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Whole School SEND:
Peer Mentoring for School Improvement 2022–2023

**Strengthening strategic SEND leadership
in a primary school**

School: Primary

Overview of Focus of Peer Mentoring Support

This Peer-to-Peer project was undertaken to support a mainstream school, The School, graded as Requires Improvement (RI) to improve the quality of SEND provision and was undertaken by a Whole School SEND (WSS) Regional Lead.

6 sessions of peer mentoring support carried out via Zoom. The Headteacher was the key contact and attended each session. On one occasion, the SENCo attended for part of the session.

The school initially requested that the focus of the support be adaptive teaching. See below for the reasons why this focus was amended.

Background

The school is RI, with SEND as a key area for development. Located in a rural area, a member of a multi-academy trust.

The headteacher is new to post, initially temporarily, and soon after her appointment, which was agreed internally within the Trust and at very short notice, OFSTED judged the school to be RI; the headteacher was working within the Trust at the time of her appointment.

The head describes the regime she inherited as one of low aspirations and expectations. This led to very low outcomes for children.

There is extremely high mobility within the school (43%). It is not a school 'of choice' for many families who remove their children as soon as a place becomes available closer in to 'town'. There are acute attendance challenges.

Staffing is more settled now after a turbulent period. Staff turnover means that most staff who were in post at the time of the headteacher's appointment have moved on.

Implementation

Although the headteacher had identified her priority for consideration as adaptive teaching and learning in foundation subjects, as the discussion between head and mentor developed, it was not clear that the SEND data generally was robust. This raised the possibility that strategies for class-based support and development would not be well enough targeted as we were not completely clear about the SEND register. The mentor suggested the following:

1. That the programme would start with a focus on SEND data and its role as a strategic tool for school improvement
2. That we would consider the place of distributed leadership of SEND within this. This would include strategic use of the SENCo, school strategic monitoring systems, using the graduated approach to maximum effect, clarifying the school's ordinarily available provision, early identification and EHCP processes.

Building Expertise

The mentor led the head and SENCo through a presentation about a SEND data 'Nutshell' document. This was transformative for the Headteacher in her understanding of how to strategically address the SEND issues. A school-focussed nutshell was subsequently produced.

The value of this document was instant in that as we interrogated the data the school had compiled and were curious about what the data was telling us; many further questions arose for us. This enabled us to develop a much deeper view of SEND and its place and part in ongoing school improvement activities.

Subsequent areas of discussion were:

- Is the SEND register correct?
- How data 'drops' could be used to check provision, leading to potential changes to the school's SEND register.
- Core subject leaders to produce SEND data.
- SEND and ethnicity, especially pupils identified as Gypsy/Roma/Traveller

How a systematic approach to the Graduated Approach and the use of a Graduated Approach Tool can support monitoring of need, the development of provision and teacher workload.

Pulling together an 'Ordinarily Available Provision' (OAP) document for the school via a staff meeting that engaged teachers and gave them ownership. How to use the OAP document as part of routine monitoring activities.

Attendance challenges and the link for SEND pupils; actions and strategies to ensure forensic monitoring of this.

Teacher assessment, ensuring it is robust and accurate; Trust move to the use of Pre-Key Stage Outcomes as a tracking tool and the benefit of this re accuracy of assessment / SEND register.

EHCP submissions/ numbers of EHCPs at the school

Screening in Reception and basic screening of new arrivals

How to use the Nutshell as a core report to Governors

Remodelling the TA team to be more strategically responsive and better meet pupil need

Solution-focussed SEND case discussions; where the situation was particularly complex.



More inclusive ethos/culture in the setting



Earlier and more accurate identification of SEN

Reviewing and Refining Implementation

See above.

Outcome and Anticipated Impact

The head now has an accurate and deep understanding of the SEND data for the school.

The Headteacher commented that the 'Nutshell' document had *'opened my eyes and enabled me to ask the right questions. My understanding of strategic SEND leadership has improved immensely. The opportunity to really focus on this one aspect has been hugely beneficial. The Nutshell document is easy to update and is a good starting point for discussion with teachers.'*

Working together (Headteacher and teachers) to produce the OAP document has meant that teachers are highly aware now of what they need to have in place to meet the needs of ALL pupils. Shared understanding and accountability has grown.

Areas where SEND data is a query have been identified.

Arrangements to forensically monitor attendance for pupils with SEND are in place.

The SENCO left in March and a new SENCO has been appointed for September 2024 with a temporary SENCO (loaned from the Trust) covering the summer term on a part time basis.

The school has worked together to produce its Ordinarily Available Provision (OAP) document and a Teacher Handbook setting out expectations has been produced.

Routine school monitoring activities, e.g. learning walks and observations and data drops now have a clear SEND focus.

Systems for tracking pupil progress have been reviewed, and the school now uses Pre-Key Stage standards instead of its previous system.

The SEND register has been reviewed.

Next Steps to Support Sustainability

To be included in the revised summer term SDP and the new SDP for September 2024:

The school uses 'Study Bug's monitoring system to monitor the attendance of SEND pupils so that the SENCO can quickly take the necessary actions.

Beginning to build alternative ways for children to record their learning so that this becomes part of the regular daily offer, and that children can start using this independently to record their learning.

Strengthen assessment and monitoring of pupils with SEND so that it is robust and accurate, and meets the needs of the school population, leading to clear identification of targets/ next steps for learning.

Embed the revised school monitoring systems so that these are secure and fully part of the daily life of the school (pupil progress data drops, learning walks, planning monitoring, performance management).

Further develop adaptive teaching skills with a particular focus on Foundation subjects.

Review personalised plans to ensure that they are fit for purpose.