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Research Associate Report

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Mentoring: from data to people

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Introduction

Both the personalised learning agenda and Every Child Matters (DfES, 2003) place at their heart the needs of the individual pupil. The perceived need to support pupils through their social and academic progression in education has perhaps never been so pronounced.

One way in which schools are responding to this demand is through the provision and development of mentoring programmes. This fits most closely within two of the DfES's five components of personalisation (DfES, 2004), namely assessment for learning (AfL) and school organisation.

Although assessment for learning has its roots in day-to-day classroom practice, effective dialogue around learning needs between a mentor and pupil links to this. Developing the best organisational structures to support this dialogue between staff member and pupil, so that it contributes formatively to a pupil's school experience, is fundamental.

This study seeks to evaluate mentoring within a small group of secondary schools. It reflects upon the changed role of form tutors in which they have become the first port of call for pupils and parents, as well as being responsible for taking a lead in the development of the individual pupil. No longer do they seem to just mark registers and check homework diaries; they reflect upon data to support the learner in ways that were not common in the past.

As more adults in schools join in the mentoring process this study also aims to reflect on their engagement. It looks at the adult–pupil mentoring process, seeking to identify good practice and highlight issues. It puts forward the view that, in the age of Every Child Matters (ECM) and Learning Beyond the Classroom, the focus for mentoring needs to extend beyond a focus on academic achievement to one that is more holistic, taking account of pupils' social development – a move for mentoring 'from data to people'.

Background

The starting point for this research was to consider the development of mentoring within schools and its interface with assessment for learning. From the DfES (2006, p 5), *Assessment for learning: Guidance for senior leaders*, comes the following clear definition and principles:

“AfL is the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there.

“AfL gets straight to the heart of good teaching by:

- helping teachers help pupils to take the next steps in their learning;
- helping pupils help each other to take the next steps in their learning;
- helping pupils help themselves to take the next steps in their learning.”

Mentoring within schools can be linked to AfL not in those aspects which are most readily attributable to AfL in action – that is, those identifiably located within a lesson structure itself – but in the way it can contribute formatively to pupils’ understanding of their next steps in learning and development as individual learners. The quality, therefore, of the interactions between staff members and their pupils in fulfilling this role is of significant importance.

When seeking a definition of the word ‘mentoring’ within the context of the study, there was little material available that specifically looked at the relationship between the schools’ own staff members and the individual pupil. There was, in contrast, considerable literature relating to professional mentoring within a leadership context, peer mentoring for pupils and the provision of mentors from outside the school, for example, schemes involving volunteers from industry.

Definitions of mentoring in terms of professional relationships within educational leadership describe it in the following terms:

“Mentoring has associations with the older and wiser supporting the development of the young and less experienced” (Tomlinson, 2004, p 98).

“Mentoring relates to guiding, counselling, coaching and sponsorship based on experience, perspective and distance. It is a relationship rather than an activity” (Ibid, p 104).

McCall and Lawlor (2002, p 122) state:

“Some mentors work within curricular provision, but most assist through pastoral, extra-curricular or ‘curriculum enhancement’ arrangements. The focus may be on one-to-one attention and general support, rather than specific tutoring. Indeed, it is useful to think of mentoring by the purpose it serves. There are at least four:

- First, passing on skills to others and helping them get some kind of advancement.
- Second, providing guidance and support to help an individual or group to establish a better sense of identity or to become more effective in coping with their life or work demands.
- Third, providing additional knowledge or a higher form of expertise or skill to help extend opportunities for very talented or more able pupils.
- Fourth, acting as a ‘critical friend’ or sounding board against which someone tests their intended decision-making, proposed courses of action or actions

already taken; being supportive, but open and honest to the point of being prepared to give disappointing as well as good news, in short offering an individual or group that which only a 'best friend will tell you'."

Smith (1999, p 259) cites the work of learning mentors within the DfES's Excellence in Cities initiative as impacting upon the following areas:

"Relationships can foster any of the basic competencies associated with emotional intelligence, including Self-Regulation, Self-Motivation, and Social skills – particularly Self-Awareness and Empathy."

Literature on the mentoring of pupils by school staff is, as mentioned previously, scarce, but Hylan and Postlethwaite (1998, pp 68–77) describe a pilot mentoring scheme, Raising Pupil Achievement (RPA), that has been developed in a girls' secondary school. Its principal aim was to raise the standard of achievement of the pupils involved and was based on regular mentoring interviews between pupils and teachers. The interviews had an explicitly academic focus. In this pilot project, mentoring was provided for pupils in Years 7 and 12. The evaluation of the pilot project showed statistical analysis of the value added by mentoring and the sampling of the views of all participants. Pupils at the school appeared routinely to gain good examination results. However, the evaluation found an increase in motivation to learn for all mentored pupils and a measurable increase in attainment for some ages and ability groups.

In *Sharing a Laugh?* (2004), Phillip, Shucksmith and King looked at the impact of different forms of mentoring on young people in three settings. They found that most young people and their mentors believed that the experience was a positive one, a finding that the Rhyddings Business and Enterprise School's SRB mentoring project also confirm¹.

And from Bowring-Carr and West-Burnham (1999, p 111) comes:

"For several years, Sydney Smith School has, with varying degrees of success, used a mentoring scheme for Year 11. This has taken the form of senior managers and pastoral heads working with four to eight pupils each to discuss their progress, to work with them on action planning and revision and to nag them about attendance and completion of course work."

Perhaps tellingly, Hargreaves (2005, p 5) offers the following comment, which we can consider in the context of mentoring:

"In many schools there is also no agreed vocabulary in which teachers might talk with their pupils about learning, even though this is at the very heart of professional practice."

Drawing on all the above references and the data which emerged from the study, the meaning of mentoring for this study became: 'The interaction between adults and young people relating to enhancing self-development.'

¹ <http://www.simonmidgley.co.uk/mentoring/rhsproject.htm>

Methods

The research was based in five West Country secondary schools, chosen because of their links to NCSL's Leadership Network within the South West region and due to their being identified as exponents of good practice. They collectively serve some 8,300 pupils.

The methods used were selected to elicit data related to:

- how mentoring was led within the school
- what mentoring strategies and practices were employed
- what the pupil experience of mentoring was

To this end, the methods comprised:

- Semi-structured interviews with headteachers (except in the author's own school in which the deputy head was interviewed) and pastoral representatives from each school. In one case, as an opportunity sample, the whole pastoral management team was interviewed. The interview schedule was piloted within the author's own school prior to its use in others. It sought to explore the school's understanding of mentoring, its current use of it and proposed future developments. The link of mentoring to both assessment for learning and the personalised learning agenda was made clear throughout.
- A joint discussion held between two schools where the future of mentoring and pastoral structure was discussed in detail.
- Group interviews with a representative group of pupils from each school. They were chosen by the individual school as a cross-representation of year groups, gender and ability. The pupils' interview consisted of three principle areas of questioning, as the intention was to get them to explore the issues in some depth. Questionnaires were subsequently given to these pupils at the end of the group interview. The questionnaire was developed from an original online survey carried out in the author's school.
- In the author's own school, the pupils' opinion was augmented by two online questionnaires as part of the school's self-evaluation procedures for mentoring, each involving over 500 pupils.

The author recognises that the inclusion of his own school in the research as well as its small-scale nature are issues that affect perceived validity. Concerning the former, an objective stance was maintained as far as was possible throughout.

Key findings

This report focuses on the following key findings:

- Mentoring means different things to different people and schools.
- ‘Academic’ mentoring can be distinguished from ‘holistic’ mentoring and there may be some tension between the two. The study schools focus on academic (subject achievement and attainment-based) rather than holistic (the whole child) mentoring, although the need to support the whole child is recognised in order to facilitate learning.
- Creating the right atmosphere and culture for mentoring to occur is an important role of leadership of schools.
- Pupils want to experience a consistent, high-quality approach to mentoring.
- It is necessary to provide staff training (CPD) to develop and support the establishment of mentoring systems.

Each of these key findings will be explored below before the report’s recommendations are set out in the conclusion.

Mentoring means different things to different people and schools

During the interviews, all leaders were asked: “What does mentoring mean in practice for you and the school?” The following quotations illustrate the diversity of interpretation at school level. Whilst such diversity might create a limiting factor when discussions occur externally with other parties, to individual institutions it may not be such an issue. It is, perhaps, a strength within the education system that schools are free to interpret terms such as mentoring in their own way, adapting them to suit their own individual institution’s requirements.

- “I see mentoring... more as a part of forming a support to assessment for learning... I say in English the teacher takes time and sorts it out. There may be the same sort of problem with the same pupil in say maths or science. Who picks that up? Who makes sure of the overview?”
- “It’s about optimum use of registration and establishing relationships with members of staff, between pupil and pupil.”
- “Finding time for an individual teacher... to provide the child or group of children with sufficient data to enable the child to understand how they can proceed – to improve.”
- “Pupils who opt out do not achieve and mentoring helps remove the baggage they have with them before they enter a lesson. A calm class allows for good learning.”
- “When I talk of this [mentoring], language is the key. So we actually get into the habit of talking about learning as a community – pupils amongst pupils, and pupils with staff.”
- “I would also like to see mentoring as part of the curriculum... so that subject teachers are not just delivering information... within their specialism, but they’re also mentoring those pupils in that subject context.”

- “I think mentoring also takes place when you get a conflict with a child... The trouble is, we only ever do it at options time. Actually, I think we should be doing it much earlier on... But it's costly.”
- “Mentoring means identifying pupils' needs... I think with the personalisation agenda mentoring is obviously going to become important... but basically we should be improving their life chances through the mentoring process.”
- “Staff volunteer to mentor Year 11s, both teaching and non-teaching. This has been a great success following our coaching course.”
- “But one of the issues for them [parents] is this business of ‘how do I know my child is going to be safe and happy?’ and one of the key things is this mentoring thing and there is no question about that at all.”
- “There are lots of differing mentoring aspects that we have in place at the college, starting in Year 7. When they come up they have a mentor, a pupil in Year 11 who looks after a small group of pupils.”

From the pupils came the following observations:

- “The mentors were very helpful in guiding us around the school when we started here. I liked that.”
- “They [mentors] help us to achieve our targets.”
- “Tutor stays with you, knows you and helps.”
- “My tutor is my rock and they give extra advice when needed.”
- “He [tutor/mentor] takes an interest in me in form time.”
- “Varies from tutor to tutor as to what you do and the targets you set.”

Although there are some similarities concerning what it means in practice, there is also diversity. In addition, there appears to be a universal recognition of its importance from a staff perspective but some acknowledgement that there are tensions that exist in how it is used and that it might achieve more if its remit was extended. In summary, to emphasise the need for a common language from a senior leader comes:

“I think the term mentoring is an odd term, you know. I'm not sure how we can change that, as it seems to mean so many things and that's the problem. That's the issue.”

Academic mentoring can be distinguished from holistic mentoring and there may be some tension between the two

Nationally, the work that schools have been undertaking in supporting children's wider well-being was recognised in *Every Child Matters: Change for Children* (2004, paragraph 3.7), which also reiterated schools' formal duty to safeguard pupils and promote their welfare. It recognised that the criteria for inspecting schools applied by Ofsted would be amended to report on the support for the well-being of pupils. ECM also placed the emphasis on schools to ensure that:

- "...young people are supported to realise their potential and develop positively through their teenage years" (2004, paragraph 3.9).

Each school showed that it provided data to the tutor on which mentoring discussions with pupils could be based. Pupils also recognised and supported the use of this data in the setting of subject targets.

All the schools considered themselves to be data rich and recognised that the vast majority of this data lay in the academic field, ie performance data, where such statistical information could be generated relatively easily. CATs, SATs, YELLIS were mentioned as sources of such data, all of which led to predictions, projections and expectations culminating in the setting of targets for the young people.

Several schools had aggregated these results in order to produce teacher, subject department and school targets also, and it became clear that it was through the establishment of these processes that much mentoring work was directed.

It was often by identifying underachievement and monitoring the effective meeting of targets that led the schools to direct their resources towards pupils. These resources, both human and financial, were recognised as being both scarce and specialised. The consequence of this targeting was that particular pupils were targeted in order to boost their chances of academic success.

Schools valued widening the discussions they had with pupils beyond just learning targets and recognised the need to support learning in as wide a concept as possible. One school identified how it captured the features of non-academic success and achievement of its pupils. Another school had a comprehensive system for reviewing and encouraging pupil activities; this fed newspaper articles and provided additional links to pupils' homes through increased contact. Whilst not recorded in a formal way by the school, such reports could, and did, enable the pupil – if they so wished – to build a file of achievement. In another school, a pro forma was used to record pupils' non-academic attainment and interests more structurally and formally. It enabled information to be gathered that could create a debate around the whole child.

From the practitioners came the following observations when reflecting on this aspect:

- "What we do is ask the pupil to bring in three pieces of work which demonstrate quality, weakness and something they are proud of, and they can identify their strengths, and show their weaknesses through the work too... Tutors now have information and can listen to the pupils' voice."
- "We [the pastoral leadership team and our primary schools] were talking about creating a learning passport, which is a device to allow children to understand themselves as learners at Year 6 level, but not an assessment focus. It is 'how resilient are you, how good are you when you get stuck at finding alternative way?'... And then the child is empowered into understanding themselves as a learner."

- “A sort of self-analysis... it gets them talking, learning, and you engage the pupils' voice.”
- “I think unless you clear out some of the pastoral problems that they may have, they can be blockers to academic success... and clearly they need to be in a stable emotional state before they can successfully learn within the school.”
- “There is this girl in Year 11 and she is not particularly able, but she works really hard and she is very proud that she has got some level in a tractor exam. We had it on display because it was important to her and to us and we mentioned it in assembly. No one laughed. It is at whatever level. If it is an achievement for you we want to recognise that too. So that's what we do.”
- “We've not been terribly good at tracking what the kids' achievements are and what is going on in their lives outside, so we are experimenting with a personal portfolio, which we are going to launch in September with Years 7 and 8. A colleague and a couple of other key staff have been trying to identify what are some of the key personal skills we want children to gain.”
- “We [the staff] get caught up about their [the pupils'] behaviour. We don't actually talk about why it appeared, and also about what our pupils want.”

The pupils themselves contributed the following comments:

- “Targets are set; they are academic ones.”
- “Targets are for subject only; no one has asked me what else I do.”
- “More academic [pupils] don't get as much encouragement or support.”
- “It's more than just helping us [pupils]; it's helping us to achieve, but not just academically.”
- “All they [the tutors] seem to do is set higher and higher targets. He never said 'well done' for reaching them. Every time you get a grade you are expected to get a higher one.”

Again, there are commonalities but also differences in the views expressed. Both hint at a recognition that mentoring could achieve more in enabling the mentor to understand the mentee more, particularly with regard to going beyond their academic achievement to a greater understanding of them as both a learner and an individual.

Creating the right atmosphere and culture for mentoring to occur is an important role of leadership of schools

All the school leaders interviewed identified creating the culture and atmosphere where change can flourish as a critical factor that enabled mentoring to occur. The data from interviewees reflected that the culture needed to link to both an individual's academic achievement as well as to their behaviour. Leaders perceived the importance of mentoring to be connected to their response to, and realisation of, the personalised learning agenda and ECM.

As stated in a DfEE research briefing paper (Miller, 1998, p 4):

“It is important that the mentoring scheme is part of a whole-school approach to raising attainment... The scheme needs the commitment of senior management and the support of the whole staff... to help to reinforce its importance with pupils.”

The school leaders were similarly unanimous in their enthusiasm about recognising and responding to the pupils' voice in their schools. Most schools had clearly established recognition structures for this such as school councils, but few used this voice in the field of mentoring development and few could be clear in identifying the outcomes of the success of their mentoring programmes at pupil level, in terms of how they affected the individual's learning. One school used an online evaluation system to gather pupils' and parents' views of mentoring. The role of self-evaluation in providing data to inform the development of mentoring systems and practices was highlighted as an area which leaders could develop. Culturally, this would support the commitment both to taking note of pupils' perspectives and supporting the role of mentoring as a means to developing more pupil-centred practices.

Schools that had tried to individualise programmes to meet the needs of their pupils ascribed these approaches to the culture they had developed with staff and parents. There was a clear recognition by those interviewed that part of the role for school leaders was to clarify their expectations of mentoring systems and how it was to be performed, as well as leading and managing the changes necessary for many staff. Recognition was also given to the need to engage parents and pupils in the processes.

Those involved in supporting and providing mentoring processes also identified that mentoring could be both planned and ad hoc – the latter often occurring in response to behavioural issues. In *Call in the professionals*, Revell (TES, 2004) presents an argument for teachers to be teachers only; but this is balanced by the need for quick action to occur when a crisis situation arises, such as one linked to behaviour. It echoes the findings of this research, where the need for rapid, appropriate response is identified as a critical factor. Schools recognise that they provide support to pupils as the need arises, quickly and often at the expense of others in the school. A clear reference was made by one interviewee to the lost teaching time, when a teacher is involved in a pastoral support case and has to drop everything in order to respond to it. No one interviewed objected to the teacher responding as they all recognised the need to support the individual. What they were concerned about was the effect of this response on others and the effect on the teachers themselves.

The study schools' leaders cited the following in relation to the ways in which mentoring was led within their schools:

- “It's about changing the climate.”
- “The climate was created because I had a vision of how I felt things could be and, through INSET days, talked to staff about it and sold that vision to staff, and staff were willing to let me lead in that direction.”
- “Creating the ethos and attitude of staff and pupils is vital to learning.”
- “The most important, critical factor is the leadership's behaviour; being about talking to kids, having high expectations of them and uniform, improving behaviour. Asking the right questions of pupils and staff.”
- “I always think, look for your fellow travellers, and look for the people who are going to enable and carry the can too. Take them with you and create the backdrop against which this change can occur.”

Pupils want to experience a consistent, high-quality approach to mentoring

For the pupils interviewed, culture was encapsulated in the pragmatic examples of the practice that they encountered. For some, the experience was positive and the perceived effectiveness of their mentoring experience enhanced their educational experience:

- “I found the person I saw to be very supportive.”
- “Tutor time is good in the sixth form: it makes us [sixth form] feel like adults. My tutor is my friend and confidant.”
- “They help us achieve our targets they have set.”
- “The PE department knows about my sporting events outside school and they helped to rearrange my homework timetable, which was very helpful.”

The concerns of those for whom the experience was not so positive related largely to the inequity of their experience. For some, this related to the very different approaches taken by the staff involved in the process:

- “We were seen by someone who did not know us and they seemed not to have much interest in us.”
- “Not all tutors do the same. Ours has never got our files and our tutor period is a free lesson. We usually use it for reading time.”
- “I was seen on mentoring day by someone who did not know me and I have not seen them since.”

For others, inequity was perceived in the following ways:

- the inconsistency between subject targets set and grades subsequently achieved
- the perceived disproportionate time spent by mentors with disaffected pupils

It was clear, particularly from the comments gathered from the pupils, that, for some, the communication of their targets and response by their tutors to these was another area of concern. They felt that there was little point in creating targets which were not shared with other staff or that were not reviewed.

- “We [the pupils] want our targets shared, not put in a drawer in our tutor rooms by our form teachers.”
- “What’s the point of writing them if no one sees them?”
- “We get targets set by our form tutors from the data they have but no one else knows about them.”
- “Subjects set target but our tutors don’t discuss them with us.”
- “Varies from tutor to tutor: not all tutors interpret data in the same way.”

School leaders were aware that consistency was required within the school and supportive tutors in the mentoring process were acknowledged in all schools, as evidenced, for example, by high attendance levels in a tutor group. All schools recognised the 'ineffective tutor' and had tried to address – with mixed success – their shortcomings. However, inequity of practice issued challenges for the prevailing systems and practices:

“When working with pupils they tend to vote with their feet when they realise they are not getting a good deal from the teacher.”

In seeking pupils' perspectives there was an acknowledgement of the challenges in how this was managed, in terms of its influence on developments. Leaders were forthright in their wish to encourage more pupil involvement in schools as they were essentially 'the customers', but recognised that this posed a challenge for some staff members.

Asking the pupils their opinions about their experiences brought with it an anticipated commitment from the school to do something about the answers. It was clear that pupils wanted the staff of the school to listen to them and for their opinions to be respected and for this to lead to action. The following two comments illustrate this well:

- “When we [pupils] bring something to our form tutor I hope they will help us do something about it.”
- “I [sixth former] like it when they [the tutors] listen to me and help me with my issues.”

Comments from school leaders that illustrate their support for evaluation structures included:

- “The critical bit is the pupils' voice and how the tutor listens to and uses that.”
- “The barometer groups [representative groups of pupils] would feed back as well. We do these at KS3 and it is just working through into KS4 this year where the head of year meets with a cross section group of eight pupils to keep in touch... with anything really... It will usually be the curriculum and pastoral systems and what they think about that. The head of year feeds that back to staff. It's a good way of getting structures feedback and this feeds back on the pastoral system.”

For leaders, communication of mentoring data between staff was recognised as a critical challenge, with the sharing of recorded targets set through mentoring processes being identified as a key to consistency of support to the pupils. To this end, ICT systems were acknowledged as a potentially effective means of data transfer between staff involved in the mentoring of pupils. In seeking to address equity, leaders said:

- “As learning co-ordinators, we have meetings once each half-term where we discuss good practice and exchange ideas. I write guidance for mentoring days for teachers, explaining expectations of what we would like them to do. I also produce an A3 sheet which structures the discussions between the pupil and the teacher... then we use that as a basis for mentoring discussion.”
- “I think we should skill them up to meet the role... We need to provide common information and skills to staff to do this role and to share it with the children.”

It is necessary to provide staff training (CPD) to develop and support the establishment of mentoring systems

The changing role of the form tutor and the expansion of mentoring roles for staff as a result of workforce reform all held implications for ensuring that training and development opportunities supported consistent systems and practices.

This expansion ranged from a considerable amount of one-to-one work, particularly evidenced through the work with behaviourally challenging pupils and those with special needs – such as those recorded in statutory assessments – through to group work and counselling. There was also reference to the many outside agencies and their potential mentoring roles in school, such as careers and advice, social services or volunteers from industry.

The greater the number of adults involved, the more the need for good communication was recognised as essential between all the parties in the school. Recognition was given to the use of ICT systems to help enable this to occur, with event-logging and note-taking being seen as one possible way forward. The expansion of the need to handle data efficiently was acknowledged, along with the need for training in this.

An area for discussion that developed was the idea of engaging more specialists in schools to support the work of the classroom teacher; the question arose as to whether the teacher should be the specialist in learning and teaching and concentrate all their efforts in this area only. This would imply that the responsibility for child development and the holistic element of the role should rest in the hands of some other specialist professional. There was a debate in some of the interviews about encouraging the growth of all-degree professional specialists to work in schools, although the costing of this was not considered other than in passing.

The role of the form tutor was also recognised as having changed and this also had implications for practice. Emphasis was placed on the need to recognise that no longer were they there just to mark registers and check homework diaries, but rather that they should be a first port of call for parents and pupils alike. It became clear that the need for the form tutor to manage a small group of pupils well and establish a good, open relationship with them which encouraged their engagement in school, was paramount to their success. This change in the role in tutoring was being reflected by some schools in their expectations of the form tutors and was to be developed in most through a change in job description for the form tutor.

It was recognised that the role of the tutor to respond to an individual's needs had improved and that the schools had worked hard to achieve this. Some schools had seen it as part of the creation of an ECM culture, but all had recognised that the role of the tutor had changed from how it had traditionally been perceived.

The school leaders interviewed considered how this reconceptualisation, allied to the expansion noted earlier, might impact on the mentoring role:

- “Teaching staff have developed their teaching skills and we don’t in the same way develop their pastoral skills... We must now provide the training.”
- “I see the role [of tutors] as teaching and learning managers.”
- “Where [non-teachers were used], it worked; it was good.”
- “I think that teachers believe they are caring professionals and I believe many would feel it detrimental to their relationships to the pupils to try and remove that. But practically speaking, non-teachers would be available throughout the day to pick up and mentor pupils.”

- “The role of the teacher could be as support rather than lead. I wonder why we need highly trained graduates to look after truancy, for example.”
- “We have appointed a pastoral support worker, ex-youth worker, to work with individuals.”

And from a pupil came this comment:

- “My mentor was not a teacher and they were very helpful.”

Several of the schools claimed how the growth in the number of support staff and their increased direct involvement in supporting the learning experience of young people – and therefore directly in mentoring – had given rise to a wide training programme and the necessary perception change that this also brought. Recognition was given to this through the specific area of working with the disaffected and less well-motivated pupils.

School leaders’ comments included:

- “If you want to be a mentor you need to have subject knowledge and an understanding about the data you have... This may well be a staff training issue.”
- “We have got to address that the kind of INSET and training provided is important to the success of mentoring.”
- “We have trained staff in coaching and made them active listeners. Many of them are non-teachers, and they were highly praised by the trainers. This has proved a great success and they now act as mentors to a small group of pupils by extracting them from lessons.”
- “You [the leader] have got to get a clear structure... Then you have to put in place a proper training programme. You redefine roles and support the introduction of these.”

Recommendations

In the work carried out by Hallinger and Heck (1999, pp 4–5), three forms of leaders' influence on what happens in classrooms are identified:

- direct effects – where leaders' actions directly influence school outcomes
- indirect effects – where leaders affect outcomes indirectly through other variables
- reciprocal effects – when the leader or leaders affect teachers and teachers affect the leaders and through these processes outcomes are affected

These would link well with the suggested recommendations for school leaders, drawn from the findings and outlined below:

- Provide professional development opportunities to all staff involved in mentoring pupils to create effective and consistent practices.
- Enable the assimilation of all new staff into schools, reinforcing culture and practices to support and sustain the mentoring process.
- Develop a clear, common language of mentoring that removes ambiguity, promotes consistency and allows informed debate.
- Support effective mentoring by joining pastoral and curriculum issues and enable this to be communicated effectively through robust systems.
- Establish a pastoral structure that encourages mentoring and takes advantage of workforce reforms.
- Encourage pupils to develop and set their own targets, both academic and non-academic, sharing them with all who need to know and are involved with them, through robust information exchange systems.
- Recognise and provide opportunities to consult the pupil voice, using it to evaluate and develop existing mentoring practices as part of the school's self-evaluation measures.
- Involve all adults in the school in the mentoring and, as leaders, 'walk the talk' and model desired values.
- Develop opportunities to engage with other professionals within a climate of ECM to provide mentoring support for pupils.
- Extend mentoring beyond academic performance to include and value pupils' social development and other skills and abilities.

This research has tried to reflect both school leaders' and pupils' views on the specific issue of adult–pupil mentoring. It recognises the limitations of the size of the sample and it is hoped that it will engender further work to give greater credence to these findings by widening the research base.

In conclusion, it would appear appropriate to leave to a pupil the final words regarding the reasons for the research:

“When used properly it [mentoring] works well, keeping pupils working hard. However, sometimes targets are written in planners [school dairies] and never revisited. In these cases, target-setting never moves pupils and generally wastes lesson time.”

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