

Practice Guide to Learning Mentoring



A Guide for Learning Mentors and Line Managers

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A guide for new learning mentors and their line managers

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Introduction

This guide provides a brief overview of Learning Mentor provision for those newly appointed to the role and for senior staff who have responsibility for managing the strand for the first time. The learning mentor functions have many parts, but the key aim is to support pupils and students of all ages and abilities achieve their potential.

What is a learning mentor?

Learning mentors are salaried staff who provide support and guidance to children and young people to help them overcome social, emotional and behavioural problems which act as barriers to learning. They bridge academic and pastoral support roles ensuring that individual pupils and students engage more effectively in learning and are participating in the life of the school.

The barriers to learning can be wide ranging and often very personal to the individual pupil. A young person may be going through complex transitions and changes in their own lives, within the family or at school. These problems can manifest themselves in challenging behaviour, being unable to control strong feelings, bullying or just general disaffection and disengagement from learning and participation. Some may not have developed appropriate learning or study skills, personal organisation activities or have lost motivation.

Learning mentors help to identify and target these pupils at risk of disaffection and help them to identify and address what it is that is getting in the way of their learning. They do this by building professional helping relationships with pupils who have been referred to them. Through mentoring one to one or in small groups they follow an agreed time bound action plan based on the children's strengths and needs. They will involve parents and can facilitate access to specialist support for young people and families.

| Five Steps to learning mentoring | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Find out the child or young person's perspective | Explore solutions that make sense | Support the action plan in context |
| Work in partnership with staff parents carers peers agencies professionals | | |
| Review progress and prepare for endings | | |

In addition, learning mentors have a much wider role in enhancing inclusion across the school by having a focus on attendance, welfare, supporting personal, social and health programmes. They assist in making transfer between key stages effective, ensuring the appropriate information is shared and understood. They run clubs and "drop ins", and alternative learning activities. Experienced learning mentors are closely involved in safeguarding and protection.

Learning mentors liaise closely with teachers and other support professionals, and have proved to be an invaluable link between the family and school. The focus, however, is always on supporting the young person or child, helping them to grow, change and become active learners.

Their key responsibilities are to:

- Assist in identifying early signs of disengagement
- Establish one to one and group mentoring relationships
- Develop profiles, agree and implement a time bound action plan
- Work with parents and carers
- Work with agencies and other professionals
- Support the school in keeping children safe
- Support transfer between schools and key stages
- Develop extended activities to support inclusion
- Contribute to extended services
- Promote the role and evaluate its effectiveness
- Maintain professional standards
- Operate within legal, ethical and professional boundaries

Why do some children need *mentoring* support?

Pupils of all ability levels can be identified as underachieving because of a wide range of social and emotional factors. These barriers can become internalised, taking the form of low self-esteem, lack of confidence, poor concentration and difficulties in relationships or unmanageable feelings of anger, loss or sadness. They may also affect health, attendance, and level of engagement in learning.

The causes can be multi layered involving a change in family circumstances, bereavement, relationships, adapting to a new culture. These pupils need short term support to sort out and make sense of what is happening to them, to reflect on how their actions can be causing problems and to work out ways to making life better.

Who might benefit?

| Children and young people who may benefit from Learning Mentoring | |
|---|---|
| Poor attenders, poor punctuality | Suffered loss or bereavement |
| Demotivated | New to school, difficulties in settling into school |
| Disengaged from learning or social engagement | Language or cultural difficulties |
| Lack of self-esteem and confidence | Looked after children, those in care |
| Variety of behaviour issues, disruptive, bullying issues, attention seeking | Young carers |
| Difficulty in managing strong feelings, anger | Poor attendance and punctuality |
| Difficulty in building relationships making and mending friendships | Truants |
| Lacking resilience | Home circumstances causing anxiety |
| Passive Learners, difficulty in participation | Issues linked to safe guarding and child protection |
| Unhappy | Clash between home and peer culture |
| Learning gaps, falling behind, poor learning or study skills | Communication problems – home or school |
| High levels of anxiety | Welfare issues, tired, hungry, neglected |
| Difficulties in concentration | Sexual health, teenage pregnancies |
| | Substance abuse |
| | At risk of becoming involved criminal activities |

With the class teacher, the LM builds a profile of background information, strengths and needs and plans a programme of intervention. This will be developed in one to one withdrawal sessions, group work and by transferring new skills in the classroom context.

The mentoring process allows space and time for children to identify and focus on the positive changes they want to make for themselves and the path by which they will achieve these changes. The learning mentor motivates and empowers pupils to further learning and challenges their expectations and their views of the learning process. At its best the mentoring relationship explores solutions, develops personal growth, negotiates targets and boundaries, while giving encouragement and support in applying new skills and attitudes to the classroom and beyond.

An important aspect of the mentoring process is the involvement of parents, encouraging and supporting them to become part of the decision making. Mentors also liaise with the link agencies and the schools where pupils have come from and are transferring to.

Guiding Principles

Good learning mentor practice is grounded on firm principles and values and it is helpful for line managers and the learning mentor to agree everyday working values.

Values, principles and behaviours for supporting vulnerable young people

- Having a holistic view of the child
- Listening to the child's perspective, valuing the voice of the young person
- Effective support is based on good trusting relationships
- Recognising self-esteem and reliance are essential to development
- Believing that change is possible
- Acknowledging that the learning context sometimes needs to change
- Recognising parents and carers are the child's first and most enduring educators
- Knowing when a child needs a significant person in their school life to guide and support them
- While respecting confidentiality, keeping the safety and welfare of the child as paramount
- Being committed to working in partnership with colleagues, parents and other agencies to ensure support is comprehensive

The learning mentor needs to be flexible in managing their caseload and liaising with all those involved. Therefore they are not based within the confines of one classroom but have a role throughout the school. Much of the initial interventions take place outside the classroom. Although LMs may provide timetabled support for some children they can be called upon to deal with unexpected matters and situations, before, during and after school.

The Misunderstandings about Learning Mentors

LMs are NOT

- LMs are NOT teaching or learning support assistants. LMs focus on social and emotional needs and strengths. They find out what is causing barriers to learning. They develop strategies that bring about change in behaviour and order to thinking and communication
- LMs are NOT Counsellors – Learning Mentor support is a short term intervention and very much target driven. Mentors use counselling skills in their work, but do not have sufficient supervision in most cases to enable them to develop a full counselling role.
- LMs are NOT a person to whom the young person is sent when they misbehave - the mentoring programme is not part of any disciplinary process.
- LMs are NOT just the person who runs circle times and clubs. Their support is part of planned holistic programme for targeted pupils with identified needs.
- LMs are NOT supply teachers, cover for absent colleagues, administrators, office workers, learning support assistants. Their priority is to give guidance and support to those pupils with social and emotional needs.
- NOT voluntary mentors, they are employed by the school to build sustained, long term professional relationships with pupils and to extend support networks with other agencies.
- LMs are Learning mentors do NOT have a magic wand; they can't change the big picture such as fractured families, housing or society's ills. But they can help individual pupils to understand and manage feelings of anger, injustice, hurt in order to help them re-engage with their learning.
- LMs are They can NOT work alone in school; they need to work in partnership with class teachers, SENCO, inclusion teams to help the pupil develop more positive attitudes and behaviour
- LMs do not take the problem away from the classroom; the class teacher is still vital to long term change and growth.

Learning Mentors in Action

One to One Interventions

On average the full time Learning mentor has a caseload of eight to twelve mentees at any one time. They meet with their target pupils regularly over an agreed length of time, individually, in a group and in class. The level of intervention can vary from high focus to light touch:

- Significant long term intervention of two to three terms
- Medium intervention, over six to twelve weeks
- Low intervention, a few sessions or short contact once a week

Focus Groups

Learning mentors facilitate a variety of groups which can be issue based such as bullying, transition or a specific creative topic. Developmental groups focus on social skills, team work, improving listening and communication and friendships. Circle time and Circle of Friends is also used by learning mentors. These opportunities provide a safe environment for children to explore with their peers issues that are relevant to them.

| Personal skill developed through one to one and group mentoring | |
|--|---|
| Talking about yourself | Learning how to learn |
| Listening to others | Accessing information |
| Empathy, learning to help others | Listening to and following instructions |
| Having a conversation | Concentration on a task |
| Handling disappointment | Working with others, sharing, team work |
| Self-organisation | Confidence to try new tasks |
| Solving problem, analysing | Self-esteem, sense of achievement |
| Creativity | Asking for help |
| Managing strong feelings | Taking part, taking the lead |
| Making and mending friendships | Understanding what is expected |
| Handling bullying issues | Dealing with authority |
| Managing difficult situations | Transition awareness and preparation |
| Joking with hurting | Saying "No" |
| Making sense of change in personal life | Taking responsibility |

Transfer between Schools

The transfer between primary and secondary schooling poses several challenges for pupils, including social, emotional and academic. As well as giving practical help about friendships, allaying concerns and practising lessons, Learning Mentors can help children to build personal skills to cope with a new school and to manage their own learning. These skills involve personal organisation, decision making, accessing and managing information, analysis, dealing with authority, understanding what is

expected. For particularly vulnerable pupils Learning Mentors ensure that the correct information about support needs and relevant background is received by the most appropriate person in the forwarding school

Learning Mentors in Class

Those who are not familiar with the mentoring process are sometimes unsure what learning mentors do in the classroom. Apart from supporting circle times or PSHE there are other reasons for the LM presence in class.

- Supporting children to transfer or generalise skills and attitudes back into the classroom. This includes helping other children to support target children, modelling behaviours, cueing, praising, referring back to one to one sessions, observing, feedback, self-assessment.
- Learning Mentors may also be in class as part of an extended planned programme that addresses whole class issues, disruption, difficult relationships or a high proportion are not reaching their potential. The effectiveness of this support will depend on the clarity of purpose, shared strategies and responses.

Extended Activities

Learning Mentors carry out a range of other activities that enhance children's school life – early morning activities, breakfast clubs, friendship groups, playground projects, drop-ins, school councils, after school clubs, working with community organisations to extend sports and games. Examples of activities that learning mentors have developed to support the Every Child Matters Agenda can be found in the appendix.

Working in Partnership

The principle of taking a holistic approach to supporting young people is demonstrated by the way learning mentors work in partnership with colleagues, families, agencies and other professionals. Because they meet pupils and parents regularly and communication is based on trusting relationships they can offer a unique insight into the child and young person's life in school, home and on the street.

Sharing Information

Working in partnership relies on clear systems and protocols for sharing information. Learning mentors in particular have to be sensitive in handling confidential matters and ensuring they have consent from children, young people and families that information about them will be shared with others.

Working in Partnership with Parents and Carers

Learning mentors are a valuable informal link between home and school, helping parents to understand the work of the school and giving guidance on how they can become involved in their children's learning. They are particularly effective in engaging those parents on the edge of the school community and helping them to maintain links with outside support agencies. They do this by daily meeting and greeting, running small self-help groups to talk about parenting matters such as healthy eating, setting boundaries, bedtimes, telling stories, helping with homework.

Working in Partnership within the School

An essential part of any pupil programme is having protected time for teachers and learning mentors to agree a plan of action and for monitoring progress. They meet with SENCOs, senior managers and support staff to share information.

They work alongside class teachers in delivering PSHE, healthy school projects, and circle times, and contribute to whole school policies and events that address bullying, positive relationships and inclusion. Some have a special responsibility for attendance and punctuality where they liaise closely with the administration staff and Education Welfare Officers.

Working in Partnership with Services and Other Practitioners

Experienced learning mentors know a great deal about their mentees and understand the child's perspective in sensitive child protection cases. They can provide useful information to other professionals and for the Common Assessment Form (CAF). As learning mentors gain in experience some have been given increasing responsibility when liaising with outside agencies, particularly social services. They are being asked to take part in key decisions about children's welfare and complex safeguarding issues. Some are asked to attend Family Support Panels or to act as lead professionals. However, the role does have professional boundaries and care needs to be taken that learning mentors are not asked to go beyond what they can competently and confidently manage.

Balancing the Work Load

Learning mentors work forty hours a week. The challenge, as with so many in education, is how to balance all their duties while adhering to the first principle of providing mentoring to those children who are not fully engaging. Having two or more complex cases involving Social Services takes considerable time and energy leaving little space for other pupils.

A similar dilemma occurs when learning mentors focus most of their time on a small number of particularly disturbed pupils. While being very effective in preventing permanent exclusion this can be to the detriment of other children who, with short periods of focussed mentoring support, could make significant progress.

Line Management and Supervision

Learning mentors work with pupils in different ways from teachers and assistants. They carry a case load, their time needs to be flexible and their base is not in the classroom. Therefore they need to be managed in a different way. They require line management to ensure all aspects of their work are fully integrated and effective supervision to support individual cases.

| How can Learning Mentor Functions be supported? | | |
|---|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Mentoring relationships | Extended activities | Transition |
| Parents and carers | Working in Partnerships | Safe guarding |
| Professional development | Additional duties | Monitoring and review |

Line Management

The Learning Mentor Function Map and job description are essential in clarifying how the role can be adapted to meet the pupils in the school and how mentoring support can be employed effectively to support the whole school plan for improving learning and participation.

Job Descriptions

RBKC have agreed three levels of job descriptions based on the Learning Mentor Function Map and National Occupational Standards. The three levels are Learning Mentor, Advanced Learning Mentor and Senior Learning Mentor which involves responsibility for managing others

For details see RBKC LM Job descriptions.

The time Table

Balancing the timetable can cause real difficulties and sometimes needs the support of a senior manager to oversee and mediate with teaching staff

The time table should have the following balance:

| 40 Hours per week, 8 hours a day agreed by the school | | |
|--|---|--|
| <u>Mentoring Pupils</u> 26 to 30 hours 65% to 75% of timetable | <u>Work with adults</u> 10 to 6 hours 10% to 25% of timetable | <u>Organisational tasks</u> 3 to 4 hours usually after school 8% to 10% of timetable |

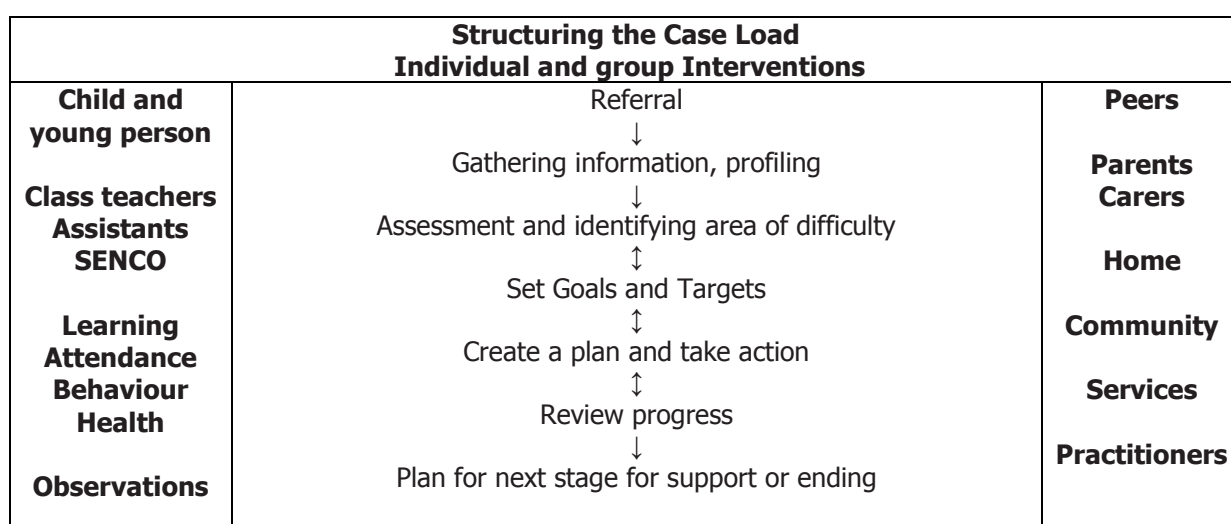
(See Appendix *RBKC Learning Mentor Timetable*)

Facilities for the Learning Mentor

To enable the Learning Mentor to carry out the different aspects of the job they need a private space for confidential discussions and documents and good communication links. The area need not be large, it should be comfortable and welcoming for an anxious parent, a frightened or angry child, unhappy adolescent or a place where learning mentor and colleague can share plans and strategies.

Organising the Work

Learning mentors and their line managers need to agree a structured approach to referrals, assessment, planning and review to ensure their support is effective and rigorous. These systems should inform which cases need to be prioritised, filter problems which could be solved in other ways and build in endings and exits.



(See appendix *Five Steps to Structured Learning Mentoring*)

Performance Management Review

Those taking part in performance reviews need to be fully aware of the complexity of the role, the counselling and helping skills which learning mentors need to employ and the competence in communication required. The performance review meeting is an opportunity to evaluate and develop these skills and to review the effectiveness of the role across the school. (See Guide to Learning Mentor Performance Review)

The Functions of Supervision

Supervision from an informed lined manager can provide time and space to reflect on practice, explore ways forward for complex and difficult cases and support the personal impact these may have had on the practitioner. The aim is to help the learning mentor to become a reflective practitioner, thinking about their work in more depth and exploring how they can develop and change their practice. There four components, some aspects overlap with performance and line management.

The four components of supervision for learning mentors:

- Ensuring that learning mentors are competent to do the job and are accountable
- Continuing professional development – by reflecting on practice, talking about the case load, how to move forward, opportunities for widening professional knowledge and understanding
- Personal Support – talking about aspects of the job that are personally & emotionally challenging
- Sharing principles, values and aims underpinning mentoring; looking at how school systems may need to change to make the role function well or mediation

In school the various aspects of supervision can be provided in different ways and by different people, line managers, SENCOs, EP service, colleagues.

Check points for Line Managers

- Senior managers need to ensure there is a shared understanding of how the role supports learning, behaviour, welfare, participation and inclusion
- The Learning Mentor role is identified in the school improvement plan
- The work of Learning Mentor is an integral part of whole school policy for removing barriers to learning and raising attainment
- LM policy and practice complements other relevant initiatives such as SEAL, PHSE, Healthy Schools, SEN and inclusion etc.
- Clear distinctions are made between Learning Mentor support and other forms of support
- All teaching, support and administrative staff have been informed of the role and have a broad understanding of the purpose and nature of the role and understand the procedures for referral and support
- Job descriptions have been customised and agreed to meet the needs of the school. They are regularly reviewed.
- Suitable facilities and dedicated place for working is in place
- Timetable is in place and allows flexibility
- Protected time agreed for class teachers and learning mentors to plan
- Learning mentors are involved in sharing information with partner agencies
- Systems in place for monitoring and evaluation
- Procedures agreed for performance review, supervision
- Professional development and training are supported

Further information can be found in CWDC's Learning Mentor Practice Guide which can be accessed at <http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/assets/0000/2107/Impracticeguide.pdf>

Issues raised by Learning Mentors

- Am I doing the right thing?
How can I help a child who is not responding?
Child is cooperative one to one but back in the classroom they can't transfer the behaviour / skills we have been practising and agreed
- I think I am making progress, then something happens at home and he /she can't cope, behaviour becomes very difficult and they get into trouble
I need to talk to someone about this case which has been very sensitive and difficult
The child has had a sudden bereavement / loss / trauma - what should I do
A pupil has disclosed but told me it is a secret
- I am finding my relationship with a parent is not working.
- I would like to broaden my knowledge and skills.

- My time table is overloaded
Teachers want me to be in class all the time
I feel staff want me to "take away the problem"
- There is no time to talk with class teachers for sharing strategies and giving feedback.
- Where do I find information that would help me understand this child?
I am not included in multi-agency meetings
I am still treated and a teacher's assistant to deliver the curriculum
- I am worried that agency / worker is not taking this case seriously.

- What will Ofsted inspectors expect from me?
- Where does the LM role fit into the school plan?
- When will my pay be reviewed?

National Accredited Training Opportunities

Currently, the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) implements and maintains professional standards that reflect the essential skills and competencies for a range of workers to support integrated working. This includes learning mentors.

CWDC have established a Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF), a new national framework for recognising and accrediting qualifications. The framework consists of vocational qualifications of different sizes including awards, certificates, diplomas and foundation degrees with specific pathways for learning mentors.

National Occupational Standards (NOS) provide a base for these new QCF qualifications and inform job descriptions.

All recently appointed learning mentors should attend the CWDC Induction Training regardless of prior qualifications. The programme provides the specific framework for learning mentor practice and was reviewed in line with the common core refresh in 2010. The training handbooks can be accessed on the CWDC website; information about current courses in the London area can be found by searching the general website.

The induction training supports the new CWDC Level 3 Diploma for Children and Young People. A Level 5 Diploma is due in summer 2011 and a range of foundation degrees are available.

More information can be found in *RBKC Guide to Learning Mentor Standards and Qualifications* and at <http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/qualifications/level-3-diploma-for-the-children-young-peoples-workforce>

Appendices

Appendix One: Learning Mentor Timetable

Appendix Two: Five Steps - Structured Approach to Learning Mentoring

Appendix Three: Useful tips from Experienced Learning Mentors

Appendix Four: Learning Mentors supporting Every Child Matters

Appendix One: Learning Mentor Timetable

Learning mentors are expected to work 40 hours per week during term time with appropriate breaks and lunchtime. Their timetable needs to be both structured and flexible to allow quality time with pupils and to deal with unexpected matters. The timetable below is intended as a guide only.

Definition of learning mentoring:

To provide support and guidance to children, young people and those engaged in them, by removing barriers to learning in order to promote effective participation, enhance individual learning, raise aspirations to achieve their potential

| Mentoring Pupils | Work with adults | Organisational tasks |
|---|---|---|
| <p>1 to 1 pupils, case load from 8 to 12 Short term individual support e.g. new pupils Focus groups during lesson time Managing supportive peer networks Start & end of day meetings with pupils Before and after school clubs Lunchtime activities Drop in "surgeries" Unexpected matters relating to pupil needs Assessment, observations, profile building In class mentoring support Whole class PSHE sessions/circle time School transfer support Attendance monitoring LM lead projects Assemblies Whole school events</p> <p>In certain circumstances LM may be deployed to support one age group for an extended period, e.g. bereavement, high level of social & emotional needs</p> | <p><u>Links with Parents/Carers/families</u> Start & end of day meetings with parents Parents of mentee pupils Planned parent groups Family learning/therapeutic sessions Home visits/ phone/email contacts</p> <p><u>Links with Staff & exchanging information</u> Referrals, assessment, planning, reviews SMT/Inclusion team/SENCO monitoring reviews CP, unexpected pupil needs</p> <p><u>Multi agency Links</u> Educational, social & medical services Family agencies Local community services Secondary and feeder schools</p> <p><u>Professional competence</u> Meetings with line managers, annual reviews Attend training and supervision programmes LM Network meetings Contribute to staff training</p> | <p>Maintaining up to date records – data base register of mentees, referrals, profiles, plans, reviews</p> <p>Maintaining secure filing for confidential matters</p> <p>Regular communication links with parents/schools agencies etc.</p> <p>Reports for school and agencies Annual data returns</p> <p>LM guides to role & practice, policy Maintain inspection evidence file Maintain CPD file</p> <p>Preparing pupil activities/ sessions Keeping informed of local and national initiatives and legislation that relate to LM practice</p> |
| 26 to 30 hours | 10 to 6 hours | 3 to 4 hours usually after school |
| 65% to 75% of timetable | 10% to 25% of timetable | 8% to 10% of timetable |

Appendix Two: Five Steps - Structured Approach to Learning Mentoring

A structured approach to learning mentoring helps to keep practice intentional and focused on outcomes. It also helps to maintain boundaries so that learning mentors do not become overwhelmed with requests for support. It is supported by effective caseload management. The *Five Steps* gives an overview of a structured approach to one-to-one mentoring, and the types of records that learning mentors need to keep.

| Five Steps Structured Approach to mentoring practice | Supporting documentation * RBKC Proformas available |
|--|---|
| 1. Referral | |
| <p>The learning mentor receives a referral</p> <p>If this is an appropriate referral add to the LM Register of target pupils</p> | <p>* Criteria for Referral * PLM Referral Form Or school referral form (Also include performance and tracking data, pastoral information, teacher assessment etc) * LM Register Target Pupils</p> |
| 2. Assessment and gathering information | |
| <p>Assessment helps the learning mentor to understand what is contributing to the child or young person's difficulties and what strengths and personal resources they have. Identify barriers and the focus for support</p> | <p>* PLM Mentee Profile Profile of background, learning, attendance, behaviour and participation, meetings with the child and parent, other support in place</p> |
| <p>Assessment involves gathering information and liaison with staff, parents/carers and the child or young person.</p> | <p>Case notes could include interviews with parents/carers, teachers, support staff or other practitioners involved with the child or young person</p> |
| <p>Gain consent of parents/carers and include them as part of the assessment process</p> | <p>* Letter to parent/carer, including information about learning mentoring, offering an opportunity to meet the learning mentor</p> |
| <p>Start where the child is at. Get the child or young person's perspective. Their understanding of what is contributing to their difficulties and their perception of their own strengths is key. Learning mentors use a range of techniques for initiating the professional helping relationship, supporting children and young people to tell their stories</p> | <p>Notes from the introductory meeting with the child or young person.</p> <p>Many learning mentors use a range of self-assessment and profiling tools.</p> <p>* Behaviour Form These can be used as a baseline against which to measure progress</p> |
| 3. Set goals | |
| <p>Once the learning mentor and the child or young person have decided on which issue they will work on, the learning mentor helps them to set challenging and realistic goals, and then breaks these down into smaller steps or targets, helping them to grow as a person, participate and learn better</p> | <p>* Target setting</p> <p>Record of the goals that the learning mentor and child/young person has identified</p> |

Five Steps - Structured Approach to Learning Mentoring

| | |
|--|--|
| 4. Create a plan and take action | |
| Based on the information from the assessment, an action plan is drawn up identifying what work the practitioner and the child or young person will do first. The action plan includes goals that specify the different behaviours and outcomes that will result from the work that the learning mentor and the child/ young person will do together. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * PLM Mentee Support Plan * PLM Weekly Record <p>Keep a diary/ log of work done and significant information</p> |
| 5. Review progress | |
| After a set period of time (usually specified in the action plan), the learning mentor and the child or young person will review progress. Parents/carers, teachers and other practitioners may be involved in the review. The review is not always a formal meeting. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * PLM Mentee Support Plan * LM Review Teacher * LM Review Pupil Voice * LM Review Target Pupils |
| If sufficient progress has been made, the learning mentor and the child or young person will begin an 'ending' process. However, if there is still work to be done together, a new action plan will be formed. | <p>Monitoring/tracking the child or young person's progress.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * PLM Mentee Support Plan |

Adapted from CWDC Learning Mentor Practice Guide available at <http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/>

Appendix Three: Experienced Learning Mentors Share Good Practice- Useful tips

- Have a room of your own and make it comfortable and non classroom – soft chairs, cushions, pictures, photographs, little objects or toys to fiddle with. Storage space for confidential matters, games, soft toys, book shelf. The room can be furnished on the cheap – charity shops, Argos, Ikea.
- Be firm about referrals, don't be overwhelmed, have a clear system in place
- *Talk* to teachers about their referrals and concerns rather than asking them to fill in a form. Then you write the notes and give them a copy
- Maintain the triangle of communication in school, the child, teacher and you – this avoids working in isolation.
- Take time to build relationships and trust with the children. Photographs are good talking points, particularly those taken when they were very young.
- Help them to tell their story, what has happened to them, what are they doing, what are they feeling. Be clear about what needs to change and how this can be done.
- You need time to assess a child – what are the things that are getting in the way of learning, observe, talk to the teacher, other staff, involve the parent/ carer, and above all, what does the child say about the difficulties. Don't forget to look for personal strengths and what makes the child spark.
- When working with very young children let them get to know you on safe territory – go into the nursery for regular story time, or to play games.
- When taking a child out of class – don't just whip them out! Stay while they complete a sentence, drawing etc, have a conversation. Give opportunity for positive conversation about the child with the teacher e.g. "She did really well at .." or "Perhaps a friend might to go with you today"

Experienced Learning Mentors Share Good Practice- Useful tips

- When you are in class you are helping your mentee to use skills and behaviours which you agreed and practised in your one to one sessions.
- Maintain the other triangle of communication, the child, parent and you.
- Have things to help children when they feel very full of emotions. Anger is an energy – when a child comes into your room, they need to give vent to this in acceptable ways – thumping a cushion, manipulating play dough
- Collect “normal games” such as snakes and ladders, board games, dominoes, chess, raid charity shops
- It is quite acceptable to work on basic skills for literacy and numeracy but keep in mind what skills and personal attitudes you are developing e.g.:
 - ✓ Language, vocabulary, expression
 - ✓ How to work in a group, listening to others
 - ✓ Organisational skills, solving problems
 - ✓ Confidence to start a task and sticking with it.
 - ✓ Following instructions, concentration
- If you are working in this way be as creative as possible by using alternative approaches and make it relevant and *make it fun*.
- Most important part of the LM job is helping teachers to understand the child, developing their confidence in managing troubled children, increasing their information about the family – while being professional and having regard for confidentiality.
- Remind staff that you do not have a magic wand.
- For most of the work you do you won't see miracles, it is about building and repairing foundations for the future.
- Move the clock on five minutes – makes it easier wind up the session!

How the provision supports the Every Child Matters outcomes

Following a public inquiry into the death of Victoria Climbié, the government launched the Green Paper, *Every Child Matters* (ECM) in 2003. The Children Act 2004 required schools and other child-care services to work together, focussing support around the needs of children, young people and families. Although the current government have introduced different terminology the principles of Every Child Matters are still observed in the field today and are very relevant to the holistic approach adopted by learning mentors.

The following learning mentor activities are real examples of how LMs in RBKC and Westminster have supported the ECM five outcomes.

1. **Be healthy:** Enjoying good physical and mental health and living a healthy lifestyle

Supporting Healthy Life Styles

Pupils: Individual Pupil Plans include the LM focus on social and emotional development e.g., changing behaviour, managing strong feelings, self-esteem and confidence. Early intervention is provided for those whose mental health is at risk because of trauma or lack of positive childhood experience or having social or health difficulties. Pupils have the opportunity to talk to someone they trust.

Cross School

- LM Timetable includes 'this week's situation', a specific time to deal with 'immediate issues' that need to be heard and resolved, preventing concerns from becoming serious and unresolved matters.
- Breakfast Clubs, fruit times
- Supporting PSHE programmes, health programmes such as the Life Bus.
- LM is involved in ensuring the playground allows a variety of physical activities for all pupils.
- LM ensures pupils have glasses, hearing aids, disability aids

Group and Whole Class Support

- Yr. 4 Games group to practise social skills for making and maintaining friendships
- Yr. 3 & 4 Friendship Group / circle of friends to support target mentees who have joined midterm with no previous schooling, new to UK culture and with health problems
- Yr. 5 'Health Smart', talk and activities about what makes a healthy lunch box. Although this was a whole class session but the focus was to encourage an overweight child to change their diet and to support another pupil with social and friendship skills while not making them feel different.

Parents and Pupils

- After school homework club for invited pupils and their parents. LM gave advice on parenting, setting boundaries while modelling positive ways of speaking to the children. Parents began to share problems and solutions, they provided translations for others. The peer parent support continued beyond the school gates.
- Daily informal meetings in the playground provided advice and supporting healthy life styles. In depth meetings are arranged by agreement. Discussions include setting boundaries, bedtimes, reducing 'screen entertainment', homework routine. LMs make links to the appropriate agencies to provide more specialist support.
- Cross-school support for children new to the school and making links with their parents – introduction to 'school life style', attendance, punctuality, routines, health issues, how to help children at home

2. Stay safe: Being protected from harm and neglect

Child protection & Safe Guarding:

- LM liaises with CT, HT, Social Services.
- Help and guidance for those children caught up in CP cases, family disputes or where parents have taken their dispute over access to court
- Support for pupils where there are concerns leading to CP.
- Liaising with parents where there may be potential neglect or inappropriate parenting.
- Providing support and advice to staff.

Avoiding Harmful Activities

- LM working with children to raise confidence to deal with undermining situations
- Building self-worth and assertiveness to say no and not to follow others in activities they know to be wrong/unsafe, how to seek adult and peer support.
- Strategies for making positive choices about behaviour and relationships.
- Dealing with anti-social and intimidating behaviour through a range of planned group and class activities and discussions.
- Developing acceptable language to express strong feelings before turning to more harmful ways of communication

Time to Talk

- Yr. 4 planned sessions 'I'm OK Are You OK?' Sharing issues.
- Lunchtime 'drop ins' to discuss friendship problems, playground disputes
- 'Time out' cards –to cool down, reflect or to move away from potential trouble. Time to talk strategies.
- How to managing anger, aggression, coping with bullying

Helping to Learn

- Helping children to feel safe to participate in learning activities in class without fear of failing
- Confidence building and providing strategies for working independently, listening to instructions.
- Managing anxiety about home matters so that they can engage in learning.

Focus Support

- Supporting trauma. Opportunity for individual children to share worries and concerns related to loss and bereavement
- Supporting young carers and those with considerable responsibilities beyond what is appropriate for their age group
- Focus on Looked After Children

Cross School Activities

- Computer club includes safety issues such as accessing the web, chat rooms etc
- Liaising with local beat PC, role model on how relationships with police, particularly Yr5 & 6
- Arranging cycling proficiency tests

3. Enjoy and achieve: Getting the most out of life and developing the skills for adulthood

Overcoming Barriers to enjoying Learning

- Clear LM referral system embedded within whole school system. In Partnership, SENCO, CT & LM ensure those pupils needing mentoring support are identified. Flexibility allows support for 'one off' meetings with pupils performing or behaving out of character
- LM Caseload includes one to one, paired and group work. Focus is on:
 - Skills to access the curriculum, overcoming the social and emotional barriers to participation
 - Raising self-esteem, confidence and increasing engagement in class.
 - Providing opportunities and activities for pupils to experience achievement and enjoyment
- Developing study skills, supporting pupils to manage the process of SATs

Pupil participation

Pupils are expected to take active part in intervention, asked to think about their level of learning and social engagement, their strengths and their interests. With guidance, they reflect on finding alternative ways of behaving and thinking.

Group activities & clubs

- Times Table Are Us, number fun for Yr. 6 pupils needing times table boosting
- Handwriting competitions, spelling games
- Lunchtime homework club for ten pupils, making homework enjoyable and achievable. Skills building, working independently but knowing how to access help
- Writing projects, school newspaper, plays, stories, biographies, interviews
- Fairy Story Group: Lunch time Yr.2 group, Hearing stories, drawing, acting, talking about family issues, emotions link to stories.

- Puppets, making and sewing for target pupils
- Computer games club, testing skills, finding out, video conferencing
- Chess Club: 25 pupils twice weekly, website chess, competing in tournaments
- Arts Club, model making, clay, painting, photography, film making
- 'Moving up' - preparing pupils for managing change - transfer to secondary schools, providing Music, dance, drama groups – guitar, singing, hip hop, assembly performances
- Sports and Games: opportunities to talk about concerns and looking forward.
- PSHE Focus: Yr. 4 Circle time, strengthening friendships, relationships, positive feelings, empathy, self esteem

Focus groups

Focus on social problems, self-control, confidence, self-esteem, managing behaviour. Meet for an hour once a week for twelve weeks.

Social skills groups, learning how to collaborate, team work, sharing, appreciating own talents and those of others

In Partnership

- Emphasis on working with CT on initial referrals, planning, reviewing progress in achievement & enjoyment, agreeing shared responses to target pupils, praise, sanctions and rewards
- Liaising with local agencies to ensure they are appropriately informed.
- Co-ordinates volunteers working in school, ensuring they are prepared, giving advice
- Meetings with parents about how to make homework and support fun, how and what to praise.
- Morning greetings to help pupils to move from home mode to school mode. Upset children are given help to settle and engage.

4. Make a positive contribution

Being involved with the community and society and not engaging in antisocial or offending behaviour

Supporting others

- The LM developing social skills for positive peer relationship
- Developing empathy and understanding of others, listening skills and how to be heard

Pupils finding solutions and improving the school

- Leading the School Council, football council, making the playground fair and balanced.
- Visits to Houses of Parliament, local councils
- Projects have included gardening, recycling, keeping playground clean and tidy for others

Collaboration

- Lunch with the learning mentor, setting the table, sharing a meal, learning to have a conversation at the table
- Yr. 4 Project on caring for others, I'm OK You OK? Developing empathy and teaching how to communicate this.
- Lunchtime ICT club involving older pupils supporting younger children
- Friendship and social skills, Circle of Friends, Supporting Circle Time.
- Group work which supports social skills for collaboration, sharing, team work
- Developing social skills for positive peer relationships when starting secondary schools

Positive Behaviour

- Child's voice is encouraged through LM review formats. Mentees are asked to reflect on the steps they have taken to change behaviour / make progress and to think about how they can maintain positive attitudes in the future.
- Teaching and modelling positive behaviour, good manners, citizenship.
- 'Who goes first?' Teaching turn taking in Reception
- Yr. 2 sessions on "when to play, when to learn". Encouraging taking part in out of school social activities

5. Achieve economic well-being

Not being prevented by economic disadvantage from achieving their full potential in life

Attendance & Punctuality

Supporting parents to help their children attend school regularly and on time and to secure good foundations for learning.

Taking responsibility

- Strategies for doing homework independently
- Teaching learning skills, how to start and stay with a task, developing resilience.
- Motivating aspirations. Supporting making positive choices.
- Looking after school pets and chickens, gardening, receiving visitors

At risk of disadvantage

- Supporting effective transition to secondary schools.
- Working with those pupils vulnerable to failure or non-engagement in school, risk of involvement in crime. Regaining self-worth, recognition of own talents and strengths.
- Guidance to parents about their role and the importance of their involvement. Arranging courses in parenting skills
- Linking with local community, bringing their skills into school.
- Links with other agencies, EP & speech therapist