



Whissendine Church of England Primary school is a small, friendly, high-achieving village school of approximately 190 pupils. The school, rated Outstanding by Ofsted in three consecutive inspections, is part of the Rutland Learning Trust.

This strengths initiative involved seven teachers and eight teaching assistants. This is a well-established, high performing team of experienced educators. Strengths-based development was deployed as an investment in staff development, to increase collaboration and develop future leadership potential.

## Process

Teacher team:

- Teacher team took the StrengthsFinder survey and received their top 5 report
- They completed employee engagement survey. Reviewed and set an action plan. They are currently on their third cycle.
- Teacher team had three individual coaching sessions with Karen over an 18 month 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
  - Session 3 focused on identifying success so far and future goal setting on individual and team goals
- Teacher team had two team strengths discovery sessions to share insights and feedback to others

Teaching Assistant team:

- Completed employee engagement survey. Reviewed and set action plan. They are currently on their second cycle.

## Impact

Employee engagement results demonstrated the following results<sup>a</sup>

- Overall employee engagement scores have risen from 4.19 (Nov 2017) to an exceptional 4.49 (Oct 2018)
- All scores in Oct 2018 were 4 or above (max score of 5)
- Recognition scores moved from 3 (Nov 2017) to 4.5 (Oct 2018). This being a key indicator of engaged employees who feel a key part of the team.
- "My opinions seem to count," moved from 2.8 (Nov 2017) to 4.5 (Oct 2018)

---

<sup>a</sup> Please note that maximum score is 5. Results are collected by an anonymous survey. Answers are then averaged to find the team mean.

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

- Greater self-awareness. They can now identify and verbalise their own strengths and see the potential rather than focusing solely on weaknesses
- Understanding how and why their strengths impacted positively and negatively on others.
- Increased self-belief and higher career aspirations
- Improved team dynamics as team have a common language to talk about values and what drives and motivates them.
- Increased ability to support each other in a meaningful and helpful way.

Comments received about the experience include:

*"It has made us not only understand ourselves much better but also brought the team much closer."* Class teacher

*"I feel as if I have learned something about myself as a teacher and what I want to aim for in the future. I, wholeheartedly, can recommend Karen and this process to you."* Class teacher

*"...having undertaken the training as part of a team, I feel I am now able to support colleagues in a positive way, understand and use their strengths which can only be a bonus to our working environment!"* Class teacher

*"Teams are now working better because they know what makes one another tick. They are playing to their strengths when organising themselves for the completion of tasks. They are considering why certain people react in the ways they do to certain initiatives and/or change."* Headteacher

## Next steps

Whissendine are well on their way to embedding strengths within their culture of high performance. They are currently including their office team in strengths coaching with a view to including teaching assistants at some point in the future.

They regularly revisit strengths language in team meetings and performance reviews to keep the language and insights alive and powerful.



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](mailto:karen@rutlandcoaching.uk)

For further testimonials please see [www.rutlandcoaching.uk](http://www.rutlandcoaching.uk) and [www.soar.com/KarenatRutlandCoaching](http://www.soar.com/KarenatRutlandCoaching)