

National Peer Mentoring Anti-Bullying Pilot 2008-10

A report setting out the main findings from the national peer mentoring anti-bullying pilot 2008-10



Acknowledgements

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This report is the product of the wide-ranging feedback received from the staff managing peer mentoring programmes in the participating schools, from the regional support agencies who advised them, and from the pupils who took part as either peer mentors or mentees. Their experiences and insights have been drawn together through the progress reports, questionnaires and case studies they have provided.

A detailed evaluation of the pilot was undertaken by The Children's Society's Research Unit. Their findings have been incorporated throughout this report.

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About the Mentoring and Befriending Foundation (MBF)

MBF is a national charity that encourages the growth and development of mentoring and befriending programmes throughout England. We do this by providing a source of expert guidance, inspiring excellence and creating a force for change.

Our vision is of a society where mentoring and befriending can empower all people to reach their full potential.

Our mission is to support the expansion of quality mentoring and befriending provision across all sectors.



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Introduction

The development of peer mentoring

Over recent years peer mentoring has been the subject of increasing interest in schools. It can offer vital support during pivotal moments in a young person's life. It also draws on a resource which is available to every school in the country, is relatively inexpensive to provide and can actually relieve pressure on staff time.

Schools in particular have found that peer mentoring is now clearly recognised in supporting a number of strategies within their school's improvement plan or national initiatives. Peer mentoring can also be adapted to the particular circumstances of any individual school and it has the capacity to become self-sustaining, as those who have benefited from this support often go on to become peer mentors themselves.

The wider school agenda

The brief of this national pilot was to affirm the view that peer mentoring could be included in a number of national and local strategies as an intervention tool to support young people.

School-based peer mentoring has always been promoted as an intervention which can have a positive impact on a range of related issues affecting student well-being. Effective peer mentoring programmes in schools can improve school attendance, engagement and achievement.

There is consistent evidence that young people who have experienced peer mentoring demonstrate higher levels of satisfaction with life in general, increased self-esteem, improved peer relationships and become happier at school as a result.

In terms of specific pupil support programmes, peer mentoring can contribute directly to helping children achieve more and to the National initiatives, which promote supportive learning environments for all pupils.

Bullying in schools is also now being addressed on similar lines. In 2007, the government published its Safe to Learn guidelines which looked at how to embed anti-bullying work in schools. This renewed focus on tackling bullying has raised the profile of peer mentoring again and highlighted how schools can develop creative approaches to dealing with this important issue.



Embedding a proactive approach to supporting young people

One of the most attractive features of peer mentoring is its adaptability and suitability for all school environments.

All young people should be invited to enter the debate about what bullying is and to make them aware of the different forms it might take: whether it be physical, verbal, cyber, racist, emotional or in any other form. Schools can work with young people to identify what the issues are and then introduce appropriate measures to rectify these as part of a wider school agenda. By including peer mentoring within a school's overall plan, the staff and school are able to take ownership of the intervention and work with it to support young people.

The methods employed to embed peer mentoring in schools are paramount to its success. Over recent years many schools have embedded peer mentoring as part of their anti-bullying strategy, or more recently, as a tool in raising well-being and self-esteem as part of their supporting young people agenda. Tackling these issues at a strategic level (potentially through the senior leadership team or governors) has increased the level of engagement with young people and staff alike.

The process of cascading the information of interventions such as peer mentoring through the staff to the young people provides a clear sense of commitment by all to ensure young people have the safest, most productive school environment possible.



“By engaging the students themselves in the updating and revising of anti-bullying policies in schools, it gives them a sense of responsibility that is necessary to ensure bullying is tackled by everyone at every level.”

Claire Wood, head of coaching and mentoring at Headlands School and Community College, Bridlington

“We do not set out to humiliate bullies, but it is a system that has worked well... Our programme highlights time and again that for some young people, to be peer accountable has a far greater impact on their behaviour than the disapproval of an adult in authority.”

Ailsa Bunch, behaviour manager at Morecambe Community High School, Lancashire

“By working with associates of the bullies you disempower the bully; you have the potential to create zero tolerance of bullying behaviour. This provides the opportunity to use associates of the bully as a lever to prevent further bullying episodes. It takes away the power base for the bully – no audience, no kudos.”

Sherife Tayfun, manager of the Positive Behaviour Support Programme at Hornsey School for Girls, London

“I was always losing my breaks and free time, but realised that what I was doing (bullying) was wrong and that I could make a more positive contribution, so I decided to become a peer mentor myself.”

Year 9 peer mentor comment

“Bullying can be hard to define and may not always be obvious to teachers or parents. The most important factor is how a child feels about what is being said or done to them by another child.”

Head of ChildLine in Partnerships with Schools (CHIPS), NSPCC

This report presents the findings from the national peer mentoring anti-bullying pilot 2008-10

This report explains how the National Peer Mentoring Anti-Bullying Pilot 2008-10 was set up and the scale of participation by schools across the country.

It presents the key findings based on the pilot's evaluation by The Children's Society Research Unit along with the data and information collated by the MBF, and explores how peer mentoring has been embedded and is delivered within schools.

Along with looking at the anti-bullying agenda in schools, this report looks at the wider strategies of schools for supporting young people and offers case studies which represent different models of peer mentoring.

It also identifies the characteristics of effective schemes and examines what constitutes good practice and how schemes can take forward their work in the future.

Who is the report for?

It is expected to be of particular value to those who are considering peer mentoring within an overall strategy to support young people and who are in a position to promote its widening application.

There is now clear evidence that peer mentoring can be developed across the educational spectrum in secondary, special and primary schools and that it can support young people of all ages and backgrounds. The findings of the pilot evaluation along with this report aim to highlight areas of good practice to:

- Local authorities
- Commissioners and funders
- Head teachers and senior staff within educational settings
- Project co-ordinators
- Schools interested in setting up peer mentoring schemes and developing a range of support mechanisms for young people



What this
report covers

The National Anti-Bullying Pilot

In November 2007, Ed Balls, MP, Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families announced funding for a series of pilots to help prevent young people from being bullied and to support those who are bullied.

The MBF were engaged to specifically concentrate on peer mentoring within schools and to explore the wider agenda about how peer mentoring could be included in school policies as part of a support mechanism for young people.

CHIPS Childline (NSPCC) was engaged to focus on peer support. CHIPS outreach workers offered advice, support, information and training in the setting up and development of peer support schemes in schools and other organisations.

A third organisation, Beatbullying, had the focus to introduce cyber mentoring as a tool to tackling bullying. Beatbullying empowers young people to lead anti-bullying campaigns in their schools and local communities, and builds the capacity of local communities to sustain the work. Beatbullying has been assisting and supporting young people that are being bullied, re-educating and changing the behaviour of young people that bully and preventing bullying in schools and communities across the UK.

Aims of the National Peer Mentoring Anti-Bullying Pilot 2008-10

The MBF pilot was designed to develop several models of peer mentoring and assess their effectiveness as part of a wider school strategy to support the health and well-being of young people through mentoring, while also identifying good practice approaches.

The MBF's role was to help schools either set up or develop existing peer mentoring schemes that would be sustainable and support key initiatives while also exploring the impact mentoring had in tackling bullying.

The MBF also explored how peer mentoring could make the learning experiences of young people as effective as possible by creating safe learning environments for them through positive peer interaction and engagement.

The focus was to use the MBF's well-developed pre- and post-16 training programme to train the schools taking part in the pilot. Primary schools were to be taken through the new MBF primary training programme, Lean on Me, while secondary schools were trained through the pre-16 MBF peer mentoring training programme.

To assess the impact of the pilot, The Children's Society's Research Unit was commissioned to evaluate what was learnt and the effectiveness of these peer mentoring anti-bullying programmes in schools.

Scope of the pilot

One hundred and fifty schools were selected to take part in the pilot, comprising of 30 primary, 100 secondary and 20 special needs schools.

- 6,000 mentors were recruited in schools and trained to take part in anti-bullying peer mentoring programmes
- Thomas Hardy School in the South West was the largest taking part with 2,173 students and the smallest was Lever Park SEBD School in Manchester with 50 pupils
- Schools from 63 local authorities across England have been engaged in the pilot
- A national media and publicity campaign promoted the pilot and raised the profile of anti-bullying initiatives
- Two-thirds of these pilot schools were running existing schemes and a third were starting a new project within their school



Key findings

The findings below have been collated and analysed by The Children's Society as part of their independent evaluation of the pilot.

- The pilot highlighted the diversity of approaches to peer mentoring that schools can develop as part of their anti-bullying support agenda. There were examples of programmes involving:
 - one-to-one support
 - drop-in sessions
 - buddies/playground pals
 - peer mediation
 - group
 - cyber mentoring
- Students in the evaluation survey were experiencing similar levels of bullying to their counterparts nationally – 25% had been bullied 'sometimes' or 'often' by other young people during the past 12 months
- The evaluation indicated that 63% of the 'most bullied' students who went on to be mentored had experienced a reduction in bullying victimisation by the end of the year
- One in three pilot school co-ordinators reported that in terms of the 'seriousness' of bullying there had been an improvement
- For students most at risk of being bullied their general life satisfaction had increased – they were 62% closer to the national norm after mentoring engagement
- The biggest positive shifts in scores for particular aspects of well-being were for 'self-esteem', where students were 80% closer to the national norm and 'relatedness' (the feeling that others are caring and supportive) where there was a 77% improvement
- Scheme co-ordinators observed that the involvement of students as peer mentors can help to foster a mutually respectful and positive culture which can help a school function more effectively overall
- More than 75% of students surveyed said that they had 'gained confidence' through working for peer mentoring schemes
- 70% of surveyed students said they had 'learnt more about themselves' and 'felt better about themselves'
- 60% of the peer mentors felt they had 'made a difference to the lives of the pupils I worked with'

“The popularity of mentoring to support children and young people has increased greatly in the past 20 years. The ‘traditional’ approach – with an adult volunteer building a relationship with a young person – has, more recently, been brought directly into schools and been complemented by the growth of peer support.”

National Peer Mentoring Anti-Bullying Pilot evaluation, The Children's Society, April 2010

Running the pilot

Expectations

The purpose of the pilot was to evaluate different models of peer mentoring while providing support to schools in setting up and offering advice on how schools could embed peer mentoring to support the tackling of bullying and wider school strategies.

The MBF's role was to help schools develop sustainable peer mentoring programmes to support both their anti-bullying policies and also other key initiatives which support young people and help them achieve.

The pilot was designed to run for two years between 2008 and 2010, involving schools which had either no previous experience of peer mentoring or wished to develop their existing schemes and focus on anti-bullying issues.

During the life of the pilot it was expected that approximately 3,000 peer mentors would be recruited and trained each year.

Participating schools

During the recruitment campaign around 2,500 schools across England were contacted about their possible involvement in the pilot. The aim was to include a broad representation of types of schools and peer mentoring programmes and the application process considered such factors as school locality and size, local authority representation, Ofsted rating and free school meal percentages.

Applications were sought from projects that could clearly demonstrate that they already had or were in the process of setting up a peer mentoring scheme that was using young people to deal with issues of bullying in school.

The MBF received formal applications from 339 schools and selected 150 to take part in the pilot, consisting of 30 primary, 100 secondary and 20 special needs schools.

- 53% of the schools were located in an urban location, 34% were from a mixed rural/urban location and 12% of schools were situated in a rural setting
- 56% of schools already had or were the process of applying for SEAL status
- The largest school taking part was Thomas Hardy School in the South West with 2,173 students and the smallest school was Lever Park SEBD school in Manchester with 50 pupils
- Schools from 63 local authorities across England were engaged in the pilot
- Two-thirds of these pilot schools were running existing schemes and a third were starting a new project within their school

Each school designated a co-ordinator who was responsible for managing their peer mentoring activities and liaising with the MBF and support agencies during the development of the pilot.

Role of support agencies

After a national tendering process, four agencies were contracted by the MBF to support the 150 pilot schools. Their brief was to provide guidance to the schools as they developed their peer mentoring programmes while also supporting their commitment to engaging in their wider anti-bullying strategy.

The support agencies were organised on a regional basis:

North West - Salford Foundation

Salford Foundation is an organisation that supports the vocational, personal, social and academic development of young people and adults in Salford. It provides opportunities for those in education, business and the wider community to work together for their mutual advantage.

Midlands/Yorkshire - Leicestershire Education Business Partnership

Since 1992, Leicestershire Education Business Company has set up and managed links between schools, colleges and companies, so that young people, aged 5-19 learn more about business and working life. This has contributed to young people raising aspirations, developing knowledge, increasing motivation and improving personal development.

South East - CSV (Community Service Volunteers)

Every year, CSV involves over 150,000 volunteers in high-quality opportunities that enrich lives and tackle real need. Between them, they help transform the lives of over one million people across the UK. CSV trains over 12,000 young people and adults each year, helping them build the skills and confidence they need to progress to further education or employment or to set up in business.

South West - Somerset Youth

Somerset Youth is a charity organisation based across Somerset, with head offices in Glastonbury. It has been running since 1999, with many changes along the way to suit the needs of the young people they work with, their communities and ever-changing lifestyles. They work with volunteers and organisations to help place suitable volunteers with placements and vice versa. They support volunteers throughout their activities as well as putting on volunteering taster days for them.

Support agencies were selected on the basis that they could demonstrate established expertise in the field of peer mentoring, either as a service deliverer or as an existing provider of support to peer mentoring projects in schools, and had the capacity to support schools within a wide geographical area.

The agencies visited each school on a bi-monthly basis to support the implementation, development and sustainability of their peer mentoring programmes. They also linked schools in each region through an active support network, advised them with the implementation of evaluation tools and supported them in the collation of evaluation material during the term of the pilot.

Diagnostic tool and pilot schools

An aim of the national pilot was to support all schools taking part in the setting up and sustaining of safe and secure programmes within their schools.

A diagnostic tool was specifically created by the MBF to monitor the development of operational and strategic elements within each of the schools.

The diagnostic tool was designed around the elements of the MBF Approved Provider Standard (APS). The core elements around this tool provide a health check for projects and identify key areas where support may be needed.

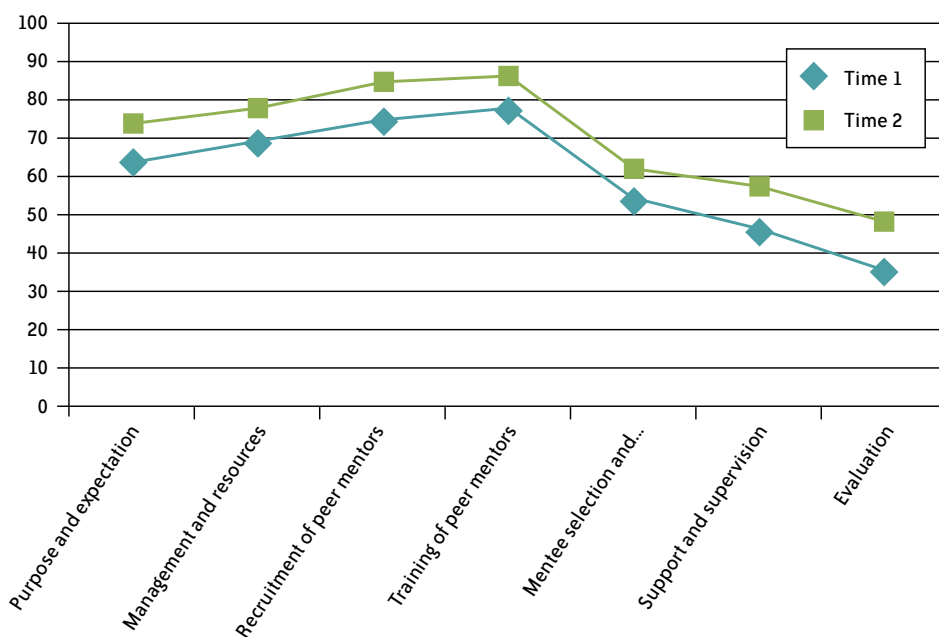
The purpose of the tool was to examine and identify any processes that may not have been in place and ensure that the practices undertaken were safe and effective.

In total, 96% of pilot projects completed the diagnostic tool providing the MBF with data to identify the way in which schools could be supported to ensure that each programme met or was working towards the necessary criteria and assure their programme was running with safe and effective practices.

The graph below shows the seven sections completed by the schools and the distance travelled between the two times the diagnostic tool was completed.

Schools completed the tool at two points within the first year of the pilot. The first round was completed in December 2008 (Time 1) and the second round was completed in June 2009 (Time 2). The assessment tool was divided into seven sections (totalling 46 questions), each focusing around a specific area of good practice.

With each of the elements, an action plan was designed for schools which did not have this process in place. Below are some examples of how this was initiated by the co-ordinator and the processes they put in place with assistance from the MBF and the regional support agencies.



Programme purpose and expectations

Schools who found through the diagnostic tool that they had no clear aims and objectives were supported by the MBF to look at what the school and young people wanted from the programme. They looked at what they wanted to achieve with the project and how it would help support the school. Often they were asked to look at the school improvement plan to see if the programme could contribute to any of the action points on there. Schools were usually asked to concentrate on one or two specific points and agree with the senior leadership team that this was the aim of the project so that it would have a clear definition and aim.

Programme management and resources

An important element within a project is that it has a robust management system in place. Some schemes fail due to there being no clear management and there is no ownership taken, often leading to one person undertaking the whole management of the scheme. Schools that did not have clear management structures in place were supported in looking at how and who is involved in the project currently and who could be approached to get involved to support it. This would also include young people and getting them involved in aspects of the management such as supporting training and organising meetings.

Recruitment of peer mentors

In order to ensure that schools were managing effective and safe schemes, schools that did not have a clear recruitment process for mentors were given guidance on some successful ways of developing this. Some schemes had no formal process of recruitment or retention. The MBF supported schools and helped them produce application forms and marketing plans to recruit mentors. Many of the templates to create this were given to schools as part of the initial training in the pre-16 resource pack for setting up a peer mentoring programme.





Training of peer mentors

Training is an intrinsic part of peer mentoring and it is very important that all mentors have the opportunity to access training. Many schools already had training in place, with a few schools that were only beginning their peer mentoring still trying to establish a training programme. The MBF offered them training programmes for mentors and provided guidance where necessary. More established schemes also benefited from the additional support and used the materials offered by the MBF to complement their current training.

Mentee selection and matching

This element was varied in the way it was completed by schools. Some schools had very thorough systems for matching mentors and mentees, often using a range of information to apply to the matching. Some schools had little or no formal matching process in place. In some cases this led to the programme not taking off or being sustainable within a school. To support these schools, the MBF offered support in creating matching criteria for programmes and highlighting the benefits of successful matching using examples such as creating mentor and mentee matching forms which list likes and interests. This could be used by the co-ordinators to match young people together who had a common interest in an area. The value of this meant that the relationship would form more quickly and the strength of the match would also be stronger, leading to a more positive and creative relationship.



Support and supervision

For a scheme to be safe, it is important that there is support and supervision in place to safeguard the participants, and the school. From the diagnostic tool it was evident that many schools did not have clear systems in place. Many schools were taken through some of the processes that could be put in place to safeguard the young people. Designated space and room were an issue for some schools. Another issue was schools not having enough staff to supervise sessions. To alleviate this, some schools worked with senior students and worked with them to facilitate supervision in larger rooms such as libraries.

Evaluation

The evaluation of programmes fell in the lowest category for pilot schools completing the diagnostic tool. There were a number of reasons for this. Some of the new schools had not completed a full cycle or were still in the process of setting up their scheme at the time the tool was completed. The results from the diagnostic tool exercise showed clearly that of the seven elements completed by the schools the final two areas, support and supervision and evaluation, had distinct gaps.

The evaluation and support and supervision aspects of running a successful scheme are fundamental to the safety of the users and the school as a whole. Safeguarding young people has to be at the forefront of any programme. All schools were taken through this and offered support in ensuring this was part of the core of the mentoring project.

The diagnostic tool made it transparent what schools needed to implement in order to run safe and effective schemes for their young people. At the end of the first year, schools that had still not completed areas within the tool were given more concentrated support and action planning advice to help them manage their projects successfully.

Schools participating in the pilot were encouraged to apply for the MBF Approved Provider Standard if they could successfully demonstrate that they could demonstrate they satisfied all the criteria. By the end of the pilot, 44 schools had achieved the Standard, with another 26 schools in a position to complete their application to achieve the award by the end of the academic year

MEDIA & CAMPAIGN HIGHLIGHTS ★★★★★★

To ensure that the national pilot received maximum media coverage to raise the profile and awareness of anti-bullying throughout the country, a strategy was developed by the MBF project manager to identify how this could be carried out successfully.

Many of the pilot schools contributed to events and work highlighted in the press and media across the country as part of the local and regional PR strategy. Young people from the pilot schools worked hard raising awareness of tackling bullying through peer mentoring by using a number of different and innovative methods.

Local and regional awareness

In order to raise the profile of tackling bullying, all schools were offered support by the MBF to engage with local and regional media through a series of press releases during the course of the two years. Much of the publicity focused on the fantastic work carried out by the young people and the way they were supporting others in their schools.

There were several high profile awareness-raising campaigns during the two years of the national pilot, the main one being the collaborative national art-inspired **Elephant in the Corner campaign**. The aim of the campaign was to showcase elephant sculptures designed by young people as part of the press activity over Anti-Bullying Week 2009.

The MBF, in partnership with Wild in Art, created pieces of work that would inspire, provoke thought and raise awareness into how young people are tackling bullying. Wild in Art is the leader in the provision of mass public appeal art projects for schools and communities. It pioneers 21st century learning by supporting creativity, innovation and discovery through a range of resources and events. For more information, visit www.wildinart.co.uk

Fourteen pilot schools were chosen to take part in the Elephant in the Corner campaign from a mixture of primary and secondary schools from around England. The 70cm tall fibreglass elephants were used to unite children across year groups and school communities as they worked together on designs and ideas to reflect how they hoped to achieve a future without bullying.

Each school was given an elephant and the concept to produce a piece of work with their elephant that represented the way the young people perceived bullying and how they tackled it. Each school took a different view on how they decorated their elephant.



"The young people who have been involved in this exciting project have been fantastic in the way they've taken ownership of this exhibition ...these incredible elephants have captured imaginations, minds and hearts every step of the way."

Ben McGrath, project manager for the MBF, explaining why the elephants were chosen to represent the pilot.

Online anti-bullying club

Another major strand of the awareness-raising campaign in tackling bullying was through the innovative use of creating an online radio station, where young people could post questions and blogs on how they tackle bullying in their schools and communities.

The MBF teamed up with one of the largest online radio stations in the UK, Radiowaves (www.radiowaves.co.uk), to develop a groundbreaking initiative to help introduce a unique level of anti-bullying support in schools.

In order to secure their place on the team, students were asked to submit a personal profile application stating why they thought they would make a good online peer mentor.

Twenty successful young people from across England who applied were invited to be trained as online peer mentors at the Radiowaves HQ in Leeds in September 2009. The young people chosen were then taken through the role of becoming an online peer mentor. They were taught skills around reporting and interviewing and how to use the equipment and website. They were also taught important aspects of using websites, including safety and confidentiality.

The site has been a fantastic tool for young people to find out the views and thoughts of others on things such as how to deal with bullying in schools. Some young reporters have gone a step further and posted online advice and personal statements about what they did to reduce bullying in their school.



National Conference 2009

Another highlight of the awareness-raising campaign was the involvement at the *MBF National Conference* held in London in November 2009.

This event brought together the Elephant in the Corner exhibition and some of the young reporters from the Radiowaves website to showcase their hard work and effort during their time as peer mentors.

The young reporters had to work for their places at the conference. During the day the four chosen reporters interviewed MPs and delegates at the conference. Attending ministers and senior officials were taken through their paces by the young people who showed tremendous character and professionalism in asking them what they thought the benefits of mentoring were. The interviews were filmed by the young people and posted on the Radiowaves and MBF websites.

Evaluation of the pilot

The MBF commissioned The Children's Society Research Unit to undertake an independent evaluation, concentrating on the first year of the pilot.

The external evaluation was commissioned particularly to explore mentee outcomes, including looking at whether they varied relative to different types of peer mentoring. It also explored the operational aspects of the work in different schools, the views of scheme co-ordinators around effectiveness and on 'lessons learnt' from practice and the benefits for children and young people who volunteered to mentor their fellow students.

Method

The Children's Society identified a representative sample of 24 secondary and eight primary schools from the pilot, ensuring the sample included schools where there was already an established peer mentoring scheme in operation and ones where the approach was entirely new.

Data collection for the evaluation incorporated four key elements, phased over the first year (2008-09), to explore outcomes and reflections on the work:

- Student survey – a self-completion questionnaire administered to all students in years 5 and 6 (primary) and year 7 (secondary)
- Co-ordinator survey – a questionnaire for staff co-ordinating the peer mentoring schemes in each school
- (Both of these surveys were two-phased, with data being collected at the start of the peer mentoring work and at the end of the first year of operation).
- Peer mentor survey
- Interviews/survey data for case studies

(These two exercises were conducted retrospectively at the end of year one).

By using a quasi-experimental method for the students' survey, with data collection from whole year groups before and after engagement with the peer mentoring schemes, the evaluation was able to compare self-reported outcomes from students who had been mentored with those who had not used the schemes.

Peer mentoring schemes – different approaches

In developing a scheme in a particular school, co-ordinators and other staff had some freedom over how to translate the pilot brief, both for the types of support offered (and how they were delivered) and how this might incorporate an emphasis on anti-bullying.

Individual co-ordinators could opt to include one-to-one support, drop-in sessions, buddies/playground pals, peer mediation, group mentoring or cyber mentoring. The evaluation found that there was a wide variety of provision across the pilot, but with an overall onus on one-to-one support. Sixteen out of the 17 secondary schools in our sample who provided information said they had this type of mentoring as part of their scheme. The majority (all except two schools) had one or more of the other approaches within their scheme as well (the most popular being group mentoring), and half of the schools included three or more elements within the overall structure of their scheme.

A variety of ways of organising and delivering the particular approaches were also apparent. For example, different ways of matching mentors with mentees, and in some models, no matching at all and instead using drop-in sessions. Also in evidence were different frequencies and lengths of mentoring meetings, and in the locations they took place in; whether there was a dedicated or private space to meet in. A similar variety was in evidence in the delivery of group and other mentoring approaches.

For one-to-one mentoring, co-ordinators indicated that 30 minutes was the normal length of a session and that a weekly meeting was the usual pattern for contact. However, there were four other approaches noted, ranging from a weekly 15 minute meeting to 30 minutes twice a week.

There was also a variety of approaches to the organisation of one-to-one mentoring meetings. Although most co-ordinators said that meetings took place in either break times or during registration, one indicated that they were done “in lessons” suggesting that this could be at any time of the day, perhaps at registration or form time. It was noted by the study that none of the meetings took place after school.

In terms of the location of meetings, just three of the ten schools had access to a ‘dedicated space’ (with one being the school chapel). Otherwise, in most instances, either unoccupied classrooms or other sites such as libraries or canteens, or even ‘corridors’, were the best places available to mentors and mentees for their meetings.

It was also apparent that different co-ordinators had interpreted the anti-bullying remit for the work in different ways. For example, some had specific training for mentors on bullying, used bullying-specific referral systems, or had developed creative approaches (e.g. a team of mentors performing a play based around bullying to year 7 students).

Some co-ordinators had also linked their peer mentoring scheme to a wider school strategy around bullying (e.g. related to SEAL work, or to the work of a school council or the role of learning mentors).

In terms of how co-ordinators had come to their assessment of the impact of peer mentoring, the majority said they had used their own ‘general experience over the period of operation’ to assess whether incidences of bullying had reduced within the school.

Although one in five coordinators were not prepared to commit to an assessment of these issues, those who were mostly said that there had been no discernible change in numbers of incidents. With regard to seriousness, marginally more coordinators indicated that the situation had improved, around one in three. However it is important to stress that these findings were collated during a period of six months at the beginning of the scheme and many of the projects will have only been in the early stages of setting up and running in the school.

Who was being mentored? A profile of the mentees and schemes used

From a total of 1,621 responses, 372, around one in four, of the students said they had been mentored.

The mentored group mirrored the characteristics for the general student population, with the exceptions of students reporting a difficulty with learning, and those born outside the UK.

The features of the mentored sample are worth noting:

- There was an almost equal split between male and female students across the mentored sample
- The majority of respondents, around half for both samples, were 11 years old but proportionately more 10-year-olds had been mentored (and less 12-year-olds)
- Around a third of the sample were at primary school and they made up a higher proportion of the mentored than the overall sample
- Proportions in the two samples for ethnicity and country of origin mirrored each other
- Almost one in four young people in the mentored sample reported a difficulty with learning and they were proportionately over-represented in the mentoring sample (forming just 13% of the overall sample, but 22% of the mentored sample)
- Proportionally more primary than secondary school students had been mentored (26% compared to 22%)

Findings on the types of peer mentoring that secondary school students engaged with and their frequency of scheme contact indicated the following:

Most students had had one-to-one support; around 28% of secondary school students reported this type of support

Overall 'engagement activity' was 21%. One in five students had seen their peer mentor for a one-to-one meeting more than five times

The least popular approach was drop-in mentoring. Only one in 12 secondary school students said they had used this service

It was found by the evaluators that the results from the secondary school analysis mirrored the results for primary school students

Students' self-reporting on bullying victimisation

It was noted by the evaluators that students in the survey were experiencing similar levels of bullying to their counterparts nationally (based on The Children's Society statistics) with 25% having been bullied 'sometimes' or 'often' by other young people during the past 12 months.

However, 36% of the students who went on to be mentored during the year reported this level of bullying victimisation (compared to 22% of the other students who replied to the survey), indicating successful targeting of the peer mentoring work to those who had suffered bullying.

A further analysis of those who had engaged with the most formalised approach (one-to-one structured work), as opposed to those who had worked with the schemes in other ways, did not reveal any significant variations in impact for different types of mentoring, concluding that intervention through a number of methods, not just one-to-one mentoring, can support young people.

In order to discover whether peer mentoring engagement was effective in reducing victimisation for individual students, the study looked at the impact for just those young people who had been in the 'most bullied' group at the time of the first survey (i.e. those who had been bullied once a week or more). The results from this were promising, showing that 63% of the 'most bullied' students who went on to be mentored had experienced a reduction in bullying victimisation by the end of the year.



Impact on student well-being

Comparing the overall mean scores that students reported for the well-being measures at the times of the first and second surveys the evaluators could then see whether those who were at risk and had been mentored showed better increases in well-being than those who had not engaged with a scheme.

The results indicated that for at risk mentored students:

- general life satisfaction had increased – they were 62% closer to the national norm after mentoring engagement
- the biggest positive shifts in scores for particular aspects of well-being were for self-esteem, where students were 80% closer to the national norm, and relatedness – the feeling that others are caring and supportive – where there was a 77% improvement

Mentored at-risk students had enjoyed better improvements in well-being for self-esteem and relatedness than non-mentored at-risk students, but the latter group reported a marginally higher increase in their year-end level of satisfaction with school.

As well as providing a direct service to their peers the involvement of students may have helped to foster a mutually respectful and positive culture in school. Something scheme co-ordinators commented on in the survey, and is something that can help a school function more effectively overall.

The study found that effective operation of school-based peer mentoring schemes relies heavily on the work undertaken by the children and young people who volunteer to take on a mentoring role.

The mentors – the benefits of taking part

The student volunteers reported in their retrospective peer mentor survey that they had benefited from participating in the scheme. One hundred and sixty peer mentors, from two primary and 11 secondary schools responded to the survey. Comments on the benefits included:

- More than three-quarters of students said they had “gained confidence” through working for the peer mentoring schemes
- High proportions of the young people had “learnt more about myself” (71%) and “felt better about myself” (70%)
- More than half the young people (60%) felt that they had “made a difference to the lives of the pupils” that they had worked with
- For secondary school respondents only, almost all agreed that “It will look good on my CV when I apply for work or for college/university”

Study conclusion

The evaluation study surveys achieved high levels of responses from students and co-ordinators and the methodology allowed for the impact of the scheme to be measured, due to its quasi-experimental design.

Evidence was found of promising levels of scheme-engagement by young people who were being bullied and of positive benefits for children and young people who volunteered to be peer mentors. Co-ordinator feedback on the early work of the schemes was also generally positive.

In terms of outcomes for mentees the study found that:

- The ‘most bullied’ group of mentored students did report an improvement by the end of the year
- ‘At-risk’ students who were mentored, reported positive changes across a range of psychological and emotional well-being measures. The greatest improvements – relative to national norms for their age group (based on The Children’s Society data) – were in self-esteem and ‘relatedness’ (the feeling that others are mostly caring and supportive)

The evaluators were only able to look at six months-worth of scheme operation – and this was at a point when many of the schemes were in the early stage of development, relative to the pilot. This meant there had been little time for the effects of peer mentoring support to be felt by mentees, particularly when one takes into account the periods that other evaluation has suggested are necessary for a beneficial effect to be embedded.

“All the children know they can report to the buddies at any time. If a problem is reported to them then a record is made of the incident which is passed to the class teacher and a copy given to me so the problem can be followed up.”

Primary school peer mentoring co-ordinator

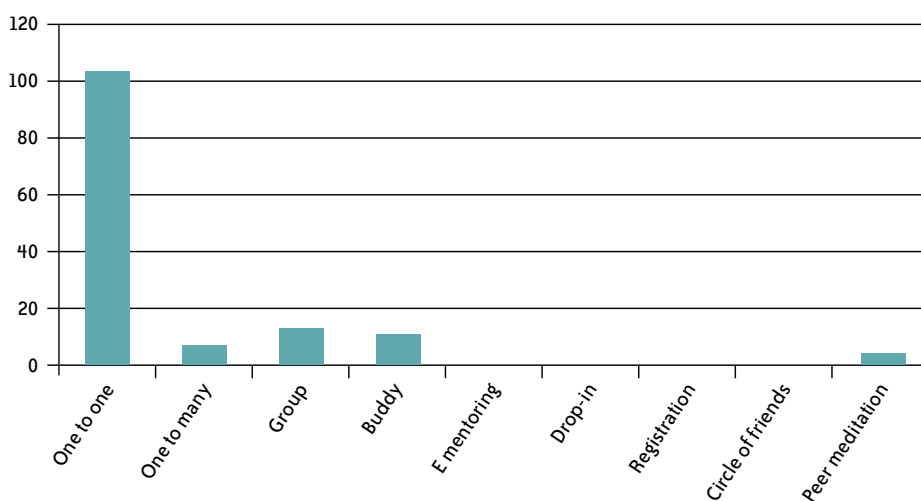


Models of peer mentoring programmes

Diversity of approaches

A key aspect of the pilot was the opportunity to feature a number of peer mentoring delivery models that schools could readily incorporate into their structures and help in tackling issues such as bullying and addressing self-esteem and well-being as well as creating a safer environment for young people.

At the outset of the pilot each participating school was asked to identify what the main model would be in their peer mentoring scheme. Below is a graph outlining the models the schools were proposing to use for the pilot.



From the evidence provided by the schools it was clear that the main model for peer mentoring was one-to-one. Although as the pilot progressed, it became evident to schools that they needed to employ a range of models to meet the needs of the young people and also to engage with the young people effectively.

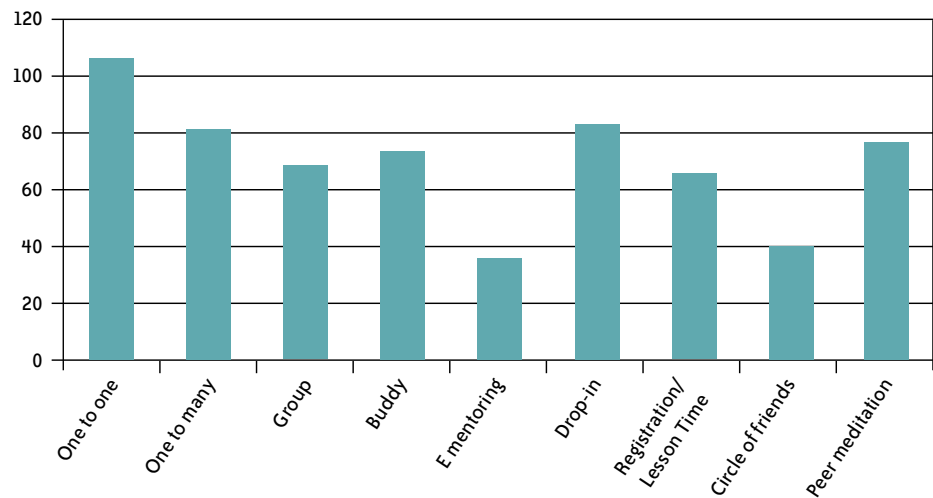
The graph below illustrates how schools actually used these approaches together or as part of a series of approaches. It is useful to note that schools used more than one model within their programme throughout or at different times within the academic year.

From the results submitted by schools at the end of the first year (July 2009), the main type of peer mentoring activity within the pilot was one-to-one. However, this model was generally supported by one-to-many or group peer mentoring. Many of the schools taking part in the pilot employed more than one type of mentoring programme during their cycle of activity. This was to complement the different support strategies they had in place at specific times of the year for different cohorts of individuals.

An example of this would be a school offering support to vulnerable young students entering secondary school in September. As the academic year begins the school would offer a group mentoring scheme to all year 7 students who felt they needed support to integrate successfully into secondary school life. This would take place during lunchtimes and registration and would be open to all students who wished to access this support. Peer mentors would be trained to work with groups of young people.

After a period of time, one-to-one peer mentoring would be offered to students who were still not fully confident with new school life. This would be a more formal process with regular meetings at pre-arranged times. Towards the end of the academic year, peer mentors would work in a one-to-many peer mentoring programme with students moving from primary to secondary school, beginning the cycle again.

The following is an overview of each of the models used to support young people that were identified within the pilot.



One-to-one support

The most widely-used model which can focus on key points in school life such as the transition from primary to secondary school; peer mediation/conflict resolution; addressing specific issues such as cyber bullying – providing an environment where disclosure can take place. There is an expectation that a relationship will develop between the mentor and mentee over an extended period of time.

For one-to-one mentoring, school co-ordinators indicated that 30 minutes was the normal length of a session and that a weekly meeting was the usual pattern for contact. Typically mentors and mentees undergo a matching process which takes account of individual issues, shared experiences and interests, gender and cultural considerations, mentor skills and behaviour etc.

Meetings take place at designated school locations (libraries and canteens are popular) and at specific times such as break and lunch periods.



Group mentoring

Peer mentors are assigned to a wider range of pupils, often to specific form groups, and provide support to any pupil who asks for it, typically on a weekly 'surgery' basis. This is a less formal approach than one-to-one peer mentoring and may be most applicable to deal with short-term concerns. It can also reduce the amount of time staff have to spend on these 'lower level' issues.

Group mentoring can be used as an initial stage for mentors and mentees to become acquainted. Some schools use this process as a way of allowing natural relationships to form before they undertake one-to-one sessions. There is also a lower level of pressure on the young people to interact, with mentees usually engaging with someone who has similar interests or views as them. This is particularly popular with transition peer mentoring, where new year 7 students are linked with older peer mentors from the school through initial group sessions.

Drop-in sessions

An alternative to one-to-one mentoring which can attract more students because of its informal availability, it also encourages them to seek peer support with their friends if they are nervous about asking for help on an individual basis. Peer mentors are usually 'on duty' on a rota basis at a designated location which is widely-publicised around the school.

The success of this type of mentoring is reliant on a number of variables. Schools that have adopted this type of mentoring said the way it is marketed to students is very important. Successful marketing of a drop-in session can result in encouraging numbers of young people accessing the support. However, with areas such as bullying it can be difficult to encourage young people to 'walk in' to a room which has been designated for the bullied.

One successful method of overcoming this is to work with mentors and have them as roaming mentors across the school. They can identify potential young people around the school (at breaks/lunch etc) who may benefit from support and point them in the direction of the sessions. This is a far more direct approach and their presence can ultimately act as a diffuser to potential incidents around the school.

Buddies/playground pals/circle of friends

The pilot highlighted that this form of activity has become increasingly popular at primary schools, where around half of the mentoring could be categorised in this way.

Here peer mentors have clearly visible roles (often wearing distinctive clothing) during each playtime, helping young people discuss their disagreements, listen to their problems, organise games and enhance fun and friendship throughout the school.

There are a number of different activities which the peer mentors can get involved in including refereeing games in the younger children's playground and holding mediation sessions to resolve disputes.



These schemes embed more positive playtimes and reduced the number of incidents where staff may be required to intervene in pupil disputes. It also enables children involved to be more confident to speak about issues that they feel are relevant and important to them and to add a positive contribution to the school community.

Peer mediation

A more specialised form of peer mentoring which can be used to help resolve individual or group disputes. Peer mentors are trained in conflict resolution so that they can help both sides express their viewpoint and look at ways to move forward and come to an agreement. Mentors act as peacemakers around their school and through the training gain in confidence and in emotional and social skills. This type of support works by allowing children and young people to act as mediators in a dispute without help from teaching staff.

The children become empowered, which helps them to develop their sense of community and co-operation. Peer mentors acting as mediators can be extremely positive within the school. However, it has to be made clear through the training that if a situation becomes too complex for the young people to deal with, then it must be passed on to a teacher.

Cyber mentoring

This will be an option where peer mentors can provide advice and support to the young people subjected to bullying through IT applications.

Through recent innovation in technology and the increasing use of IT within schools and home life, young people have more access to devices such as laptops, mobiles and smart phones, allowing them to engage with others at any time, from any location.

The introduction of cyber mentoring has undoubtedly moved mentoring to new heights. Schools can train young people to become online mentors and with the IT packages available, can ensure that there is a safe system in place when the mentoring takes place.

A key aspect of this work is to encourage disclosure so that the school and peer mentors can offer support. The peer mentors can also lead a prevention programme in classrooms and assemblies, supervised by school co-ordinators.

In summary

- It should be emphasised that the different models of peer mentoring delivery are not intended to be 'stand alone' forms of support
- It is quite common for schools to adopt a mixture of schemes to suit their particular environments and priorities

Case studies

About the project

The college is one of the largest schools in Lancashire and educates over 1,600 young people. In the last few years, it has developed two forms of peer mentoring: year 8 peer mentors to support year 7 students in transition and sixth form 'buddies' to provide additional support to lower school pupils who are experiencing difficulties.

Approach to peer mentoring

The project is run by Sue Strother, pyramid club and peer mentoring co-ordinator, and also features in the School's Development Plan for 2009-2012. According to Sue, the key to developing peer mentoring programmes within schools is to:

"...make sure the co-ordinator is given the time to run the scheme and that there is a safe space where the young people can come to."

The scheme has benefited the school in a number of ways. One of the year 8 mentors, Kira, points out that although the scheme has not completely wiped out bullying she feels that the school is much safer now that it has peer mentors as not as many people are worrying about being bullied.

How the schemes work

The year 8 peer mentors are mainly involved in supporting year 7s through transition and during their first year in the new school. They work with individual form groups and look out for particular pupils who are vulnerable. Through the provision of a mentor room and time with the year 7 form groups, peer mentors are able to build relationships with the year 7s and help them to settle into the school.

The sixth form buddies have a more structured one-to-one relationship. Members of staff identify pupils who need support and refer them to the peer mentoring co-ordinator. When matched, the mentee and mentor work towards goals they have agreed together and meet for about 15 minutes a week during form time.

"Keep working at it, even when you find it hard to talk to your mentee, you have to work hard to find things in common and help them to trust you."

Georgina, a sixth form peer mentor emphasises the need for perseverance

Good practice highlighted by the college

Peer mentors receive high quality training for their role

The college used AEGON, a national company with a local office, to host their training. It allowed students time away from school to concentrate on the skills required in being a peer mentor and learn to work with and support one another. As Alfe, one of the peer mentors, says "after our training, we are much better at noticing what help people need".

Commitment of staff time

Sue says: "Make sure you give enough time to peer mentoring, having a dedicated staff member allows the scheme to run effectively".

Peer mentors are actively supported and recognised

There are also regular supervision and celebration events including a trip to an outdoor centre and meals in local restaurants. The year 8 peer mentors also recently won a Diana Award for anti-bullying.

What impact have the schemes made?

Pupils are positive about the benefits of peer mentoring. Year 7 mentee Ellie says:

"Peer mentoring helps you feel more confident and peer mentors can help you if you have nowhere else to go."

Reece, also in year 7, adds that:

"Peer mentoring is good because it makes you feel safer and gives you someone to talk to."

The sixth form buddying system is having a visible impact with year 7 and 8 mentees reporting more confidence and a greater ability to cope with their new school. Chris, a sixth form mentor, tells this story:

"One mentee was a musician but he was quite shy and not sure about getting involved in the school music department. I worked with him to encourage him and help build his confidence and now he's really involved in the music department and has made lots of new friends."

The scheme has also had an impact on the mentors. The year 8 mentors report that they are able to recognise people's problems more and feel more involved in school life. The sixth form mentors feel that they are giving something back to the school and have learning communication and listening skills. Sarah, a sixth form mentor, says that:

"It has also helped with my studies. I am studying psychology and peer mentoring has helped me to understand human relationships better."

There has also been a noticeable reduction in bullying incidents recorded in the school and there is a strong belief that the development of peer mentoring has helped this to happen.

About the project

St. Gregory's is a Specialist Humanities College in the North West and runs the High Five Peer Mentoring Programme to support year 7 students which is closely linked to its social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) activities.

Approach to peer mentoring

Peer mentoring has been an intrinsic part of the ethos at St. Gregory's for many years. Their last Ofsted inspection judged personal development and well-being as outstanding and specifically cited the example of older students giving up their mornings and acting as mentors to year 7 students in English and mathematics. The school's programme has taken this principle much further and extended its reach across and beyond the whole school.

The programme has been developed by Lyndsey Granton who teaches English, PE and is the special educational needs co-ordinator. She found that many vulnerable year 7 pupils wanted to see her each morning with problems relating to being in a new school environment. If she did not have time to talk to them all about their worries the children began sharing their problems and making each other feel better. At this point Lyndsey realised that peer mentoring could make a significant contribution to the transition of pupils at St. Gregory's.

How the scheme works

When starting the programme in autumn 2007, Lyndsey began by recruiting a manageable group of 10 peer mentors working mostly on an informal drop-in basis. This has now developed into a team of 25 young people who are trained over two days and who focus on SEAL targets with their mentees each week.

Selecting potential mentees is a four-stage process at St. Gregory's.

- The transition manager identifies pupils from feeder primary schools who would potentially benefit from having a peer mentor
- Pupils who are not coping effectively with the transition from primary to secondary are identified from the school SEN register
- The head of year 7 monitors pupils who have demonstrated poor homework and organisation skills in the first half-term
- A drop-in service allows year 7s to deposit appointment cards for peer mentoring support

Good practice highlighted by the project

Promoting peer mentoring as part of a school's anti-bullying strategy

Lyndsey saw Anti-Bullying Week 2008 as an ideal platform to raise awareness of the peer mentors as a force to tackle bullying at St. Gregory's. During the week peer mentors went out into the playground and into assemblies with giant lollipops to promote peer mentoring.

Developing a positive mentoring culture

The school also has an external mentoring programme in which successful local professionals are engaged to mentor pupils. Inclusion manager Wendy Dolphin has worked to ensure the external and peer mentoring projects complement each other and embed the concept of this support within the school ethos. Many of the pupils recruited to be peer mentors have a better understanding of what mentoring involves from experiencing adult mentors within their school.

Adopting a 'quality' approach

Lyndsey has found working towards the Approved Provider Standard (APS), the MBF's national quality standard and benchmark for good practice, a useful tool for giving her project a renewed direction, highlighting what has worked well and increasing her motivation to ensure the project is continuously improving.

What impact has the scheme made?

Lyndsey is certain that the High Five peer mentoring programme at St. Gregory's plays a dual role in that it has an equally positive effect on the peer mentors and the peer mentees who take part. She has utilised the PASS system (an online system used to measure well-being of young people) to demonstrate the positive outcomes that peer mentoring is achieving for the pupils involved.

The effects have been so positive that she has chosen peer mentoring as the specific focus for a dissertation as part of her Masters in Special Needs.

Brady Primary School and The Chafford Business and Enterprise College, London

About the projects

Here is an example of two schools working together on a major peer mentoring initiative across the primary and secondary sectors.

The Chafford Business and Enterprise College is a mixed 11 to 16 comprehensive school in the London Borough of Havering. Brady Primary School is on an adjacent site. Chafford was involved in the MBF's 2006-08 National Peer Mentoring Pilot for which it achieved the Approved Provider Standard (APS). Brady has also achieved APS to reflect their commitment to managing a safe and secure mentoring scheme.

Approaches to peer mentoring

Chafford has some 50 mentors from Key Stage 4 who have been trained by the school's learning support staff. Around 150 mentees benefit, having been chosen by heads of house, staff selection, and self-referral. The programme operates a one-to-one format together with the provision of a drop-in facility, with a designated venue acting as the hub for delivery.

Brady Primary School's anti-bullying project is facilitated by the learning support co-ordinator. The format is to adopt a buddying scheme to address the needs of year 3 pupils who have social issues such as isolation, low self-esteem, aggression, and anti-social behaviour of which bullying can be a part.

How the schemes work

At Chafford, booklets are used to record what takes place in the mentoring relationships along with their evaluation resources. Reflection sessions are regularly undertaken through activities like working lunches to promote the good work of the scheme.

At Brady, initially 13 year 6 pupils were selected as potential mentors based on an awareness-raising assembly. Students were then asked to apply and were subsequently interviewed. Training was undertaken by the co-ordinator with inputs ongoing throughout the year. Mentees were identified through a combination of referrals by staff, mentors and the pupils themselves.

Mentors and mentees create their own 'bubbles' to foster their respective relationships. Additionally, the mentors act as playground buddies. On a rota basis the mentors keep an eye open for any problems that may arise and intervene to prevent negative situations from developing. Mentors are also involved in weekly feedback sessions to evaluate and monitor developments.

Developing a collaborative partnership

Based on Chafford's well-established peer mentoring experience, they initially acted as a mentor for Brady's learning support team and mentors; sharing their expertise with the primary school. This began with Chafford mentors inviting the year 6 mentors from Brady to a tea party at their school, which subsequently led to regular meetings and the sharing of good practice and ideas. The longer term benefits are significant as many of the Brady pupils will eventually move to Chafford and contribute to their mentoring culture.

An important factor in the success of both schools' schemes is the key roles played by the co-ordinators. Both are from their school's learning support teams which provides them with appropriate time for planning, delivery, and monitoring to reflect the empathy that the role demands. The Brady co-ordinator now contributes to local events as well as acting as a champion for other primary schools in Havering.

Good practice highlighted by the projects

Whole school involvement

Brady's approach is to promote peer mentoring as part of its culture. The team are involved in Anti-Bullying Week, and make assembly presentations. The head teacher, leadership team and staff are all committed supporters and also ensure that parents are kept fully informed.

Provision for celebration

To mark the end of the first year of the project, mentors and mentees came together for a celebratory pizza party. Mentees in particular stated that the mentors had helped them with relationships, enabled them to remove barriers, acted as a support mechanism and enabled them to gain in confidence.

Students working with staff to manage the scheme

A significant feature of the Chafford scheme is that some of the longer-standing students and members of staff have now come together as a student peer mentoring management team. This helps support the co-ordinators with reflection sessions and the choosing of future mentors.

What impact has the scheme made?

"The peer mentoring programme at Brady is at the centre of our school's vision, which is to develop each child's self-esteem, emotional awareness of themselves and the needs of others and thereby feel confident to reach their full potential in all aspects of their lives. Our School Improvement Plan is based around helping children achieve more with a dedicated annual Peer Mentoring Plan lying at its centre. Our success in devising a comprehensive peer mentoring programme has been central to our school being designated 'outstanding' by Ofsted with the report identifying that each child at the school is seen as being an important individual with unique needs with our dedicated peer mentoring programme being at the heart of its success."

Mr Trevor Bradbury Cert. Ed, head teacher of Brady Primary School, London

About the project

St. Andrew's Primary is a small inner-city primary school of 170 pupils of whom a quarter have special needs and 60% are from ethnic minority groups. St. Andrew's was given an outstanding Ofsted rating in 2007 for the care, support and guidance the school provides for its pupils. Ofsted also reported in 2009 that:

"The SEAL materials are used effectively to promote tolerance and understanding and the school has recently introduced a peer mentoring course, to enable older pupils to train as counsellors".

Approach to peer mentoring

Head teacher Karen Leyland and the staff at St. Andrews have a clear and shared vision where students leave the school with the skills to effect positive change in the world. The peer mentors play an important role in the school's emotional literacy strategy. Having peer mentors has given some vulnerable children the confidence to go into the playground at lunchtime and it has given the peer mentors the opportunity to be positive role models who look out for their peers.

Judith Hall is the family support manager, whose role includes co-ordinating the peer mentors. She has observed pupils with a high level of emotional literacy and wants to make sure they have a context in which to use their skills and improve the quality of life of other children at St. Andrews.

How the scheme works

After a real-life interview process 30 applications from pupils were narrowed down to 16 peer mentors. Surprised by the range of children who applied, Judith decided to appoint some children who she did not initially think would be typical peer mentor candidates. However, the confidence and maturity of these pupils really grew through their new role.

The new MBF primary peer mentoring resource pack Lean on Me was used to train the mentors who were also given lanyards, badges and caps so that they could be easily identified in the playground.

The peer mentoring scheme is flexible and responsive to the children at St. Andrews. Initially the scheme only involved them being 'on duty' once a fortnight but the peer mentors themselves felt that they could help more if they had a weekly shift.

Good practice highlighted by the project

Benchmarking with other peer mentoring schemes

Judith feels that the support she has had on the pilot from her support agency, Salford Foundation, has been invaluable in the implementation and development of her scheme. She has also had the opportunity to attend networking events in her region and believes that her project has benefited through learning about similar peer mentoring projects and sharing ideas with them.

Equipping peer mentors with effective skills

Part of the peer mentors' training included conflict resolution and this is already being put into action in the playground where children are finding solutions to issues that arise with their peers.

What impact has the scheme made?

Judith believes that peer mentoring can support schools' anti-bullying strategies and has seen this at first hand through the nurturing environment being sustained by peer mentors at St. Andrews:

"Peer mentoring complements all the other strands in our Behaviour Policy, which is underpinned by our Emotional Literacy Strategy and the ethos of our school."

A questionnaire of year 2 pupils at St. Andrew's in 2008 found that many had been hurt by other children, even if they realised it wasn't deliberate. Judith hopes that the peer mentors will reduce this percentage of bullying by the time they revisit the questionnaire at the end of the year.

Through their peer mentoring scheme staff are working in partnership with the children to create a safe environment for all pupils at St. Andrews. The visibly positive contribution that peer mentors are making has ensured that this project is supporting St. Andrew's commitment to the Every Child Matters agenda.

The pupils themselves agree:

"My mentee was chosen because she didn't have many friends but now she does."

"There was a girl sat in the corner being called names and bullied and I suggested she should have a mentor, after that she was smiling and became much happier."

"I like being a peer mentor because I like helping people; I look after my cousins at home and now I can look after people at school too."

Outwood Academy, Adwick, Yorkshire

About the project

As a newly-established Academy (September 2009), the school has adopted Vertical Mentor Groups (VMGs) with students from year 7 to year 13 working together. All academy students have been trained as peer mentors within their VMGs to enable them to support each other socially and academically and also to be a support to tackle bullying incidents. Over 100 peer mentoring partnerships developed during the 2009-10 academic year.

Approach to peer mentoring

The school has been running one-to-one peer mentoring for six years and a new cyber mentoring initiative began in 2009. The main aim is for older students to support others so that they can enjoy their time at the academy and reach their full potential. Impact is measured by monitoring mentees' attendance, progress reports, behaviour and their general feedback.

The anti-bullying pilot has helped the academy to focus on the issue. Senior peer mentors promote the scheme when visiting VMGs and by giving presentations at school assemblies. They also produce flyers and posters and supply PowerPoints for display on the plasma screen in the dining hall. Peer mentors have been issued with lanyards and badges so that they can be identified around the academy.

How the scheme works

Peer mentoring is co-ordinated by the head of personalised learning support. There are two lead peer mentors (from year 12 and year 13) with a support team of other sixth form senior peer mentors. They have extra responsibilities such as recruiting, training and monitoring progress and they make suggestions to improve the scheme and regularly make presentations to the senior leadership team about introducing new initiatives.

What works best about the scheme is that everybody in the academy is trained as a peer mentor so they are all aware of how to support others. The lead and senior peer mentors have taken ownership of the scheme to drive it forward. They have recruited a dedicated team of specialist peer mentors who meet their mentee on a weekly basis and are also available for break-time drop-in sessions for anti-bullying work.

Good practice highlighted by the project

Promoting mentor qualifications

Academy students are given the opportunity to work towards the OCN Peer Mentoring qualification at level 1, 2 or 3 and more than 150 students have so far achieved the award.

Establishing a clear process of evaluation

The academy is evaluating the progress of mentees against attendance, effort grades in lessons and behaviour. A sixth form senior peer mentor is in charge of each of these areas.

What impact has the scheme made?

Mentored students complete a questionnaire at the beginning of the relationship about how they feel academically and socially in school then how they feel at the end. Significant improvements had been made in all areas, from attendance and completing homework to relationships with others, feeling safe and general happiness.

The peer mentors completed a questionnaire at the end and 100% of them felt well supported, were given adequate facilities and enjoyed the experience.

The impact the scheme has made on the whole school is that students know that there is support available for them and as the scheme is so widely used there is no stigma attached to it. Students learn new skills, they achieve a sense of community spirit and can gain a qualification which all help with their personal development and future career prospects.

"I wanted a peer mentor because I had been bullied and even though it was sorted I didn't know if it would happen again and I didn't have any friends to talk about it and back me up. My peer mentor is ace and I feel a lot better about everything."

Mentee

"I feel like I've learnt a lot. Communications skills, being reliable enough to turn up and do a good job and by helping them I've become more focused myself."

Mentor



Milestone School (special needs), Gloucester

About the project

As one of the special needs schools which took part in the pilot, Milestone supports children aged from two to 16 with specific and moderate learning difficulties, autistic spectrum disorders and emotional, behavioural and physical disabilities. The school had previously introduced a peer mediation scheme and wanted to access the resources available through the pilot to establish a more structured programme.

Approach to peer mentoring

The school saw the pilot as an opportunity to promote peer mentoring as a way of helping their children with self-esteem, behaviour and self-advocacy issues. Due to the particular needs of the pupils it was recognised that one-to-one peer mentoring was not a practical option but that group support would be more appropriate. Small groups were set up at break times and other difficult sessions to allow peer mentoring to develop.

How the scheme works

The peer mentoring is co-ordinated by Val Kennedy, personal and social development leader and a class teacher. She promotes the scheme across the school, recruits and trains the peer mentors and identifies the needs within the school where their skills could be used. A small group of seven peer mentors were recruited and are closely supported by Val and the pastoral support manager.

Two peer mentors work with a small group of pupils at a time and are also involved in lunchtime activities and support such as the skipping club which helps to reduce bullying opportunities.

What impact has the scheme made?

The experience of Milestone School has shown that peer mentoring can be helpful in a school where pupils have special needs. Val has found that some of her peer mentors had been seen as bullies in the past and are now seen as role models for other pupils.

The peer mentors have raised the profile of the scheme and have spoken at the County Anti-Bullying Accreditation event to promote their work and share good practice.

Pupils' confidence and self-esteem have been raised, they are able to cope with life at school better and they have improved their skills for making positive peer relationships. Val also reports that pupils have demonstrated higher motivation in relation to school since the start of the peer mentoring scheme.

Characteristics of successful programmes

The national pilot was able to draw on a wide range of experiences incorporating schools which already had established peer mentoring programmes and those which were introducing them for the first time.



Components of a successful peer mentoring programme

For a scheme to be successful within a school there are a number of key components that are needed to be embedded. Below is a list of some of these, as noted by co-ordinators from the pilot.

- Clarity about the purpose of the scheme and what the school expects to see as benefits and improvements. Making sure the focus of the project is clear and the project's aims are achievable and beneficial.
- Clear senior management support from the outset to provide a high profile for the scheme and the appointment of committed and trained co-ordinators.
- A creative approach to publicising the programme to all relevant pupils through a positive marketing strategy, which is taken on by all personnel in the organisation or school.
- A targeted and positive marketing strategy by the teaching staff and peer mentors to promote the scheme.
- The selection of reliable volunteers as peer mentors who have received relevant training for their specific roles, with supervision and support in place to respond to any issues affecting individual relationships.
- A structured process of monitoring and evaluation to assess the impact of the scheme and identify areas for attention and improvement.

Enabling factors

When co-ordinators were asked what they considered to be the most important contributors to the success of their programmes, they emphasised these aspects:

Mentor enthusiasm/commitment/reliability

This was overwhelmingly seen as the key feature and reflected the significant time and preparation peer mentors put into their roles. The reliability of the mentors, being available when they say they will be, is commonly seen by mentees as the reason they trust them.

Co-ordinators also indicated that trusting and valuing mentors, giving them appropriate responsibilities for the day-to-day running of their programmes and formally recognising their efforts, helped to create a sense of 'team spirit.'

Staff support

Peer mentoring works most effectively in schools when it is promoted as part of an overall pupil support strategy, has senior management backing and is seen by staff as an additional resource available to them.

Strong lead/involvement of co-ordinator

Any successful mentoring scheme needs clear and enthusiastic leadership to build momentum and sustainability. Co-ordinators expect to stay involved with their programmes over the longer term as they develop their understanding of what works.

Mentee engagement

Taking time to explain how peer mentoring works, what it offers and how mentees can make the most of their support, increases the likelihood of meaningful relationships.



High profile of scheme and mentors in school

Peer mentoring thrives on 'good publicity' and ensuring that all staff and pupils are fully aware of how the scheme works. Presentations in assemblies, prominent information displays, newsletters, peer mentor badges are some of the ways to promote the programme.

Quality training

This would apply both to preparing co-ordinators to run a programme and also to equipping peer mentors for their roles. Formalised and in-depth training of peer mentors is now well-established. The MBF spent time during the pilot ensuring co-ordinators received training from the Pre-16 co-ordinators. The resource pack used contains all the necessary elements to ensure a programme is set up and sustained effectively. Co-ordinators received training through MBF-run courses. These events are run throughout the year, across the country for anyone who wishes to set up a peer mentoring programme. Bespoke training for clusters of co-ordinators is also available through the MBF website.

Robust procedures for selecting mentors/mentees

A structured mentor selection process, focused on relevant skills and qualities, and the identification of appropriate pupils who will benefit from this kind of support, increases the capacity of the programme to deliver meaningful results.

Having a designated room/time for mentoring sessions

Wherever possible, schools found that an area or room which could be allocated to peer mentoring activities gave a focus to their programmes and offered a 'safe zone' for pupils. This also helped when scheduling peer mentoring sessions to ensure they took place at the agreed times.





Recruiting male mentors

The general experience of school programmes is that significantly more female pupils volunteer to be peer mentors than boys. Co-ordinators would look at ways they could attract more male mentors to provide better balance.

This has particular relevance when peer mentors are supporting pupils with behavioural or bullying issues.

Student resources

Once programmes had been running for at least a full cycle co-ordinators found that they had a clearer understanding from their pupils of what resources (training materials, mentor handbooks, meeting diaries, monitoring information etc) were needed to support the programme and record essential information.

Assessing effectiveness

Co-ordinators recognised that they needed to be able to demonstrate the impact of peer mentoring both to senior management and to the school community as a whole. The collation of evidence and the development of assessment frameworks were seen as a priority. The diagnostic tool and APS is a practical and essential set of tools to identify successful methods of assessing effectiveness. These tools act as a monitor for what processes are in place and offer direction for co-ordinators who wish to employ methods to capture evidence and monitor the success of the scheme and participants.

Accreditation pathways

The pilot has supported all participating schools in developing peer mentoring programmes which can achieve national accreditation.

The Approved Provider Standard

MBF is committed to promoting voluntary regulation of mentoring and befriending projects through the Approved Provider Standard (APS), the national quality standard for organisations running mentoring and befriending projects. APS is supported by the **Office of the Third Sector** and the **Department for Children, Schools and Families**.

APS is unique in its focus on mentoring and befriending projects. APS projects operate to a nationally approved standard that provides a reliable and objective benchmark of safe and effective practice.

Over 800 projects have been accredited with APS since 2001, which range from large, national organisations through to regional and smaller projects.

APS is made up of **12 elements** focusing on the key management and operational areas that underpin the effectiveness of any mentoring or befriending project. In order to achieve APS, you must demonstrate that your project meets all the requirements across each of these elements. For more information about APS in detail please read the **Approved Provider Standard: 12 Elements**.



The benefits of achieving APS

The practical benefits of achieving the APS include:

- External recognition for safe and effective practice in mentoring and befriending
- APS is an accepted benchmark by government departments and other funding bodies that will help with your funding applications
- Increased public confidence in your mentoring or befriending programmes to help promote your programme to potential service users and volunteers
- Provides a 'health check' of your project to ensure that you are operating in a professional way
- Entry onto the **online APS directory** of Approved Providers to allow practitioners to network and share good practice and potential volunteers and service users to contact your project
- Entitlement to **MBF membership** whilst 'Working Towards' APS offering:
 - Complimentary copy of Rapport magazine
 - Discounted registration fees for our **national training programme**
 - **Resources and research** available at a discounted rate
 - Discounted registration fee for the **MBF national conference**
- **Certification and use of the 'Approved Provider Standard' logo**, to help promote and raise the profile of your project

ASDAN/MBF Peer Mentoring Award

Schools can also support their peer mentors in achieving individual accreditation.

The award counts as up to half the requirements of the ASDAN Certificate of Personal Effectiveness (CoPE), which is worth a full GCSE and scores the equivalent of Grade B at Level 2.

For more advanced students credits from the Award could also count towards CoPE Level 3, which is a full AS Level, worth 70 UCAS points.

Peer mentors are required to present a Portfolio of Evidence of their activities.

The Portfolio contains:

- Evidence of Personal Challenges undertaken and completed
- Planning and reviewing documents
- Completed Record of Progress
- Summary of skills development

For further information visit the MBF's website or www.asdan.org.uk

Resources

All resources below can be accessed on the MBF website at <http://www.mandbf.org.uk/resources/publications/>

Peer Mentoring: A Resource Pack for Pre-16 Practitioners

This resource pack aims to assist practitioners to design, plan and introduce a peer mentoring programme for pre-16 students. It provides training resources that can be adapted to include the primary and tertiary sectors and includes a CD-rom.

Peer Mentoring: A Resource Pack for Post-16 Practitioners

This resource pack aims to assist practitioners to design, plan and introduce a peer mentoring programme for post-16 students. It provides training resources that can be adapted and includes a CD-rom.

Peer Mentoring: Lean on Me. A resource pack for primary schools

This resource pack aims to assist schools that want to set up a peer support programme in a primary setting. The resource pack takes co-ordinators through the process from initial planning to training and supervising the peer supporters.

Safe to Learn: embedding anti-bullying work in schools (DCSF, Sept 2007)

Guidance documents on tackling cyberbullying, homophobic bullying plus guidance related to race, religion and culture.

Personal Safety Guidelines for mentoring and befriending programmes working with children and young people

Produced by the MBF and the Suzi Lamplugh Trust to help mentoring and befriending co-ordinators consider personal safety issues to ensure their volunteer and mentees/befriended are safeguarded.

Peer Mentoring: A Guide for Schools

This booklet outlines the steps to be taken prior to the introduction of a successful peer mentoring scheme in a school.

Peer Mentoring: A Guide for Young People

This leaflet explains the concept of peer mentoring to young people with information on the benefits for both mentee and peer mentor. It can be used to promote the programme to school students.

Peer Mentoring: A Guide for Parents

A booklet giving a brief explanation of schools-based peer mentoring programmes, aimed at parents whose child may be involved in such a scheme.



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