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USING MENTORING TO SUPPORT SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT - CASE STUDY

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THORNTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

CHANGING LIVES, TRANSFORMING SCHOOLS.

GIVING EVERY CHILD IN THE SCHOOL A MENTOR - CASE STUDY
Thornton Primary

Every Child has a mentor at Thornton Primary School

Thornton Primary School in Lancashire opened on 7 September 1914 and looks after children aged four to 11 years old.

In 2012 the school was rated as 'satisfactory' by Ofsted and Head teacher Rachel Clements decided to take action: *"One of our strengths was quality of care, but we wanted to improve across the board."*

The school believed in the positive power the right kind of mentoring could have on children, but at the time it only had one part time learning mentor. It turned to Herman Stewart of Every Child Needs a Mentor for help and now the school is going from strength to strength. In its last Ofsted report the school was praised for "good and sometimes outstanding" teaching and strong "quality of care".

Not enough mentors

When Head teacher Rachel Clements decided to really push mentoring at Thornton Primary School, there was only one part time Learning Mentor. She worked 20 hours a week and could only see around 10 per cent of the pupils. She supported the children for many different reasons from a death in the family to social and friendship issues, low self-esteem and parents splitting up.

The school decided to train its staff to be mentors, but understandably many of them were nervous about taking that responsibility. Some felt they did not have the right training. Others were worried about having enough time to be a mentor. And some raised questions about what to do if a child disclosed something in a mentoring session that affected their safety.

Finally, Rachel also had to explain to the governors what she wanted to do, what the benefits of mentoring would be and justify the cost of a whole school mentoring / training programme.

A bespoke approach

The school turned to the Every Child Needs a Mentor organisation. Chief executive Herman Stewart said: ***"We specialise in enabling young people to have epiphanies and we show others how to be able to do this too. We use a highly structured and methodical approach so that we can effectively record, track and evidence impact."***

Over a six-month period, Every Child Needs a Mentor worked with Thornton Primary School to develop a school improvement strategy with our Lead Schools Inspector and a bespoke mentoring programme to enable every child to have a mentor. We trained the senior leadership, teachers, TAs and year 6 students. We developed a bespoke approach with mentoring resources, training sessions and staff consultation. And the Lead Schools Inspector delivered "outstanding learning" training for the teachers..

Now more than 16 staff members are mentoring the children and every child has a named mentor. The original mentoring system still runs alongside the Every Child Needs a Mentor programme, but the Learning Mentor can focus on the students who need her most.



The school's latest Ofsted report was a glowing endorsement of the process. It described the school's welcoming ethos and atmosphere. The teaching was "sometimes outstanding" and inspectors were impressed by the creative curriculum and strong "quality of care".

"Reading the report I felt so proud of what we'd achieved in that time. The report said we'd improved rapidly all the way through."
Rachel Clements – Head teacher

Staff are on-board, with evaluations showing they support the programme and are enjoying being mentors.

"Mentoring is a fantastic opportunity to get to know a small group of children really well. It provides quality time to spend with the children. I like the way mentoring encourages children to have goals and aspirations and I can support them in achieving their dreams"
Hannah Leech - Teacher

"I am finding the mentoring sessions really valuable. They are informal meetings that allow time for the children to talk openly with an adult about issues that they might not have the opportunity to discuss during the normal school day."
Tracey Barnes - Teaching Assistant

The response from the children has also been very positive. They look forward to their mentoring meetings and enjoy having the time to talk.

"I enjoy meeting and talking with children from different classes and different age groups. Mentoring is helping me to think about what I want to be"
Max – Year 6 student

"It's great having more avenues of support for the children. I feel there is more capacity to support children and reduce their barriers to learning. It has also been good to see the shift amongst the staff as the programme has developed and their confidence has grown."
Rachel Clements - Head teacher

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If you would like to find out more, about how we could support your school, please contact: 0800-644-4881 or email Herman Stewart on hello@everychildneedsamentor.com