

*Riverside School, Tadcaster
Learning Mentor
Caroline Wyatt*

Learning Mentors

Background

Learning mentors became established in secondary schools as part of the Excellence in Cities initiative in 1999, initially in 6 inner city areas. They are part of the Government agenda to 'raise standards, tackle failure and create a new culture of opportunity and success,' North Yorkshire has just begun to introduce Primary Learning Mentors into schools. I have attended their pilot induction course and am among the first to be appointed in N.Y.

Learning Mentors help schools deliver the Every Child Matters outcomes, particularly supporting children to 'enjoy and achieve' and 'make a positive contribution.' They also support the Children Act (2004) which include personalised learning, common assessment framework, information sharing, earlier intervention, better preventative work, integration, multi-agency working and work with families.

My appointment came about through the N.Y. job evaluation exercise. I was asked to complete a benchmark questionnaire about my current work. This resulted in a points total which equated to the role of Learning Mentor as opposed to that of Advanced Teaching Assistant.

As this is a 'new' role at Riverside and the job description should be tailored to our school it is important to outline the key elements of the role of Learning Mentor.



What is a Learning Mentor?

The DFCS definition of a Learning Mentor is:

'To provide support and guidance to children, and those engaged with them, by removing barriers to learning in order to promote effective participation, enhance individual learning, raise aspirations and achieve their potential.'

A barrier to learning is any factor that prevents a child being in a suitable emotional physical or psychological state to engage in their lessons and learn. Barriers impact on behaviour, extreme behaviour can be managed by recognising, working with and lowering the barrier. Intervention may be significant, medium, infrequent or incidental.

Barriers to learning may include

- Bereavement
- Bullying
- Absence/lateness/attendance
- Malnourishment
- Tiredness
- Friendship difficulties
- Specific learning difficulties
- Abuse/child protection
- Trauma
- Mobility /Transition/moving schools
- Looked after children
- Family difficulties/separation/divorce/financial/housing/
- Adult Literacy/siblings/new baby
- Social Skills/showing emotions
- Self esteem/self confidence
- Gifted and Talented
- Demotivated/disorganised
- Controlling anger
- Mental health
- Vulnerable - need someone to talk to

How will these children be supported?

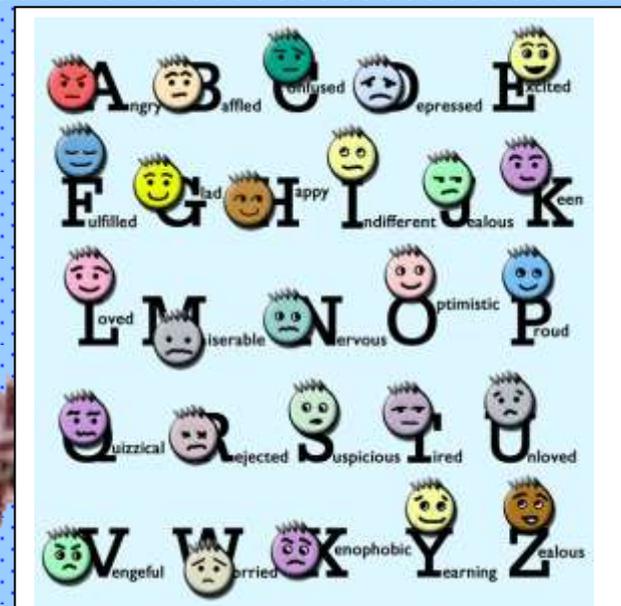
1-1 sessions timetabled 2 x 30 mins
group work/circle time
drop-in opportunities
playground/lunchtime projects
extra curricular activities (extended schools)
mediation
counselling
playground buddies

Who will identify these children?

Concern from any member of staff
Head Teacher/SENCO
Parents
Attendance register
Children themselves
Ongoing assessment material (incl sats)
Outside agencies

What is the mentoring procedure?

Initial concern
Discussion/relevant info
Observation /home visit/permission
Pupil/staff/parent/agency questionnaire
Agencies consulted if necessary
Research
SMART targets/desired outcome
Sessions planned
Record keeping
Exit mentoring/ discussion
evaluation
follow up



Roles linked to Learning Mentor

School Council
Eco-schools
Garden Projects
Playground projects
Healthy Schools
SEAL
PSHCE
Citizenship

Finally!

A Learning Mentor is not meant to replace the pastoral care provided by other members of staff but to compliment and support their work through discussion and whole school approach.