



Cottesmore Academy is a Primary School that is committed to high quality learning and teaching and meeting the needs of all the children in its care. The school is located in Kendrew Barracks and serves a marvellous diverse community with 100% of the children coming from Service families. The children come from a range of cultural backgrounds including British, Fijian, Nepalese, African and Indian. This unique range of backgrounds enables the school to share and celebrate with the local community and enrich our curriculum at every opportunity.

Cottesmore Academy is a school that is experiencing enormous change. They have experienced 100+% turnover in pupils this academic year and currently have 150 pupils on roll. The school rated Requires Improvement by Ofsted in its last inspection in September 2018 has recently joined the Rutland Learning Trust and is in a period of rapid and sustained improvement.

This strengths initiative involved the ten classroom teachers, eight teaching assistants, two office staff and the premises officer. This is a highly committed team with a wide range of experience who are digging deep to make rapid progress. Strengths-based development was deployed as a vehicle to develop and support the team during this time of change and ensure that the whole team invested in each other and made the necessary adjustments to benefit the children's learning.

Process

The Headteacher had fully engaged with the strengths philosophy and we had worked together for some time. She had explored the potential of her own top 5 then full 34 and so understood how this process could work for her team.

Teacher team:

- Teacher and Teaching Assistant team took the StrengthsFinder survey and received their top 5 report
- Teacher team had two individual coaching sessions with Karen over a 12 month period.
 - Session 1 focused on understanding their profile and exploring insights to raise performance on individual and team goals
 - Session 2 focused on identifying success so far and future goal setting on individual and team goals
- Teaching Assistant had one individual coaching session with Karen during this period.
 - Session 1 focused on understanding their profile and exploring new areas of potential
 - Session 2 focused on using insights to raise performance on individual and team goals
- The whole team had two team strengths discovery sessions to share insights and feedback to others

Impact

Employee survey results demonstrated the following results

- 100% of team felt that the strengths initiative had positively impacted their performance at work as a teacher and a leader.
- 100% of team felt that this time was a great investment of time for them and for their organisation in terms of their professional development and impact in the classroom and leadership goals.
- 96% of team felt that the insights gained and progress achieved would be sustainable over time.
- 100% of the team would recommend this process to a colleague.

The team identified that strengths development had helped them with the following areas:

"As a member of the SLT, strengths have not only helped me develop as a leader but understand the strengths of others better. This has led me to develop my interactions with members of the team which has led to improved outcomes."

"The sessions enabled me to truly evaluate my professional skills through stepping back from them and seeing them within a wider context."

"I think there is real potential to develop strengths as a shared leadership team across the trust which could lead to enhanced collaboration."

"Have really enjoyed the whole experience so far and feel it has had a positive impact on both my professional and personal life."

Next steps

"We plan to always be 'EPIC' as we strive to ensure everything we do is enjoyable, focussed on progress, inclusive and collaborative. We believe that becoming EPIC allows us to achieve our motto - 'Think, believe, dream, dare...we are heroes of our own adventures'."

Strengths development for our team is a key part in this journey. Next academic year we will continue to use individual and team coaching sessions to drive performance and engagement to benefit the staff and so the children.



If you would like to discuss how initiatives like these can support and develop your team then please get in touch.

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For further testimonials please see www.rutlandcoaching.uk and www.soar.com/KarenatRutlandCoaching