE	CORE	CORE	CORE	CORE	CORE	CORE	2
3	CORE	CORE	CORE	CORE	CORE	CORE	CORE	CORE	CORE	CORE	CORE	3
4	CORE	CORE	CORE	✓	CORE	☐	✓	✓	CORE	✓	4	
5	CORE	✓	CORE	✓	✓	☐	✓	✓	CORE	✓	5	
6	CORE	✓	✓	✓	✓	☐	✓	✓	✓	✓	6	
7	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	☐	☐	✓	✓	✓	7	
8	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	☐	✓	✓	✓	✓	8	
9	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	☐	✓	✓	✓	✓	9	
10	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	10	
11	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	☐	11	
12	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	☐	✓	✓	✓	✓	12	
13	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	13	
14	✓	✓	✓		✓	☐	✓	✓	✓	✓	14	
15	✓	☐	✓		☐	☐	✓	✓	✓	✓	15	
16	✓	✓	✓		✓	☐	✓	✓			16	
17	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	☐	✓			17	
18	✓		✓		✓	☐	✓	✓			18	
19	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓			19	
20	✓		✓		✓			✓			20	
21	✓		✓		✓						21	
22	✓		✓		✓						22	
23	✓		✓		✓						23	
24	✓		✓		✓						24	
25	✓		✓		✓						25	
26			✓								26	
27			☐								27	
28			✓								28	
29			✓								29	
<b>Total</b>	25	16	28	13	24	8	17	20	15	14	180	
<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS</b>												

Key:

CORE	The Core Investors in People Standard
	Your Choice from the IIP Framework
	Not part of the Investors in People Framework

## Annex 2 – Continuous Improvement Action Plan

<b>Business Issue: What?</b>	<b>Suggested Actions: How?</b>	<b>Potential Benefit: Why?</b>	<b>Priority: When?</b>	<b>Solutions/Support: Who?</b>
Involvement of staff in developing the School Development Plan, including strategies and plans to facilitate proposed changes	Review the terminology you use in your School Development Plan to ensure there is no ambiguity for your people when describing your purpose, vision, objectives and core values.	This will allow you to align your school development plan when you next complete a review against the Investors in People Framework (Generation 6).	Medium	Prior to constructing your School Development Plan September 2017 – June 2020.
	Consider adapting the tools you use in your planning process – namely replacing SWOT with the simpler version of ‘Strengths and Areas for Development’ for your internal analysis	Improved analytical processes and simpler tools to use.		
	Introducing STEP (Sociological, Technical, Economic and Political) for your external analysis.			
Examine the impact of coaching to further develop leadership and management in the school	Review how you manage change within the school and in particular consider how change is communicated, measured and reviewed. You may find it useful to appoint a ‘change champion’ and engage in a relevant change management process, such as Kotter’s 8 step model.	Ability to bring the school successfully through periods of significant change to school curriculum	Medium	

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