



Impact Measurement Pilot Peer Mentoring Report 2005-2006

Mentoring+
Befriending
Foundation



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1. Background and Context

Recent years have seen a rapid expansion in peer mentoring, particularly amongst projects targeting pre-16 students in schools. The present Government views peer mentoring as a potential means of achieving its own policy objectives, most recently in the context of the issues addressed in the Government Green Paper 'Youth Matters'.

'We will look to expand opportunities for peer mentoring. Young people can be effective volunteer mentors and support other young people at key stages of their development. They can act as role models, raising aspirations and achievements and exerting a powerful influence on young people. They can be particularly effective with those who have become disengaged from their communities or from learning.'

'We propose to ask the Mentoring and Befriending Foundation to work with the new Russell implementation body to expand opportunities for peer mentoring.'

Government Green Paper 'Youth Matters' July 2005

In March 2004, the Mentoring and Befriending Foundation published a final evaluation report on the Peer Mentoring Pilot Programme (2001-4) involving over 400 schools. The report contained the following recommendation.

'Feedback from projects indicates a high degree of satisfaction with peer mentoring programmes and the beneficial effect that they can have on those pupils involved directly and on the whole school environment.'

'Whilst schools recognise the improvements in their own pupils, in order to demonstrate the effectiveness of peer mentoring schemes to a wider audience it would be useful to develop a generic index of impact measurement.'

As the comments taken from the evaluation report confirm, there are many individual examples of good practice in peer mentoring and a wealth of anecdotal evidence. However, as the report also reveals, there is as yet very little objective data on which to make the case for peer mentoring, certainly in terms of its impact on a national scale. Nor, to date, is there a common or consistent methodology for the evaluation of projects or for the collection of evidence on key mentoring outcomes.

The demand for appropriate tools to measure performance and assess the impact of peer mentoring, and mentoring more generally, is growing. This demand can come from teachers and project managers keen to enhance current practice and improve support for students. A recent MBF survey reveals considerable support amongst practitioners for the use of impact measures with the main benefits seen as:

- Supporting performance improvement
- Demonstrating value for money and added value
- Improving accountability to stakeholders and funding bodies

MBF Survey - Current Practice in the Use of Impact Measures (December 2004)

There is also an increased expectation on the part of Government and other funding bodies for projects to show 'added value' and to be able to demonstrate real and significant change through the use of more 'hard-edged' evaluation of outcomes.

2. Aims of the Initiative

Against this background, the Mentoring and Befriending Foundation (MBF) set out to promote the use of impact assessment in peer mentoring. Underlying this initiative was the view that a more qualitative approach to the evaluation of mentoring practice was now essential. It was also felt that increased harmonisation of evaluation outcomes and methods would enable the MBF to produce stronger evidence about the benefits of peer mentoring.

Different models for evaluation and impact analysis continue to evolve. There is a need for a more co-ordinated approach and a unified understanding of the evaluation process and its terminology. Providers and partners need to collaborate in the design of a common impact assessment framework that can support continued improvement in the delivery of activities as well as encourage greater consistency in methods used for the evaluation and measurement of programme objectives.

MBF Survey; Current Practice in the Use of Impact Measures (December 2004)

The aims of the initiative were twofold. Firstly, to design and then trial a model of impact assessment in peer mentoring that would assist the development of improved outcomes for students and support individual programme evaluation. Secondly, to incorporate within the model a set of key 'headline' outcomes that could be used in the future by the MBF to demonstrate the impact of peer mentoring on a wider scale.

Although designed primarily for use in an educational context, the basic principles underlying much of the work meant that the model could be applied in a variety of mentoring settings.

3. Methodology

Pilot Project

With the backing of the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), the MBF established a pilot project to undertake the initial work in developing a model for impact assessment in peer mentoring. A small group of schools already engaged in peer mentoring were invited to support the pilot process. Schools were required to apply a common process and procedures developed by the MBF, including measurement of, at least, one of the key outcomes. However, they were also allowed some discretion in applying the pilot process to fit their own specific needs and circumstances.

At the end of the pilot the schools were required to produce a written report describing how the project had been implemented, including an analysis and supporting data showing evidence of impact. This information together with experience gained during the pilot would then be used to revise the original impact assessment model and produce a final version of the model and supporting processes.

A timetable of the delivery of the project with key milestones is set out below.

- Promotion of the project and identification of pilot schools - July 2005
- Development of the model, operational procedures and supporting documentation - September 2005

- Initial briefing visits to agree the basis of schools' involvement in the project, including outcomes to be measured - September/October 2005
- Introduction and application of operational processes in schools, commencing with baseline assessment - October 2005
- Mid programme review of the operation of the project in schools - February 2006
- Project evaluation including production of school case study reports, collation and assessment of data and drafting of final project report by the MBF - March 2006
- Revision of the model and supporting processes drawing on the experience of the pilot - July 2006

Definition of Impact

Impact assessment is a dimension of evaluation. It can be measured by using a number of qualitative or quantitative indicators, providing evidence of change from an established baseline. The concept of impact in its widest sense can mean any change or consequence resulting from an activity, including intended as well as unintended effects, long-term as well as short-term and negative as well as positive.

The definition of impact used in this project was more restricted. The process for impact measurement used here focused solely on the measurement of anticipated outcomes i.e. the major benefits to the young people that it was hoped would occur as a result of their participation in peer mentoring activity.

A list of the terms used in evaluation and impact analysis is provided in the appendix of this report.

Principles underpinning the design of the model

In developing the impact assessment model, some basic principles were incorporated:

- It should be fit for purpose with information relatively easy to analyse and collate
- It should draw on existing evaluation and data collection processes
- It was based on the suggestions of colleagues who are managing peer mentoring projects
- Use was made of a combination of 'hard' and 'soft' data
- Both mentor and mentee were engaged in the evaluation process
- Use was made of both baseline and end-of-programme assessment in order to demonstrate change and 'added value'

Key Outcomes

Raising standards of achievement, improving young peoples' behaviour and developing the qualities of respect and understanding for others were identified as the project's key 'headline outcomes'. They also represent major priorities for the present Government and for schools themselves. Raising achievement and improving behaviour, particularly in terms of attendance, were also the outcomes, in terms of current mentoring practice, where quantifiable methods for measuring impact were most frequently applied (MBF Survey - December 2004).

Improvements in achievement were measured by comparing actual against predicted performance for the mentored group. However, the methods used by individual schools for making this comparison were not

identical in every instance, depending, in particular, on the year groups involved. Consequently, all of the schools were asked to indicate the basis on which predicted/actual scores were made e.g. teacher predictions, YELLIS or other value-added measure.

The methods that were used for measuring change for each of the key outcomes are shown in the table below.

Outcomes	Impact Measures	Process used to measure change
Raising standards of achievement	% improvement in educational performance	Comparing predicted with actual performance at tests/examinations
Improving young peoples' behaviour	% improvement in school attendance % reduction in behavioural referrals	School attendance registers Records of detentions, class referrals Teacher assessments Teacher assessments
Developing respect and understanding for others	Improved relationships with peers and adults	Students' own reported perceptions of change

All of the schools were required to use, at least, one of the key outcomes. In addition, programme co-ordinators identified subsidiary outcomes linked to aims that were specific to their individual projects. A list of the outcomes, impact measures and measurement processes used by each of the schools during the pilot exercise is included in the appendix.

Where feasible, in order to screen out any overall school added value effect, schools were asked to identify a control group with similar characteristics to those of the mentored group.

'Hard' and 'Soft' Data

Good evaluation practice draws on a combination of both 'hard' and 'soft' information. Consequently, quantifiable data, such as attendance and examination performance, was used alongside attitudinal surveys involving teacher assessments as well as students' own perceptions of change. Self-assessment questionnaires for the use of students and staff were devised by the MBF and used in the project at the baseline and end of programme evaluation stages.

Operational Procedures

Operational procedures and supporting documentation were developed by the MBF and incorporated in the '*Guide to Using Impact Measures in Peer Mentoring*' resource pack which was then distributed to the pilot schools. The documentation was also produced in disc format making it easier for schools to adapt it for their own use. Individual briefing visits to schools were used as an opportunity to explain the purpose of the pack and to ensure that schools clearly understood the procedures to be followed throughout the pilot phase.

Baseline Exercise

Procedures included a baseline exercise so that an assessment could be made, at a later stage, of the effects of peer mentoring on the students participating in the programme. In addition to quantifiable baseline data, the process involved obtaining the views and perceptions of students and mentors against a number of specific indicators linked to the aims of the programme. Basic details on the nature of the mentored group e.g. reasons for referral, numbers participating in the programme were also collected at this stage.

End of Programme Evaluation

At the final evaluation stage, information was collected for the mentored group of students that enabled a comparison to be made with baseline data, focusing on the following:

- Changes between predicted and actual examination performance
- Changes in behaviour evidenced by students' attendance records over the period of the project.
- Changes in behaviour evidenced by teacher assessments
- Mentees and peer mentors own reported perceptions of change

As in the case of the baseline process, documentation was provided by the MBF to enable schools to process and record this information. Wherever possible, any data required was drawn from processes already operating in schools for the collection of the same or similar information.

All of the schools were required to produce a report, using the 'template' shown below, describing how the project had been implemented.

- A summary of the background and context of the peer mentoring programme, including the reasons for its introduction, the specific aims of the programme and which students it was designed to support
- An outline demonstrating how the peer mentoring programme operated in school, for example, who is involved, the resources allocated and including brief descriptions of the preparation, referral, monitoring and review arrangements
- A more detailed section showing how impact measurement has been introduced and integrated into the peer mentoring programme, including descriptions of the outcomes, impact measures and measurement processes that had been used
- The results of the exercise, including what evidence has been gathered, what it revealed and how it would be used to support further development of the programme
- Supporting documentation and data

4. Project Delivery

Identifying the pilot schools

Schools were first notified that the MBF was considering the development of an impact measurement model for the use of peer mentoring projects at Regional Peer Mentoring Network meetings held in March 2005. Colleagues from schools attending these meetings were asked to indicate whether they would be interested in supporting this new development.

In July 2005, following agreement with the DfES to provide funding support for the initiative, all of the schools that had expressed an initial interest were contacted again to see if they were still willing to participate in the pilot exercise. At this stage schools were provided with more detailed information about what this would involve. As a result of this process and following further dialogue with the MBF, a total of 13 schools were invited to participate in the pilot phase. With one exception, where the programme was in its first year, all of the pilot schools had been operating peer mentoring for a period of two years or more. A list of the pilot schools is included in the appendix.

Each of the schools was awarded a bursary of £400 in recognition of their participation in the pilot and the additional work that this would require. Guidance was provided on how the bursary could be used and schools were asked to provide a detailed financial breakdown for the approval of the MBF prior to release of the funding.

Initial Briefing

Meetings were organised in September and October 2005 that involved MBF visits to each of the pilot schools. These visits provided the MBF with an opportunity to explain the purpose, time-scales and procedures involved in the pilot in more detail and to answer any questions that the schools may have had. The visits enabled the MBF to agree the basis of each school's involvement in the pilot, including the specific outcomes, impact measures and measurement processes that would be applied. To support this process, schools were asked at the meetings to provide some background on their peer mentoring programmes, including the reasons for their introduction and which students they were designed to help.

When asked to describe the main aims of their programmes over half (7) of the schools highlighted the easing of difficulties associated with the transition from Year 6 to Year 7. These included the problems of bullying and low self-esteem. Five of the schools referred to 'improving educational achievement' as a major goal, either in terms of GCSE examination performance, comparison of test results or in relation to reading ability. Over 70% of the schools placed the acquisition of new skills high on their list of priorities, particularly in relation to the development of communication skills. However, this outcome was referred to, most frequently, in connection with the benefits of the programme for peer mentors rather than mentees. Two schools, including the one in the example below, adopted a variety of approaches in order to achieve a range of different outcomes. A desire to achieve changes in patterns of behaviour, attendance and punctuality was referred to directly by four of the schools. It should be borne in mind that there is considerable overlap between all of these outcomes. For example, raising the self-esteem of mentored students may well, subsequently, have a positive effect on their examination performance or attendance at school.

'The peer-mentoring programme was established in June 2001 with the aims of raising attainment and improving the motivation of identified students. The school also wished to involve students in supporting, guiding and advising their peers. Currently the school operates 4 'strands' of peer mentoring and the programme has extended over time to involve over 80 peer mentors on a weekly basis across all 4 strands.'

Strand 1: Y10 mentors are allocated on a 1:1 basis to support students at risk of disaffection.

Strand 2: Y8 mentors (x2) are allocated to each Y7 form to resolve potential conflicts, address barriers to learning and assist with organisation and time management concerns.

Strand 3: A mentoring club operates every Wednesday lunch-time where Y8 mentors are available for Y7 students on a 'drop in' basis.

Strand 4: Y12 students meet Y11 students once every week on a 1:1 basis to discuss issues relating to raising attainment at the end of Key Stage 4. Particular emphasis is placed on revision skills, organisation and planning course-work and time management.'

Assistant Headteacher, Derbyshire

Particular emphasis was placed on how the programme was currently being monitored and evaluated, including any evidence of impact that had already been gathered, together with examples of any documentation used. Prior to the pilot, verbal and/or written feedback from staff and students was the most commonly used method of assessment. The schools had devised a variety of questionnaires for the purpose of obtaining feedback. In a minority of cases, these were used in conjunction with an initial base-line assessment to assist pre and post programme evaluation. In some instances, the feedback formed part of an annual review process. Impact analysis and techniques such as the use of key performance indicators, were not in common usage amongst the schools. There were two exceptions to this, where GCSE predicted and actual examination performance and Fischer Family Trust data were used to measure changes in educational attainment.

Baseline Data

All of the pilot schools completed and returned baseline summary forms providing the following information:

- Basic data about the programme, including start and completion dates
- Details concerning the students involved, including numbers participating in the programme and reasons for referral
- Confirmation of the outcomes and impact measures to be used

The following observations are based on the information provided by the schools.

- Over 800 students (858) participated in the project, either by acting as peer mentors or as mentees
- Over half of the mentees (214) were from Year 7
- Although spread more evenly across the year groups, peer mentors were drawn primarily from the Sixth Form (189) and from Years 9 (62) and 10 (76)
- Whilst females made up the greater proportion of peer mentors, this pattern was reversed in relation to the cohort of mentees
- The students most frequently selected were those identified as at risk of underachieving (165 - representing about a third of mentees). Other groups targeted for peer mentoring support included students with transition issues (98) behavioural problems (72), lack of self-confidence (76) and lack of motivation (45)

Individual reviews of the operation of the initiative in schools

Review meetings were held with the schools in early 2006 to monitor progress and discuss any issues that had arisen. Particular emphasis was placed on reviewing the operational processes set up and used by each school for supporting the introduction of impact measures. Schools were also asked to provide any preliminary or early evidence of impact that had been gathered, together with copies of any materials or documentation they had used, other than those contained in the MBF resource pack. The visits were also used to agree a format for the school's project report to be submitted to the MBF by the end of March 2006.

5. Project Evaluation

Key Findings

Out of a total of thirteen pilot schools, twelve schools successfully completed the project. One school, due to internal re-organisation, withdrew from the project in January 2006. Over 800 young people participated in peer mentoring programmes that were supported through the project.

'Peer mentoring has been operating at the school for the last two years. It has a major positive impact on both the peer mentors and the mentees. It is an important and logical extension of the well-embedded work with learning mentors.'

'The mentors have grown in self worth and developed important skills as diverse as communication and anger management. Their impact on pupils, particularly in Year 7 has resulted in effective transition, improved self-confidence and a focus on improved learning and social outcomes. It is with a sense of pride that we can see the growth of the overall provision for meeting individual needs. This particular project has extended this into empowering young people and releasing their potential.'

Head teacher, Birmingham

All of the pilot schools were able to use specific outcomes and develop their own systems to support the measurement process. This was achieved despite the fact that most of the schools were using impact assessment for the first time. The specific measures and measurement processes that were applied varied between the schools, depending on the purpose of the programme and nature of the student group involved. However, all of the schools introduced, in combination with other outcomes, at least, one of the 'key' outcomes. Examples of good practice have been developed, in terms of process and supporting documentation, that can be applied more widely and will be used by the MBF to enhance the existing impact measurement model.

'Peer Mentoring has evolved considerably since the initial launch, both in focus and in the number of students involved, although the key outcome has always remained the same, to raise standards of student achievement. Measurement of the effects of peer mentoring on student achievement has also developed over this time period, and the College is now able to establish more effectively the impact that the programme has had on individuals and their learning.'

The evaluation process in 2005-2006 has been the most structured and informative to date, with the main elements including:

- *A self reporting process to obtain students' views on whether self-esteem, confidence and motivation to learn has improved*
- *An evaluation report written by Learning Mentors*
- *Analysis of prior attainment with attainment post-mentoring using YELLIS predicted grades, teacher working-at-grades and GCSE results as performance measures*
- *Comparison of mentored students' levels of attainment with a 'control group' of Year 11 students who declined the offer of mentoring support'*

Project co-ordinator, Leicestershire

All of the schools involved in the pilot process were positive about the benefits of introducing impact analysis, although a minority of school co-ordinators reported that they had experienced some difficulty in setting up and establishing the model and supporting procedures. However, many of the issues raised by them related to the overall management of the programme and were not solely a result of the introduction of impact measures. A list of the main issues identified is provided below.

- Lack of co-ordinator time
- Difficulties in getting young people together, particularly in relation to after-school activity
- Changes in schools' reporting processes
- Lack of expertise, need for training in the use of the impact assessment techniques
- Difficulties in establishing appropriate 'baselines' for Year 7 students who were new to the school
- Lack of support from other school staff including senior management
- Pressure on staff time and reporting overload
- The timing of the MBF project and it's relatively short time-frame

All of the pilot schools confirmed that they would continue to use impact measures in the future and expressed their willingness to be part of any further development. Co-ordinators considered that there was a need for skills development in relation to the assessment of impact and that further support and training in the use of such measures was required.

Based on the experience of the project, school co-ordinators made the following observations:

- Outcomes need to be related to the programme's main aims with information easy to collect and analyse
- Progress in key quantifiable outcomes, such as raising educational attainment, often arose following improvement in 'softer' outcomes that were the initial reason behind the mentoring referral e.g. enhanced self-confidence

- The aim of the scheme in school is not solely for the purpose of improving grades in academic subjects, but rather it has a broader, flexible and overarching set of aims that remain student centred
- The data needed for assessment of each measure should be readily available to lessen the workload for the programme organiser
- The timetable for data collection should be taken into account to ensure that necessary data will be available at the end of the pilot
- Assessment was most effective when made on the basis that peer mentoring was usually only one of a number of factors that had influenced the mentee
- Students with multiple barriers to achievement can benefit from the support of a peer mentor but only as part of an overall 'personalised learning plan' involving all staff concerned with meeting the needs of the student in question

There was a strong interest in devising impact measures for peer mentors to compliment those developed through this project for the mentored group. Indeed, all of the schools saw the benefits of peer mentoring for mentored students and peer mentors as being of equal importance. For example, at one school, the impact of the programme on sixth form peer mentors was seen as a primary goal, with considerable emphasis placed on the development of their personal and social skills.

'The programme acts as a vehicle for sixth form students to undertake personal development training that is accredited with a BTEC Certificate in Communication Skills. Over 250 students have benefited from residential training courses in the past four years. Learning outcomes include the development of interpersonal, leadership, mediation and mentoring skills. Weston Spirit, a voluntary sector youth development agency, delivers the training. The agency also provides weekly support and guidance sessions for the peer mentors. The scheme is currently funded by O2UK as part of their corporate and social responsibility agenda.'

The impact of the programme on peer mentors has been evaluated through self-reporting questionnaires for students and staff. Feedback from peer mentors has been extremely positive, as the results below illustrate:

- *100% took the view that peer mentoring was needed in schools*
- *90% believed that the experience had motivated them to achieve academically*
- *90% believed that it had developed skills in teaching, communication and leadership*

The attainment of peer mentors has also been evaluated. In the 4 years since the programme began, the sixth form has achieved the fourth highest 'value added' score in Merseyside, UCAS applications are up 200% and 81% of Year 13 students are now applying for higher education.'

Programme co-ordinator, Merseyside

Only four of the schools were able to produce an analysis showing evidence of impact, together with supporting data, in time for inclusion in the interim report submitted to the DfES in March 2006. In the remaining schools, peer-mentoring activities were not due to be completed until later in the school year. However, since the March deadline, a further seven schools have provided fresh information, either in the form of attitudinal surveys (3) or as analyses of hard data relating to the key outcomes (4). These findings have been incorporated into the present report.

In terms of quantifiable data demonstrating impact, any conclusions must be interpreted with caution, given that the results are based on returns from only eight of the pilot schools. Most of the schools were using impact analysis for the first time as well as measuring change over a relatively short time scale. Some schools also experienced difficulty in establishing valid baseline measures, especially where the purpose of the peer-mentoring programme was to ease transition from primary to secondary education and Year 7 students were new to the school. However, taking these factors into account, six of the schools' provided hard evidence of positive change, as highlighted below:

- A school in Derbyshire reported that 60% of peer mentored students initially identified as likely to under-achieve gained 5 or more A to C grades at GCSE
- A Greater Manchester school reported that the reading age of peer mentored students improved by an average of 9 months in comparison with an average improvement of only 4 months for non mentored students
- A school in Leicestershire reported that, in terms of GCSE performance, the performance of mentored students was on average 1.5 grades higher than that of students in the 'control group'
- Using Fischer Family Trust data, a school in the North East reported that 62% of mentored students showed an improvement in their attainment based on a comparison of projected and actual performance
- A school in Birmingham reported that 80% of peer mentored students improved their attendance records compared with a figure of 40% for non mentored students
- A Nottinghamshire school reported that the average attendance of a group of students identified with behavioural difficulties improved from a low 80% to nearly 90% during the period of mentoring support

Great care should be taken before attributing these changes solely to the impact of peer mentoring, especially as only three of these schools used a control group in order to 'screen out' any overall school added value effect. Other variables, including different forms of student support and methods of intervention, as well as factors external to the school, may also have influenced the results.

The result of analyses at the remaining two schools that provided 'hard outcome' data were inconclusive. At one of these schools the principal outcomes of the programme were to improve the attendance of a group of 59 Year 7 mentored students as well as their attainment and behaviour in 3 subject areas. An equal number of students from the same year group were used as a control. The average attendance of mentored students during the period of support was marginally higher at 92.3% than the average of 91.6% for students in the control group. The results for attainment and behaviour, which were measured on the basis of teacher assessments, showed that the mentored group had fewer scores below 'satisfactory' (4) than the control group (7). Unfortunately, the school did not provide baseline teacher assessments that would have enabled an assessment to be made of students' 'scores' in terms of 'distance travelled.'

At another school, the aim of the programme was to improve the reading ability of a group of Year 7 students. An equal number of students with similar reading abilities were used as a control. An assessment was made at the beginning and end of Year 7. Although there are individual examples of significant change (see below), overall, the results are inconclusive, with 78% of mentees reaching a higher score than was predicted in comparison with 75% of the control group.

'B is a Yr.7 student initially identified by the Yr.6/7 link teachers because of his limited self-esteem and confidence in literacy. He experienced significant difficulties due to dyslexia and was at risk of under-achieving.'

B attended 11 out of a possible 12 peer-mentoring sessions and was keen to undertake the follow-up assessment tests, despite his anxieties around spelling. He had developed good relationships with peer mentors, especially his partner. He showed an excellent attitude towards all the sessions.

By the end of the project B was more motivated and enthusiastic about college. His spelling and reading scores had doubled, which in turn increased his reading level. Currently his mentor is trying to arrange further help for him by continuing to listen to him read and by playing appropriate literacy games with him.'

Year 7 mentee, Co. Durham

In two instances, it was possible to measure the impact of peer mentoring over more than one year. At a school in Leicestershire, where the aim was to improve the GCSE performance of students at risk of underachieving, the effects of the programme were analysed over a period of three years. A group of students identified in exactly the same way as the mentored students, but who declined the opportunity to have a peer mentor, acted as a 'control'. The performance of the mentored group was more positive than that of the control group in each of the three years, amounting to a difference of almost 1.5 grades per student.

At a Manchester school, where the aim of the programme was to improve the reading abilities of Year 7 students, the impact of the programme was measured over two years, although it was only in the final year, during the MBF project, that a control group was used as a comparison. The results of the analysis show an average improvement of 8.6 months (2004/5) and 9 months (2005/6) over the period of peer mentoring support. In comparison, the average improvement of the non-mentored students was 4 months (2005/6 only).

Schools also provided an evaluation of the impact of peer mentoring based on teacher assessments and/or students' own perceptions of change. In nearly all cases, this was carried out on the basis of an analysis of self-reporting questionnaires that were completed prior to the start and at the end of the peer mentoring programme. Information was also provided in the form of individual case studies. Apart from one curious exception, (See appendix 5 - school in Merseyside), the returns from the schools are overwhelmingly positive. Some of the findings are highlighted below:

- 73% of mentees reported improvements in motivation and self-esteem - Derbyshire school
- 85% of sixth form peer mentors felt that they would have benefited from having a mentor in year 11 - Leicestershire school
- 75% of Year 7 mentees reported improvements in motivation and self-confidence - Nottinghamshire school
- 92% of mentees showed an improvement in their effort grades in comparison with the results of the previous term - North East school

The Mentoring and Befriending Foundation (MBF) gratefully acknowledges the assistance of all the schools that contributed to this pilot project. A list of the outcomes and impact measures used by each of the schools, together with edited extracts from a selection of the school reports, are included in the appendix of this report. For any further information about the project, please contact the MBF.

6. Recommendations

The experience of the pilot and examples of good practice that were developed provide a sound basis from which to establish a generic model of impact assessment that can be applied in a variety of peer mentoring settings. All of the pilot schools were able to introduce impact measurement processes and have committed to continuing to use them in the future. Based on the lessons of the pilot, the following features should underpin any further development of the model:

- Programmes should possess clarity of purpose and the outcomes used should be clearly defined, easily measurable and relate directly to the aims of the programme
- Processes for the conduct of the assessment should be fit for purpose, cost effective and planned from the outset. Wherever possible, they should draw on existing evaluation and reporting processes
- Programme organisers must be clear about what they want to measure - skills, knowledge, understanding, changes in behaviour, personal development or a combination of some/all of these
- Assessment measures and the evaluation process as a whole should be determined at the outset and developed as an integral part of the planned learning experience
- Impact assessment should be developed within an on-going quality assurance process and used as a practical means of assessing programme effectiveness, improving current practice and informing future development. It is not an academic piece of research
- The aims of the programme and anticipated outcomes should be communicated to all staff to help them recognise the benefits of peer mentoring and to secure support within the school
- Impact assessment should be used as an integral part of the wider evaluation process and does not replace it

In terms of demonstrating impact, the results of the pilot need be interpreted with caution given the short time frame and relatively small size of the sample. However, taking these factors into account and bearing in mind that the production of impact data was not the primary purpose of the project, the reports received from the schools are broadly encouraging. With two exceptions, all of the schools were able to produce some evidence of positive change, six of them in the form of hard, quantifiable, data. There are individual cases, particularly where it has been possible to measure impact over a longer period of time, that clearly point to the beneficial effects of peer mentoring. However, it is recommended that any further research to provide evidence of impact should involve a greater number of schools and take place over a longer time scale, preferably over a minimum period of two academic years.

The use of key 'headline' outcomes linked to priority Government policy areas worked well and all of the schools were able to use at least one of the three key outcomes. Peer mentoring comes in a wide variety of forms, a fact that needs to be taken into account in any further development of a generic model. However, following the experience of the pilot, it should now be possible to adopt a more standardised approach to the measurement processes for the key outcomes. This would provide a consistent base from which to produce comprehensive evidence that could demonstrate the positive effects of peer mentoring.

The experience of the pilot demonstrated that it is feasible for schools to identify a control group of students with similar characteristics to those of the mentored group in order to strengthen the 'rigour' of the impact assessment process. However, the effects of this should not result in the exclusion of eligible students who

would otherwise benefit from peer mentoring support. To overcome this, some schools used as a 'control' a group of students who had declined the offer of peer mentoring support. It should also be noted that peer mentoring is usually one of a number of alternative support strategies and that students, who are not engaged in peer mentoring, will be assisted by other means.

Schools with access to Fischer Family Trust (FFT) data should incorporate the use of this data in measuring predicted/actual attainment. In addition to comparison of predicted and actual attainment for individual students, use of FFT data would allow comparisons to be made between the mentored group and a 'control group' of students with similar predicted scores as well as with the year group as a whole.

Quantifiable data (e.g. GCSE performance) should be used with other information such as teacher assessments and mentees/mentors own reported perceptions of change, particularly where assessing change in students' attitudes. Consideration should be given to the application of a standard self-assessment tool, such as the Pupil Attitude to Self and School Rating Scale (PASS), which is already being used successfully to support peer mentoring by two of the pilot schools. Used alongside traditional outcomes, such as attainment and attendance, PASS can produce robust standardised data on students' attitudes to learning, the school and themselves as learners. It can also support the selection of students for peer mentoring support by identifying those 'at risk'.

Greater use could be made of existing school reporting systems in order to assess the effects of peer mentoring (e.g. subject teacher 'effort reports'). This would have the advantage of keeping to a minimum the demands on teachers' time. It would also provide a means of directly linking the potential contribution of peer mentoring to the school's wider goals.

There was a strong interest amongst the pilot schools for devising impact measures for peer mentors to compliment those developed through this project for the mentored group. Indeed, schools saw the benefits of the programme to mentees and peer mentors as equally important. Consequently, it is recommended that any further work concerning the use of impact assessment should incorporate the development of measures designed to capture the effects of the programme on peer mentors, in addition to those for mentored students.

The project highlighted the need for further skills' development in relation to the use of impact assessment, especially in relation to the analysis of information. Further opportunities for training and development in the use of impact analysis are required by mentoring practitioners from national support organisations such as the MBF.

7. Conclusion

The pilot project, although limited in terms of its scale and period of evaluation, has demonstrated that an impact assessment model can be applied to peer mentoring. The model can generate quantifiable evidence to demonstrate that peer mentoring can deliver significant benefits in areas of high priority to both Government and schools. It provides a practical measurement tool that can be used by a much larger group of schools to 'evidence' the impact of peer mentoring.

As a result of this pilot, the MBF will review all the findings and feedback from participating schools to enhance the existing impact assessment model. The examples of good practice generated by the pilot have already been incorporated into the MBF guide 'Peer Mentoring - A Resource Pack for Pre-16 Practitioners'. The lessons of the pilot will also inform the development of a new major MBF project in peer mentoring, involving 180 schools, that is due to commence in September 2006.

List of terms and definitions used in impact assessment

Mentoring

A one-to-one non-judgemental relationship in which an individual, the mentor, voluntarily gives time to support and encourage another. This relationship is typically developed at a time of transition in the mentee's life, and lasts for a significant and sustained period of time.

Programme evaluation

A systematic investigation to determine effectiveness and assist decision- making.

Impact

- Impact analysis is a dimension of evaluation
- Impact can be defined by change or difference
- Impact can be measured by a number of agreed qualitative or quantitative indicators, providing evidence of change from an established baseline
- Impact analysis seeks to assess how learners have benefited from the activity

Inputs

The various resources needed to run the project e.g. income, personnel, equipment.

Processes

The main elements of the programme, such as mentor recruitment, mentor/mentee training and preparation, programme evaluation

Benchmarks

Data that acts as a baseline which is used in before-and-after comparison

Outputs

Countable units, the direct product of a programme's activities e.g. number of successful mentoring pairs or mentor training sessions completed.

Outcomes

Benefits or changes to individuals that occur as a consequence of their participation in the programme. Outcomes can include changes in knowledge, skills, attitudes, behaviour or status. They may be intended or unintended and can be assessed at various stages e.g. at various points during the lifetime of the programme, or at some date in the future to see if the gains are long term.

Impact measures

Specific data that can be measured to judge whether a programme has been successful in achieving its objectives.

APPENDICES

Schools participating in the Peer Mentoring Pilot Project

School	Outcomes	Impact Measures	Assessment Process
Case Study 1 Leicestershire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To raise standards of attainment To increase self-esteem and self-confidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % of grades A*-C compared to students not mentored 	Comparison of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Predicted grades vs. achieved grades mentoring and after Questionnaires before and after mentoring
Case Study 2 Hartlepool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To raise standards of attainment To improve behaviour, including punctuality and attendance To improve motivation to learn 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvement between predicted and achieved grades Improvement in effort grades % improvement in results from pass test 	Comparison of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Projected/actual attainment (FFT) Examination results (FFT) Pupils attitudes to self and school tests
Case Study 3 Birmingham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To improve behaviour, attendance and punctuality To increase self-esteem and self-confidence To aid transition from key stage 2 to key stage3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % improvement in attendance % improvement in punctuality Increased pupil effort grades 	Comparison of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Behaviour records Attendance figures Late records Effort grades Autumn/spring Pupil questionnaire before and after
Case Study 4 Greater Manchester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To raise standards of attainment Develop respect and understanding for others To improve motivation to learn 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvement in reading age Improvement in treatment of others and social skills Improvement in effort grades/ interim/ Subject reports/ educational review 	Comparison of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading age at start and end of year 7 Questionnaires for pupils and staff Less referral for bullying and serious incidents Interim end of year reports and educational reviews

School	Outcomes	Impact Measures	Assessment Process
Case Study 5 Merseyside	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To improve respect and understanding for other To improve motivation to learn 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % improved capacity for empathy and improved communication skills % Actively serving the school community in some way % of improved behaviour % improvement in aptitude attainment in class % homework completed % involvement in extra curricular activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Questionnaire/pupil self rating completed by mentee Monitoring of a specific service to the school community-questionnaire completed by peer mentor and mentee Recorded incidents of behaviour referrals Pre and post intervention questionnaire completed by form tutor and mentee
Case Study 6 Derbyshire i) Key stage 3 ii) Key stage 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To raise attainment at KS 3 To improve motivation To raise attainment at KS 4 To improve motivation to learn To increase self-esteem and self-confidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of C grades or above on annual report Students to report more positive attitude All mentees to achieve target grades at GCSE in August 2006 Mentees to engage in fewer disruptive activity Mentees to report positively about learning 	<p>Comparison of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effort grades on Y7 annual report Completion of mentee questionnaires before and after the programme Predicted grade vs. achieved grade GCSE results Student questionnaire before and after programme Examination performance
Case Study 7 Co. Durham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To raise standards of attainment To improve behaviour, including punctuality and attendance Other outcomes identified on baseline summary sheet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment test results Improvement in areas identified as scoring low The original baseline sheets 	<p>Comparison of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment test Better reading partnership assessment Baseline self-assessment

School	Outcomes	Impact Measures	Assessment Process
Case Study 8 North East England	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To raise standards of attainment To improve behaviour, including punctuality and attendance To increase self-confidence and self-esteem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raised numbers of mentees reporting improved confidence Higher behaviour score on report Increased % in attendance score Increase in academic levels 	Comparison of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self rating questionnaire by mentee Current behavior score with previous Termly reports
Case Study 9 East Yorkshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To raise standards of attainment To improve motivation to learn To increase self-esteem and self-confidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GCSE examination results Number of positive mentee responses Evidence of meeting deadlines Number of positive responses from significant others Number of positive mentor responses 	Comparison of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SAT's Current projections with actual GCSE grades Reports issued by tutors and year heads Improving attendance and punctuality records Direct mentor/mentee experiences in developing relationships Reports from teaching/pastoral staff Feedback from parents
Case Study 10 Nottinghamshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To improve behaviour, including attendance and punctuality To increase self-esteem and self-confidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Less incidents in school % improvement in behaviour through KS3 manager % of mentee involvement in class and extra curricular activities 	Comparison of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Records Detentions Red cards Feedback from mentees/mentors, mainstream staff

School	Outcomes	Impact Measures	Assessment Process
Case Study 11 Lincolnshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To improve respect towards peers and staff and show a greater understanding of others need • To improve personal and social skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement in amount of referrals/ detentions/ isolations • Less bullying • Genuine politeness towards staff and peers which will improve the mentees self-esteem through their positive attitude • Respect shown towards staff and students alike 	<p>Comparison of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current amount of staff referrals and behavior/ lack of respect with previous amount • Scoring sheet completed by form tutors before and after programme • Verbal feedback from tutors and mentees • Assessment sheets to be completed by supporting peer mentors after discussions with mentees
Case Study 12 Lancashire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To improve respect and understanding for others • To increase self-esteem and self-confidence • To improve personal and social skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoidance of bullying issues • Becoming part of peer group • Improved relationship with peers • Improved relationship with adults • Increased self-belief • Set own goals for future attainment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of recorded incidents of bullying • Self-assessment of group team skills • Being part of a social group monitored by mentor/form tutor • Self-assessment/form tutor evaluation • Self-assessment • Goal setting with mentor • Monitoring of goals with mentor
Case Study 13 Hull	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To raise standards of attainment • To increase self-esteem and self-confidence • To improve behaviour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % improvement in attainment • Improvement in confidence and therefore motivation • % improvement in behaviour, punctuality and attendance 	<p>Comparison of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Termly effort and attainment grades • Reports from subject teachers/Head of year • Involvement in school clubs and activities • Behaviour reports and records of punctuality and attendance

Individual Case Studies

Case Study 1, Leicestershire

Background

Peer Mentoring began in 2001. It has evolved considerably since the initial launch, both in focus and in the number of students involved, although the key outcome has always remained the same, to raise standards of student achievement. Measurement of the effects of peer mentoring on student achievement has also developed over this time and the College is now able to establish more effectively the impact that the programme has had on individuals and their learning.

The peer-mentoring programme is a key area of action in the College Development Plan. A member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) carries overall responsibility for the co-ordination and management of the programme.

Initially the programme focused on supporting underachieving boys, as the 'gender gap' at that time at the College was greater than national figures (15%). Students achieving grades at the C/D borderline were also targeted. Access to the programme is now less restricted and mentoring support is provided for students who are underachieving in many subject areas across the curriculum.

The SLT co-ordinator and progress managers work together to identify students suitable for peer mentoring support. An analysis is carried out using 'monitoring' predictions from the end of Year 10, a process in which subject teachers give students a 'working-at-grade' (WAG) and a 'target grade'. Students' 'working at grades' are compared with their SAT's predicted grade to measure achievement. A list of students is drawn up, with the focus on students who are underachieving in more than two curriculum areas. Students with an attendance that is lower than 85% are not included in the programme as good attendance at peer-mentoring meetings is considered essential if the process is to have a beneficial effect.

Post-16 students are trained to mentor Year 11 students. Peer Mentoring meetings are held on a weekly basis during the lunch period for six to eight weeks. These meetings take place in the autumn term, in the 'lead up' to Year 11 trial (mock) examinations. The programme co-ordinator and two learning mentors are always present to offer help and advice.

A focus or theme for the sessions is agreed each week, including getting to know each other, addressing areas of concern, planning revision, development of revision skills, dealing with course-work and class work concerns. Targets and action-points are agreed and recorded in the mentees record book used to monitor progress. Tutors and Progress Managers are given weekly updates on the progress and attendance of mentees.

Evaluation and Impact Assessment

Initially the impact that mentoring had on Year 11 students was assessed only through qualitative measures such as questionnaires and debriefings. However, evaluation over the past four years has increasingly become more focused and refined.

2003/4 Programme

Quantitative measures were introduced in the 2003/4 programme. 18 students were mentored and 17 students who declined the invitation to get involved formed a control group. A comparison was made between YELLIS predicted grades and actual GCSE grade achieved at the end of Year 11. The mentored students achieved + $\frac{1}{4}$ grade higher than YELLIS predictions and students in the control group achieved - $\frac{1}{2}$ grade lower than predicted. This would suggest that mentoring might have had a positive effect of $\frac{3}{4}$ grade per student.

2004/5 Programme

In the third year of the programme students monitoring grades were compared to YELLIS predicted grades before mentoring and then YELLIS predicted grades compared with student GCSE grades to identify value added. The mentored group consisted of 28 students and their results were compared with a control group of 21 students identified in the same way as in the 2004/5 programme. The results of this analysis are shown below:

Mentored Group

Prior to mentoring support = -2.6 grades per student compared to predicted grades

GCSE attainment = -2.6 grades per student compared to predicted grades (YELLIS)

This shows that there was no change in attainment.

Control Group

Prior to mentoring attainment = -4.2 grades per student compared to predicted grades

GCSE attainment = -5.7 grades per student compared to predicted grades (YELLIS)

This shows a decrease of $1\frac{1}{2}$ grades per student.

Overall: Students mentored compared to those not mentored showed a difference of $1\frac{1}{2}$ grades per student.

The results show that although involvement in the programme did not result in an increase in attainment, it did halt the decline in underachievement. However, this was not the case with the control group where the rate of achievement continued to decline.

2005/6 Programme

The evaluation process in 2005-2006 has been the most detailed to date. It includes the following elements:

- Self reporting questionnaires to obtain students' views on whether self-esteem, confidence and motivation to learn has improved
- Evaluation report written by Learning Mentors
- Analysis of prior attainment with attainment post-mentoring using YELLIS predicted grades and teacher working-at-grades for mentored Year 11 students
- Analysis of prior attainment with attainment post-mentoring using YELLIS predicted grades and teacher working-at-grades for Year 11 students who declined the offering of mentoring

- Analysis of attainment prior to mentoring compared with GCSE results for mentored Year 11 students and comparisons made with Year 11 students who declined the offer of mentoring

The results of this analysis show the following:

Mentored Group

Prior to mentoring attainment = -3.58 grades per student compared to predicted grades.

After mentoring attainment = -3.24 grades per student compared to predicted grades.

This shows an improvement of nearly ½ grade per student.

This data shows that the effect of the programme was to reduce the level of underachievement.

Control Group

Prior to mentoring attainment = -3.09 grades per student compared to predicted grades.

After mentoring attainment = -4.00 grades per student compared to predicted grades.

This shows a decrease of nearly 1 grade per student.

This data shows that the performance of the control group continued to decline.

Overall: mentored students compared to those not mentored reveal a difference of nearly 1½ grades per student.

Feedback from the attitudinal surveys showed that students believed that they had gained in confidence learnt new skills and felt a sense of achievement. 85% of Peer Mentors felt that they would have benefited from having a mentor in Year 11 if offered one.

Further changes have been made to the 2005/6 programme as a result of these findings. For the first time the programme is being repeated later in the year to provide further support for the mentored group in the lead up to their final GCSE examinations. A further analysis of the impact of the programme will then be carried out which will be available in September 2006.

Case Study 2, Hartlepool

Background

The peer-mentoring programme was established in September 2003 as one of a range of support provisions offered by the Learning Inclusion Department. The Department recognised the effectiveness of peer mentoring as a strategy in supporting the development of individual students, enabling them to achieve their full potential. The programme provides an additional support mechanism within the College to which students can be referred for guidance and is specifically targeted at the transition from KS2 to KS3. Peer mentoring operates in a context that may be more familiar and acceptable than other, more formal, provision.

Impact measures were introduced to the peer-mentoring programme in September 2005 as a means of demonstrating the effectiveness of the project through the use of quantitative data. Prior to this, the success of the programme was measured using qualitative assessment data only. The new impact measures utilise readily available in-college data and provide evidence of change from an established baseline.

The impact measures introduced relate directly to the programme aims:

Aim	Impact Measure	Assessment Process
To raise attainment	Improvement shown between projected and final grade in English, Maths and Science	FFT data - Comparison of projected and actual performance
To improve motivation to learn	Improvement shown between Autumn/ Spring term effort grade	Termly effort grades- Comparison with results from previous term

Results

The following results were gained using data relating to 13 mentoring pairs who were active during the pilot period.

Outcome: To raise attainment.

In the mentored group of 13 students, 8 students (62%) improved their attainment. Of these 8 students, 1 student improved attainment in all 3 subjects and 7 students improved in 1 subject.

Amongst the peer mentor cohort of 13 students, 12 students (92%) improved their attainment. Of these 12 students, 2 students improved their attainment in all 3 subjects, 2 students improved in 2 subjects and 8 students in 1 subject.

Outcome: To improve motivation to learn.

In the mentored group, 12 students (92%) showed an improvement in their effort grades. Of these 12 students, 1 student improved in 4 subjects, 4 students in 3 subjects, 4 students in 2 subjects and 3 students in 1 subject.

Amongst the peer mentors, 9 students (69%) showed an improvement in their effort grades. Of these, 1 student improved in 3 subjects, 5 students in 2 subjects and 3 students in 1 subject.

Case Study 3, Birmingham

Background

The school's peer mentoring programme was introduced in 2004 and provides support for Years 7 and 8 students on issues such as transition, organisational skills and completion of homework. The Learning Mentor team facilitates the programme.

Peer mentors are initially recruited from Year 9 and serve for a period of two years. Students are selected as peer mentors after an interview process and the provision of two references from members of staff. Following selection, peer mentors attend an OCR training programme one evening each week for a period of 18 months.

Introduction of Impact Measures

A group of Years 7 and 8 students were selected for mentoring support. They were identified as at risk of under-achieving and showing lack of motivation or self esteem. An equivalent group of students were identified as the control group. Specific outcomes and impact measures used are shown in the following table.

Outcomes	Impact Measures	Assessment Process
To improve behaviour	% improvement in attendance and punctuality and reduction in the number of reported incidents	Comparison of: behaviour records, attendance figures, lateness records
To increase self confidence	Increased student effort grades staff perceptions of change	Comparison of: attendance figures, effort grades teacher questionnaires

It was difficult to obtain attendance figures for the Year 7 group of students, as they had not yet completed a full term at the school. Consequently, it was decided to use a comparison of effort grades (in English, Maths and Science) as a measure instead.

Evaluation of the data

Attendance and Punctuality (Year 8 students only)

The Peer Mentored Group

- 8 of the 10 students improved their attendance
- The attendance of 2 students declined
- Lateness was reduced in 6 cases, with 4 students significantly improving their punctuality, 3 remaining the same and 3 students showing an increase

The Control Group

- The attendance of 6 of the 10 students fell
- 4 students improved their attendance
- Lateness remained approximately at previous levels (NB Specific data was not provided by the school for the control group on this issue)

Effort Grades (Year 7 students only)

The Peer Mentored Group

- 7 of the 11 students increased their effort grades
- The effort grades of 4 students showed no change

The Control Group

- None of the students increased their effort grades and in the case of 1 student, there was a decline

Reported Incidents (Years 7 and 8)

The Peer Mentored Group

- 15 of the 21 students in the group reduced the number of incidents they were involved in
- The behaviour of 4 students showed no change
- 1 student increased the number of incidents he was involved in
- 1 student was referred to a special treatment centre

The Control Group

- Only 1 of the 21 students in the group reduced the number of incidents they were involved in
- 13 students increased the number of incidents they were involved in
- The behaviour of 7 students showed no change

A process to obtain the views of governors, staff, parents and the students themselves supplemented the use of hard data. The results of this exercise were overwhelmingly positive. Some examples of feedback are provided below.

'As Governors of the school we are in full support of the peer mentoring scheme. Having had the privilege of speaking to the peer mentors, we can confirm that not only have they had a huge impact on the Year 7 children who have been mentored, they have benefited greatly from this scheme themselves.'

Governors of the school

'The feedback that I have had has been very positive; this has been from tutors, students and parents. The scheme works both ways giving the mentors the ability and experience to work on their own. Whilst the students have people who they can access whenever they need to in a formal and informal way.'

Head of Learning and Guidance

'We have been very pleased with our daughter's progress since becoming a peer mentor. She has grown in her social and emotional well being. This has shown in her GCSE grades and her motivation to achieve has come from learning she has empathy to help others.'

Parent of peer mentor

Case Study 4, Greater Manchester

Background

Peer mentoring has been operating at the school for over 4 years with the focus primarily on transition issues, with Year 10 pupils providing support for Year 7 pupils, including assistance with study skills, homework and reading support. It is a large-scale programme with over 40 trained peer mentors. 1 to 1 paired mentoring forms the 'core' of the programme, although there is also a 'drop-in' facility.

This report focuses on a single element of the peer-mentoring programme - the Peer Reading Scheme. It includes an analysis of the impact of peer support on the students involved, including data relating to the operation of the scheme in 2004/5 and 2005/6.

The aims of the scheme were twofold:

- To improve the reading and comprehension abilities of Year 7 peer mentored pupils as measured through use of standardised reading tests
- To aid the development of the inter-personal skills of Year 10 pupils to the benefit of themselves and others within the school community

The scheme operated from September 2005 to March 2006, involving over 100 peer-reading sessions. These sessions were monitored and facilitated by 2 members of the Curriculum Support Facility. Year 7 pupils were identified to participate in the scheme after completing the Macmillan Individual Reading Test. Suitable 'peer readers', of which there was a surfeit of volunteers, were drawn from Year 10 pupils, English sets 1 and 2. Year 10 pupils participating in the scheme were provided with in-house training that covered the following topics:

- An introduction to Peer Reading
- Potential problems affecting the reading abilities of year 7 pupils
- The operation of the Peer Reading Scheme - how it works
- Use of the Curriculum Support Library
- Use of a personal log book-recording progress during individual sessions
- Following initial training - on-going support and feedback throughout the year

Results of the Analysis

Peer Reading Scheme - 2005/6

Of the 15 pupils supported by the scheme, 11 improved their reading age from at least 8 months to as much as 1 year 9 months. None of the pupils regressed in their reading age. The average improvement for the peer reading group was 9 months.

Of the 15 pupils from the 'control group' (i.e. an equivalent group of pupils who did not participate in the scheme), 8 pupils showed an increase in reading age. The reading age of 6 pupils declined. The average improvement for the 'control group' was 4 months.

The average attendance for all 25 pupils reviewed in 2005/6 was 92%

The table below provides data for each pupil (including those participated in the scheme and pupils in the non-mentored 'control' group) showing the respective position in terms of reading age at the beginning and end of the scheme.

Reading age comparisons mentored/non-mentored

Peer Mentored Pupils				Non-Mentored Pupils			
	RA Sept 05	RA Mar 06			RA Sept 05	RA Mar 06	
Pupil 1	8.09	10.08	1.99	Pupil 1	8.06	11.03	2.97
Pupil 2	7.09	9.07	1.98	Pupil 2	9.1	11.6	2.5
Pupil 3	8.09	10.04	1.95	Pupil 3	9	11	2
Pupil 4	6.08	8	1.92	Pupil 4	9.1	11	1.9
Pupil 5	7.03	8.09	1.06	Pupil 5	9.04	10.04	1
Pupil 6	7.01	8.06	1.05	Pupil 6	9.1	10	0.9
Pupil 7	8.07	9.1	1.03	Pupil 7	9	9.04	0.04
Pupil 8	8.03	9	0.97	Pupil 8	9.04	9.07	0.03
Pupil 9	8.03	9	0.97	Pupil 9	9.1	9.07	-0.03
Pupil 10	7.06	8	0.94	Pupil 10	8.06	8	-0.06
Pupil 11	7.01	7.09	0.08	Pupil 11	8.09	8.03	-0.06
Pupil 12	7.09	7.09	0	Pupil 12	9	8.06	-0.94
Pupil 13	8.03	8.03	0	Pupil 13	10.04	8.03	-2.01
Pupil 14	8	8	0	Pupil 14	9.1	7.06	-2.04
Pupil 15	6.08	6.08	0	Pupil 15	9.04	9.07	0.03
			0.9				0.4

An analysis was also carried out in 2004/5, although on this occasion a 'control group' was not used as a means of comparison. The main findings are provided below.

- 15 pupils participated in the peer reading scheme
- Initial reading age of between 6 years 5 months and 8 years 8 months
- Initial comprehension age of between 6 years 0 months and 10 years 2 months

At the end of the scheme

- Reading ability increased by an average of 8.6 months
- Comprehension ability increased by an average of 13.8 months
- Average attendance was 88% (The group included school 'refusers', exclusions)

The table below provides data for each of the pupils showing the respective position in terms of reading and comprehension ages at the beginning and end of the scheme.

Year 7 Reading Tests

	SEN	fm	Rdg	Age	Comp	Age	Months Read	Date tested	Rdg	Age	Comp	Age	Rdg -/+	Comp -/+
Pupil 1	SAP		-6.05		6.00	7.09	8	6/05	-6.09	8.05	6.11	8.05	0.00	0.11
Pupil 2	SA	K	6.08	7.10	6.08	8.05	8	6/05	7.09	10.05	8.11	10.05	1.01	2.03
Pupil 3	SAP	S	7.02	8.03	7.05	9.02	8	6/05	8.03	10.01	8.07	10.01	1.01	1.02
Pupil 4	SAP	A	7.02	8.03	7.11	9.08	8	6/05	7.05	10.03	8.09	10.03	0.03	0.10
Pupil 5	SA	A	7.08	8.10	8.01	9.10	8	6/05	9.00	10.05	8.11	10.05	1.04	0.10
Pupil 6	SAP	A	7.10	9.00	8.01	9.10	8	6/05	8.01	10.10	9.04	10.10	0.03	1.03
Pupil 7		A	8.01	9.02	7.07	9.04	8	6/05	9.05	11.05	9.11	11.05	0.06	2.04
Pupil 8	ST	A	8.05	9.06	6.08	8.05	8	6/05	8.11	8.10	7.01	8.10	0.01	0.05
Pupil 9	SA	A	8.07	9.09	7.11	9.08	8	6/05	8.08	11.04	9.10	11.04	1.04	1.11
Pupil 10	SA	K	8.07	9.09	10.02	11.11	8	6/05	9.11	11.09	10.03	11.09	-0.04	0.01
Pupil 11	SA	K	8.08	9.09	7.05	9.02	8	6/05	8.04	10.03	8.09	10.03	0.11	1.04
Pupil 12	SA	A	9.02	10.04	8.08	10.05	3	11/04	10.01	11.04	9.10	11.04	0.11	1.02
Pupil 13	SA	R	9.02	10.04	9.02	10.11	7	6/05	10.01	11.02	9.08	11.02	0.03	0.06
Pupil 14	ST	S	9.04	10.05	8.03	10.00	3	1/05	9.07	11.00	9.06	11.00	1.04	1.03
Pupil 15		P	9.04	10.05	9.04	11.01	7	6/05	10.08	11.07	10.01	11.07	0.04	0.09
Pupil 16	SA	P	10.04	11.06	7.07	9.04	7	6/05	10.08	10.08	9.02	10.08	1.06	1.07
Pupil 17	SAP	K	7.03	8.05	8.01	9.10	7	6/05	8.09	10.08	9.02	10.08		1.01

Case Study 5, Merseyside

Background

The school is a Roman Catholic 11-19 comprehensive school, with 1200 students on roll, based in the Wirral Local Authority area.

The peer-mentoring programme was initiated in 2001 with the aim of challenging bullying and creating a caring and welcoming culture across the whole school. The programme provides support to Year 7 pupils in the transition from primary to secondary education. This is achieved through modelling positive behaviour and offering social and academic support in extra curricular activities, and by collaborating with Year 7 teachers in a classroom context, with the overall aim of raising attainment.

The programme also acts as a vehicle for sixth form students to undertake personal development training that is accredited with a BTEC Certificate in Communication Skills. Over 250 students have benefited from residential training courses in the past four years. Learning outcomes include the development of interpersonal, leadership, mediation and mentoring skills. Weston Spirit, a voluntary sector youth development agency, delivers the training. The agency also provides weekly support and guidance sessions for the peer mentors. The scheme is currently funded by O2UK as part of their corporate and social responsibility agenda.

Recruitment of peer mentors and Year 7 mentees

50 sixth form peer mentors are recruited each September. Social leaders are targeted but all students who are interested are encouraged to apply. Application forms are assessed and informal interviews conducted involving youth workers and existing peer mentors. Peer mentor training takes place in October/November and interventions begin later in November.

Year 7 mentees are initially identified in Year 6 during the transition visits to feeder primary schools. Subsequently, after the first half term in late October, the Head of Year and Special Education Needs Co-ordinator nominate pupils for peer mentoring support (56% of pupils referred onto the 2005/6 programme were designated as having special educational needs). Parents of nominated pupils are contacted to inform them about the scheme and to obtain their consent. Curriculum time is allocated for initial contact/introductions and evaluation.

Outcomes and Impact Measures

Outcomes	Impact Measures
To improve respect and understanding for others	% of pupils assessed as showing: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- more positive behaviour- improved relationships with staff- improved relationships with peers % of pupils who believe they have improved their respect for others
To improve motivation to learn	% of pupils with observed improvement in motivation to learn % of pupils with observed improvement in confidence % of pupils who believe they have improved their motivation to learn

Questionnaires were adapted from the templates provided by the MBF. These were designed to be completed by Year 7 pupils with the guidance of their peer mentor (pre and post intervention). The first questionnaire was completed 15/12/05 and the final questionnaire 15/3/06. The pupils were also assessed against the same outcomes by the Head of Year 7, using the same pre and post intervention process.

Results

Without further analysis, it is difficult to draw any firm conclusions about the impact of the 2005/6 programme from the initial results of the assessment process, particularly in the absence of a control group of Year 7 pupils who did not have the experience of working with a peer mentor. Additional quantitative information such as records of attendance, behavioural referrals, use of PASS data may provide further insights. However, the initial findings show a marked difference between the views of the pupils themselves and the assessment made by the Head of Year. Data drawn from the pupil self-reporting process appears to indicate a decline in levels of motivation and respect for others with:

- 28% of pupils displaying improved scores in levels of motivation and respect for others
- 72% of pupils perceiving themselves as being less respectful and motivated

In stark contrast, positive results were recorded by the Head of Year who was emphatic in his analysis of the benefits of peer mentoring to the targeted Year 7 pupils.

- 88% of pupils displayed improved motivation to learn
- 92% of pupils displayed increased confidence in learning
- 72% of pupils displayed improved relationships with staff
- 88% of pupils displayed improved relationships with peers
- 100% of pupils who were identified as behaviourally challenging displayed an improvement

Feedback from the peer mentors on the benefits to themselves of participating in the programme were equally positive with:

- 100% taking the view that peer mentoring was needed in schools
- 90% believing the experience had motivated them to achieve academically
- 90% believing that it had developed skills in teaching, communication and leadership

Case Study 6, Derbyshire

Background

The peer-mentoring programme was established in June 2001 with the aims of raising attainment and improving the motivation of identified students. The school also wished to involve students in supporting, guiding and advising their peers. Currently the school operates 4 'strands' of peer mentoring and the programme has extended over time to involve over 80 peer mentors on a weekly basis across all 4 strands. Each of the 4 strands is detailed below.

Strand 1: 14 Y10 mentors are allocated on a 1:1 basis to support students at risk of disaffection.

Strand 2: Y8 mentors (x2) are allocated to each Y7 form to resolve potential conflicts, address barriers to learning and assist with organisation and time management concerns.

Strand 3: A mentoring club operates every Wednesday lunch-time where between 8 and 10 Y8 mentors are available for Y7 students on a 'drop in' basis.

Strand 4: 15 Y12 students meet Y11 students once every week on a 1:1 basis to discuss issues relating to raising attainment at the end of Key Stage 4. Particular emphasis is placed on revision skills, organisation and planning course-work and time management.

Students are identified for peer mentoring support by pastoral teams who are provided with a clear brief of the programme and a profile of the type of student suitable for selection. Parental support is central to the success of the programme and parents are regularly informed of students' progress.

The Use of Impact Measures

Only strands 1 and 4 of the peer-mentoring programme were involved in this project. In order to measure the success of strand 1, mentored students should demonstrate improved effort grades in their next annual report. Those students identified should also make satisfactory progress or better in 70% of subject areas and show more positive responses in attitudinal questionnaires that were devised for the programme.

The success of strand 4 was measured in a similar way. Success criteria focus on attainment in GCSE examinations. The school identified as an intended outcome that the target group should obtain more than 5 A to C grades at GCSE and show more positive responses in attitudinal questionnaires after the programme compared to before the scheme.

Year 11 students were selected as mentees on the basis of their underachievement i.e. students who were capable of achieving 5 A to C grades but who, on the basis of teacher assessments, were predicted to fall short of this level of attainment. Students targeted were also those likely to respond positively, in order to maximise the impact of the mentor as a resource.

Results, evidence and next steps

Strand 1: Y10- Y8 Peer Mentoring

Complete data was available for 12 Y8 students. Programme annual reports were used to compare levels of effort. Points were allocated for each grade and on that basis it was possible to identify whether levels of effort had changed since completion of each student's Y7 report.

Of the 12 students:

- 6 students were awarded higher effort grades
- 1 student remained the same
- 5 students had lower effort grades

Therefore 58.3% of students showed an improvement in effort since their Y7 reports.

In terms of feedback from the attitudinal surveys before and after the programme, 73% of students reported improvements in motivation and self esteem.

Strand 4: Y12 -Y11 (Figures for 2004/5 Programme)

60% of the students achieved 5 or more A to C grades.

Feedback from attitudinal surveys indicated that participation in this strand of the programme was wholly positive. (Specific data was not supplied by the school on this issue)

Data from both strands 1 and 4 have been used to refine the model. For example, Strand 4 has been extended to include a higher number of mentees.

Given the relative success of all strands operating within the programme at the school, priorities have been incorporated into the annual improvement planning cycle. For example, the planning cycle for 2006/7 will seek to extend the programme to include a system of e-mentoring, the focus of which has yet to be agreed.