



Exton and Greetham CofE Primary School is a small, friendly village school of approximately 60 pupils. The school, rated Good by Ofsted in its last inspection in 2014, is part of the Rutland Learning Trust.

This is the second academic year of strengths development in this setting. The initiative continues to involve the three classroom teachers and five teaching assistants. This is a supportive team with a wide range of experience and time served.

The purpose of this academic year's strengths programme was to continue to raise self awareness to aid open communication and collaboration as part of their constant drive to raise performance.

Process

The Headteacher continues to be fully engaged with the strengths philosophy and we had worked together for three years. She has explored the potential of her own top 5 then full 34 themes and so understood how this process could work for her team.

Teacher team:

- Teacher and Teaching Assistant team build on their strengths insights from last year with a particular focus on how they help and hinder their own success
- Teacher team had two individual coaching sessions and two team sessions with Karen over 12 months.
 - Session 1 and 2 focused on understanding their profile and exploring new areas of potential with particular reference to their middle leader role
- Teaching Assistant had two individual coaching sessions and two team sessions with Karen over 12 months.
 - Session 1 focused on developing a deeper understanding of their profile and how that influences team dynamics
 - Session 2 focused on over and underuse of themes and how this can help them achieve high performance or get in their way of success

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. (A rise from 94% last year)
- 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. (Sustained at 100% last year)
- 85% of team felt that the insights gained, and progress achieved would be sustainable over time. (A rise of 5% from last year)
- 100% of the team would recommend this process to a colleague. (Sustained at 100% from last year)

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

- Understand their own strengths and how to develop them for higher level performance
- Value different strengths within the team and give them a voice
- Be more compassionate with themselves and each other
- Have challenging conversations with greater success and impact on performance

Comments received about the experience include:

"I have become more focussed as a leader - clearer in my outlook, objectives, aims and the end goals I want to achieve. These have been better communicated with the team and more direct. I have used my strengths to support staff, but also to provide challenge where needed and stand up for my own beliefs and ideals." Headteacher

"Fantastic! Loved every session and have taken lots of points back into the classroom and to relationships with other staff. Hugely beneficial to the team." Class teacher

"I think the group sessions were really beneficial to the team as they allowed us to discuss potentially difficult issues using a common language. This would be really helpful to keep bringing to whole school meetings." Class teacher

"I would recommend this approach whole-heartedly to any education professional who was exploring the idea of strengths-based coaching." Headteacher

"I felt supported and my uniqueness was embraced and channelled to the benefit of the team." Teacher

"Previous to the strengths training I considered at least one of my strengths to be a weakness. Understanding and accepting my strengths has improved my confidence immensely and I feel a far more effective team member at work." Teacher

Next steps

As we speak schools are closed due to Covid 19 and the language of strengths is being used by the team to communicate, collaborate and support each other during rapidly changing times.



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