



English Martyrs Catholic Voluntary Academy is a small Voluntary Aided Catholic Academy with 134 children aged between 4 - 11 years old on roll and is part of the St Thérèse of Lisieux Catholic Multi Academy Trust together with 13 other primary schools and two secondary schools across Lincolnshire. The school, now rated Good by Ofsted in 2011 and 2016, has made exceptional progress in recent years under its new leadership.

The team are very proud of their active and friendly community and provide a broad and balanced curriculum setting high expectations and encouraging all our children to achieve their potential. Their school values of excellence, determination, respect, equality, friendship, courage and inspiration help them to achieve this.

This strengths initiative involved the Headteacher and four classroom teachers. This is a well-established and experienced leadership team who have made considerable progress. Strengths-based development was deployed as a vehicle to ensure that this momentum was sustained and that the considerable experience available was being best utilised to benefit the schools development and so the children's learning and progress.

Process

Teacher team:

- Headteacher and Teacher team took the StrengthsFinder survey and received their top 5 report
- Teacher team had a individual coaching session with Karen to focus on understanding their profile and exploring 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. This involved action planning how to work together with increased efficiency based on their insights.

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.
- 93% 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.
- 97% of team felt that the insights gained from the team sessions have enhanced their professional relationship with colleagues as they have a greater appreciation of what their themes bring
- 90% of the team felt that the progress had been 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:

- Identifying leadership success and areas of untapped potential
- Enhanced team dynamics as individuals shared their view point
- The process was supportive, validated abilities and gave a different perspective on longstanding relationships and behaviours.

Comments received about the experience include:

"I found this experience very interesting personally as it helped me understand better my strengths as a leader and possibly areas that I needed to consider more in the future."

"It made me question how other people would view my leadership and if I needed to reflect on this more to enable me to be better in my current role."

"It was a fantastic piece of CPD."

"It really helped us as an SLT to think about our combined strengths and who would be more likely to lead on specific areas. I would now consider rolling this out to all teaching staff to enable us to become more reflective and better able to share good practice."

"I would like to see more schools accessing this training as a matter of course."

Next steps

The English Martyrs team have successfully explored the discovery stage a strengths initiative with their senior leadership team. They now face the challenge of embedding the benefits, language and behaviour to get maximum benefit on performance. They plan to develop coaching through a lesson study model with all staff.



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

Karen Muir, Rutland Coaching karen@rutlandcoaching.uk

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