How can a peer mentoring programme be developed in order to meet a school's pastoral care development priorities?

James Leigh

A Research & Development Project
Submitted for the
MSc Learning & Teaching 2018

DEPOSIT AND CONSULTATION OF THESIS

One copy of your dissertation will be deposited in the Department of Education Library via the WebLearn site where it is intended to be available for consultation by all Library users. In order to facilitate this, the following form should be completed which will be inserted in the library copy your dissertation.

Note that some graphs/tables may be removed in order to comply with copyright restrictions.

Surname	Leigh
First Name	James
Faculty Board	Education
Title of Dissertation	How can a peer mentoring programme be developed in order to help meet a school's pastoral care development priorities?

Declaration by the candidate as author of the dissertation

1. I understand that I am the owner of this dissertation and that the copyright rests with me unless I specifically transfer it to another person.

2. I understand that the Department requires that I shall deposit a copy of my dissertation in the Department of Education Library via the WebLearn site where it shall be available for consultation, and that reproductions of it may be made for other Libraries so that it can be available to those who to consult it elsewhere. I understand that the Library, before allowing my dissertation to be consulted either in the original or in reproduced form, will require each person wishing to consult it to sign a declaration that he or she recognises that the copyright of this thesis belongs to me. I permit limited copying of my dissertation by individuals (no more than 5% or one chapter) for personal research use. No quotation from it and no information derived from it may be published without my prior written consent and I undertake to supply a current address to the Library so this consent can be sought.

3. I agree that my dissertation shall be available for consultation in accordance with paragraph 2 above.

How can a peer mentoring programme be developed in order to help meet a school's pastoral care development priorities?

Abstract

This research project explores the development of a peer mentoring programme in my school during the academic year 2017-18. The main focus of the project is how the peer mentoring programme can be aligned to help fulfil my school's pastoral care priorities. The importance of encouraging a whole-school approach to well-being is also considered. There is currently a growing awareness of pastoral issues such as mental health in schools, and the research regarding peer mentoring is developing concurrently. For instance, recent governmental guidelines (2017) encourage peer support as a proactive tool to tackle mental health issues, and studies demonstrate that peer mentoring can develop resilience in young people. However, the research regarding peer mentoring is limited.

Action research was employed for this project in order to ensure a continued focus on the development of the peer mentoring programme and to ensure regular collaboration with both pupils and staff, allowing for both feedback on interventions and suggestions for the future. Three cycles were undertaken, with a key focus on pastoral priorities for each cycle. Mixed methods surveys were employed in order to allow for both quantitative and qualitative data. This provided a broad range of responses from the pupils and staff which the programme engages with.

This project resulted in significant changes to the peer mentoring programme in my school setting. Working in collaboration with a range of pupils and staff has allowed me to re-structure the peer mentoring programme for the next academic year, focussing on the quality rather than quantity of peer mentoring available, and employing participatory action research has encouraged a more meaningful engagement with the development of the programme. A whole-school approach to well-being is, over time, being developed in my school setting, and the peer mentoring programme will play a proactive part in that.

Contents

1. Introduction 6
1.1. Definitions 6
1.1.1. Peer mentoring: 6
1.1.2. Well-being: 6
1.2. The school setting 7
1.3. National priorities 7
1.4. School priorities and implications for the peer mentoring programme 8
1.5. Rationale for developing the peer mentoring programme 10
1.6. Programme development priorities 12
2. Literature Review 13
2.1. Why are peer mentoring programmes increasingly popular? 13
2.1.1. The wider application of mentoring 13
2.1.2. Peer mentoring in the UK 15
2.2. What pastoral concerns can peer mentoring address in schools? 16
2.3.1. Be proactive in developing in our pupils an understanding and awareness of mental health issues 17
2.3.2. Ensure that pupils can make a smooth transition into the school and between sections 18
2.3.3. Promote amongst all good physical and mental health, including emotional intelligence, resilience and self-awareness 18
2.3.4. Provide a safe and secure environment for our pupils. 20
2.3. How can peer mentoring programmes be structured? 22
2.3.1 How does effective peer mentoring provision differ between the sexes? 24
2.4. Conclusion 25
3. Methodology 27
3.1. Introduction to the Research Process 27
3.2. Research Questions 27
3.3. Methodological Approach 28
3.4. Method 29
3.4.1. Peer Mentoring Programme Baseline Survey 2016-17 30
3.4.2. Action Research 31
3.4.3. General Plan 32
3.5. Data collection 34
3.6. Ethics 36
3.6.1. Programme concerns 36
3.6.2. Data concerns 37
3.7. Collaboration 38
3.8. Data Analysis 39

4. Results and Discussion 41
4.1. Action Cycle One 41
4.1.1. Interventions undertaken 42
4.1.2. Surveys 42
4.1.3. Findings 43
4.1.4. Discussion 50
4.1.5. Implications 54
4.2. Action Cycle Two 55
4.2.1. Interventions undertaken 55
4.2.2. Surveys 55
4.2.3. Findings 56
4.2.4. Discussion 61
4.2.5. Implications 64
4.3. Action Cycle Three 65
4.3.1. Interventions undertaken 65
4.3.2. Survey design 66
4.3.3. Findings 67
4.3.4. Discussion 75
4.3.5. Implications 79
5. Summary of findings 80
5.1. How should the peer mentoring programme be structured in my school setting? 80
5.2. In what ways can the peer mentoring programme be targeted towards meeting the school's pastoral development priorities? 81
5.2.1. Be proactive in developing in our pupils an understanding and awareness of mental health issues 81
5.2.2. Ensure that pupils can make a smooth transition into the school and between sections 82
5.2.3. Promote amongst all good physical and mental health, including emotional intelligence, resilience and self-awareness 82
5.2.4. Provide a safe and secure environment for our pupils 82
5.2.5. Encourage our pupils to be involved in charitable ventures 83
5.3. How have the Peer Mentors benefitted from the peer mentoring programme? 83
6. Implications for ongoing practice 85
6.1. Other interpretations 87
7. Conclusions 89
8. References 92
9. Appendices 97
Appendix 1: School development priorities (anonymised) 97
Appendix 2: Sixth Form Development Plan 2016-18 (anonymised) 98

Appendix 3: Training certificate 100
Appendix 4: Collaboration with other schools (anonymised) 101
Appendix 5: Guidance for mentoring new staff 103
Appendix 6: Peer Mentoring Report - 2016/17 (anonymised) 104
Appendix 7: November 'Micro-Inset' session presentation to colleagues 108
Appendix 8: April 'Learning Research Group' presentation to colleagues 109
Appendix 9: Response to CUREC application, December 2017 (anonymised) 111
Appendix 10: CUREC: Letter to Headmaster (anonymised) 112
Appendix 11: Action Cycle One surveys 114
Appendix 12: Example of Coded Data from questionnaires 116
Appendix 13: Middle School assembly questions (anonymised) 117

1. Introduction

1.1. Definitions

1.1.1. Peer mentoring:

There is no single definition of peer mentoring (Parsons, Maras, Knowles, Bradshaw, Hollingworth & Monteiro, 2008; O'Hara, 2011; Powell, 2016). The following working definition for peer mentoring will be used throughout this project:

A relationship, either one-to-one or one-to-many, between an experienced pupil (or mentor) and one (or more) less experienced pupil(s) (or mentee(s)) in which the mentor voluntarily gives time to support and encourage the mentee(s) to learn and develop emotionally, socially and academically. The mentor-mentee(s) relationship lasts for a sustained period of time (Cartwright, 2005; Knowles & Parsons, 2009; O'Hara, 2011; Powell, 2016).

This definition has been reached at through a combination of the literature review and a review of the existing peer mentoring programme in my school setting.

1.1.2. Well-being:

Similarly, there is no single universally employed definition regarding mental health and/or well-being. For the purposes of this project, 'well-being' will be defined as per the World Health Organisation's description of mental health:

Mental health is defined as a state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community (Young Minds & National Children's Bureau, 2017).

This definition is appropriate for this project due to my school's pastoral care development priorities, the studies referred to in this project regarding possible aims for peer support programmes, and the ways in which the peer mentoring programme is utilised in my school setting. Further, positive mental health and well-being are increasingly being reported as one and the same thing, especially in school settings[1].

1.2. The school setting

My school setting is an independent secondary school of around 750 pupils (Years 7-13). The school is boys-only in Years 7-11, but at Sixth Form there are around 90 girls out of roughly 270 pupils. The school is split into three Sections for pastoral purposes: Lower School; Middle School; and Sixth Form. Each Section has vertical tutor groups.

The peer mentoring programme for the academic year 2016-17 worked on the basis of a group of 16 pupils from Year 13, both boys and girls, being selected and trained at the end of Year 12 to work with Lower School tutor groups (Years 7-8). The Peer Mentors met with their assigned Lower School tutor group once a week for five to ten minutes. They were free to discuss any issues with them. There was a very loose structure.

At the end of the academic year 2016-17 I was asked during a Heads of Year meeting to lead and develop the peer mentoring programme, as it was perceived there had been significant problems with it. Despite this, when looking at current issues in education both nationally and in my school setting, there are reasons to develop the peer mentoring programme.

1.3. National priorities

Much of this project follows the growth in mental health awareness in education. Particularly over the course of the past year, there has been a stream of news items focussing on young people's

[1] https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-44722695 [accessed 5 July 2018]

well-being[2][3][4][5][6][7]. These went as far as to say private schools in particular faced a mental health 'crisis'[8] due to pressure to succeed in exams. Further, the new public exam system is perhaps heightening this issue[9]. The Government has therefore recently made it clear that it is a priority to develop mental health provision for children and young people in schools (Department of Health & Department for Education, 2017).

The pastoral care required for mental health concerns is therefore a growing concern in education, and there is emerging literature encouraging peer-to-peer support as an intervention to help. Although peer mentoring programmes are increasingly popular in communities, businesses and universities (for instance the University of Oxford's peer support programme[10]), the research regarding peer mentoring in education is limited but promising (Karcher, 2007; Roach, 2014; Powell, 2016). Still, the Government (Department of Health & Department for Education, 2017) has encouraged peer-to-peer support as a method to develop resilience amongst young people.

1.4. School priorities and implications for the peer mentoring programme

My school has been following developing trends regarding pastoral care in education, for example promoting awareness of the key issue of mental health. The peer mentoring programme was created as it was seen as a potential support method for pupils, as well as a way to work towards my

[2] https://www.nhs.uk/news/mental-health/many-teenagers-reporting-symptoms-depression/ [accessed 6 April 2018]
[3] http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-42962273 [accessed 20 February 2018]
[4] https://www.ascl.org.uk/utilities/document-summary.html?id=D91C5B0A-72A6-4117-96A9B343E51FB296 [accessed 20 February 2018]
[5] http://www.worcesternews.co.uk/news/15609206.School_peer_mentoring_scheme_proves_successful/ [accessed 21 October 2017]
[6] https://berkshire.muddystilettos.co.uk/kids/kids-happiness-mot/ [accessed on 5 April 2018]
[7] https://www.theguardian.com/society/2018/apr/09/social-media-has-poisoned-us-young-brits-on-why-they-are-unhappy [accessed on 10 April 2018]
[8] https://www.tes.com/news/schools-try-deal-youth-mental-health-crisis-they-cant-do-it-alone-where-government [accessed on 5 July 2018]
[9] https://www.theguardian.com/education/2018/may/17/stress-and-serious-anxiety-how-the-new-gcse-is-affecting-mental-health [accessed on 20 May 2018]
[10] https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/counselling/peersupport?wssl=1 [accessed on 10 July 2018]

school setting's targets. The school's stated pastoral development priorities for 2014-19 (Appendix 1) include:

"Be proactive in developing in our pupils an understanding and awareness of mental health issues;
Ensure that pupils can make a smooth transition into the school and between sections;
Promote amongst all good physical and mental health, including emotional intelligence, resilience and self-awareness;
Provide a safe and secure environment for our pupils".

These priorities are relevant as aligning the peer mentoring programme with them will be the key focus for this project. Indeed the literature indicates peer mentoring can help to some extent with all of these: the possibilities for peer mentoring to promote mental health, aid with transition, encourage resilience and help pupils see school as a positive environment have all been explored by researchers (see Section 2.2.). Additionally a more minor target for this programme is to "encourage our pupils to be involved in charitable ventures", again helping to fulfil a priority (Appendix 1). Finally, this project will help to fulfil one of the school's priorities for "Co-Curricular" development as it will "Provide a broad range of co-curricular options to ensure each student can find his/her niche in the School and to ensure there are opportunities for every pupil to develop self-confidence" (Appendix 1), as the Peer Mentors themselves will fulfil an important role. This is particularly relevant as the school's most recent ISI report noted some pupils felt they lacked enough opportunities to take on responsibilities (ISI, 2011).

There are further reasons to look at developing the peer mentoring programme. Coupled with the overall school development plan are shorter-term 'Section' plans, and indeed the peer mentoring programme may help to fulfil aspects of the Sixth Form Development Plan 2016/18 (Appendix 2) to some extent too:

"Improve transition from KS4-5. Ensure boys are ready for demands of Sixth Form;
Ensure Sixth Form students act as positive role models to younger boys in the School;
Improve the awareness of mental health, and provision for students with mental health issues"

Evidently there is overlap between the sets of priorities/targets. Regarding the first target, as aforementioned a key aspect of the peer mentoring programme is aiding transition, and interventions in this project will ensure Peer Mentors actively welcome new Year 12 pupils. Further, events will also be run to provide advice to both Lower School and Middle School tutees about school life and coping with e.g. exam pressure and the differing demands of each school year. In this way then, the peer mentoring programme can also help with the second target. Finally, the Peer Mentors are trained in Mental Health First Aid (Appendix 3), and will discuss these issues with their peers throughout the school, therefore helping us work towards fulfilling the final target.

1.5. Rationale for developing the peer mentoring programme

My key aims for the peer mentoring programme changed significantly due to this project. My reflections on national and school priorities, as well as the literature review and potential methodologies for this project, all had a significant impact on my overall aims, understanding and development of the peer mentoring programme.

From the outset the development of the peer mentoring programme was relevant to me personally in my role as a Deputy Head of Year (12/13). As such, I was tasked with improving the peer mentoring programme at the end of the 2016-17 academic year during a Heads of Year meeting. This project allowed me to take ownership of a programme in the Sixth Form with a pastoral focus and collaborate with a range of colleagues. It also allowed for some collaboration with other schools (Appendix 4).

When I first inherited the programme I focussed on a rationale for peer mentoring specifically, to justify it in my school setting. I was aware peer mentoring programmes could be

beneficial to school communities and that peer mentoring in secondary schools in the UK is an area undergoing significant growth (Mentoring & Befriending Foundation, 2010) but as yet there is a paucity of research focussed on mentoring (Roach, 2014; Powell, 2016). However following the literature review for this project, including a study of other research projects and government policy regarding pastoral care (Department of Health & Department for Education, 2017), the importance of a whole-school approach to promoting well-being became clear, and thus the fulfilment of the school's pastoral priorities. Consequently whilst considering methodologies for this research project I was drawn to the potential impact of participatory action research, and how it can both engage staff through collaboration and also empower pupils, providing them with an active voice in a programme's development (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007; Rudduck & McIntyre, 2007).

Indeed there are reasons to suggest that in order for a well-being policy to truly engage pupils, it may well be the message best comes directly from them. This is because for young people, peers can be agents of great influence (Harris, 1998; Roach, 2014), arguably more so than their teachers as peers are likely to be seen as 'streetwise' (Philip & Spratt, 2007). As such, it makes sense to employ peers in promoting well-being in schools. Emerging research in neuroscience also supports this claim, Blakemore (2018) labelling the positive behavioural influence of peers as having a strong 'prosocial' effect in adolescents. Further, when employed correctly peer mentoring programmes allow schools to specifically tackle pastoral concerns (Mentoring & Befriending Foundation, 2010). Indeed in many ways using peers as influencers allows a school to harness its most plentiful resource (Mentoring & Befriending Foundation, 2010). Ultimately, thanks to my engagement with this research project, I would argue a 'whole-school' approach regarding well-being necessitates allowing pupils to play an active part in increasing awareness of pastoral issues.

Finally, there are also reasons to embed peer mentoring practice throughout the school community (Mentoring & Befriending Foundation, 2010), as the potential benefits of mentoring are not restricted only to young people. For instance, new staff in my school setting benefit from being assigned 'buddies' to help them in their new role in this school setting (Appendix 5), which follows

governmental recommendation from 2001 for mentoring as a form of continuing professional development in schools in the UK (Department for Education and Employment, 2001; Rhodes and Beneicke, 2002). My school setting also runs a 'Learning Research Programme' whereby staff undertake their own research before presenting their findings to their peers, and the presentation are often stated to be the most relevant of the CPD sessions in the school year. As such, this project was condensed into presentations for my peers on two occasions during the 2017-18 academic year (Appendixes 7 and 8). Therefore peer mentoring in a professional sense in schools may be commonplace, but for young people the practice is still developing.

1.6. Programme development priorities

A number of development priorities for the new academic year 2017-18 were arrived at through collaborating with my colleagues. These followed a report based upon a survey I conducted at the end of the academic year 2017-18, in order to understand the existing problems with the peer mentoring programme (Appendix 6). It seemed clear there was a belief in the potential of peer mentoring, however the peer mentoring programme was neither effectively led nor delivered and consequently there was not much enthusiasm amongst Lower School tutors to develop it. The report found the peer mentoring programme had failed in the previous year due to absent leadership, lack of structure, poor selection of mentors and the resulting lack of impact on mentees. Identifying possible interventions and evaluating changes to the programme to tackle these issues became a key priority.

This project does not aim to reach a conclusion on the effectiveness of peer mentoring, or create a best practice report on structuring peer mentoring programmes in all school settings. Instead, this project presents the development of an existing programme, arriving at a number of implications for my programme next year and ultimately a reflection on how similar programmes could be developed by other interested practitioners.

2. Literature Review

A review of literature was conducted in order to help with the rationale for the peer mentoring programme, its structure, and considerations regarding how it could be developed in my school setting. The following concerns were addressed:

1) Why are peer mentoring programmes increasingly popular?

2) What pastoral concerns can peer mentoring address in schools?

3) How can peer mentoring programmes be structured?

2.1. Why are peer mentoring programmes increasingly popular?

2.1.1. The wider application of mentoring

A consideration of the wider application of mentoring helped to further the rationale for this project, for both my own understanding and to convince others about its benefits.

One of the key benefits of mentoring in all settings is that it is extremely cost effective, making use of a resource already available (Mentoring & Befriending Foundation, 2010). As such it is common in workplaces for new members of staff to be assigned a peer mentor, most pertinently for instance new teaching staff in schools (Garvey & Langridge, 2006) including my school setting which for some years employed a 'buddy system' for new teachers (Appendix 5). Similarly mentoring by peers is regularly found in businesses, universities, nursing etc. (Powell, 2016). As a concept, there are three major areas for mentoring research: youth; academic; and workplace, as identified by Eby, Allen, Evans, Ng & Dubois (2008). The former two areas are of interest for this literature review.

Mentoring can lead to a wide-range of positive outcomes, as concluded in Eby et al.'s meta-analysis (2008). Employing a search for articles between 1985-2006 resulting in 116 independent samples for their meta-analysis, they concluded that there is a significant correlation with favourable outcomes due to mentoring, particularly regarding attitude. Drawing together two areas of interest, they stated that reviews of youth (DuBois, Holloway, Valentine & Cooper, 2002) and academic

(Sambunjak, Straus & Marusić, 2006) mentoring found associations with positive career and employment outcomes. Additionally youth (DuBois et al, 2002) and academic (Dorsey & Baker, 2004; Sambunjak et al, 2006) mentoring is linked to positive psychological outcomes. Youths are also likely to experience more positive social relationships, higher performance and display less problematic behaviour when being mentored (DuBois & Silverthorn, 2005). Eby et al. (2008) additionally noted that although the overall effect sizes are small, mentoring appears to be more highly related to some outcomes, such as a generally positive approach to school for the youths. However, Eby et al.'s research was an early attempt at quantitatively summarising the potential effects of mentoring, looking primarily at mentoring relationships between adults and youths. The authors note that their findings do not prove causation, but a relatively minor correlation. Further, their academic sphere focussed on college students, not school-aged pupils, and was based in the USA. The youths studied also tended to be more at-risk than in my school setting (an independent, fee-paying school in the UK). Nevertheless, Eby et al. are able to state that behavioural outcomes seem to be affected by mentoring, and they suggest that areas such as attitudes towards school and motivation may be areas which are most easily affected.

Regarding peer mentoring specifically and in school settings, the majority of literature comes from the USA (Roach, 2014; Powell, 2016); this should be no surprise as peer-support schemes originated in the USA and Canada (Houlston, Smith & Jessel, 2009). Initiatives there such as the Big Brothers Big Sisters School-Based Mentoring programmes have encouraged school-based programmes focussing on relational development. For example in 2008, 50,000 high-school-aged mentors were enrolled on their programme, and school-based mentoring is one of the fastest growing forms of mentoring in the USA (Karcher, 2007; Herrera, Kauh, Cooney, Grossman, & McMaken, 2008). However, as Karcher (2007) states, whilst school-based, peer-driven mentoring is attractive for reasons such as it being easily-facilitated and its unthreatening nature, the practice has out-paced research and led to a multitude of under structured programmes. This provides a clear reason for measured reflection on their structure.

2.1.2. Peer mentoring in the UK

Whilst peer mentoring is relatively established in the USA in a variety of settings, peer mentoring in secondary schools in the UK is still a growing field. Following the formal introduction of mentoring through official initiatives such as the Excellence in Cities initiative in 1999 - which developed learning mentors to support schools in raising standards and narrowing the attainment gap between more advantaged and less advantaged students (Kendall, O'Donnell, Golden, Ridley, Machin, Rutt & Noden, 2005) - and the Mentoring & Befriending Foundation (MBF, 2010) in the UK, the use of peers as mentors is becoming a more common pastoral intervention in UK secondary schools (Houlston, Smith & Jessel, 2009; Powell, 2016). The MBF note that in their earlier successive pilot programmes, many schools involved had little or no previous experience of peer mentoring. This was in 2001-04 when they worked closely with six schools prior to rolling out a programme to 300 schools. By 2010, the MBF were in contact with 1,729 out of 3,343 maintained secondary schools in England (51.5%), with 595 (35%) running peer mentoring programmes. The MBF therefore estimated that 16,000 pupils were being supported by peer mentoring within English schools, of which 81% were secondary aged pupils. Therefore peer mentoring had experienced 'significant' growth over the ten year period. The number of these programmes is likely to continue to increase (Houlston, Smith & Jessel, 2009) thus justifying the need for further research relating to peer mentoring as the literature is not that well developed (Roach, 2014; Powell, 2016).

Further demonstrating this growth, in a slightly earlier study regarding peer-support programmes it was estimated that around 62% of schools, both primary and secondary, in the UK make use of structured peer-support (Houlston, Smith & Jessel, 2009). Houlston, Smith & Jessel were attempting to provide a summary of the way peer-support is being used in England through a large-scale survey of 240 primary and secondary schools, drawing on results from nine geographical locations in England. It should be noted that theirs was an estimation of the usage of peer-support, based on their sample but the result was also adjusted to allow for non-response error as they

received a response rate of 33.1% from the 726 schools they selected. They also employ a broad definition of 'peer-support', including methods such as 'befriending'. Nevertheless it was also reported that of the 13 secondary schools who reported they did not have a scheme four said they were developing one, again demonstrating the growing trend for these programmes.

Despite this, the literature also makes clear that many schools do not employ peer mentor programmes and there are justifiable reasons why. As Houlston et al (2009) note, some schools do not need a formal programme as they believe they offer the necessary support through other means. Further, these programmes do require time and can create an additional workload (Knowles & Parsons, 2009). Poor communication between staff, mentors and mentees can lead to serious problems in the programme as mentors may go 'off-message' and mentees may feel neglected (Karcher, 2007). Also, it is noted by Powell (2016) that under the Coalition Government (2010-2015), the expansion and promotion of peer mentoring programmes lost the momentum it had previously enjoyed.

It is possible to summarise that peer mentoring has grown in popularity across settings due to the impact it can be associated with, for example improved attitudes for youths regarding school. Indeed even if the pupils in a secondary school have not yet encountered a peer mentoring programme there is a good chance they will later, perhaps at university or in a workplace. These programmes are not limited purely to school settings focussing on pastoral concerns, although that will be the main focus of this project.

2.2. What pastoral concerns can peer mentoring address in schools?

One critical concern is that there are numerous different areas that peer mentoring programmes can be focussed on in schools. This is largely dependent on the objectives of the programme and the school setting itself. The focus of this research will be on my school's pastoral priorities, which are considered in turn.

2.3.1. Be proactive in developing in our pupils an understanding and awareness of mental health issues

There is a clear drive by the UK Government to help young people understand mental health issues, and peer-to-peer support has been recommended for this issue. This is stated in a recently released green paper (Department of Health & Department for Education 2017), but again it is acknowledged there is limited research available as to how effective peer support is. Nevertheless a quantitative survey carried out of 2,780 schools across England for the Department for Education (Marshall, Wishart, Dunatchik & Smith, 2017) found that 53% of all institutions surveyed were making use of peer mentoring programmes to promote awareness of positive mental health, and in particular secondary schools were more likely than primary schools to make use of peer mentoring for mental health issues (78% vs. 49%). Further, 36% of respondents stated that they used peer support for individual pupils with mental health needs and again this was higher in secondary schools (58% vs. 32%). Marshall et al. (2017) do not attempt to evaluate the impact of these interventions. Nonetheless, training sessions for practitioners involved in improving mental health in schools now see fit to recommend peer mentoring as a support intervention (Garner, 2017).

Therefore it is interesting that Powell (2016) believes peer mentoring may only be suitable for low to mid-level support issues, and not issues such as mental health concerns, as the mentors themselves are unlikely to be equipped to deal with more serious support issues. This is despite Powell's stated advocacy for peer mentoring, due to her being a practitioner who runs a peer mentoring programme and consequently her willingness to promote its potential impact. Thus the potential for peer mentoring to help schools deal with mental health issues is still being debated. However, one recommendation which seems agreed upon which certainly is relevant to this project is that a whole-school approach is vital for tackling mental health issues (Powell, 2016; Department of Health & Department for Education, 2017). The application of this with regards to my school setting requires further investigation.

2.3.2. Ensure that pupils can make a smooth transition into the school and between sections

There are definite reasons to suggest peer support can be extremely helpful in transitioning between schools. Whilst at all stages, peers can be influential in the lives of children (Karcher, Nakkula & Harris 2005; Portwood, Ayers, Kinnison, Waris & Wise, 2005), this influence only increases as a child grows up (Conger & Rueter, 1996; Ryan, 2001). Adolescents are distinct from younger children in their attitudes: adolescents place greater importance on peer influence (Helsen, Vollebergh, & Meeus; 2000), and are more likely to seek help from a friend or peer than an adult (Boulton; 2005). Indeed, there is emerging neuroscientific support for this phenomenon (Blakemore, 2018). This helps explain why peer mentoring may be more common-place in secondary schools than primary schools (Samara & Smith 2008). Secondary school pupils may require peer support in transitioning from primary to secondary school as they face significant academic, personal/physical, social and organisational changes/challenges (Chedzoy & Burden, 2005; Powell 2016). A UK-based study found that peer mentoring could help pupils feel more confident and less anxious about transition from primary to secondary school, and that their communication skills improved (Nelson, 2003). Further, peer mentoring can be an extremely efficient intervention in schools as it deploys an existing group – pupils – to extend the influence of the teacher to where they may not go (Topping, 1996; Goodlad, 1998). Peer mentors have what could be called 'street knowledge' (Philip & Spratt, 2007) which may make them more relevant to their peers than teachers. Therefore there are clear reasons to suggest peer mentoring may help pupils in transition.

2.3.3. Promote amongst all good physical and mental health, including emotional intelligence, resilience and self-awareness

The issue of 'health' here is broken down into several elements, and there are reasons to suggest peer mentoring can help with them all. Regarding physical health, it is notable that adolescents are hugely influenced by their peers; this can be both negative and positive. Blakemore (2018) is keen to

stress that adolescents are reliant upon peer acceptance, and this can lead to both antisocial but also 'prosocal' risk taking. Blakemore and Mills (2014) propose that for adolescents, social anxiety is a more important determinant of behaviour than physical danger due to fear of social exclusion. For instance they are more open to taking risks when in the presence of their peers, as evidenced by their being more likely to be in a car accident when accompanied by a friend (Blakemore & Mills, 2014). However, peers can be a positive influence. Blakemore (2018) draws on a large-scale study (Campbell, Starkey, Holliday, Audrey, Bloor, Parry-Langdon, Hughes & Moore, 2008) which used peer supporters to discourage smoking in 30 schools, the results showing a significant reduction in smoking over a 2-year period following the intervention when compared to a control group of 29 schools with no focussed programme. Blakemore concludes that this should encourage health campaigners to embrace the positive potential of peer influence amongst adolescents.

Concerning mental health, included is resilience, emotional intelligence and self-awareness. Starting with the former, building resilience amongst pupils to avoid mental health issues is a priority. As Roach (2014) states, the research on resilience has in fact partly fuelled the interest in mentoring. Secondary school can be a high-risk environment, due to the pressure which young people face when confronted with, as just one example, public exams (Hodges & Perry, 1999; Bugental, 2003; Roach, 2014; Powell, 2016), and peers can help when dealing with these concerns, particularly through building resilience (Garner, 2017; Blakemore, 2018). The presence of positive peer relationships has seemingly been identified as providing protection from high-risk conditions, consequently reducing the additional levels of pastoral support a school may need to provide for pupils.

Regarding resilience, emotional intelligence and self-awareness, Karcher (2007) concluded that peer mentoring can help. He reviewed the available literature regarding what he called 'CAMPs', or cross-aged mentoring programmes, involving an age difference of more than two years between mentor and mentee. He determined that despite the limited research available, CAMPs can indeed have beneficial effects for both mentees and mentors. Small studies have revealed

consistently positive results for mentees regarding attitudes towards school (Bowman & Myrick, 1987; Karcher, 2005; Stoltz, 2005), social skills (Karcher, 2005) and behaviour problems (Bowman & Myrick, 1987). For mentors, high schools pupils were found to improve their moral reasoning and empathy (Ikard, 2001) and their connection to their school (Stoltz, 2005; Karcher, 2006). Indeed, older mentors are more likely to benefit themselves from this engagement in a school activity than mentees (Bowman & Myrick, 1987). Again, Karcher (2007) concludes that these sorts of programmes hold great promise regarding pastoral concerns for pupils.

Other researchers have pointed to the benefits for both 'helper' and the 'helped' (Topping, 1996; MBF, 2010). Indeed the MBF report that from one study, which was admittedly carried out by the National Mentoring Network between 2001-04, 53% of 300 schools highlighted an increase in self-confidence amongst the peer mentor group, and 75% of the mentors surveyed said they 'gained confidence'. Houlston, Smith & Jessel (2009) found that the most commonly mentioned outcomes for peer supporters, across all school reposes, were the development of various skills such as social and leadership skills, and an increased responsibility within the school. This was followed with perceived enhanced self-esteem/confidence. Indeed participation in school-based activities can certainly increase their sense of school belonging and enjoyment (Eccles & Barber, 1999; Grossman & Rhodes, 2002; Roach 2014). This therefore also helps to fulfil the school aim of providing a range of suitable activities for each student, in order to develop self-confidence.

Although there is much research to be done in the field of peer mentoring in schools there is clear evidence that these programmes can help to at least some degree regarding resilience, emotional intelligence and self-awareness, including for the mentors themselves.

2.3.4. Provide a safe and secure environment for our pupils.

One of the main areas the literature stresses that peer mentoring can help in pastorally is ensuring a safe place for all pupils. For instance, the MBF states that much of the focus of peer mentoring programmes has been on issues such as bullying (MBF, 2010). For example, Roach's (2014) study

into peer mentoring is a valuable large-scale UK-based study into the effectiveness of peer mentoring for dealing with bullying, but also increasing school satisfaction, finding that particularly for the latter concern peer mentoring can be impactful. Roach surveyed 372 mentored pupils as well as a comparison group of 1,249 young people from 22 schools in England at the start and end of the school year. Again, Roach recognises the limited availability of research into this area in the UK, noting that only two UK-based studies were identified from a literature review (Nelson, 2003; Parsons et al, 2008). Roach focussed on pupils aged 9-12 who were being bullied or were at risk of bullying, as he states this is when the prevalence of bullying peaks (Griffin & Gross, 2004), and reached a number of interesting conclusions. As he found that mentees were in fact more likely to be bullied following the implementation of peer mentoring programmes, Roach speculates that the schemes may have actually increased awareness of bullying incidents and what constitutes bullying. This somewhat corresponds with a Beatbullying case study (2009) into cyber-bullying cited by the MBF (2010) which noted a substantial increase in the levels of reported bullying by an average of 41% following the introduction of a peer mentoring programme. However the Beatbullying case study ultimately saw a reduction in bullying incidents by an average of 38% in participating schools due to the increased awareness of cyber bullying and support available through the peer mentoring programme (MBF, 2010). Roach (2014) also concludes that peer mentoring focussing on bullied pupils may be insufficient to address the problem, which agrees with evidence suggesting that anti-bullying approaches should focus on the bullies themselves and the wider school environment (Vreeman & Carroll, 2007). However, Roach's key finding was that the mentored group had significantly higher levels of school satisfaction than the comparison group, which agrees with the idea that school satisfaction improves amongst young people with a good peer support network (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987; Nickerson & Nagle, 2005).

Roach (2014) makes clear a number of the limitations of his study. First, the findings were only self-reported mentee measures, and the validity of these findings would benefit from more objective measures of the impact of the mentoring from other sources. Also, there was great

variation in the way the schools implemented the programmes, and therefore it is not possible to state from this study what constitutes an effective structure for a peer mentoring programme. However, he does not seem to consider whether being mentored actually increased the chance of a mentee being targeted for bullying. Nevertheless, the findings regarding the life satisfaction of the mentees is intriguing.

Therefore it is possible to state from this section of the literature review that peer mentoring can assist with a range of pastoral concerns in schools. The literature suggests peer mentoring can help fulfil all of my school's key pastoral priorities, though this will undoubtedly depend on developing an appropriate structure for it.

2.3. How can peer mentoring programmes be structured?

Peer mentoring programmes can be structured in numerous ways, for instance either one-to-one support sessions, or one-to-many regular meetings. The peer mentoring programme I inherited involved one-to-many sessions by a Year 13 pupil visiting Lower School tutor groups, however I am keen to analyse issues with this system and consider other platforms for peer mentoring.

Roach's (2014) research on the structure of peer mentoring programmes is therefore of interest. In his study, the schools involved were able to implement programmes according to their own design, and so mentors met with mentees regularly either on a one-to-one basis or in a small group, or perhaps through drop-ins when required, all taking place in school. These methods are not fully evaluated but there are other important results. As the key finding was that the mentored group reported significantly higher levels of school satisfaction than the comparison group, he concludes this may logically have been a consequence of the setting. As mentor-mentee interactions would have focussed on school-related matters, and the programme would have increased interactions between mentees and the teachers who ran the programme, Roach (2014) states in order to yield these positive results school-based mentoring programmes should focus on school

issues, actively involving teachers as coordinators. Also, although he believed a higher number of meetings would be all that was required to demonstrate a strong relationship being formed between mentor and mentee, the findings did not prove this. Indeed a key limitation of his study is that the perceived 'quality' of the mentoring relationship relied too much upon merely the number of meetings. The quality of each meeting was ultimately thought to be more important than the quantity of meetings, and this in itself is useful.

It is also important for the programme co-ordinator to meet with the mentors regularly. High-school-aged mentors are seemingly more easily overwhelmed than adults (Karcher, 2007), and Karcher makes a clear warning that the effects of these programmes shrink when there is insufficient monitoring of the mentors. Indeed a lack of adult supervision may result in the mentors causing harm (Karcher, 2005).

The ways in which the mentors should be trained is undoubtedly important for reflection. The Big Brother Big Sister scheme in the US has made it clear that mentors who undergo quality training had more success (Herrera et al, 2008). In the UK, the MBF has it as one of their priorities that peer mentoring programmes include formalised training in order to make them more impactful (MBF, 2010), and Roach (2014) also highlights the importance of formal training. Houlston, Smith & Jessel (2009) found 30.9% of secondary schools in the UK used an external trainer for mentors, although the most common form of training for secondary schools was both internal staff and external trainers (38.1%).

When implementing these programmes, it is important to educate the mentees to some degree too. Karcher (2007) believes mentees themselves may also benefit from some form of 'orientation' regarding what to expect, as Karcher, Nakkula, and Harris (2005) found how much the mentee sought the help of the mentor would affect the overall quality of the relationship. It seems to help if the mentor feels their advice is desired, and if the mentee is aware of the objectives and boundaries of the programme.

2.3.1 How does effective peer mentoring provision differ between the sexes?

One final concern for this project which may require further reflection during the research process is the way in which effective peer mentoring provision may differ between the sexes, both for mentees and mentors. My school setting is mixed-sex only in the Sixth Form. As such there are constraints regarding the extent to which girls can be used as peer mentors, particularly due to the literature review so far. It will be difficult for instance to allow a gap of more than two years in age between girls who are mentors and mentees (Karcher, 2007). Nevertheless, it is also evident the selection of Peer Mentors must reflect the diversity of the school (Garner, 2017), and indeed allowing for the younger boys to hear from the girls on occasion may be valuable as it may ease their transition into a mixed Sixth Form.

Further for girls who are new to the setting, again it is evident that peer mentoring can be of key assistance with transition between schools (MBF, 2010)**.** It should be stressed however the studies used to support the MBF's claim focussed particularly on vulnerable young people, and transition from primary to secondary. Girls are generally however more likely to seek and provide emotional support and reassurance than boys (Denton & Zarbatany, 1996). Also it may be that more frequent contact is required, as the literature suggests close relationships are more important for girls than boys (Jack, 1991; Clark & Ayers, 1993; Berndt & Keefe, 1995)**.** Roach (2014) predicted girls would benefit from mentoring more than boys in his study, however girls were found to be more likely to report lower levels of life and school satisfaction both before and after mentoring, although they were ultimately less likely to be bullied than boys. Roach believes this may be because drop-in mentoring was a very common intervention, and this may be less likely to result in the close, emotional relationships which are more suited to the developmental needs of girls. The type of mentoring girls benefit most from may therefore involve more sustained and frequent one-to-one support.

Key issues which need addressing and evaluating over the course of this project regarding the structure of the peer mentoring programme therefore include: the formal structure of the programme, which requires balance between 'quantity' and 'quality', and must include careful supervision of mentors in order to avoid any negative consequences; the training of mentors, as training seems to improve the success of peer mentoring programmes; ensuring mentees are introduced to the programme, as their understanding of what to expect from mentors can help improve its effectiveness; and there may be differences in the way peer mentoring can be most effective for each sex, for whilst boys may benefit more from being a Peer Mentor, girls may benefit from closer relationships with their peers. These issues will be reflected upon over the course of the project.

2.4. Conclusion

From this literature review, a number of valuable conclusions can be drawn:

1) Peer mentoring is commonplace in a range of settings. It has grown in popularity and there was a notable surge in peer mentoring programmes in schools in the UK between 2000-2010. These programmes associate themselves with beneficial outcomes, but the literature is not yet fully developed.
2) Despite the requirement for more data regarding outcomes from peer mentoring, it is still possible to suggest peer mentoring as an effective way to help meet pastoral concerns. Positive results can include improved attitudes towards school, helping with issues in transition, and developing pupils' confidence and resilience. Both mentors and mentees can benefit.
3) Some recommendations are possible on how peer mentoring can be structured in such a way as to associate itself with positive pastoral outcomes. These include the formalisation of the programme, the training of mentors, regular meetings with mentors, and initial contact with the mentees too. There may be differences between the sexes regarding the most

relevant form of peer mentoring, as boys may benefit more from acting as Peer Mentors whilst girls may need more regular contact.

Overall there seems to be promising evidence a peer mentoring scheme can indeed help to meet my school's pastoral care development priorities, particularly with regard to ensuring a safe and secure environment for pupils, helping ease the difficulties inherent in transition, and engaging pupils in a range of activities which can enhance their own feelings of school satisfaction (including mentors).

3. Methodology

3.1. Introduction to the Research Process

At the end of the academic year 2016-17 a baseline survey was undertaken in order to understand the views of participants in the pre-existing peer mentoring programme: Lower School tutors and tutees (Years 7 & 8), and the Peer Mentors themselves (selected Year 13 pupils). This shed light on a number of issues regarding the existing peer mentoring programme which I had inherited, wherein Peer Mentors visited Lower School tutor groups on a weekly basis. Following this survey, a number of recommendations became possible to implement at the start of the new academic year 2017-18, arrived at with my collaborators. Further information regarding this is in Section 3.3.1.

In order to investigate whether my development of the peer mentoring programme was adequately aligned with my school's pastoral priorities, action research cycles were implemented with feedback requested at each stage. Three cycles were implemented during the Autumn and Spring terms (more information in Section 3.3.2.) with all participants involved surveyed. Surveys took the form questionnaires, inviting both qualitative and quantitative feedback, undertaken at the end of each cycle (more information in Section 3.4.).

3.2. Research Questions

My focus for this project is the development of the peer mentoring programme. This will be achieved by progressing towards a programme which contributes to fulfilling my school's pastoral development priorities (Appendix 1). My specific research questions are:

1. How should the peer mentoring programme be structured in my school setting?
2. In what ways can the peer mentoring programme be targeted towards meeting the school's pastoral development priorities?
3. How have the Peer Mentors benefitted from the peer mentoring programme?

There is undoubtedly overlap between these questions. However, this should help to ensure a sustained emphasis on the development of the programme. The first question is to ensure a focus on developing the structure of the peer mentoring programme, so participants can benefit from it in a range of ways. The second question is to ensure an emphasis on the school's development priorities, as this is vital in providing a clear rationale for the programme in this setting and to provide direction for the interventions. Implicitly this is focussed on the mentees as beneficiaries. Consequently the final third question is to ensure mentors benefit from this programme, as this not only again helps to fulfil school priorities but also ensures the Peer Mentors are not over-burdened. Whilst the third question may be interpreted as offering a level of measurement regarding the effects of the peer mentoring programme, it is more focussed on providing both an ethical approach to the responsibilities of the Peer Mentors and further insight regarding the other two research questions.

3.3. Methodological Approach

My desire in this study is to explore and reflect on the way in which the peer mentoring programme is experienced by its participants in my own school setting, thereby helping me to align the programme with my school's pastoral care development priorities. Recognising that I am attempting to improve my own practice, at a local level, rather than produce knowledge is key to this project and my employment of action research (Elliot, 1991; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Accepting that I faced a 'messy' and complex situation in which it would be unlikely I would be able to completely solve the perceived issues regarding the programme which I had inherited was important and somewhat liberating for me. Yet action research should allow me to be able to more fully realise the aims and values of the peer mentoring programme (Elliot, 1991). My data will allow me to reflect on and react to emerging findings and needs whilst collaborating with key individuals, informing the future structure and focus of the programme in this setting.

A positivist approach in terms of attempting to prove cause and effect between a peer mentoring programme and an improvement in pupils' well-being is therefore not the aim of this project: a study of the efficacy of a peer mentoring programme in terms of being a solution to pastoral needs was deemed by me to be beyond the scope of a small-scale project by a teaching practitioner for a number of reasons. First, it would be difficult to attribute pupils' pastoral outcomes to only peer mentoring in a school which employs other forms of support; indeed it would wrong to assume the complex pastoral needs of pupils can be addressed solely by peer mentoring when other more specialised resources are necessary (Powell, 2016). It could also be unethical if the mentee suffered due to needs greater than that which another young person could realistically cope with (Karcher, 2007; Powell, 2016). Further, peer mentoring should only be seen as one possible mechanism amongst many, rather than the sole solution to pupils' issues (Knowles & Parsons, 2009).

3.4. Method

Elliot (1991) provided helpful insight into the process of action research. Whilst analysing Lewin's model of action research, Elliot makes three important proposals: the general idea being researched should be allowed to shift; reconnaissance should also involve analysis; and investigating action steps can be difficult and requires time to monitor. Therefore: the general idea for this project is explained herein and I am open to the programme shifting to include other platforms, which indeed is often the case with peer mentoring programmes (Naylor & Cowie, 1999; Cowie, Naylor, Talamelli, Chauhan & Smith, 2002; Houlston, Smith & Jessel 2009); I undertook reconnaissance into the existing situation of the peer mentoring programme and will explain and analyse the problem as it was understood by myself and my collaborators; and although this project runs over one year, the programme will require further monitoring.

3.4.1. Peer Mentoring Programme Baseline Survey 2016-17

A baseline survey was undertaken at the end of the academic year 2016-17 in order to understand the views of all of the peer mentoring programme's participants that year: Lower School tutors and tutees, and the Peer Mentors themselves. This followed Elliot's (2001) advice that such an undertaking could yield key findings and implications for the development of a programme.

The key issue which arose (Appendix 6) was a lack of engagement across the board. Whilst peer mentoring was seen as a valuable idea in theory, in practice there were issues with its implementation. The feedback from the Peer Mentors indicated 90% of them thought that peer mentoring was valuable. Meanwhile 75% of Lower School tutors who responded (the tutor groups of whom the Peer Mentors had been visiting) agreed, and 62% of Lower School tutees agreed to some extent that Peer Mentors are valuable. However, when asked if Peer Mentors had helped them, only 25% of tutors agreed. Of the Peer Mentors, 60% of respondents only 'slightly agreed' they had. Finally, only 37% of Lower School tutees indicated they would actually speak with a Peer Mentor if they had a problem. Across all surveys, the qualitative feedback highlighted attendance as a key issue. The responses indicated that the programme failed to be impactful as there was little accountability, guidance or structure.

A number of recommendations to implement at the beginning of my programme were therefore arrived at through analysis and collaboration with the Directors of Sixth Form and Lower School. This included splitting the programme so the Peer Mentors who visited the Lower School were boys, as it was felt boy Peer Mentors would be able to discuss issues which arose for them during transition in our setting which would be more likely to also arise for their mentees than girl Peer Mentors who had likely faced different issues. Same sex matching is a commonly used criteria for matching, and indeed returns positive results (Knowles & Parsons, 2009). Also, the literature suggests the boys acting as Peer Mentors were more likely to benefit themselves from structured peer mentoring than girls (Karcher, 2007). However this also made providing other engaging roles for the girls a priority. Other changes which arose included providing set topics for Peer Mentors to

discuss with mentees, the establishment of weekly meetings, an introductory assembly for the Lower School and participating tutor groups, and more visibility for the programme through noticeboards for photos, badges for Peer Mentors and social media to create a sense of responsibility. The time slot for peer mentoring would also be changed to a Friday morning. (For more on the report, see Appendix 6)

3.4.2. Action Research

The baseline findings succeeded in raising issues requiring attention, as suggested by the literature (Edwards and Talbot, 1997), and strengthened my resolve to utilise action research as it can be an effective way to ensure a continued effort on changing and improving at a small scale level (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). The collaborative nature of action research also meant colleagues, Peer Mentors and mentees could all be actively engaged in the development of the programme, thus hopefully helping with the issue of a lack of engagement (Rudduck and McIntyre, 2007). There are also reasons to suggest engaging the Peer Mentors and mentees in consultation may help them develop positive attitudes towards school (Rudduck and McIntyre, 2007), which is relevant to the school's pastoral priorities. Also, as the aim of my project is to assist with these priorities, it was reassuring to know seeking objectivity is less of an issue for action researchers as it focuses on a local level (Edwards and Talbot, 1997).

However the nature of my project and the utilization of action research does pose some issues. The extent to which I will be able to return to the planning stage and restructure the peer mentoring programme during this academic year (2017-18) is limited: it was important to formalise the programme and set expectations for participants early, as stressed by the literature (MBF, 2010), and therefore significantly altering it before the end of the year could cause confusion. Nevertheless, action research should help to ensure a focus on my school's pastoral care priorities as regular reflection regarding my research questions will be necessary during each cycle of the project. Also, each cycle does not necessarily have to focus purely on 'improving' the previous cycle either; other

developments can be introduced and assessed if there is good reason for it (Edwards and Talbot, 1997).

3.4.3. General Plan

Three main cycles were included in my general plan (Figure 1), each focussing on a different development and/or pastoral priority, allowing for reflection on the interventions undertaken to ultimately result in a structure for the peer mentoring programme for the next academic year.

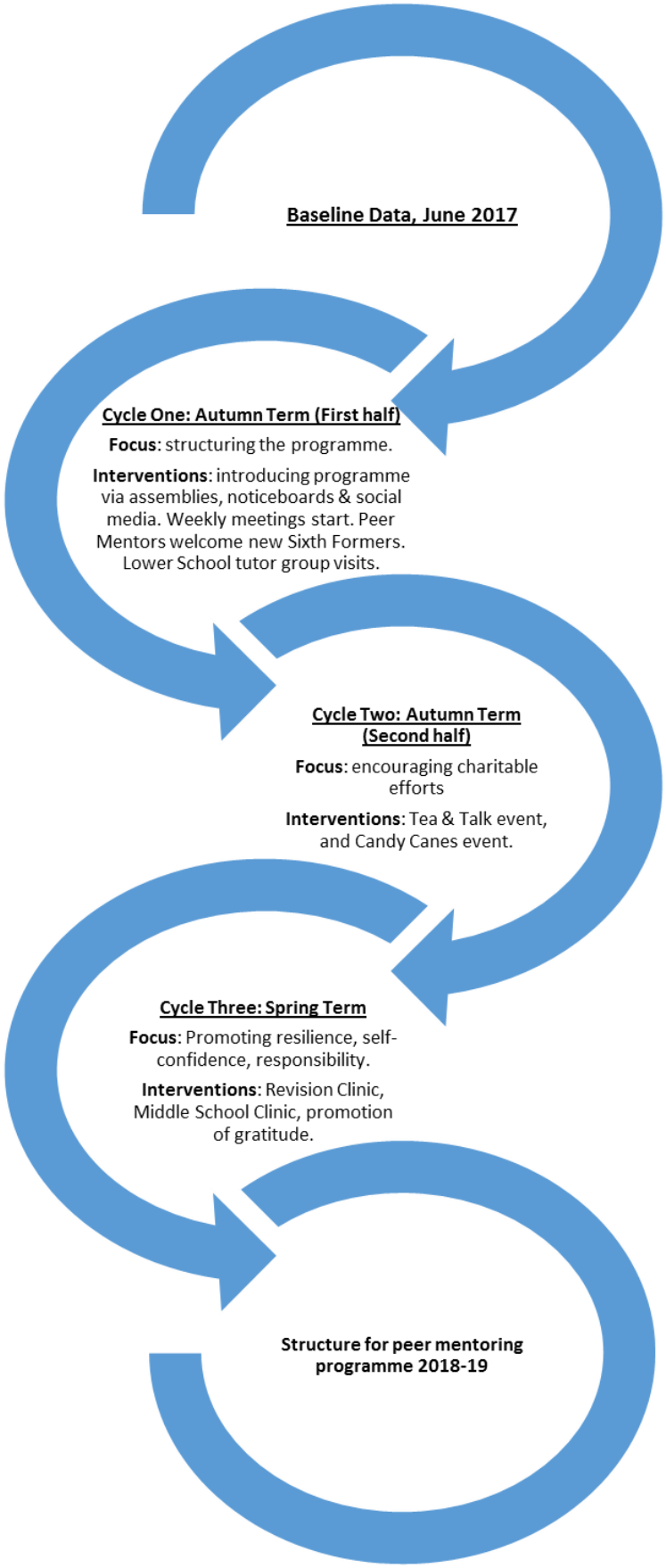

Baseline Data, June 2017
Cycle One: Autumn Term (First half)
Focus: structuring the programme.
Interventions: introducing programme via assemblies, noticeboards & social media. Weekly meetings start. Peer Mentors welcome new Sixth Formers. Lower School tutor group visits.
Cycle Two: Autumn Term (Second half)
Focus: encouraging charitable efforts
Interventions: Tea & Talk event, and Candy Canes event.
Cycle Three: Spring Term
Focus: Promoting resilience, self-confidence, responsibility.
Interventions: Revision Clinic, Middle School Clinic, promotion of gratitude.
Structure for peer mentoring programme 2018-19

Figure 1

Selecting time-frames for each cycle was a challenge. However, as suggested by Elliot (1991) there are no firm answers regarding how long cycles should take. Ultimately the fact that school terms are interspersed by vacations presents a natural organisation of time in which to complete a cycle. Whilst Elliot suggests using whole terms, in order to complete three cycles I decided the first term, the longest of the year, could be split in order to avoid any use of the summer term as exams become a focus for Year 13 pupils (the Peer Mentors).

3.5. Data collection

Elliot (1991) stresses the need for reflection regarding monitoring techniques during action research, explaining the techniques employed should provide: evidence of how well the course of action is being implemented; both intended and unintended effects; and evidence from a range of points of view. Therefore I decided on a mixed methods approach, as gathering both quantitative and qualitative feedback can allow for richer information than relying on one form of data (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2007). Suggestions for the further development of the programme were welcomed as well as a quantitative understanding of how well my interventions were perceived. I hoped this would not only help me evaluate interventions, but also allow respondents to state unintended outcomes. Questionnaires were selected to gather data as they allow a broader range of pupils to respond than if only interviews were used.

For the quantitative data, a Likert scale was utilised from 1-6 in order to ensure pupils reach a verdict, either 'agree' or 'disagree' to different extents to each question. The questions themselves focussed on different aspects of my research questions, for example 'Do you think the Peer Mentors have helped encourage an understanding of good physical and mental health?' for a key pastoral priority**.** After each question, participants were asked to explain their verdict, in order to allow for a greater understanding of any perceived successes, issues or unintended outcomes. Example questionnaires can be found in Appendix 11.

Participants asked to take part in the surveys varied at each cycle. They included: the Peer Mentors (action cycles 1-3); new Year 12 pupils (action cycle 1); the Lower School (Years 7 and 8) pupils, and tutors (action cycles 1-3); and Middle School tutor groups (action cycle 3). These groups were asked to respond to surveys at different points in order to understand the perception of the peer mentoring programme by individuals who were affected by interventions at the appropriate time.

Surveys for Lower School tutees and tutors took the form of paper questionnaires. Sixth Form pupils were surveyed using online questionnaires. Both of these methods facilitated answers as Lower School groups are easily able to complete surveys during tutor periods and the Sixth Form have easy access to electronic devices. Further, online questionnaires have the potential to elicit more honest responses, as they allow a greater feeling of privacy (Menter, Elliot, Hulme, Lewin & Lowden, 2011), therefore addressing to some extent one of my key concerns regarding the Peer Mentors' feedback who may otherwise have felt compelled to provide positive responses. Although the use of online surveys would have been welcomed with the Lower School it was deemed too problematic to ask Lower School tutees to answer online questionnaires without the use of an IT room, of which there are only a limited number.

There are weaknesses with my method of data collection. For one, Middle School tutor groups were surveyed in a different fashion to others, as whole groups reached only 'agree/disagree' responses to three questions (with qualitative comments requested too). This was due to the time constraints placed on both me as designer/researcher and the tutors themselves as the intervention involving the Middle School was not part of the general plan, and therefore the structure of the intervention and the survey was somewhat rushed. Nevertheless, 100% of Middle School groups responded, hopefully adding some validity to my findings. Across all surveys, the use of anonymity meant follow-up interviews to discuss specific issues which arose from the questionnaires in more depth would be difficult. At the outset it was my intention to conclude the project by conducting small group interviews as questionnaires may limit the responses gathered

due to time or space constraints (Rudduck & McIntyre, 2007). However, due to exams in the Summer Term it was felt to be potentially unethical to ask the Year 13 Peer Mentors to sacrifice more time to this project. Ultimately, further feedback from mentees also became unnecessary due to the findings: the decision was made that the weekly visits to tutor groups would not be a mandatory part of the programme, with significant re-structuring made.

3.6. Ethics

BERA guidelines (BERA, 2011) were consulted and CUREC approval was sought and granted (Appendix 9) for this project. The school senior leaders supported the development of this programme, and specific approval for this project was sought and granted from the Headmaster in support of my CUREC application (Appendix 10). However, further reflection was required.

3.6.1. Programme concerns

A key ethical issue which arose in the literature review for the Peer Mentors was the possibility of them feeling encumbered by the role as the academic year progressed. For instance difficulty with time management, or the role's more sensitive aspects. The weekly meetings are in place to help avoid these issues, and if Peer Mentors find their own academic performance suffering at crucial times then they will be excused from their duties for as long as necessary.

Due to the nature of the programme, there is the potential for the Peer Mentors themselves to become burdened by any difficult conversations they have with their mentees. As such, a proactive stance has been preferred and Peer Mentors have been provided with external Mental Health First Aid training. Weekly meetings have also been arranged, to ensure there is regular contact with the Peer Mentors by the programme director (me) and to ensure a direct reporting process.

In addition to this, there is the potential for a Peer Mentor to decide not to share private information should a mentee disclose an issue. Again, the weekly meetings can help combat this. Further, all Peer Mentors have been informed from the start that they should never become a barrier to a tutor/teacher hearing about a problem, and all issues relating to a mentee should be passed on to appropriate members of staff. Mentees/tutees themselves have also been informed of this. It is undoubtedly true that these steps do not guarantee an older pupil will never take advantage of any difficult information, however this situation is never totally avoidable in a school setting and I believe realistic steps have been taken to avoid that scenario.

Should any sensitive discussions or issues arise due to the peer mentoring programme, then the normal school procedure will be followed in all cases: contact with the relevant tutor, Head of Year and Director of Section to raise an issue.

There is the potential for some power issues during the course of the programme and the surveys: Peer Mentors may feel obligated to be spending a considerable amount of time devoted to the programme as they will be aware I am using this as the basis for a university project; pupils may feel under pressure to respond to surveys should their tutors make them believe they must; Peer Mentors may feel under pressure to respond to surveys. At all times it will be made clear that feedback for this project is optional and not a requirement for involvement in the peer mentoring programme.

3.6.2. Data concerns

All data will be treated confidentially and with the utmost respect, as in line with normal school protocol. All responses gathered through the questionnaires will be anonymous. Results will be kept in locked drawers in the case of hard data, and will be password protected if electronic. All data will only be used to help inform the development of the programme. All those surveyed will be informed that data will be used in the MSc project, and they have the right not to take part in the surveys. Although Peer Mentors will be asked to provide feedback, their role in the peer mentoring

programme is not dependent upon their decision to take part in this project. It will be made explicit when feedback is requested that there is no obligation to respond. The school programme and my research project are two separate concerns.

Potentially personal or sensitive data will be sought through both paper and electronic surveys. The former will be collected by colleagues and handed to me, and kept securely in a locked desk in a locked office. These questionnaires will be destroyed by the end of the academic year 2017/18, in the normal way confidential information is destroyed in school (a shredder). The electronic data will be collected using Google Drive. I will use my school email to create a personal account which only I will be able to access. All electronic data gathered will be deleted by the end of the academic year 2017/18. No names or personal details will be used in the project. All findings will be shared with senior members of school staff.

3.7. Collaboration

One benefit of employing action research as a methodology is it allows for reflective collaboration. In terms of forming a whole-school approach to well-being, collaboration is key as through reflective dialogue and collective expertise a shared value base can be created (Moloney, 2009) as well as an accessible theory of education (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). At each stage of the process there will be opportunities made for collaboration with other members of staff (Figure 2), before collaborating with all involved at the culmination of this project.

Collaborators	**Stage**			
	Baseline Data	Action Cycle 1	Action Cycle 2	Action Cycle 3
Deputy Head, Pastoral	X			
Director of Sixth Form	X	X	X	X
Director of Middle School				X
Director of Lower School	X	X	X	X
Heads of Year	X			

Lower School Tutors	X	X	X	X
Chaplains		X	X	
School Nurses		X	X	
Learning Research Group		X	X	X
'Micro-Inset' session with staff			X	
Pastoral Care Group				X

Figure 2

My key collaborators were the Directors of Lower School and Sixth Form, with whom I met on a regular basis to discuss the previous peer mentoring programme, our aims for its development and the findings which emerged. This was key as they both had a good overview of the aims for the programme and the importance of it in the school setting, providing valuable comments and suggestions throughout.

One issue is apparent with regards to my ability to actively collaborate with others: it was difficult to engage directly with the Lower School tutors on a regular basis, due to the time constraints placed on all teachers and the fact that I am both a Deputy Head of Year and a Sixth Form tutor myself. As such I was unable to meet with members of the Lower School when Section meetings took place. Indeed time management is commonly cited as an issue by co-ordinators of similar programmes (Knowles & Parsons, 2009). Nevertheless the surveys provided significant opportunities for feedback from all involved, as did frequent informal contact.

3.8. Data Analysis

Questionnaire responses were word processed in order to aid data analysis. Arguably the simpler data to analyse came in the form of the quantitative data. The data from the Likert scale was transformed into bar charts for discussion, showing the extent to which responses disagreed or

agreed to each question. Percentages in terms of whether the response 'disagreed' or 'agreed' to any extent to the question will be used for discussion. The usage of percentages allows for a simpler understanding of the perception of interventions. However one issue with my data is consistency regarding the number of respondents was not guaranteed and did indeed change throughout the course of the project. This therefore poses some concerns regarding validity. Nevertheless, as ethically I wished to respect the choice of those who did not respond, I used the qualitative data which was returned to guide my understanding of why a growing number did not return their surveys as the project continued.

The completed questionnaires' qualitative segments were coded for the purpose of analysis. The process was inductive; I hoped to be as true to the respondents' message as possible whilst also undergoing the necessary process of distilling their meaning due to the quantity of data. During the process, each open ended response provided on a questionnaire was carefully read and considered, and where relevant themes emerged across the responses were tallied. All responses were categorised in this manner and the findings are presented in tables (examples of coded responses can be found in Appendix 12). Undoubtedly my interpretation is a potential limitation of this research. However, through employing a mixed methods approach at least some of my bias which may have leaned towards suggesting the peer mentoring programme is appreciated by those who experienced it should be reduced as respondents can make clear their feelings in the quantitative data too.

4. Results and Discussion

The findings throughout this section are organised by the action cycles, their corresponding questionnaires, and the resulting data rather than by my research questions. I undertook an inductive approach in order to make the most of all feedback and any unintended insight, due to my desire to understand the experience of those involved in the peer mentoring programme, and my engagement with action research as a process rather than a means to produce knowledge or definitively prove impact.

In my discussion at the end of each action cycle and at the culmination of my results I have re-focussed on my research questions in order to reach some conclusions on how to continue the peer mentoring programme in this setting.

4.1. Action Cycle One

The focus for this cycle was my first research question (the structure of the peer mentoring programme). Following the baseline data and discussions with my collaborators, a number of revisions regarding structure were implemented from the start of the programme. I was open to feedback regarding them.

With regards to my second research question (targeting my school's pastoral priorities), the start of the academic year was an opportunity for Peer Mentors to share their experience regarding 'transition' with new pupils in both the Lower School (Year 7) and the Sixth Form (Year 12). Therefore creating opportunities for discussion between the Peer Mentors and new pupils was key, leading to the creation of lunches for new Year 12 pupils and the topic being addressed in Lower School sessions.

Further, my third research question (the ways in which the Peer Mentors were benefitting) was of interest due to my early changes. The experience of the girls was a particular concern, due to the looser structure for them compared to the boys' weekly visits to the Lower School. Therefore

their feedback was of interest in order to allow for consideration of further possible interventions which could provide additional opportunities for them to benefit from the programme.

4.1.1. Interventions undertaken

In this action cycle, the following interventions were run:

Lower School: an introductory assembly to explain the Peer Mentor's weekly visits and set expectations; the start of weekly visits by boy Peer Mentors to Lower School tutor groups on Friday mornings.

Sixth Form: 'Ladies Lunch' and 'Pizza and Playstation' events to welcome both new girls and new boys (respectively) to Year 12.

Peer Mentors: establishment of weekly meetings at Friday break-time to discuss issues, provide notices and topics for Lower School visits; badges distributed to Peer Mentors.

General: the creation of peer mentoring noticeboards with photos of Peer Mentors; the use of social media to promote the peer mentoring programme.

4.1.2. Surveys

Surveys were distributed to the following groups at the end of this action cycle in order to gather feedback:

Lower School: tutors and tutees.

Sixth Form: new Year 12 girls and boys.

Peer Mentors: all Peer Mentors, girls and boys.

The findings from the surveys will be presented in that order.

4.1.3. Findings

Feedback from Lower School tutors

Surveys were returned from 11/12 Lower School tutors.

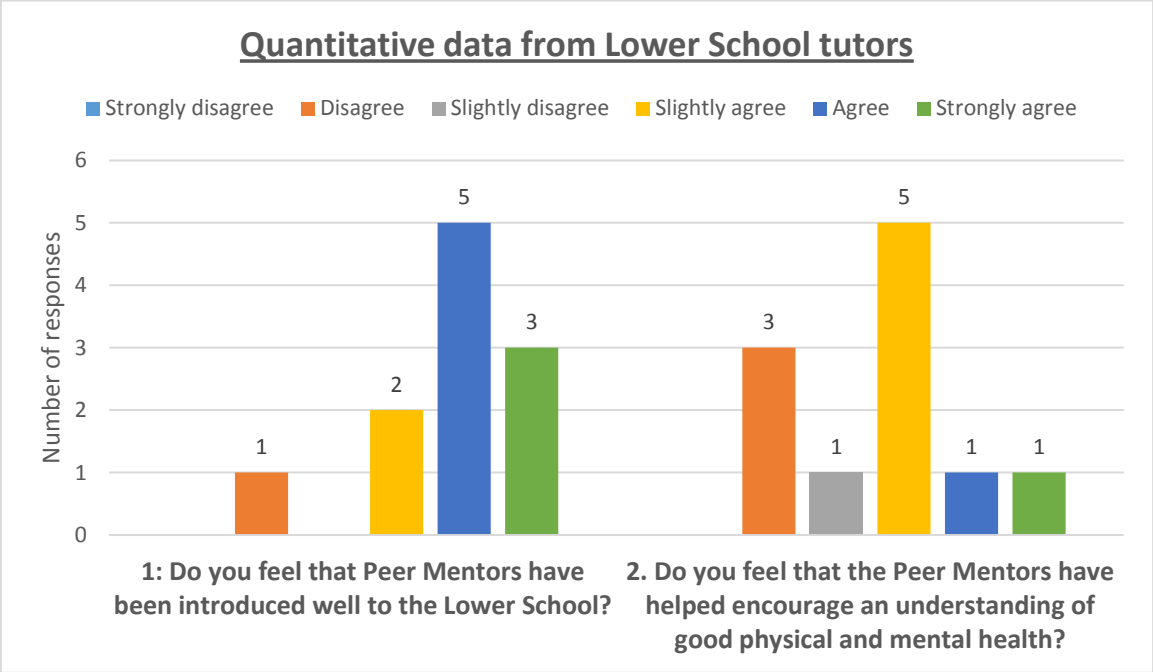


Figure 3

Coded data:

Question 1:		**Question 2:**	
Good assembly	4	Good start, needs time to build up	4
It is clear who the Peer Mentors are and where to find them	3	Only seen him on occasion	2
Language and ideas are too advanced	1	Mentor is trying harder than last year's	1
		Peer Mentor has been 'brilliant'	1
		Not sure when he's coming to tutor	1

Feedback from Lower School tutees

Surveys were returned from 11/12 Lower School tutor groups. Not all tutees chose to respond:

160/192 surveys were completed (each tutor group comprises of 16 pupils).

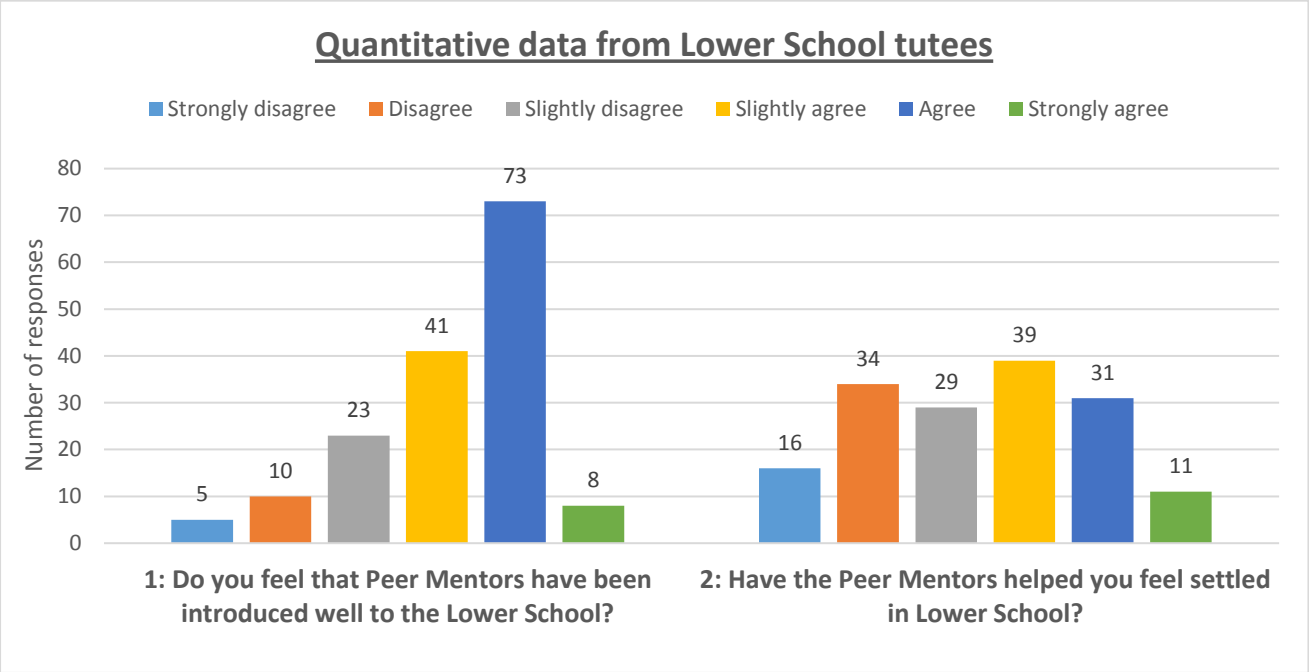


Figure 4

Coded data:

Question 1:		**Question 2:**	
Not there often enough/need more time	35	Already felt settled in (Year 8)	62
Assembly helped	31	Not there often enough	24
Badges	11	Helpful experience	22
Photos	9	Friendly/kind	18

Feedback from Sixth Form Pupils

To the survey of new Year 12 girls, 28/38 eligible pupils responded.

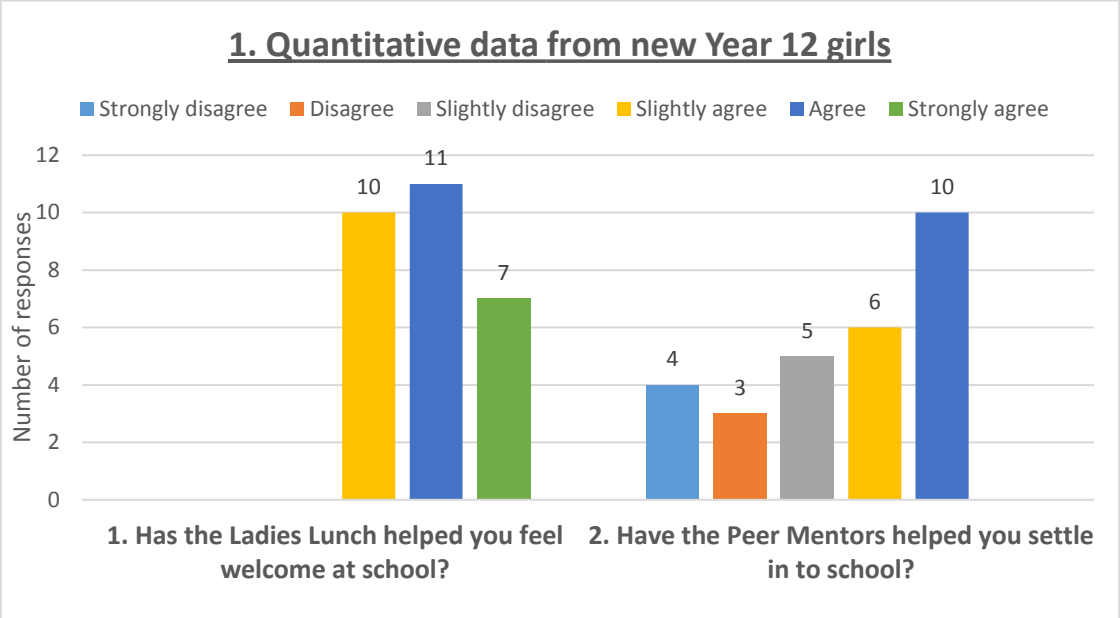


Figure 5

Coded data:

Question 1:		**Question 2:**	
Peer Mentors helped	2	I have not got to know them	5
		Made me feel welcome	2
		Ladies lunch was helpful	2

The survey of new boys in Year 12 received four responses (from the five new pupils):

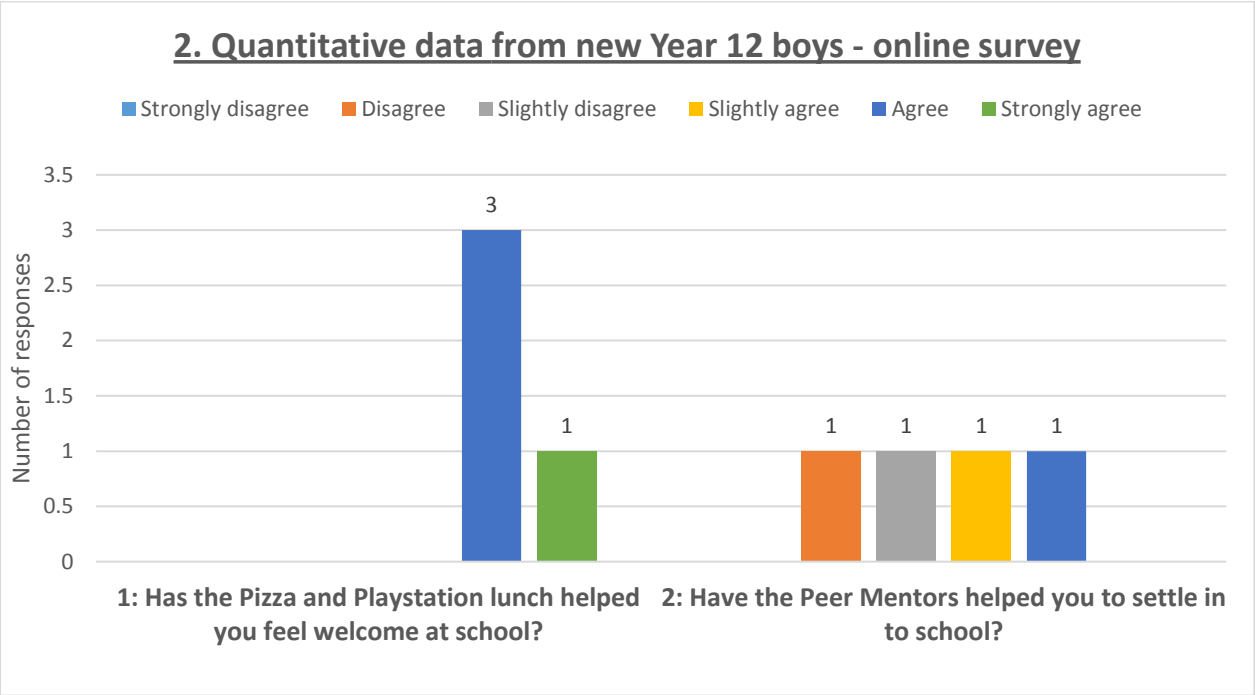


Figure 6

Coded data:

Question 1:		**Question 2:**	
Peer Mentors were welcoming	2	Not had much to do with them since	3
		They have helped me find things	1

Feedback from Peers Mentors

14/19 Peer Mentors responded.

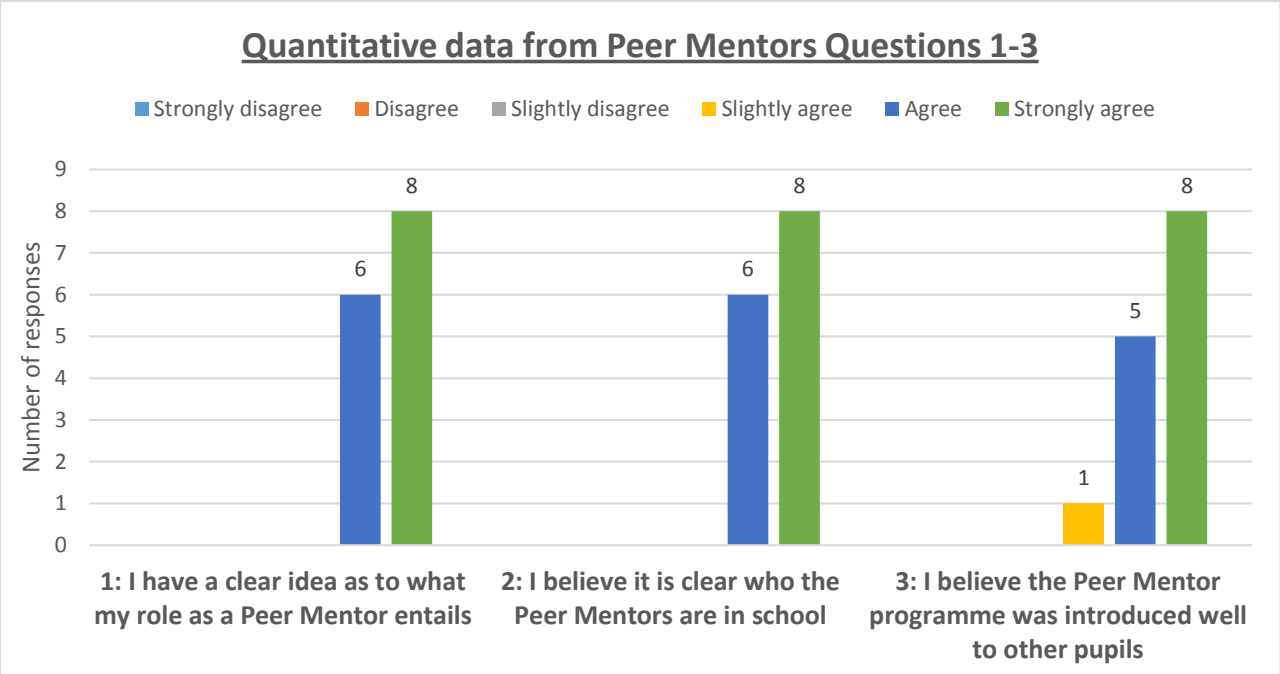


Figure 7

Coded data:

Question 1:		**Question 2:**		**Question 3:**	
Clear lay out (weekly meetings, training, assembly etc)	8	Badges	7	Assembly	4
More guidance needed for tutor time discussions	1	Noticeboards	1	Noticeboards	1
				Lunches	1

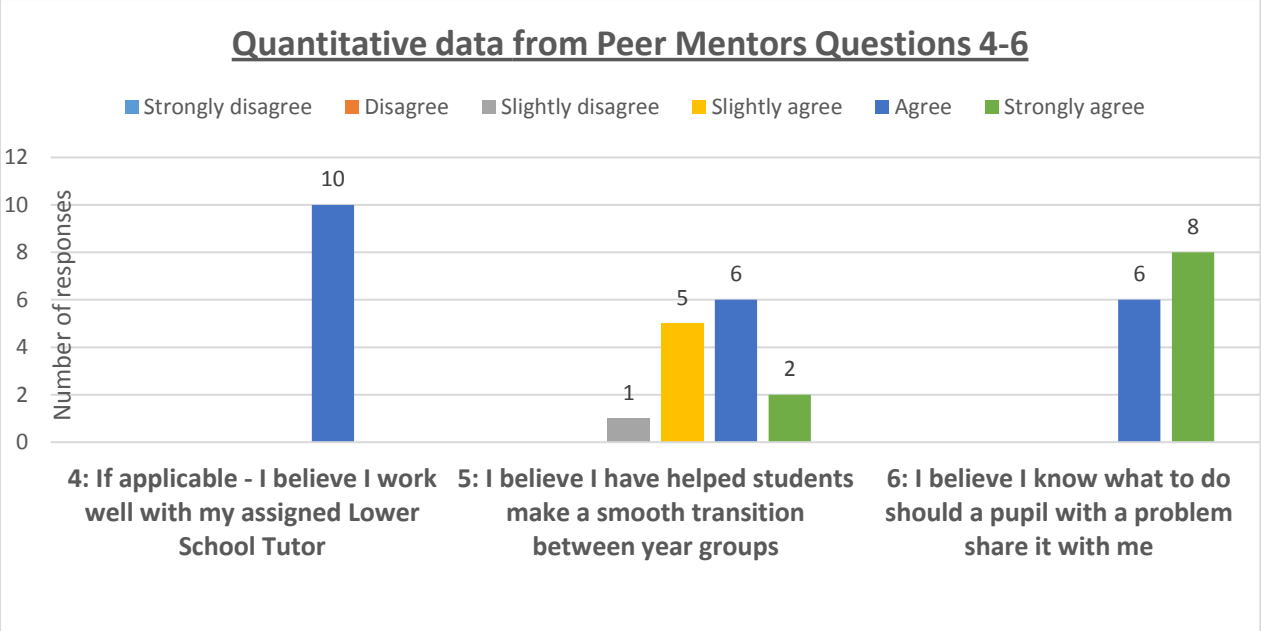


Figure 8

Coded data:

Question 4		**Question 5**		**Question 6**	
Good balance between Peer Mentor and tutor	3	Peer Mentors are able to offer genuine experience-based advice	3	Pass on serious issues	5
Would also like opportunity to mentor without tutor present	1	Tried to help some new Sixth Form pupils who were struggling and subsequently left, but it was beyond us	2	Clear instructions	4
		Lunches	1	Regular meetings help	3
		I have not provided specific advice on this yet	1		

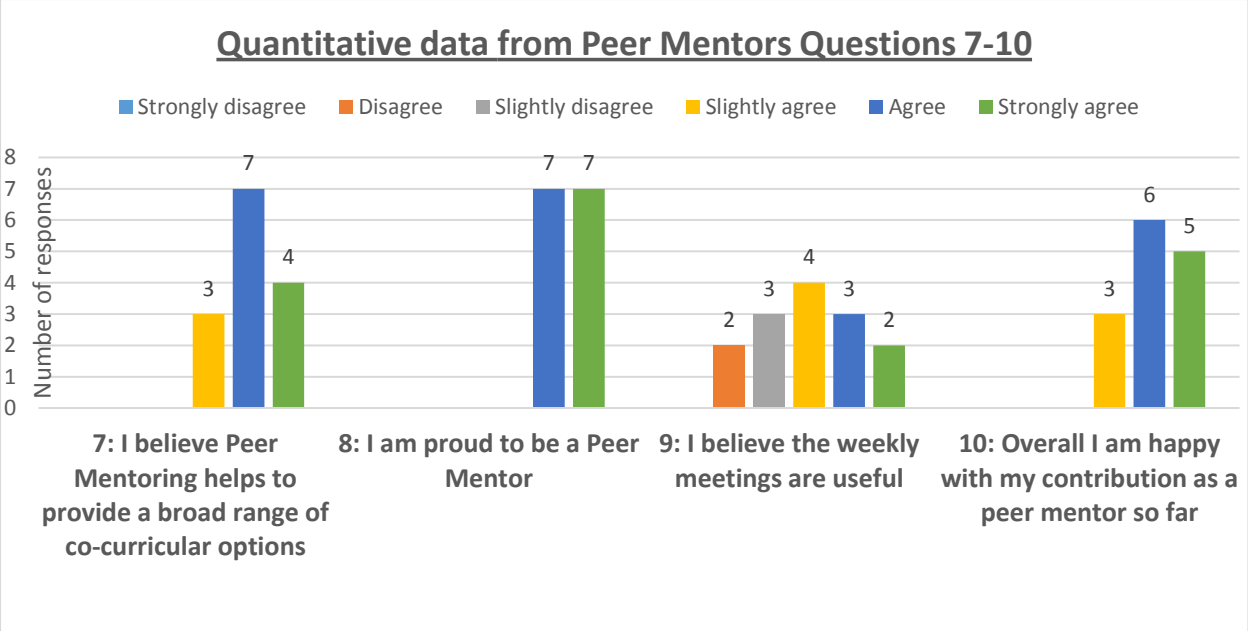


Figure 9

Coded data:

Question 7		**Question 8**		**Question 9**		**Question 10**	
Peer Mentoring provides a unique opportunity	5	I want to help people	3	Helps to collaborate	2	Positive tutor group interactions	2
		Important to promote mental health	2	Need regular discussions	2	I have enjoyed helping with problems	1
				Not always necessary	1	Yet to have problems brought to me	2
				Only if there is something specific to discuss	1	Would like to run a drop-in session	2
				I forget to go	1	Would like to promote charitable endeavours	2
						Would like more opportunities to help	1

4.1.4. Discussion

1: How should the peer mentoring programme be structured in my school setting?

The feedback to my early changes to the programme's structure provided significant insight into this question. Three key areas of interest arose.

-Introducing the programme

My findings suggest the peer mentoring programme was mostly introduced well: 91% of the Lower School tutors (Figure 3), 76% of the Lower School tutees (Figure 4), and 100% of the Peer Mentors agreed (Figure 7). Across all groups, the qualitative data reveals the assembly was the key reason for any level of agreement with the statement. However, the frequency with which it is mentioned by the Lower School is low (31/160 responses), and the comment by a tutor that the language and ideas discussed in the assembly were too advanced is of note. This could be altered for next year. Nevertheless the assembly seemed to help to provide an understanding of the rationale and structure of the programme.

The interventions to improve the visibility of the programme also seem to have worked. In their qualitative responses regarding the introduction to peer mentoring, three Lower School tutors noted it is clear who the Peer Mentors are and where to find them. Similarly, 11 Lower School tutees noted the badges were clear, and nine mentioned the photos on the noticeboards. Again however the frequency of these comments from the Lower School is low.

The literature had stressed the importance of the formalisation of the programme (MBF, 2010), its introduction to mentees (Karcher, 2007) and establishing communication with staff (Knowles & Parsons, 2009). Overall my findings thus far suggest these have been positive interventions.

-Lunches

The lunches were received well. Of the Year 12 girls, 100% of respondents agree the lunch helped (Figure 5), and two responses noted the helpful Peers Mentors as a reason for their feeling welcome. However, five respondents stated they had not had enough interaction with the Peer Mentors. This was a weakness with the way the peer mentoring programme was structured, particularly for girls who may well require a closer, more regular point of contact than boys (Jack, 1991; Clark & Ayers, 1993, Berndt & Keefe, 1995). The findings from the Year 12 boys regarding the lunches were similarly positive, with 100% of respondents agreeing the 'Pizza and Playstation' lunch had made them feel welcome (Figure 6). However, as with the new girls it seems further follow-up interaction would be beneficial.

-Lower School Tutor group visits

It is possible to infer from my findings that the start of the tutor group visits has mostly been well received. Both the quantitative and qualitative data from the Lower School is generally positive at this stage. The Lower School tutors' qualitative responses, for instance, note on four occasions this has been a good start, but more time is needed (Figure 3). Two other responses are very positive, one stating the Peer Mentor is trying harder than last year's, and one that the Peer Mentor has been 'brilliant'. However, attendance is still the key issue with two tutors stating they had only seen their Peer Mentor on occasion and another that they weren't sure when their Peer Mentor would be there. Nevertheless, promisingly at this point 100% of the boy Peer Mentors who responded to the survey felt they were working well with their assigned tutor group (Figure 8). It was hoped at this point that as long as the quality of the sessions and discussion was kept then the quantity of the visits would not be a key barrier (Roach, 2014), although mentees feeling neglected could become a problem over time (Karcher, 2007).

<u>2: In what ways can the peer mentoring programme be targeted towards meeting the school's pastoral development priorities?</u>

The most important element of my school's pastoral priorities for the peer mentoring programme at this point of the year was the issue of transition, predominantly into the school.

My findings provide mixed support for the way in which my programme has so far been developed to help with transition. Amongst Lower School tutee respondents, 51% of stated they agreed the Peer Mentors had helped them feel settled (Figure 4). The qualitative data explained the divide, as 62 comments made it evident it was the Year 8 pupils who already felt settled in school. Of the positive responses, 22 stated the Peer Mentors had helpful experience to share, 18 said they were friendly or kind, and two that they created a fun and safe environment. The weekly visits to tutor groups have therefore provided some success regarding transition, perhaps only for Year 7, agreeing to some extent with literature suggesting peer mentoring could help pupils feel less anxious and more confident in moving from primary to secondary school (Nelson, 2003).

Further to this, the findings from the new Year 12 pupils suggest the peer mentoring programme has helped them feel settled to a small extent. 57% of the new girls agreed with the statement (Figure 5), whilst 50% of the new Year 12 boys agreed (Figure 6). Overall the lunches seem to have provided success in supporting my school's pastoral development priorities, but the evidence does not fully support the literature stressing the fear amongst adolescents of social exclusion (Blakemore & Mills, 2014).

Finally, the Peer Mentors were generally positive regarding their impact in helping with transition through the new interventions. 93% agreed they had helped (Figure 8), with three believing they could offer genuine experience-based advice. It is also interesting that two Peer Mentors noted they had tried to help girls who were struggling to settle, but they recognised the help needed was beyond them. This ties in with Powell (2016), who believes peer mentoring is only suitable for low to mid-level needs. The extent to which peer mentoring can solve fundamental issues which cause pupils to leave a school is likely limited.

3. How have the Peer Mentors benefitted from the peer mentoring programme?

There is evidence that Peer Mentors have enjoyed a positive start to the programme and are benefitting from its development. 100% of respondents agreed it is helping to provide a broad range of co-curricular options (Figure 9); not only does this help fulfil a school pastoral priority, but with regards to this research question five of the Peer Mentors state it is providing a unique opportunity for them. Similarly, 100% of respondents agree they are proud to be a Peer Mentor (Figure 9), 50% strongly agreeing, with three of them identifying the role as a good responsibility. This closely ties in with a key finding of Houlston, Smith & Jessel (2009)'s, which was that mentors enjoyed this feeling of responsibility, and also helps with regards to the request made by pupils for more positions of responsibility (ISI, 2011). The Peer Mentors were very positive regarding visibility of the programme, with the badges and noticeboards mentioned. As suggested by the literature this seems to have helped developed a sense of responsibility amongst them, and ensured their engagement whilst strengthening their connection to the school (Stoltz, 2005; Karcher, 2006; Bowman & Myrick, 1987). 100% of the respondents summarise they are happy with their contribution as a Peer Mentor so far (Figure 9). I was still concerned that the activities for the girls to participate in was limited, and therefore this is an especially positive finding as it is possible to infer 4/14 respondents are girls (10/14 respondents answered questions regarding their assigned Lower School tutor group). However, it is possible that suggestions for running drop-in sessions or charitable events came from girl Peer Mentors. Nevertheless, there is a strong positivity at this stage, and this ties in with the literature suggesting mentors will benefit from their participation (Bowman & Myrick, 1987).

A concern was ensuring that Peer Mentors did not feel overwhelmed or burdened by their position, as this could pose serious concern (Karcher, 2007; Knowles & Parsons, 2009). It was helpful to know 100% of Peer Mentors were happy they knew what to do should a problem be shared with them (Figure 8), although the opinions regarding the weekly meetings were decidedly more mixed, with only 64% of respondents agreeing they saw them as useful (Figure 9).

4.1.5. Implications

My findings were discussed with my collaborators: the Directors of Sixth Form and Lower School were both very positive regarding the changes made so far to the peer mentoring programme, and further anecdotal feedback was also received from several tutors. The key difference to be made for the next action cycle following action cycle one is to ensure there are enough ways for the girl Peer Mentors to engage with the peer mentoring programme. Further, it became vital to ensure the boy Peer Mentors are attending their Lower School groups at every opportunity through my weekly meetings.

4.2. Action Cycle Two

The key focus for this cycle was my second research question, aligning the programme with my school's pastoral priorities. Two of these stress the desire to promote good physical and mental health, and encourage charitable efforts. Research suggests that in adolescents 'prosocial' behaviour regarding health can be encouraged by peers (Blakemore, 2018), and that they are more likely to engage in charitable ventures if they can see their peers doing likewise (Choukas-Bradley, Giletta, Cohen, & Prinstein, 2015). Three charitable efforts were ultimately chosen: first, running a 'Tea and Talk event' as per the suggestion by the Mental Health Foundation, to raise money for the MHF; second, as suggested by the girl Peer Mentors, a 'Candy Canes' fundraiser was run at Christmas to raise money for a local hospice; and finally, not included on my general plan, it was suggested the Peer Mentors help spread awareness of and participation in our 'Sixth-Form Sleep Out', held at the start of December to raise money for a local homelessness charity. Further, the overall structure of the peer mentoring programme was still very much under consideration. My third research question regarding the Peer Mentors was also relevant, particularly as the 'Candy Canes' event was proposed by the girl Peer Mentors themselves. This was a welcome contribution.

4.2.1. Interventions undertaken

The following interventions were run:

Whole-School: Tea & Talk fundraising drop-in event; Candy Canes fundraising event; raising awareness of Sixth-Form 'sleep-out' through Lower School tutor group visits.

Lower School: set discussions in tutor periods.

4.2.2. Surveys

Surveys were distributed to the following groups at the end of this action cycle in order to collect data:

Lower School: tutors and tutees.

Peer Mentors: all Peer Mentors, girls and boys.

Findings will be presented in the above order.

4.2.3. Findings

Feedback from Lower School tutors

9/12 tutors responded to the questionnaire, representing a drop in responses.

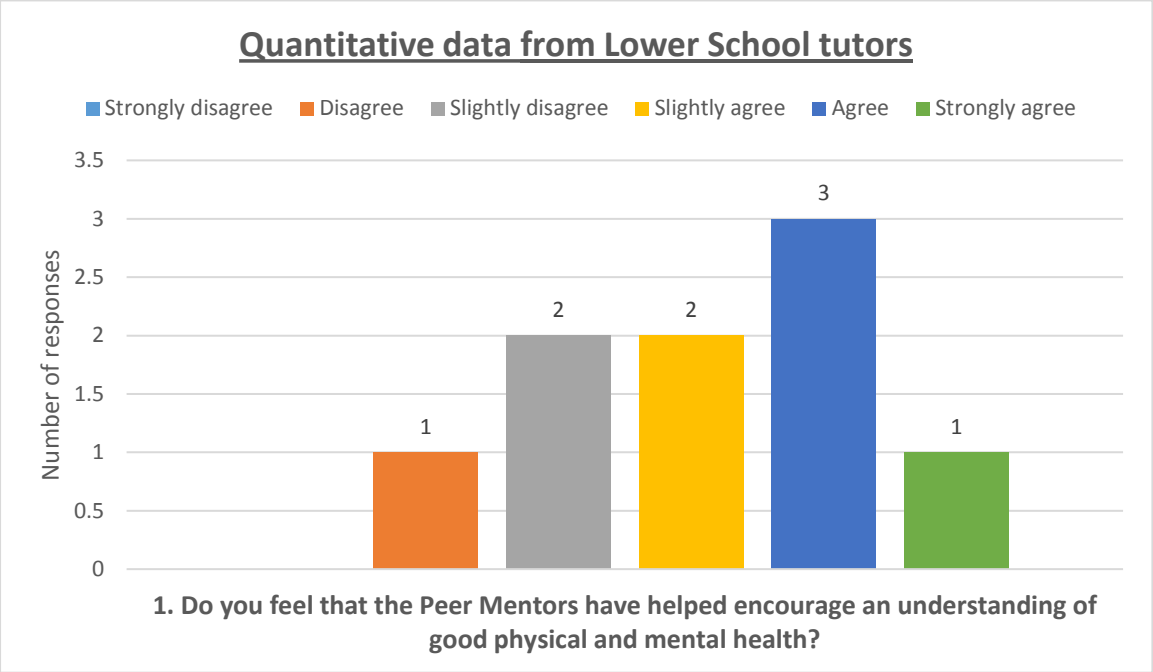


Figure 10

Coded data:

Question 1:	
Good discussions	3
Organised activities	1
Not enough depth	1
Lack of attendance	1

Feedback from Lower School tutees

8/12 tutor groups responded, and 134/192 pupils.

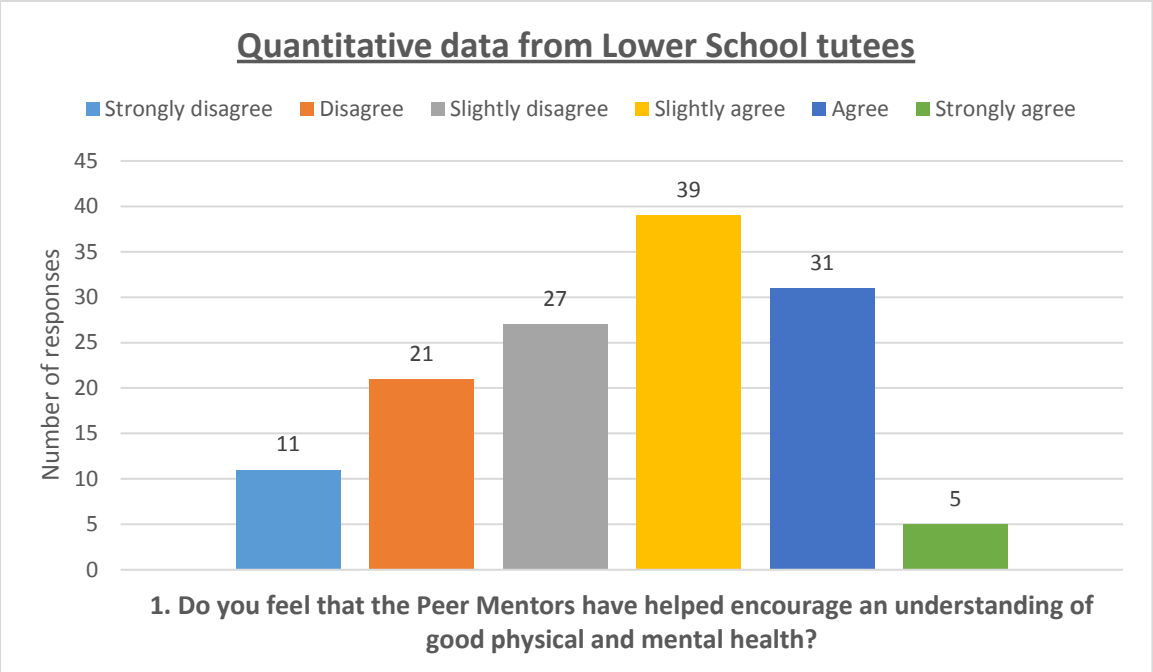


Figure 11

Coded data:

Question 1:	
Good discussions	26
Lack of attendance	15
Tea & Talk event	14
Helped with issues such as bullying	11
Reassuring to know older pupils	10

Feedback from Peer Mentors

13/19 Peer Mentors responded.

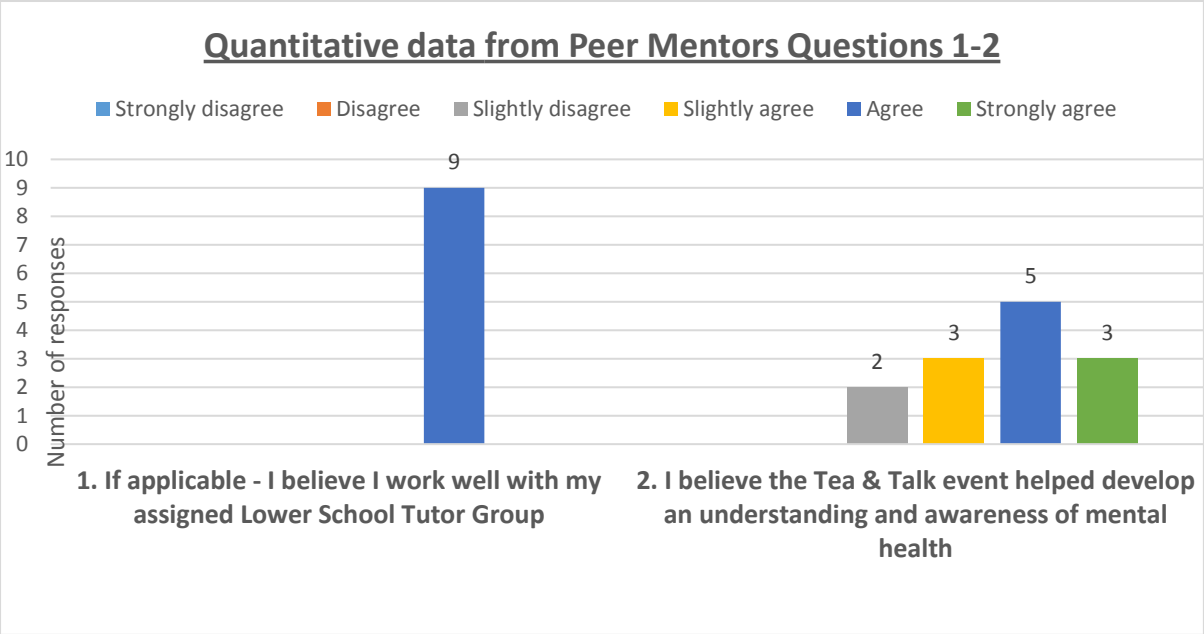


Figure 12

Coded data:

Question 1:		**Question 2:**	
Good relationships established with Lower School	4	The event raised awareness	5
More guidance needed for tutor time discussions	1	Quality of discussion was limited	2

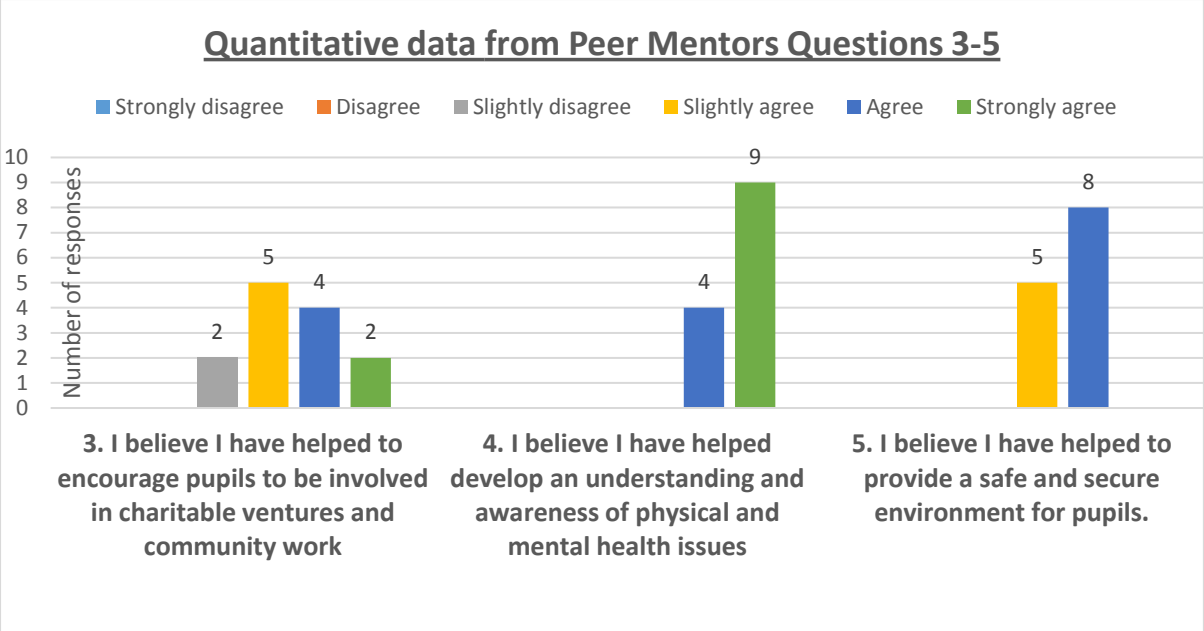


Figure 13

Coded data:

Question 3:		**Question 4:**		**Question 5:**	
Charitable events were successful	10	Mental Health First Aid training helped	5	Good relationship with mentees	2
It was difficult to ensure participation from Lower School tutees	2	Peer Mentors are well known around school and spreading awareness	2	The peer mentoring programme is more positive than last year	1
		Tea & Talk event	1	The school would not be unsafe without peer mentors	1

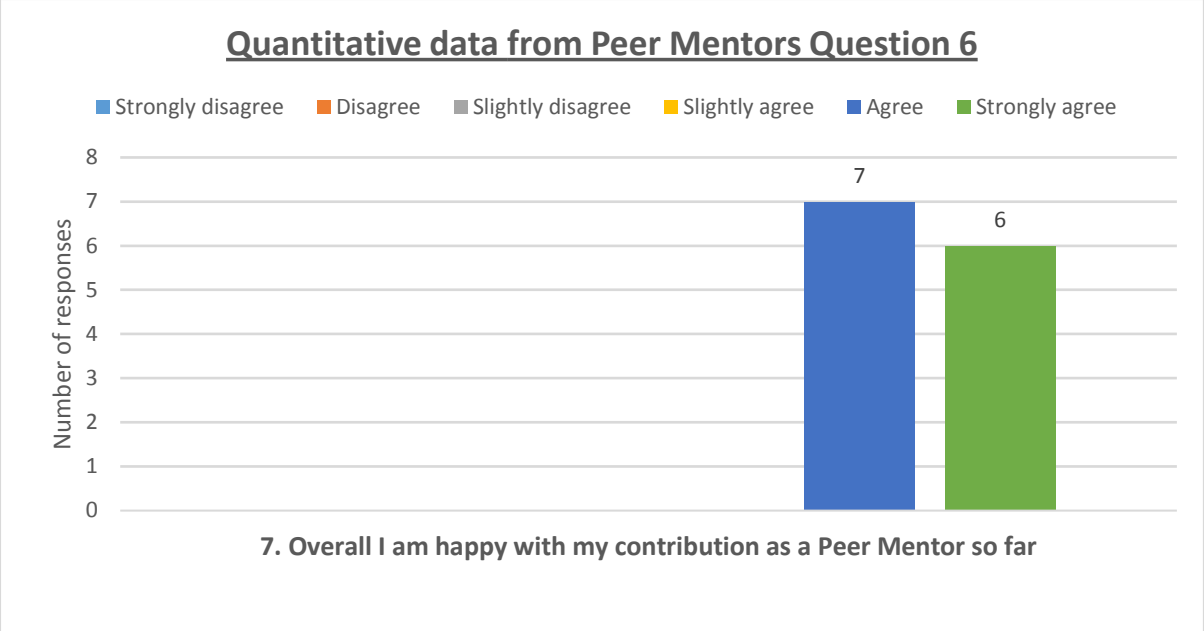


Figure 14

Coded data:

Question 6:	
The variety of activities is positive	3
Positive impact on tutor groups	2
Benefitted from training and spreading awareness of mental health	1

4.2.4. Discussion

1: How should the peer mentoring programme be structured in my school setting?

Two key areas for reflection arose regarding structure.

-Lower School tutor group visits

Increasing problems with the visits to the Lower School are evident. The data corresponds with the limitations to the peer mentoring programme found in the baseline findings. Only 66% of the Lower School tutor respondents agreed to some extent that the Peer Mentors were helping in their tutor groups with health related issues (Figure 10). Lower School tutees also returned mixed responses to both quantitative questions (Figure 11). Both sets of qualitative data raise the same concerns: a lack of depth to discussion and a lack of attendance. The data from the Peer Mentors is still largely positive, as 100% of relevant respondents agreed they work well with their Lower School group (Figure 12) with four commenting on the quality of relationship built up with tutees, though this lack of corroboration between groups is concerning. Overall there is some reason to suggest the structure can work regarding visits to Lower Schools, but the feelings are evidently mixed. My findings so far support the idea that a feeling of creating an additional workload (e.g. chasing attendance) can be an issue for staff and a sense of neglect can be a key barrier for mentees (Karcher, 2007; Knowles & Parsons, 2009).

-Events

The Tea & Talk event and Candy Canes fund raiser were received reasonably well. A weakness regarding my data collection is evident here though: the events were run for the whole school and I did not collect adequate data regarding their perception by other year groups, largely due to time constraints. However, 14 Lower School pupils cited the Tea & Talk event as helping with regards to pastoral concerns (Figure 11). Of the Peer Mentors, 85% agreed to some extent that the Tea & Talk event was successful (Figure 12), with five commenting it raised awareness, although two stated that

the quality of discussion was limited. Further, 85% believed they had helped encourage charitable ventures (Figure 13), with 10 citing the charitable events as being successful. Running these interventions also seems to have had a positive impact on the Peer Mentors, as 100% still agree they are happy with their contribution as a Peer Mentor (Figure 14), and indeed there was a rise in those who 'strongly agree' (from five to six). Therefore this can be seen as modestly successful.

2: In what ways can the peer mentoring programme be targeted towards meeting the school's pastoral development priorities?

Two pastoral development priorities were targeted in this action cycle: promoting good physical and mental health; and encouraging charitable ventures.

-Promote good physical and mental health

The literature states this is the area towards which peer support is often directed (Marshall, Wishart, Dunatchik & Smith, 2017), and 'prosocial' behaviour regarding health can be heavily influenced by peers (Blakemore, 2018) yet my data is more mixed. 66% of Lower School tutors agree the Peer Mentors have encouraged good physical and mental health (Figure 10), whilst only 56% of Lower School tutees agree with the statement, and mostly to a lesser extent (Figure 11). These low levels of agreement are concerning and attendance is again the key obstacle mentioned in the qualitative data, although there are positive comments regarding the discussions which have been held: 11 tutees state good discussions were had regarding the problem of bullying, an area which the literature suggests peer mentoring can spread awareness of (MBF, 2010; Roach, 2014; Blakemore, 2018). Further 100% of Peer Mentor respondents agree they have helped develop an understanding of physical and mental health throughout the school, 69% 'strongly' agreeing (Figure 13). This may be due to the fact they are considering the wider ways in which they have encouraged this through other means than solely the visits to tutor groups.

-Encouraging charitable ventures

As said previously there was undoubtedly a weakness in my data collecting process in order to prove how well the charitable events run were perceived. Nevertheless, 14 Lower School pupils did evidence the Tea & Talk event as impactful, and indeed the fact that the events were successfully run in themselves is perhaps evidence to support the idea that charitable ventures were encouraged in the school setting. Indeed the money raised was gratefully received by the relevant charities. Further, this year Peer Mentors encouraged participation in and raising money for the 'Sixth-Form Sleep-Out'. 10 of the Peer Mentors were involved and a record-breaking sum was raised. This success cannot be entirely attributed to the Peer Mentors, however it was an excellent result. This does somewhat explain why 85% of Peer Mentors agreed they had encouraged charitable ventures (Figure 13), but the low extent to which they agreed may be seen as an issue. Overall my data does not strongly support the suggestion that adolescents are more likely to engage in these efforts due to their peers (Choukas-Bradley et al., 2015), but it does show these events trialled can contribute to awareness regarding mental and physical health issues, and therefore towards the whole-school approach regarding well-being concerns which the literature suggests is vital (Powell, 2016; Department of Health & Department for Education, 2017).

3. How have the Peer Mentors benefitted from the peer mentoring programme?

The data suggests the experience of the Peer Mentors themselves is still the most positive from the peer mentoring programme. Again, the Peer Mentors may be providing evidence for my perceived benefit: there is an obvious discrepancy in terms of the perception of the Lower School tutor group visits, as the Peer Mentors are uniformly positive whereas the feedback from tutors and tutees is far more mixed. Therefore it is valuable to see some perhaps honest responses which show some of the weaknesses of the current programme, with comments making it clear the lack of depth in terms of discussion at the Tea & Talk event was limited; indeed this was my own perception of the event too. Nevertheless the strength of feeling regarding the Peer Mentors' own contribution is growing, with

qualitative data showing the variety of additional activities is beneficial, the training has helped them, and they enjoy being involved in a positive programme. The literature suggested this would be the case (Roach, 2014)

4.2.5. Implications

The results of this action cycle were discussed with my collaborators: it was perceived from staff who offer pastoral support, such as the Chaplains and the school nurses, that the charitable events which had been run were beneficial for the school community and should be run again; the Director of Lower School was mostly pleased by the discussions being held in tutor groups, noting one Peer Mentor-led discussion she had witnessed herself. It was also clear the Peer Mentors responded well to running events. It was felt at the end of this cycle the Peer Mentors could help run another event to support pupils, perhaps with an academic focus.

4.3. Action Cycle Three

The planned focus for my third action cycle was shared between my school's pastoral priorities and the ways in which the Peer Mentors were benefitting from the programme. I was keen to ensure Peer Mentors were encouraging resilience, self-confidence and responsibility amongst the other year groups, thus helping with a pastoral target. This would take the form of both the visits to the Lower School groups and running a 'Revision Clinic' in the Chaplaincy, in order to help provide tips for other year groups on their approach to exams.

However, an opportunity arose which had serious ramifications for my plan: the Director of Middle School asked to engage the Peer Mentors with his Section. Following discussion with the Peer Mentors themselves, a structured assembly was suggested whereby Middle School tutors asked their tutees for questions on a range of topics. These were submitted to me in advance of the assembly via email. I then distributed the questions to the Peer Mentors who were assigned roughly two questions each. At the assembly, which both Years 9 and 10 attended, the Peer Mentors were able to provide considered responses to the Middle School's questions, with each question receiving two or three replies (See Appendix 13). The girl Peer Mentors were involved as it was felt this would help Middle School pupils prepare for a co-educational setting. This therefore changed my original plan, and the emphasis on running a 'Revision Clinic' was lessened.

The Lower School tutor groups were surveyed for evidence regarding the final visits by the boy Peer Mentors. The Peer Mentors were also surveyed for their final thoughts on their experience of the programme. Surveying the Middle School also provided useful evidence for my research questions, not least because the Middle School assembly adopted a different structure to the one taken thus far and therefore also raised possibilities for my first research question.

4.3.1. Interventions undertaken

The following interventions were run:

Lower School: discussion of resilience, self-confidence, responsibility (during Lower School tutor group visits)

Middle School: assembly (school life/transition).

4.3.2. Survey design

Surveys were distributed to the following groups at the end of this action cycle in order to collect data:

Lower School: tutors and tutees.

Middle School: whole-group survey.

Peer Mentors: all Peer Mentors, girls and boys.

The findings will be presented in the above order.

4.3.3. Findings

Feedback from Lower School tutors

7/12 Lower School tutors responded.

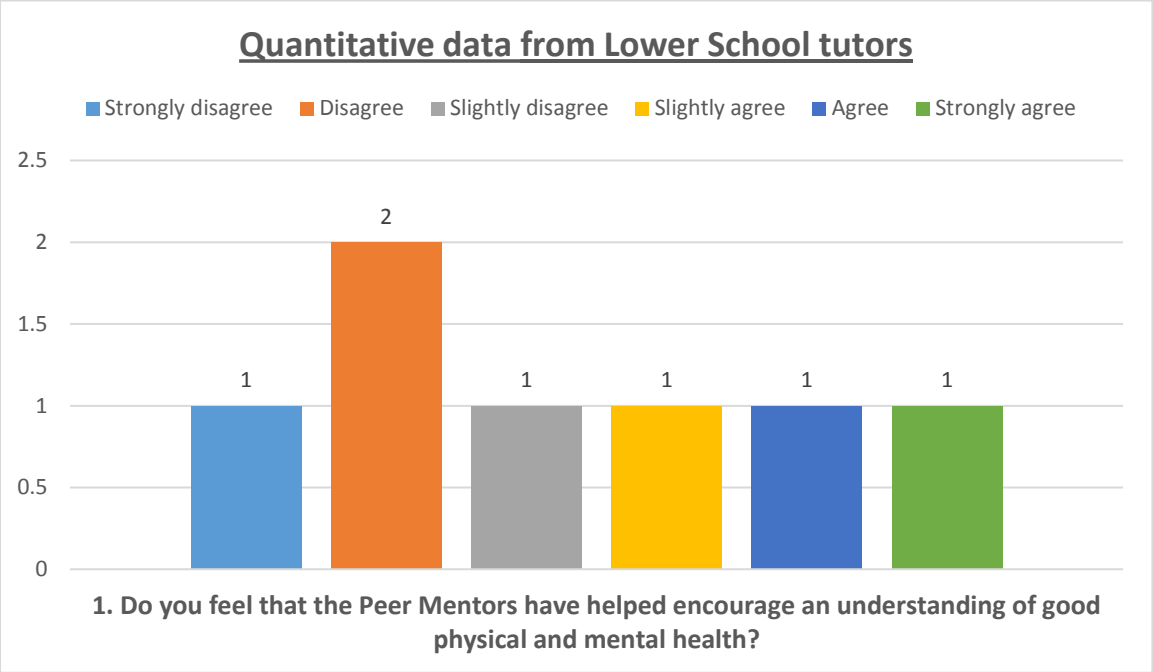


Figure 15

Coded data:

Question 1:	
Lack of attendance/didn't get to know him	5
Not mentioned in depth	2
Friendly/good relationships	1

Feedback from Lower School tutees

104/192 tutees responded to this final survey.

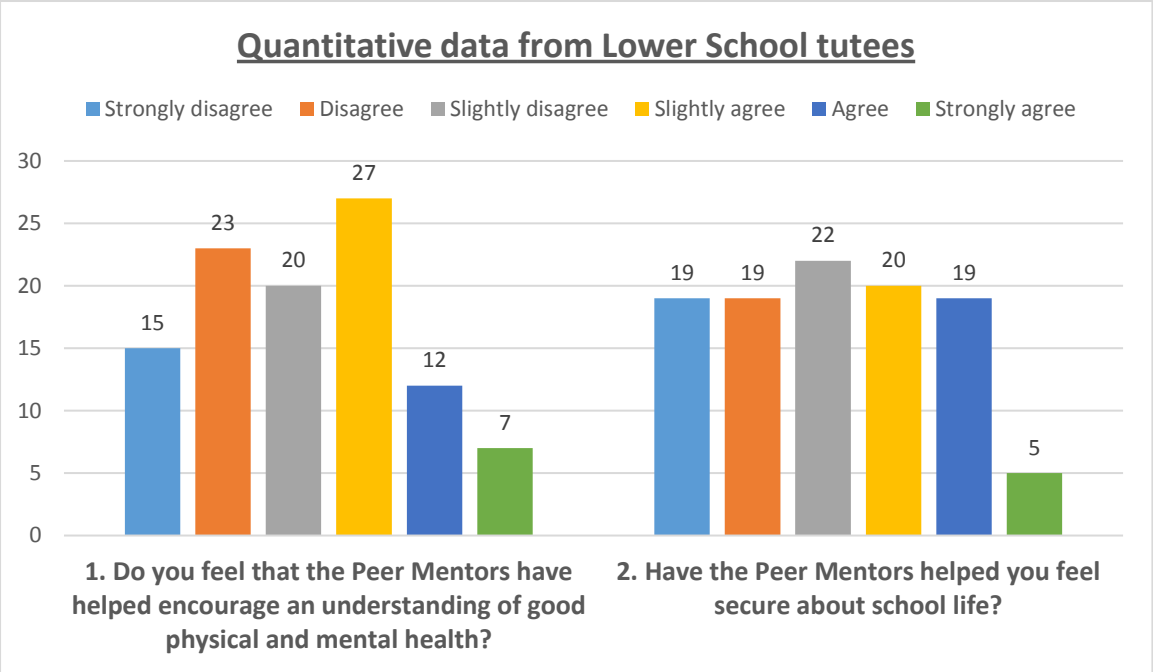


Figure 16

Coded data:

Question 1:		**Question 2:**	
Lack of attendance	40	Lack of attendance	26
Not discussed in detail	14	No meaningful conversations	11
Good conversations/information	11	Good information about other year groups/transition	10
Lack of personal discussions	5	I already feel secure	4
Reassuring to know older pupils	10	Good information about life in school	3

Feedback from Middle School

Online responses were received from 16/16 Middle School tutor groups.

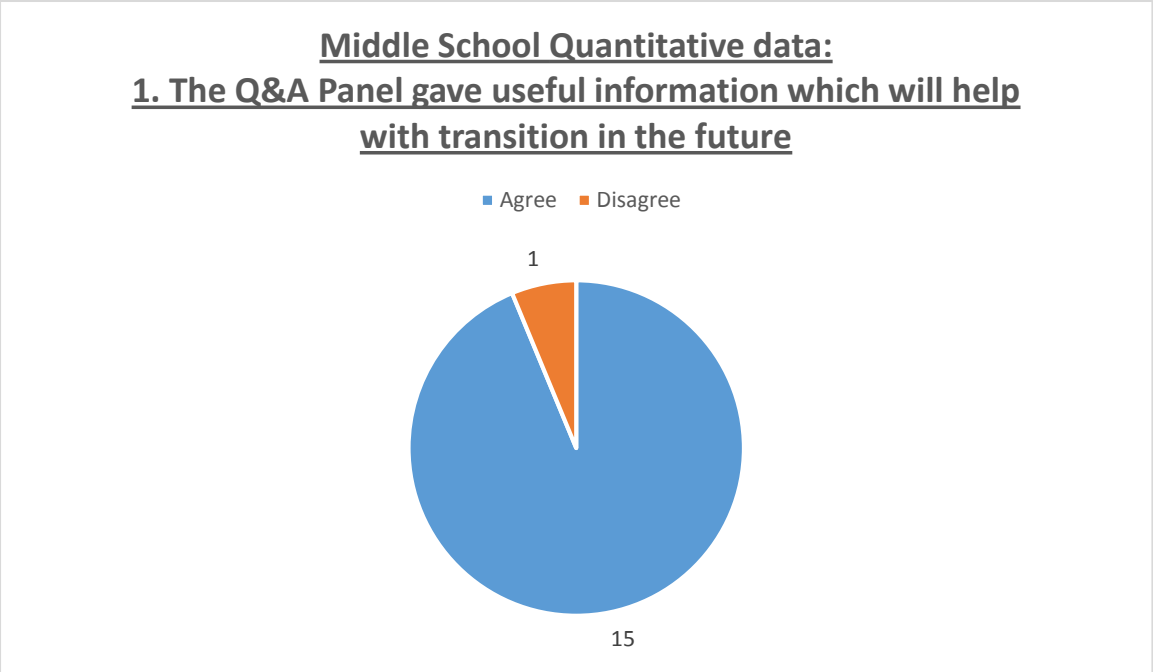


Figure 17

Coded data:

Question 1:	
Good to hear from Year 13 rather than teacher	3
Honest advice	1
Knew the information already	1

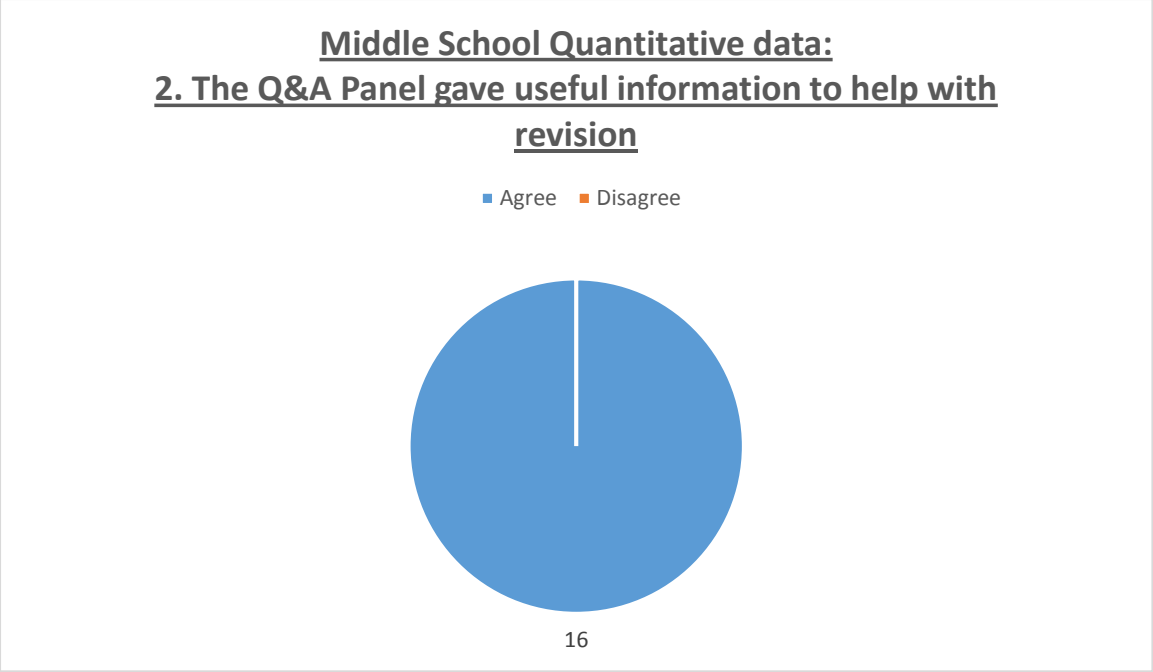


Figure 18

Coded data:

Question 2:	
When to start revising	9
Revision methods	4
How to balance revision with other demands	1
Similar to advice from teachers but more relevant	1

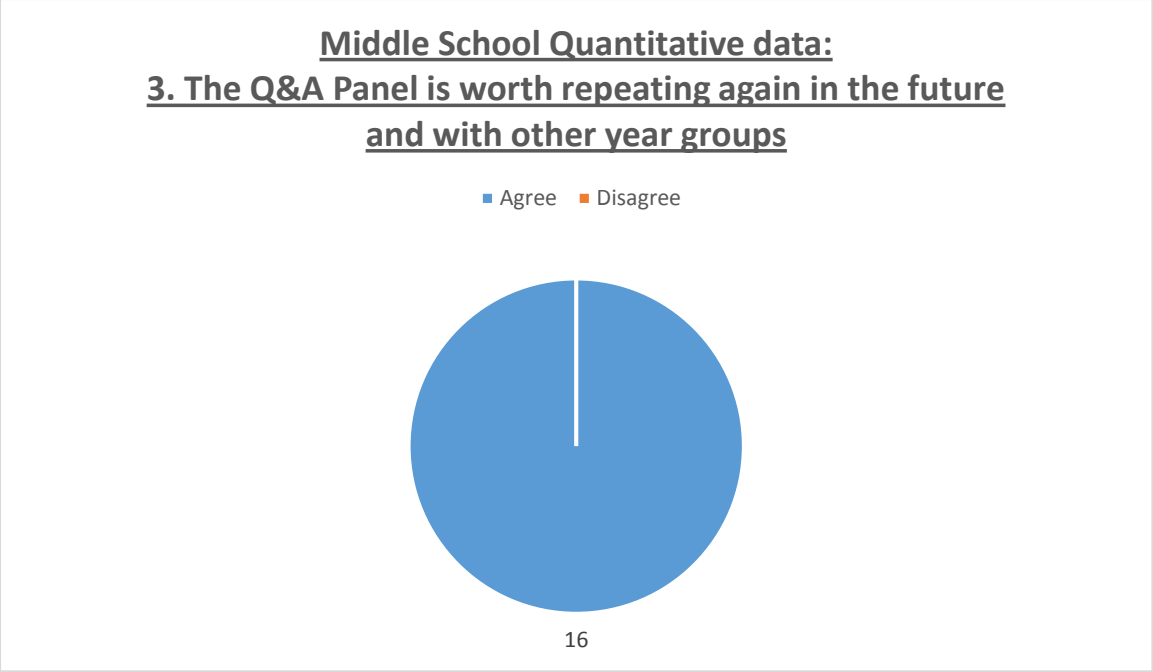


Figure 19

Coded data:

Question 3:	
Very helpful	5
More questions to ask	3
Advice is applicable to all	2
Sixth Formers speak our language	2
Repeat once per term	1

Feedback from Peer Mentors

Responses were received from 11/19 Peer Mentors.

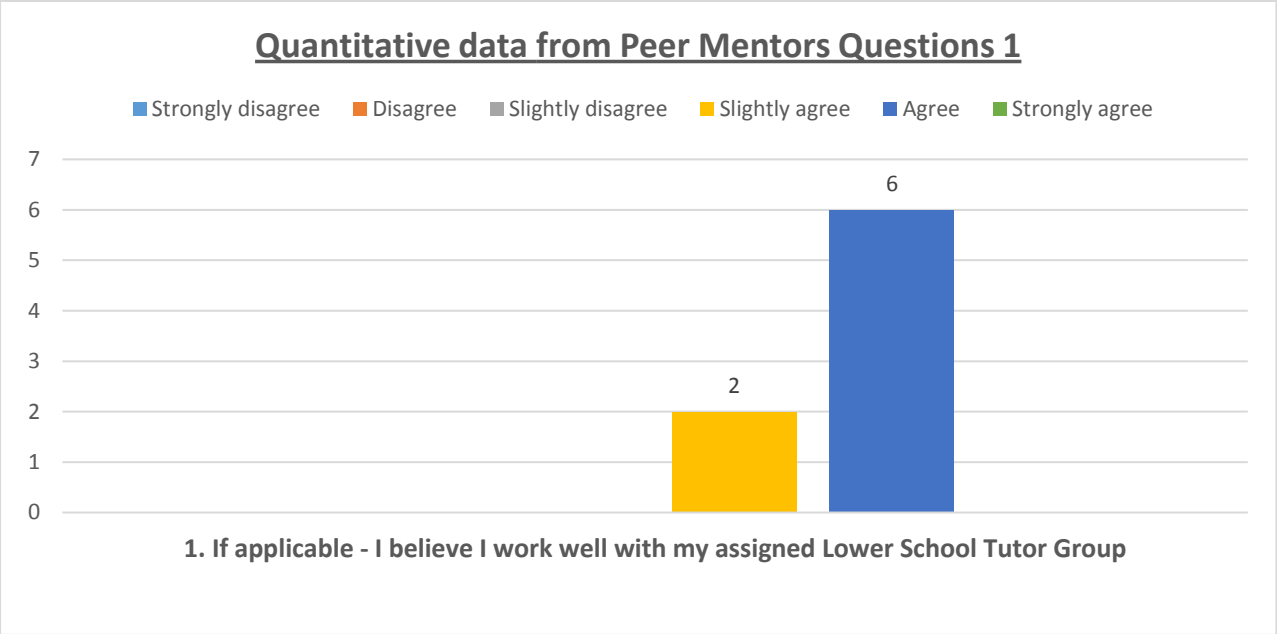


Figure 20

Coded data:

Question 1:	
Good relationships	2

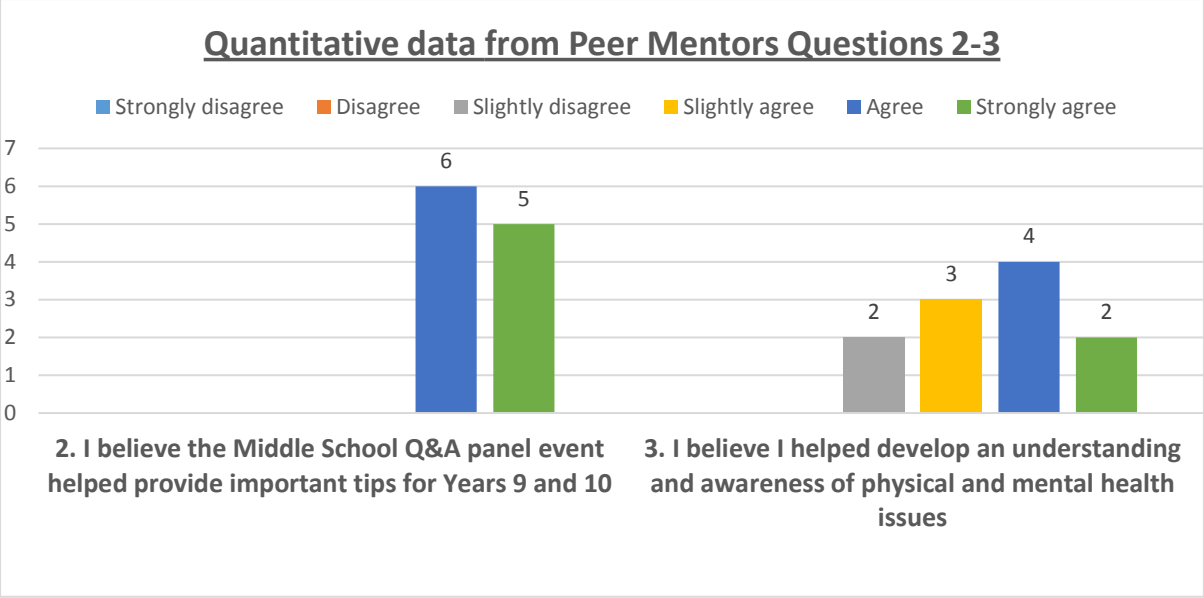


Figure 21

Coded data:

Question 2:		**Question 3:**	
Liked sharing experience and help others avoid mistakes	5	Discussions spread awareness	5
Should run assemblies more often on issues such as mental health	2	Training	2
		It is difficult to discuss with Lower Years	2

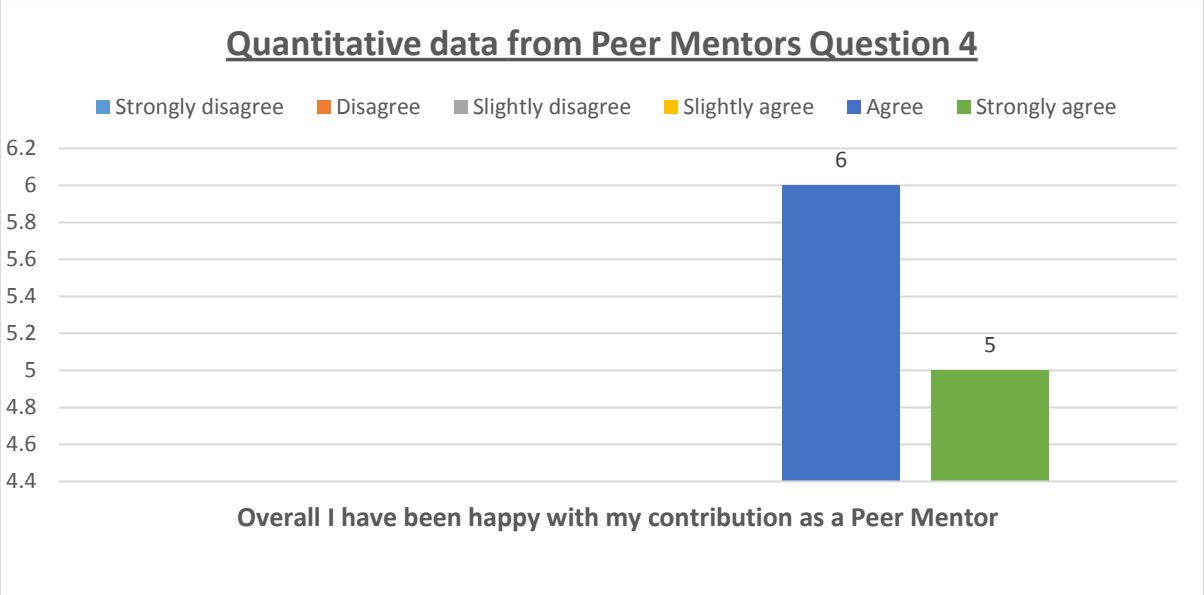


Figure 22

Coded data:

Question 4	
I have enjoyed it and learnt a lot	5
Would like to do more for the other girls	1

4.3.4. Discussion

1: How should the peer mentoring programme be structured in my school setting?

Areas for discussion on the structure of the programme include the Middle School assembly and the visits to the Lower School.

-Middle School assembly.

The assembly was received extremely well as an experimental platform for peer mentoring in my school setting. The responses were uniformly positive, although the data is limited due to the crudeness of my survey. 94% of the Middle School tutor groups agree useful information regarding transition was provided (Figure 17), with comments that hearing this advice from Year 13s rather than teachers was welcome. One group, however, felt they knew the information well enough already. Regarding revision, 100% of the tutor groups felt useful information was provided (Figure 18), with one comment stating this advice was more relevant than a teacher's. This supports the idea that adolescents can be more influenced by peers than adults in avoiding risk (Blakemore, 2018). Finally, 100% of tutor groups felt this assembly was worth repeating again in the future (Figure 19), with five comments stating it was very helpful, three stating they have more questions to ask, and two that the Sixth Formers speak their language, supporting Philip & Spratt (2007). Similarly, 100% of Peer Mentors agree to at least a good extent the assembly was successful (Figure 21), with two commenting further assemblies could be run in a similar fashion. The fact the Peer Mentors were instrumental in collaborating to create this structure most likely helped.

-Lower School tutor group visits

The key issue regarding structure still proves to be the attendance of the Peer Mentors at Lower School weekly visits. By this point it is evident weariness had set in with the Lower School tutors. 58% of tutors provided feedback (Figure 15), perhaps indicating fatigue with the process, especially if they felt that changes were not being made following their feedback. Only 43% of tutors and 44%

of tutees agree to any extent the Peer Mentors encouraged an understanding of good physical and mental health. 38% of tutees agree the Peer Mentor helped them feel secure (Figure 16). Across all questions, the qualitative feedback still demonstrates the lack of attendance and low quality discussions being the key issues. From the Peer Mentors, whilst 100% of respondents still believe they worked well with their Lower School groups (Figure 20) 25% were to a lesser degree and only 66% of applicable Peer Mentors responded, with the qualitative data providing little information. It is possible to interpret from this data, however, that at least one Peer Mentor had an extremely good relationship with their Lower School group: one tutor strongly agrees their Peer Mentor has helped, stating they built a good relationship, and a number of tutees strongly agree too. Overall though the structure of weekly visits does not seem to have returned a particularly positive experience of peer mentoring in my school setting.

2: In what ways can the peer mentoring programme be targeted towards meeting the school's pastoral development priorities?

The pastoral development priorities which were targeted in this action cycle were the encouragement of good physical and mental health, including emotional intelligence, resilience and self-awareness, and providing a safe and secure environment for pupils.

-Promote amongst all good physical and mental health, including emotional intelligence, resilience and self-awareness

The interventions run in this cycle have resulted in mixed experiences regarding this priority. The Lower School visits promoted this to some extent, with one Lower School tutor being effusive in their praise of their Peer Mentor (Figure 15). However with 57% of tutors disagreeing their Peer Mentor helped with this there is a cause for concern. The feedback from the tutees matches this, with 56% disagreeing the Peer Mentors had helped (Figure 16). Whilst 11 respondents state they had enjoyed good conversations regarding this issue with Peer Mentors, they are the minority, with

coded themes matching the tutors'. However, the Peer Mentors believe they did help with this aim to a much greater extent. 82% agree they helped with this, with 25% 'strongly' agreeing (Figure 21). Five stated they helped to spread awareness of issues, and two that their training helped. However, 25% slightly disagree, both saying it was hard to discuss this with the Lower Years; it is possible to infer then that in all likelihood these two were boys who experienced difficulty with their Lower School visits, somewhat supporting the tutors' and tutees' comments.

-Provide a safe and secure environment for our pupils.

There is a limited amount of evidence to interpret regarding this priority, but perhaps helping pupils in transition can be part of this priority. This is somewhat of a tenuous interpretation on my behalf. When asked directly if Peer Mentors had helped them feel secure about school life, 10 Lower School pupils did state the information provided about transition had helped them (Figure 16). However the quantitative data reveals 58% of respondents disagree with the idea that the Peer Mentors had helped them feel secure, the most frequent reason being due to their lack of attendance. Nonetheless, if transition is taken to be a key aspect of helping pupils feel safe and secure then the data from the Middle School suggests the assembly was a very effective way for Peer Mentors to help pupils: 94% of the Middle School tutor groups agreed useful information was provided (Figure 17). Further if advice regarding coping with exams helps pupils with this priority then 100% of the Middle School groups agree the Peer Mentors aided them (Figure 18), and indeed Powell (2016) for instance found 'stress relief' regarding academic matters was a commonly reported benefit for mentees, allowing them to feel more positive about school. Overall I believe the peer mentoring programme addressed this priority to some extent in this action cycle: the assembly was an effective way to help with this priority, but the weakness of the weekly visits is evident.

<u>3. How have the Peer Mentors benefitted from the peer mentoring programme?</u>

The Peer Mentors benefitted from the peer mentoring programme in this action cycle mostly through the running of the Middle School assembly. I believe there is also evidence that some Peer Mentors enjoyed a positive experience with their Lower School tutor groups, but they were in the minority.

The attempts at different platforms for peer mentoring resulted in valuable feedback, revealing that the Middle School assembly helped the Peer Mentors' feel positive about their position. 100% of them agree the event helped the pupils involved (Figure 21), with five Peer Mentors stating they enjoyed sharing their experiences and helping others avoid their mistakes. Two respondents commented they would like the chance to run more assemblies, perhaps focussing on other issues such as mental health. Whilst 100% of applicable Peer Mentors believed they worked well with their Lower School tutor group (Figure 20), there is reason to doubt this due to the data from the Lower School which returned far more mixed results.

The data shows the assembly was the most positive experience for the Peer Mentors and helps to explain their other responses. There are numerous suggestions to run assemblies to ensure effective forums for discussion, rather than tutor group visits. Two Peer Mentors readily admitted they found it difficult to discuss mental health with Lower School. Two state their Mental Health First Aid training as being a key reason they were able to have positive discussions around health-related topics. Overall it is clear the interventions attempted regarding structure helped the Peer Mentors feel positive about their role, with many wanting to repeat assemblies in particular in future.

Finally it is pleasing that at the end of this project 100% of respondents from the Peer Mentors feel they are happy with their contribution as a Peer Mentor (Figure 22). Indeed five 'strongly agree', explaining they have enjoyed the role and feel they have learnt a lot. However, as the respondents represents only 58% of the Peer Mentors, this data is incomplete. Further there is some reason to believe the girls have not been as satisfied in their role, as although having the girls

at the Middle School assembly seems to have been successful, with certainly no negativity reported, one qualitative comment encourages further events for girls.

4.3.5. Implications

I determined at this point an alternative structure to the Lower School weekly visits should be considered. This was discussed with the Director of Lower School, who was keen to see some form of continuity but was open to changes. The most significant result was the positivity regarding the Middle School assembly, and therefore the structure of this was used as a template for consideration on how other Sections could benefit in a similar manner. It was felt across both the Lower and Middle School, a combination of focussed tutor group visits and assemblies could be a good solution regarding how to deliver a pastorally-focussed peer mentoring programme which was beneficial and not a hindrance, allowing both mentees and mentors to benefit whilst easing the burden of regular visits which were not always focussed or required chasing for attendance.

5. Summary of findings

5.1. How should the peer mentoring programme be structured in my school setting?

The literature review highlighted a number of immediate concerns regarding structure, regarding which interventions were undertaken: the formalisation of the programme; initial contact with the mentees; the training of mentors; and regular meetings with mentors.

The formalisation and introduction of the peer mentoring programme returned encouraging feedback. At the end of cycle one it was found there was positivity regarding the programme in the Lower School, mainly due to the assembly and the start of the weekly visits. By action cycle three, however, this goodwill was eroded, and the strength of the assembly may have contributed towards this: as it had been explained to mentees what to expect from the weekly visits, when these weekly visits and therefore the mentees were neglected, the mentees likely felt the programme had failed (Karcher, 2007). Unfortunately a continued focus on attendance in my weekly meetings with the Peer Mentors failed to combat this. This is one possible way to explain the overall negativity from the Lower School mentees regarding the programme by the end of this project. It is also possible my own focus on other interventions caused the Peer Mentors to neglect their weekly visits. Nevertheless, the early assembly, explanation of the programme and the initial meetings were run well.

The training of mentors was beneficial. The mentors mentioned the impact of their training in all action cycles, and the weekly meetings likely helped to reinforce it. This supports the findings from other researchers regarding the benefits of training for Peer Mentors (Herrera et al, 2008; MBF, 2010; Roach, 2014), and also aids in the formalisation of the programme.

Perhaps the key finding regarding the ongoing structure of the peer mentoring programme is the need to significantly alter the Lower School tutor group visits. Although this was previously the crux of the programme in my school setting and for a short period positive feedback was returned,

ultimately the lack of attendance by the Peer Mentors makes this system untenable. Throughout this project, a number of interventions were therefore trialled which had a significant effect on the programme's structure. The interventions most well-received were the introductory lunches in cycle one and the Middle School assembly in cycle three. It was also felt the charity events in cycle two were generally positive. The structure of the peer mentoring programme for next year therefore invited consideration (see Section 6.).

5.2. In what ways can the peer mentoring programme be targeted towards meeting the school's pastoral development priorities?

Each priority shall be considered in turn:

5.2.1. Be proactive in developing in our pupils an understanding and awareness of mental health issues

I believed at the outset that proactively developing awareness about mental health was a key way in which the peer mentoring programme can help with the school's pastoral priorities, particularly due to governmental recommendations (Department of Health & Department for Education 2017). Some of my findings to support this. The training of Peer Mentors in Mental Health First Aid was cited as helpful by them throughout the action cycles, although in cycle three responses were hesitant regarding their ability to communicate their understanding to the Lower School. The Tea & Talk event (cycle two) also returned some positive feedback, and there seems reason to experiment in future with assemblies targeting mental health. Overall the peer mentoring programme can continue to target this priority in the specific sense of proactively spreading understanding and awareness. As Powell (2016) suggests, there is little reason to believe Peer Mentors can engage with high-level needs.

5.2.2. Ensure that pupils can make a smooth transition into the school and between sections

The literature suggested transition could be a key issue tackled by peer mentoring (Nelson, 2003). My findings demonstrate the Middle School assembly (action cycle three) and the lunches (action cycle one) were the most positive events run to help with transition. Further, I believe reasonable evidence in action cycle one was returned to suggest the Lower School weekly visits did help Year 7 at least with transition, before attendance by Peer Mentors became an issue. Attendance then became the central barrier, supporting Karcher (2007) who found this could be the case.

5.2.3. Promote amongst all good physical and mental health, including emotional intelligence, resilience and self-awareness

In action cycle two there were reasons to suggest the weekly visits had helped promote this priority amongst Lower School pupils, however the findings were not entirely positive. Whilst neuroscience has demonstrated that social rejection amongst young people can be a serious concern leading to mental health disorders, and positive peer interactions can encourage resilience (Blakemore, 2018), my evidence does not reveal the Peers Mentors helped with this. However, the Middle School assembly provides a reason to attempt an assembly being run more focussed on this priority, and there is evidence that the Peer Mentors developed their emotional intelligence, as suggested in the literature (Karcher, 2007). There are further reasons for positivity with regards to the experience of the Peer Mentors, which is discussed in section 5.3.

5.2.4. Provide a safe and secure environment for our pupils

The weekly visits and the Middle School assembly allowed the Peer Mentors to help with this to some extent. Qualitative data in action cycle two was returned demonstrating that some good discussions were had regarding e.g. bullying. Peers imparting advice on issues such as this, aiding pupils with transition, and providing advice regarding high-pressure situations can help pupils feel

safe and secure (MBF, 2010; Blakemore, 2018). However in future further interventions could focus explicitly on this issue, and events could be run more specifically on the issue of e.g. bullying.

5.2.5. Encourage our pupils to be involved in charitable ventures

This priority was targeted through the specific fundraising events run, as well as through the weekly visits to the Lower School. Some positive feedback was returned in action cycle two, as money was raised and the Peer Mentors were mostly positive regarding this priority. Further fundraising events will be run, as no issues were encountered and there is research indicating adolescents can be strongly influenced by their peers in this area (Choukas-Bradley et al., 2015), with my findings supporting this to a small extent.

5.3. How have the Peer Mentors benefitted from the peer mentoring programme?

The Peer Mentors were very positive regarding their experience of the programme throughout this project, corresponding with findings from other researchers (Karcher, 2007; Houlston, Smith & Jessel, 2009; Knowles & Parsons, 2009). The findings consistently show the Peer Mentors have benefitted from their training, their position of responsibility, through their contribution to the programme's development, and some of the boys did manage to create good relationships with their assigned Lower School group as they commented that they enjoyed this rapport. Therefore there is reason to suggest the peer mentoring programme has helped regarding the school's "Co-Curricular" target to provide a broad range of opportunities for pupils, including to develop self-confidence, whilst also helping with regards to the ISI report (2011) encouraging more opportunities for pupils to take on responsibility. There is room for further development, particularly regarding the involvement of the girl Peer Mentors. However, this issue can be equalised as the positivity

regarding the Middle School assembly, which the girls contributed to, invites reflection regarding the necessity of weekly tutor group visits.

6. Implications for ongoing practice

A number of implications for the next academic year's (2018-19) peer mentoring programme have been reached through discussion with my collaborators.

Due to positive feedback, the key areas of continuation are:

1) The Peer Mentor's Mental Health First Aid training. Other staff will also be trained in this, and assemblies for Sections arranged regarding this too.
2) The formal introduction to peer mentoring for pupils (Lower School assembly and Year 12 lunches).
3) The welcome events (lunches).
4) An emphasis on pastoral concerns, with room for academic concerns too.
5) The meetings between the programme leader and Peer Mentors.
6) The proliferation of peer mentoring throughout the Sections in my school setting.
7) Ongoing data collection to gather feedback from participants.

These echo recommendations in the literature (Knowles & Parsons, 2009; Powell, 2016).

However changes are apparent too, the key one being the end of ongoing weekly visits to the Lower School. The following plan for next year is currently in place, divided by each Section:

	Lower School	**Middle School**	**Sixth Form**
Autumn 1	1: Assembly to introduce PMs 2: Tutor group visits: target setting (Two visits. 1. Set targets; 2. Reflection)	Assembly: charitable ventures (Prosocial behaviour)	Welcome events (Ladies Lunch; Pizza & Playstation)
Autumn 2	Assembly: gratitude, emotional intelligence, resilience & self-awareness	Tutor groups: well-being.	Candy canes fundraiser

Spring 1	Tutor groups: physical and mental health	Assembly: Transition/Sixth Form	Well-being clinic
Spring 2	Assembly: transition	Tutor groups: revision	Thank you cards event

Figure 23

This new structure reflects the findings of this study and is specific to the needs of my school setting. It was concluded that a 'quality' approach focussed on activities run rather than 'quantity' approach to visits worked best, as concluded by Roach (2014), however in my setting this is largely because ensuring a high quantity of weekly visits by Peer Mentors to the Lower School has proven difficult. For these to succeed, time pressure would need to be eased on both myself and the Lower School tutors in order to chase attendance from Peer Mentors. In comparison, the assembly trialled was seen as providing a positive experience for all involved, with its definite format and specific advice. The peer mentoring programme has therefore been significantly redesigned to reflect this key finding, with all three Sections benefitting. Further, this mixed approach allows the girl Peer Mentors to play a more equal role too, as they will be involved in both the Middle School and Sixth Form events.

The Director of Lower School is still keen for the Peer Mentors to engage with assigned tutor groups in a meaningful way, with at least some tutor visits. As an introductory assembly worked well in allowing all involved to understand what to expect from the peer mentoring programme (and begin discussions regarding the concept of mental health), this has been kept. Some tutor group visits are then factored in along with a specific focus at defined times of the year, for instance target-setting will be trialled as it is suggested that academic mentoring can lead to positive outcomes (Dorsey & Baker, 2004; Sambunjak et al, 2006). Should a Peer Mentor develop a good relationship with a tutor group then more frequent visits will be encouraged. The hope is that if the tutor group

visits are scaled back, and more meaningful but less frequent visits are successful, then perhaps later the frequency can be increased. Assemblies will now be held too, in the same format as the Middle School assembly.

The format for the Middle School is new and is thanks to this project. The Director of Middle School was pleased with the assembly trialled and therefore wants to engage with the Peer Mentors more often. Therefore both visits and assemblies have been created for this Section too.

Finally, the Sixth Form programme has kept the more successful elements of this year, but will be open to revision should the Peer Mentors make other suggestions for events. The lunches were seen as successful overall, and a 'clinic' will be trialled focussed on the Sixth Form, particularly as the girl Peer Mentors would like to engage with other girls more actively.

This revised structure will allow some sustained interaction between Peer Mentors and mentees as tutor groups will be assigned to and visited by a particular Peer Mentor. Therefore my original definition of peer mentoring will still be fulfilled. The Lower School tutors have reacted positively to these proposed, necessary changes, and they shall also be discussed with the other schools collaborated with (Appendix 4). There is also of course the chance for further changes to this structure in future.

6.1. Other interpretations

Other interpretations of my findings are possible. It is arguable that peer mentoring is not necessary in my school setting due to the other pastoral care in place (Houlston et al, 2009; Powell, 2016). However I would counter that pastoral concerns are complex and numerous support methods can be valuable. Engaging young people in pastoral concerns and employing them as resources to tackle whole-school well-being issues seems logically beneficial and important. As found in this study, given the right platform pupils actively appreciate hearing advice from their peers.

Further, it may be that my engagement in trying other avenues for peer mentoring undermined the structure I inherited; perhaps if the Peer Mentors were more focussed on the

weekly Lower School visits without assemblies to distract them, more positive feedback regarding that experience would have been evident. However, I was asked to make changes to the programme when I inherited it, and positive feedback is already being received regarding the changes I arrived at with my collaborators.

7. Conclusions

The means by which the peer mentoring programme can be developed to help to fulfil my school setting's pastoral priorities has been my key concern. Indeed implementing peer-to-peer support for pastoral concerns now follows governmental recommendations (Department of Health & Department for Education, 2017). In engaging with a formal study of peer mentoring, this project has perhaps addressed the need for me, as a peer mentoring programme leader, to benefit from the reflective perspective necessary to run a scheme of this kind (Knowles & Parsons, 2009). I believe I can now make a number of recommendations for other peer mentoring programme leaders looking to develop the practice in their setting by my considering: the importance of a rationale for peer mentoring; my methodology for this project; the structure of the peer mentoring programme; and the necessity for a whole-school approach to pupils' well-being.

Developing the rationale for the peer mentoring programme in my school setting was undoubtedly a key first step. The literature review undertaken as part of this project was of great benefit: understanding that peer-to-peer support is an increasingly common means by which pastoral issues can be addressed in school settings gave me confidence regarding its applicability in my school. What became clear was that the question was not whether, but how peer mentoring could assist in my setting.

A reflection on methodology and the employment of action research was liberating for me and was, I believe, essential in order to make the peer mentoring programme meaningful in my school setting. Realising that I was not trying to simply improve knowledge regarding effectiveness, but rather that I was engaging with the process of developing a programme whilst acknowledging I was unlikely to solve all concerns regarding it (Elliot, 1991), again provided me with confidence and made my challenge less daunting. Engaging in participatory action research allowed me to collaborate in a relevant and meaningful manner with those who experience the peer mentoring programme, and discussing and reflecting upon my findings with senior members of staff allowed us to reach what I believe will be beneficial changes to the programme for next year. Being open to

change was crucial, not least as I needed to recognise that significant issues were experienced with the peer mentoring programme in my school setting. I believe that without attempting to understand the opinions of those involved, the result would have been the continuation of an unsatisfactory programme.

The baseline survey was valuable in that it revealed some perceived potential in peer mentoring amongst participants, but with obvious barriers. Undoubtedly I have not fixed all the problems regarding ongoing visits to the Lower School tutor groups. Instead I hope I have lessened the burden placed on those involved, which is perhaps all that can necessarily be hoped for (Altrichter, Posch & Somekh, 1993), and found a means by which the peer mentoring programme can continue to operate without causing the same level of frustration which was evident. This has resulted in a somewhat unique structure for my peer mentoring programme relevant to my school setting, our pastoral priorities and hopefully the needs of the programme's participants. Without engaging in a project of this sort, this structure would not have been arrived at.

Finally, a key recommendation which became evident regarding well-being in schools is the necessity for a whole-school approach. In August 2018 the issue of children's well-being continues to attract national attention[11], with reports suggesting that school life is a key cause of unhappiness in children. The Department of Health is investing £300 million into promoting well-being in schools, including the training of staff; however there are also calls for the inspection of schools' mental health services[12] with recommendations that schools promote well-being rather than mental health specifically (The Children's Society, 2018). I believe in order to achieve a whole-school approach and make it genuinely impactful, the pupils themselves should be involved. Indeed emerging research in the field of neuroscience stresses that adolescents can be influenced into 'prosocial' behaviour by their peers, and this has potential ramifications for public policy regarding young people (Blakemore, 2018). It is notable therefore that whilst the peer mentoring programme is already assisting with a

[11] https://www.theguardian.com/society/2018/aug/29/quarter-of-14-year-old-girls-in-uk-have-self-harmed-report-finds [accessed on 29 August 2018]
[12] https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-45329030 [accessed on 29 August 2018]

number of these issues in my school setting, it can be further developed in line with future recommendations.

As a concluding reflection on the peer mentoring programme, in June 2018 it was stated during an 'away day' that the peer mentoring programme had played an active part in helping to fulfil several points from the Sixth Form development plan (Appendix 2). As this plan employs my school's pastoral development priorities as a rational for each target, this therefore provides some evidence of the peer mentoring programme's contribution towards fulfilling the school's pastoral priorities. Whilst I do not pretend I have fully fixed all perceived problems regarding my school setting's peer mentoring programme, I hope this project can encourage other practitioners to engage in similarly complex situations with some confidence.

8. References

Altrichter, H., Posch, P., Somekh, B. (1993) *Teachers Investigate Their Work: An Introduction to the Methods of Action Research.* London and New York: Routledge, 1993.

Armsden, G. C., & Greenberg, M. T. (1987). The inventory of parent and peer attachment: Individual differences and their relationship to psychological well-being in adolescence. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 16*, 427–454.

Berndt, T. J., & Keefe, K. (1995). Friends' influence on adolescents' adjustment to school. *Child Development,* 66, 1312–1329.

Blakemore, S-J., & Mills, K. L. (2014). Is adolescence a sensitive period for sociocultural processing? *Annual Review of Psychology*, 65, 187–207.

Blakemore, S-J; (2018) Avoiding Social Risk in Adolescence. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 27 (2).

Boulton, M.J. (2005). School peer counselling for bullying services as a source of social support: A study with secondary school pupils. *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, 33: 485–494.

Bowman, R. P., & Myrick, R. D. (1987). Effects of an elementary school peer facilitator program on children with behavior problems. *School Counselor, 34*, 369–378.

British Educational Research Association (2011) *Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research*. London: BERA.

Bugental, D. B. (2003). *Thriving in the face of childhood adversity*. New York, NY: Psychology Press.

Campbell, R., Starkey, F., Holliday, J., Audrey, S., Bloor, M., Parry-Langdon, N., Hughes, R., & Moore, L. (2008). An informal school-based peer-led intervention for smoking prevention in adolescence (ASSIST): A cluster randomised trial. *The Lancet*, 371, 1595–1602.

Cartwright, N. (2005). Setting up and sustaining peer support systems in a range of schools over 20 years*. Pastoral Care in Education,* 23 (2), 45-50.

Chedzoy, S.M. & Burden, R.L. (2005). Making the move: Assessing student attitudes to primary–secondary school transfer. *Research in Education*, 74: 22–35.

Choukas-Bradley, S., Giletta, M., Cohen, G. L., & Prinstein, M. J. (2015). Peer influence, peer status, and prosocial behavior: An experimental investigation of peer socialization of adolescents' intentions to volunteer. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 44, 2197–2210

Clark, M. L., & Ayers, M. (1993). Friendship expectations and friendship evaluations: Reciprocity and gender effects. *Youth & Society, 24*, 299–313.

Cohen, L., Manion, L. & Morrison, K (2007) Action Research, Chapter 18, in *Research Methods in Education, 7th Edition,* London: Routledge Falmer.

Conger, R. D., & Rueter, M. A. (1996). Siblings, parents, and peers: A longitudinal study of social influences in adolescent risk for alcohol use and abuse. In G. H.Brody (Ed.), *Sibling relationships: Their causes and consequences* (pp. 1–30). Stamford, CN: Ablex.

Cowie, H., Naylor, P., Talamelli, L., Chauhan, P. & Smith, P.K. (2002) Knowledge, use of and attitudes towards peer support. *Journal of Adolescence*, 25: 453–467.

Denton, K., & Zarbatany, L. (1996). Age differences in support processes in conversations between friends. *Child Development, 67*(4), 1360-1373.

Department for Education and Employment (2001), *Learning and Teaching: a strategy for professional development*. London: Stationary Office.

Department of Health and Department for Education (2017), *Transforming Children and Young People's Mental Health Provision: a Green Paper*. APS Group.

Dorsey, L.E., & Baker, C.M., (2004) Mentoring undergraduate nursing students: assessing the state of the science. *Nurse Educ. Nov-Dec; 29(6):260-5.*

DuBois, D.L., Holloway, B.E., Valentine, J.C., & Cooper, H. (2002) Effectiveness of mentoring programs for youth: a meta-analytic review. *Community Psychol. 30(2):157-97.*

DuBois, D.L., & Silverthorn, N., (2005) Natural mentoring relationships and adolescent health: evidence from a national study. *Am J Public Health. 95(3):518-24.*

Eby, L. T., Allen, T. D., Evans, S. C., Ng, T., & DuBois, D. (2008). Does Mentoring Matter? A Multidisciplinary Meta-Analysis Comparing Mentored and Non-Mentored Individuals. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *72*(2), 254–267.

Eccles, J., & Barber, B. L. (1999). Student council, volunteering, basketball, or marching band: What kind of extracurricular involvement matters? *Journal of Adolescent Research, 14*, 10–43

Edwards, A. and Talbot, R. (1997), *The Hard Pressed Researcher: A research handbook for the caring professions,* England: Addison Wesley London

Elliott, J. (1991) *Action Research for Educational Change*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press

Garner, S. (2017, November) *Building Resilience in Children and Young People*. Presentation at a Mental Health in Schools Conference. London: Forum Training.

Garvey, B., and Langridge, K., (2006), *The Pupil Mentoring Pocketbook*. Alresford: Teachers' Pocketbooks.

Goodlad, S. (Ed) (1998) *Mentoring and tutoring by students.* London: Kogan Page.

Griffin, R., & Gross, A. M. (2004). Childhood bullying: Current empirical findings and future directions for research. *Aggression and Violent Behavior, 9*, 379–400.

Grossman, J. B., & Rhodes, J. (2002). The test of time: Predictors and effects of duration in youth mentoring programs. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 30*, 199–219.

Harris, J. R. (1998). *The nurture assumption: Why children turn out the way they do*. New York, NY: Free Press.

Helsen, M., Vollebergh, W. and Meeus, W. (2000). Social support from parents and friends and emotional problems in adolescence. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 29: 319–335.

Herrera, C., Kauh, T. J., Cooney, S. M., Grossman, J. B., & McMaken, J. (2008). *High school students as mentors findings from the big brothers big sisters school-based mentoring impact study*. Philadelphia, PA: Public/Private Ventures.

Hodges, E. V. E., & Perry, D. G. (1999). Personal and interpersonal antecedents and consequences of victimization by peers. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 76* (4), 677-685.

Houlston, C., Smith, P. K., & Jessel, J. (2009). Investigating the extent and use of peer support initiatives in English schools. *Educational Psychology*, 29(3), 325-344

Ikard, S. S. (2001). *Peer mentoring as a method to enhance moral reasoning among high school adolescents*. Unpublished dissertation, The University of Alabama, Alabama.

ISI, 2011, *RBCS Standard Inspection* [online] [accessed 6/4/2018].

Jack, D. C. (1991). *Silencing the self: Women and depression*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Karcher, M. J. (2005). The effects of school-based developmental mentoring and mentors' attendance on mentees' self-esteem, behavior, and connectedness. *Psychology in the Schools*, 42, 65-77.

Karcher, M. J. (2006). Do high school students really make good mentors? *Inaugural meeting of MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership's Research and Policy Council*. Cambridge, MA.

Karcher, M. J. (2007). Cross-age peer mentoring. *Youth Mentoring: Research in Action, 1*, 3–17.

Karcher, M. J., Nakkula, M. J., & Harris, J. (2005). Developmental mentoring match characteristics: The effects of mentors' efficacy and mentees' emotional support seeking on the perceived quality of mentoring relationships. *Journal of Primary Prevention*, 26, 93-110.

Kendall, L., O'Donnell, L., Golden, S., Ridley, K., Machin S., Rutt, S., McNally, S., Schagen, I., Meghir, C., Stoney, S., Morris, M., West, A. & Noden, P. (2005). *Excellence in Cities: the National Evaluation of a Policy to Raise Standards in Urban Schools 2000-2003* (DfES Research Report 675a). London: DfES.

Knowles, C. & Parsons, C. (2009) Evaluating a formalised peer mentoring programme: a student voice and impact audit, Pastoral Care in Education 27(3).

Marshall, L., Wishart, R., Dunatchik, A., & Smith, N. (2017) *Supporting Mental Health in Schools and Colleges: Quantitative survey*. London: DfE.

Menter, I., Elliot, D., Hulme, M., Lewin, J., & Lowden, K. (2011*) A Guide to Practitioner Research in Education*. Sage: London.

Mentoring and Befriending Foundation, (2010). *Peer mentoring in schools: a review of the evidence base of the benefits of peer mentoring in schools including findings from the MBF Outcomes Measurement Programmes:* UK.

Moloney, J. (2009) Engaging in action research: a personal and professional journey towards an inquiry into teacher morale in a senior secondary college, *Educational Action Research*, 17, 2.

Naylor, P. & Cowie, H. (1999) The effectiveness of peer support systems in challenging school bullying: The perspectives and experiences of teachers and pupils. *Journal of Adolescence*, 22: 467–479.

Nelson, A. (2003). Peer mentoring: A citizenship entitlement at Tanfield school. *Pastoral Care in Education, 21* (4) 34-41.

Nickerson, A., & Nagle, R. J. (2005). Parent and peer attachment in late childhood and early adolescence. *The Journal of Early Adolescence, 25*, 223–249.

O'Hara, D. (2011). The impact of peer mentoring on pupils' emotional literacy competencies. Educational psychology in practice. *Theory, research and practice in educational psychology*, 27 (3), 271-291

Parsons, C., Maras, P., Knowles, C., Bradshaw, V., Hollingworth, K., & Monteiro, H. (2008). *Formalised peer mentoring evaluation*. London: Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF).

Philip K. & Spratt, J. (2007) *A synthesis of published research on mentoring and befriending for The Mentoring and Befriending Foundation*, the Rowan Group, University of Aberdeen.

Portwood, S. G., Ayers, P. M., Kinnison, K. E., Waris, R. G., & Wise, D. L. (2005). YouthFriends: Outcomes from a school-based mentoring program. *The Journal of Primary Prevention, 26*, 129–188.

Powell, J. E. (2016) *What Works? A Grounded Theory of Effective Peer Mentoring in Secondary Schools*. Thesis, University of Essex & Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust.

Rhodes, C. & Beneicke, S. (2002) Coaching, mentoring and peer-networking: challenges for the management of teacher professional development in schools, *Journal of In-Service Education*, 28:2, 297-310.

Roach, G. (2014) A Helping Hand? A Study into an England-Wide Peer Mentoring Program to Address Bullying Behaviour, *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning*, 22:3, 210-223.

Rudduck, J. & McIntyre, D. (2007) *Improving Learning by Consulting Pupils*, London: Routledge.

Ryan, A. M. (2001). The peer group as a context for the development of young adolescent motivation and achievement. *Child Development, 72*, 1135–1150.

Samara, M. & Smith, P.K. (2008). How schools tackle bullying, and the use of whole school policies: Changes over the last decade. *Educational Psychology*, 28: 663–676.

Sambunjak, D., Straus, S.E., & Marusić, A. (2006) Mentoring in academic medicine: a systematic review. *JAMA; 296(9):* 1103-15.

Smith, P.K. & Watson, D. (2004). *Evaluation of the CHIPS (ChildLine in Partnership with Schools) programme (Research report RR570)*, Nottingham: Department for Education and Skills.

Stoltz, A. D. (2005). *The relationship between peer mentoring program participation and successful transition to high school*. Unpublished dissertation, University of California at Davis, California.

The Children's Society (2018) *The Good Childhood Report 2018*. London: The Children's Society.

Topping, K. J. (1996) *Reaching where adults cannot:* Peer education and peer counselling, educational psychology in practice, 11 (4), 23-29.

Vreeman, R. C., & Carroll, A. E. (2007). A systematic review of school-based interventions to prevent bullying. *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine,161*, 78–88.

Young Minds & National Children's Bureau (2017) *Wise Up: Prioritising Wellbeing in Schools*. Young Minds: London.

9. Appendices

Appendix 1: School development priorities (anonymised)

[redacted]

2014-19
Priorities for the next five years

The Aims and Ethos of the School are made available to all via the website and intranet. The points below are intended to allow the School to meet these aims successfully whilst sustaining its ethos.

Pastoral care

- Ensure that strong pastoral care for the individual is at the heart of all that we do (i.e. a teacher's first duty is to nurture and care for their students) in line with our ethos and values and in line with the recent Government guidance re safeguarding and;
- Be proactive in developing in our pupils an understanding and awareness of mental health issues;
- Ensure that pupils can make a smooth transition into the School and between sections;
- Promote amongst all good physical and mental health, including emotional intelligence, resilience and self-awareness;
- Encourage our pupils to be involved in charitable ventures and community work;
- Provide a safe and secure environment for our pupils.

Co-curricular

- Provide a broad range of co-curricular options to ensure that each student can find his/her niche in the School and to ensure that there are opportunities for every pupil to develop self-confidence;
- Provide opportunities for the most able to excel but ensure a strong focus on participation.

Appendix 2: Sixth Form Development Plan 2016-18 (anonymised)

Sixth Form Development Plan 2016-18

Pastoral		
Goal / Area for development	**Rationale (taken from document: [redacted] 2014-19 - Priorities for the next five years)**	**Actions**
Improve transition from KS4-5. Ensure boys are ready for demands of Sixth Form.	*Ensure that pupils make a smooth transition between sections.* *Ensure that pupils and parents make informed choices with regard to A Level options*	- Bring Year 11 students back after examinations for a week of taster lessons - HoDs (or delegate) to attend Elevate session - Alter Career SoW from general career focus in the 1st half of term to study skills. - Provide further support to Year 11 tutors regarding discussion of implications of students subject choices - Contact parents post mock examinations proposing subjects areas that student will achieve in. - Allow for subject changes, where possible, at the beginning of Year 12 - Arrange for more time for tutor handover

Ensure that Sixth Form students act as positive role models to younger boys in the School	*Promote emotional intelligence, resilience and self-awareness.* *Encourage our pupils to be involved in charitable ventures and community work.*	- Maintain improvement in uniform and tardiness - All Sixth Form tutor groups to organise a whole-school charity event each year - Work with Head of Activities to explore more community service opportunities for all pupils from 2017/18 - Following pilot, invite older students into lessons to offer support. Also provide lunchtime clinics. - Consider suitability of current prefect duties with PJT - Continue focus on peer mentoring and develop integration throughout the rest of the school. Improve access to peer mentors through clinics.
Improve the awareness of mental health, and provision for students with mental health issues	*Enhance quality and consistency of academic and pastoral support*	- Introduce mental health awareness week - Have at least two mental Health based Specials in the academic year. - Ensure the Peer Mentors adopt a wider role in the school, including delivering assemblies - Continue use of Tutor time to explore students' own mental health

mhfa
mental health first aid Schools
Awareness and skills-based training

CERTIFICATE OF ATTENDANCE

[redacted]

has attended the Youth MHFA for Schools and Colleges course.

This course teaches skills for providing first aid to young people experiencing mental health issues such as depression, anxiety disorders and psychosis.

Date of attendance: June 15, 2017



Poppy Jaman
Chief Executive Officer

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) England is a Community Interest Company which raises mental health literacy by teaching people MHFA skills through a range of courses. We work towards building communities where people can recognise the signs and symptoms of common mental health issues, provide help on a first aid basis and effectively guide someone towards the right support services.

A: MHFA England CIC, 49-51 East Road, Old Street, London N1 6AH E: info@mhfaengland.org T: 020 7250 8062

Appendix 4: Collaboration with other schools (anonymised)

Dear [redacted],

I am a Year 12 student at James Allen's Girls' School, South-East London. I, along with my teammate Matilda, are wishing to start a Mental Health Fist-Aid peer support network at our school. We have spoken to Dick Moore, about the project we wish to begin and he referred us to you, as there is a similar Mental Health First-Aid programme at [redacted] that has experienced notable success.

Our project idea is to train all students to be proficient in Mental Health First Aid in order to create a cohesive supportive environment, where everyone is in a position to confidently give and receive support. Consequently, preventing the manifestation of a crisis, fostering permanent positive mental states, while simultaneously reducing the stigma surrounding mental ill-health school-wide.

As this is a pilot, your expertise would be invaluable in helping us shape our project, which would aid the wellbeing of over 800 girls. Lastly, Matilda and I have collated some questions which we would appreciate having your input on. Please let us know if you would be willing to offer your guidance and start a conversation with us, in order to pave the way for a successful scheme.

Yours Sincerely,

Aymara Suarez-Sotomayor

Dear Aymara,

1. How long has there been a peer mentor programme at the school?
-Honestly I am afraid I don't know! However I can say last year the programme was running and it was a bit of a failure. This was down to poor leadership, lack of direction and poor attendance by the Peer Mentors themselves. In June I was therefore tasked with leading it and improving it this academic year.
2. Have there been any noticeable changes in the wellbeing of pupils since implementing the scheme, and what were they?
-Perhaps too early to tell. I have been mostly focussed on improving the visibility of the programme at the start of this year. The Year 13 Peer Mentors are now starting to discuss Health-related issues more regularly with lower school pupils in tutor groups, and we will be running drop-in clinics both this term and next to spread awareness of Mental Health issues.
3. What were some of the challenges you faced while implementing and running the scheme?
The first challenge was improving visibility of the programme.
4. How have you dealt with them?
At the start of the year I introduced a number of interventions to try to fix this – a badge for Peer Mentors, assemblies to introduce the scheme, a weekly meeting with the Peer Mentors including attendance records, and photos of Peer Mentors being placed prominently in common rooms and on social media.
5. Are your mentors trained, if so by who?
Mentors are trained in Mental Health First Aid by Dick Moore.
6. How have you ensured the continual use and innovation of the programme?
I am working with both our Director of Sixth Form and Director of Lower School to ensure that the scheme is appropriately meeting our Pastoral Care development plan. I am also working with Lower School tutors. I meet with Peer Mentors weekly at a break time. Other new ideas like drop-in clinics are being implemented.
7. Do you have any advice for the project we are starting?
Make yourselves accountable with regular meetings and keep an eye on news – share ideas and keep momentum going, do not let it become stale!

Please let me know if these comments are of any use? I assume your programme will be entirely pupil-led?

Thanks,

[redacted]

Appendix 5: Guidance for mentoring new staff



Guidance for Mentors of New Staff

- Make contact with your mentee on the Professional Development Day and introduce yourself as their mentor. Make sure they have refreshments at Break and also at Lunchtime.
- Talk with them each day of the first week to help with any issues.
- At the end of the first week arrange a time to meet regularly each week throughout the first term to help with any issues and advise about any School/Pastoral matters that may be coming up. In the subsequent terms this may decrease to a meeting once every two weeks.
- No record is required of the weekly meeting nor do I need any feedback unless there are problems. If you have concerns speak to me. It is also sensible to make notes of these issues which then both you and the mentee sign.

Many people feel that being a mentor requires special skills, but mentors are simply people who have the qualities of good role models.

Mentors listen	They maintain eye contact and give mentees their full attention
Mentors guide	Mentors have seasoned experience and are willing to give advice and share skills, knowledge and expertise
Mentors are practical	They give insights about keeping on task and setting goals and priorities
Mentors are accessible	Mentors are available as a resource and a sounding board
Mentors are supportive	No matter how painful the mentee's experience, mentors continue to encourage them to learn and improve

AJB/mab/newstaff2014-5

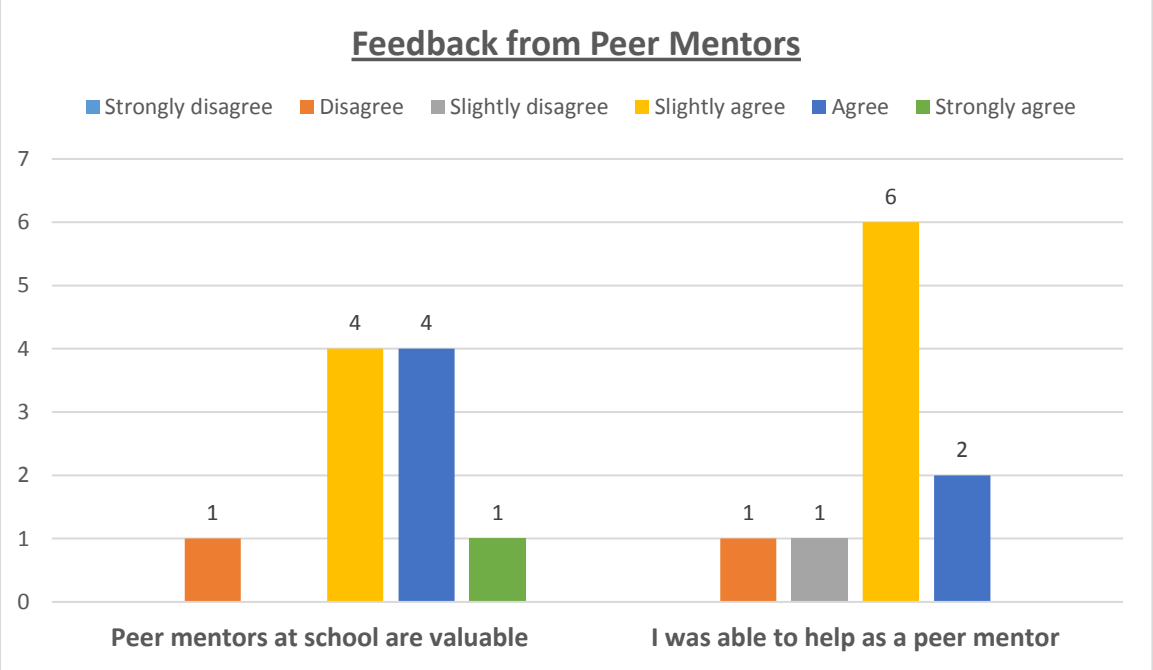
Appendix 6: Peer Mentoring Report - 2016/17 (anonymised)

Peer Mentoring Report – 2016/17

Survey design

Surveys were created to gather feedback from: Peer Mentors; teachers of lower school tutor groups; and lower school tutees, in order to gather thoughts on both the value of Peer Mentors and whether there were any suggestions for how to improve the Peer Mentoring scheme at [redacted].

Surveys were handed out to Peer Mentors by hand, whilst both tutors and tutees received their surveys in envelopes and were asked to use a portion of a Friday tutor period to complete the forms before returning the envelopes to my pigeon hole.



Results

Surveys were returned by 10/16 Peer Mentors. Meanwhile, 10/12 lower school tutor groups completed the surveys and returned the forms.

Of the surveyed Peer Mentors, it is clear that Peer Mentors do see the value of the scheme at school, however they are not necessarily hugely enthusiastic and they do not necessarily fully believe that they were able to help.

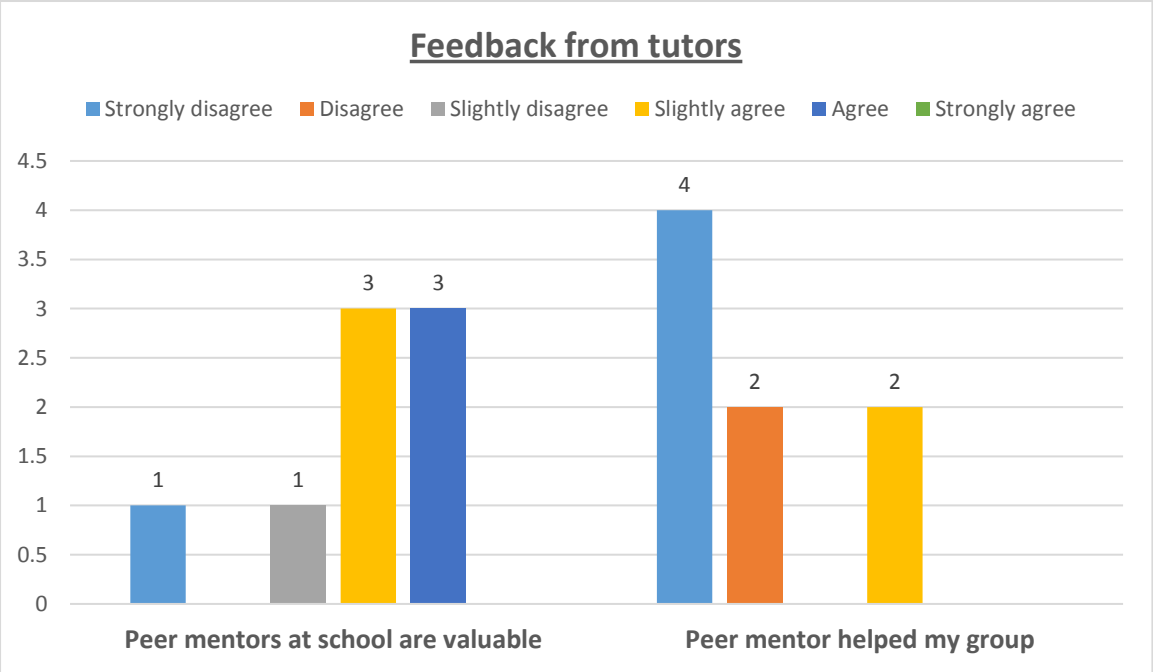
In terms of qualitative feedback, there were several useful remarks. To the first question, there are numerous comments that they were able to 'help lower years understand the older years aren't intimidating', that it can help provide someone additional to talk to, and that it was generally good to be able to speak to pupils from the lower school. All comments followed this trend – indeed even the one response that 'disagrees' with the value of the scheme, suggesting the survey was misread.

To the second question, there are numerous mentions that the Peer Mentors were able to help with a range of school matters, such as homework, time management or advice on progressing through the year groups, however it is also generally noted that there were very few serious issues which arose. This clearly helps explain the mixed responses, with statements that Peer Mentors did not believe the scheme was properly explained and that the tutor group did not have it made clear enough why the Peer Mentor was there.

Some very useful suggestions then came back from the Peer Mentors themselves, closely matching some of the suggestions already raised at, for instance, the Heads of Year meeting which discussed the scheme. The mentors would like more of a focus for discussions, with set topics, with one suggesting they could follow the PSHE curriculum. One would like more regularly 'check-ins' with

staff, whilst others would like to see room layouts change to provide chances for both group and one-to-one chats. The Peer Mentor who questioned the scheme's value suggested an assembly to introduce the scheme to the lower years.

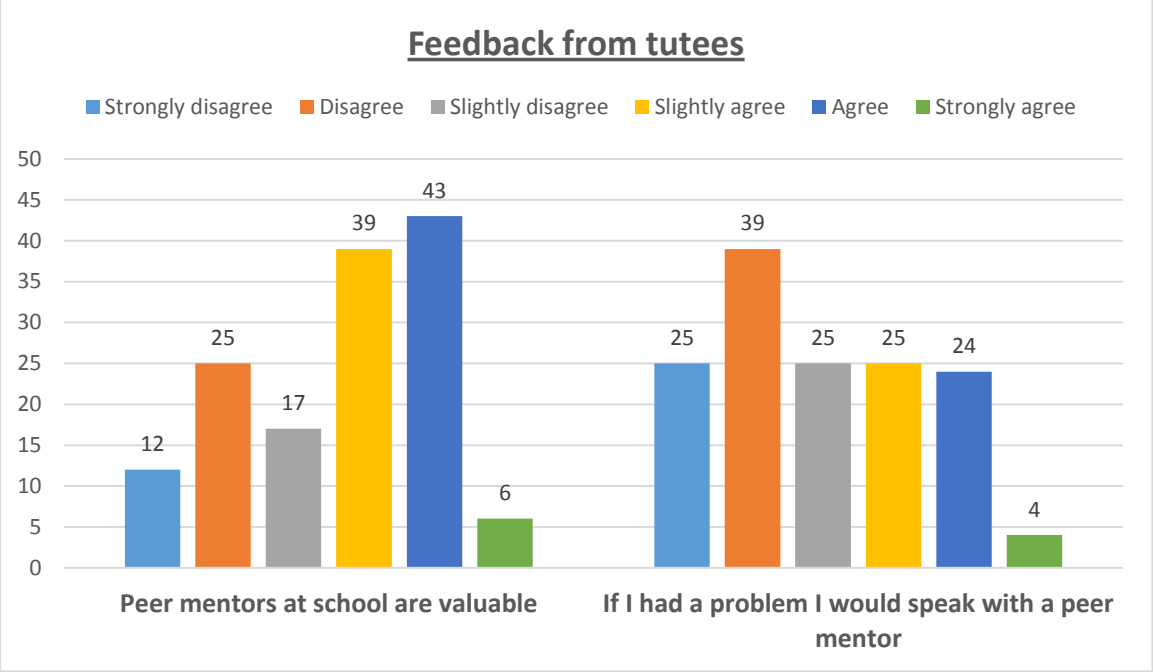
The results from the staff were more mixed. It is clear that many tutors see the potential in the scheme, but would like to see changes in how the scheme is run:



Overall, from the qualitative feedback, it is clear tutors would in fact like their Peer Mentors to both turn up more frequently, and have plans for the session. The responses to the first question mention on three occasions that the Peer Mentor seemed unsure as to how to lead the session. On at least three occasions there are also references to poor attendance. Despite these two problems, however, three other comments make it very clear that they see great potential for benefit, if changes can be made.

To the second question, again one trend is poor attendance, which seems to be the chief barrier to the scheme's success. Indeed one response makes it clear that when the mentor was there, it was very successful, whilst another notes the mentor was a good character who was able to talk openly. Again, there were some very valuable suggestions on how to improve the scheme. Some suggestions may prove tricky to implement, such as 'each child has their own mentor' and 'create a drop-in centre'. Both could of course work well, but it would not be possible to train enough mentors and drop-ins present their own challenges. Other staff would clearly however like more structure for the scheme, with check-ups on the mentors too by the scheme co-ordinator. Ice-breaker games are also suggested. One, meanwhile, would like to see the scheme stopped (more on this response later).

Feedback from tutees is interesting in that pupils generally believe Peer Mentors are valuable, but their experience of the scheme has clearly varied:



Therefore around 62% of pupils in the lower school agree to some extent that Peer Mentors are valuable. Indeed there are a variety of very positive comments about how pupils have enjoyed talking to the Peer Mentors assigned to them, generally about school life matters, homework, life in the sixth form, and intriguingly target-setting. There is a definite trend, too, that those who disagree do not think they have spent enough time with their Peer Mentor.

The response to whether they would speak with their Peer Mentor if they had a specific problem is therefore understandably not as positive, with only 37% of respondents agreeing to the statement. Again, it is very clear from the qualitative feedback that the tutees do not believe they know their mentor well enough.

As for suggestions, there were again a variety of very useful comments. Tutees would like to spend more time getting to know their mentors, for example through games, and would certainly like to see them more frequently. There were suggestions that perhaps Peer Mentors from other year groups could be assigned, too, and again that perhaps they could help with target setting activities in tutor time. Some would like to see Peer Mentors come in to tutor groups in pairs, and also some would like Peer Mentors who have come through the school since Y7 – potentially posing some reflection on the use of girls as Peer Mentors.

Reflection

Overall it seems clear that across the board, the idea of Peer Mentoring is mostly popular, however the implementation has thus far not been that successful, largely due to time constraints. There is one definite note to be made regarding the feedback, and that is concerning the noticeable trend that tutor groups tend to broadly agree in their responses, whether positive or negative. For instance, one group make it very clear that they very much liked their Peer Mentor, but her absence was noted. Similarly, another group have somewhat skewed the responses in that they have offered 19 ‘strongly disagree’ responses across the two questions, far more than any other tutor group, and they note they did not trust their Peer Mentor and so would not like another Peer Mentor next year. This may, in fact, be following the tutor’s own responses in asking to stop the scheme, and so it could be the group had discussed this before completing the forms.

Implications

It is possible to make a number of recommendations for next year based on these surveys, though admittedly some may not be as plausible as others:

-Provide more set tasks for Peer Mentors (ice-breaking games to begin with, followed by specific topics for discussion)
-Topics should follow the PSHEE scheme of work
-Peer Mentors should be met with weekly to provide plans, to discuss issues and to check attendance
-An assembly to introduce the scheme to the whole of the lower school
-A presentation to be made by Peer Mentors to introduce themselves and the scheme to their tutor group
-Photos of the Peer Mentors to be placed in the LSCR
-Badges/pins/ties to identify Peer Mentors
-Peer Mentors to help in target setting activities
-Peer Mentors to visit their assigned group in morning sessions rather than afternoon sessions

Further suggestions:
CD feedback: Ensure through all means possible that Peer Mentors do not take on issues for themselves. Hopefully avoided through regular meetings and make it clear that job of Peer Mentors is to inform relevant staff of issues in Peer Mentoring group.
KJM feedback: Provide 'Sparks' to engage and stimulate tutees with simple games, as well as times for mental health reflection/relaxation.

Appendix 7: November 'Micro-Inset' session presentation to colleagues

Current Considerations:

Training:

PMs: Mental Health First Aid

Me: Mental Health in Schools Conference; Developing a Peer Mentoring programme (cancelled – low uptake)

Further Collaboration:

Chaplain, James Allen's Girls School

Praise from:

Dick Moore (training)

Tutors (various)

Parent (Tea & Talk event)

University of Bristol medicine application advisor

Tutors re: Peer Mentors

Directors

Problems

Girls programme

'Buddying up' idea

Assemblies in first half of Autumn term

Tea & Talk did not result in meaningful conversations?

Selection process

Tutor feedback (various)

Successes:

Encouraging charitable efforts? Largest sleep-out, at all attributable to PMs?

Following-up key issues, e.g. Digital Awareness & Anti-Bullying

Target-setting – C.D. praised better targets

Nurse borrowed idea of MH continuum

Money raised for MHFA

Appendix 8: April 'Learning Research Group' presentation to colleagues

How true is this regarding schooling?

Additionally, a common refrain: 'He's a bad influence on the others'

Peer mentoring in this school setting

Examples?

Introduction/rationale

I was tasked with improving the school's peer mentoring programme at the end of the 2016-17 academic year during a Heads of Year meeting.

For young people, peers can be agents of great influence (Harris, 1998; Roach, 2014), arguably more so than their teachers as they are likely to be seen as 'streetwise' or to speak the same language (Philip & Spratt, 2007).

In many ways using peers as positive influencers simply allows a school to harness its most plentiful resource

Introduction/rationale

School priorities

-Promoting awareness of key issues such as bullying and mental health. The school's stated priorities between 2014-19 include:

-Be proactive in developing in our pupils an understanding and awareness of mental health issues;

-Ensure that pupils can make a smooth transition into the School and between sections;

-Promote amongst all good physical and mental health, including emotional intelligence, resilience and self-awareness;

-Provide a safe and secure environment for our pupils.

-It was also an intention of mine to direct Peer Mentors to encourage **charitable efforts**, again helping to fulfil a pastoral priority.

-Finally, this project will help to fulfil one of the school's priorities for "**Co-Curricular**" development as it will "**Provide a broad range of co-curricular options to ensure that each student can find his/her niche in the School and to ensure that there are opportunities for every pupil to develop self-confidence**".This is particularly relevant as it was noted in the school's most recent ISI report that **some pupils felt that they lacked enough opportunities to take on responsibilities (ISI, 2011)**

Introduction/rationale

National priorities

Much of this project falls in line with the direction of education in general. Particularly over the course of the past year, there seems to have been a stream of news items focussed on the health and wellbeing of young people.

https://www.nhs.uk/news/mental-health/many-teenagers-reporting-symptoms-depression/ [accessed 6 April 2018]

http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-42962273 [accessed 20 February 2018]

https://www.ascl.org.uk/utilities/document-summary.html?id=D91C5B0A-72A6-4117-96A9B343E51FB296 [accessed 20 February 2018]

http://www.worcesternews.co.uk/news/15609206.School_peer_mentoring_scheme_proves_successful/ [accessed 21 October 2017]

https://www.theguardian.com/society/2018/apr/09/social-media-has-poisoned-us-young-brits-on-why-they-are-unhappy [accessed on 9/4/2016]

https://berkshire.muddystilettos.co.uk/kids/kids-happiness-mot/ [accessed on 5/4/2018

Definition

Definitions

No single definition of peer mentoring (Powell, 2016; Parsons, 2008; O'Hara, 2011). The following working definition for peer mentoring will be used:

Peer mentoring: a relationship, either one-to-one or one-to-many, between an experienced pupil (or mentor) and one (or more) less experienced pupil(s) (or mentee(s)) in which the mentor voluntarily gives their time to support and encourage the mentee(s) to learn and develop emotionally, socially and academically. The mentor-mentee(s) relationship lasts for a significant and sustained period of time (Cartwright, 2005; Knowles & Parsons, 2009; O'Hara, 2011; Powell, 2016).

This definition has been reached at through a combination of the literature review and the conditions of the school setting, in order to help fulfil the school setting's development priorities as previously stated.

Literature Review part 1 – Growth of peer mentoring

Mentoring is regularly found in businesses, universities, nursing etc. (Powell, 2016). **Three major areas for mentoring research: youth; academic; and workplace** (Eby, Allen, Evans, Ng & Dubois (2008).

Mentoring can lead to a wide-range of **positive outcomes: behaviour; attitude; health; relationships; motivation; and careers**. Youth and academic mentoring found associates with positive career and employment outcomes, and positive psychological outcomes. Youths are also likely to experience more positive social relationships, higher performance and display less problematic behaviour when being mentored. Although the overall **effect sizes are small**, mentoring appears to be more highly related to some outcomes, such as a generally positive approach to school for the youths. Just an early attempt at quantitatively summarising the potential effects of mentoring. **Does not prove causation**, merely a relatively minor correlation. Further, academic sphere focussed on college students, not school-aged pupils, and it was based in the USA. The youths studied also tended to be more at-risk than the youths in this school setting.

The **majority of literature focussed on peer mentoring in school settings also comes from the USA** (Roach 2014; Powell 2016). Big Brothers Big Sisters School-Based Mentoring programme encourages school-based programmes, focussing on relational development, which in 2008 included 50,000 high-school-aged mentors. The practice has out-paced research and led to a multitude of under structured programmes. This again provides a clear reason to perform a study into this kind of programme.

Literature Review part 1 – Growth of peer mentoring

Excellence in Cities (EiC) initiative in 1999 and the Mentoring & Befriending Foundation (Mentoring & Befriending Foundation, 2010; Thompson & Smith, 2011) in the UK made peer mentoring a common pastoral intervention in UK secondary schools (Powell, 2016; Houlston, Smith & Jessel, 2009). **By 2010, the MBF found that of 3,343 maintained secondary schools in England, 1729 were in contact with the MBF (51.5%) and 595 (35%) were running peer mentoring programmes.**

In a slightly earlier study regarding peer-support programmes, it was estimated that around 62% of schools, both primary and secondary, in the UK make use of a structured peer-support scheme. (Houlston, Smith & Jessel, 2009).

Peers can be enormously influential in the lives of children (Karcher, Nakkula & Harris 2005; Portwood, Ayers, Kinnison, Waris & Wise, 2005), this influence only increases as a child grows up (Conger & Rueter, 1996; Ryan, 2001). Secondary school pupils may require help with transition from primary to secondary school as they face significant academic, personal/physical, social and organisational changes/challenges (Powell 2016; Chedzoy & Burden, 2005). UK-based study found that peer mentoring could held pupils feel more confident and less anxious about transition from primary to secondary school (Nelson, 2003). Also, adolescents are distinct from younger children in their attitudes: they place greater importance than younger children on peer support (Helsen, Vollebergh, & Meeus; 2000), and are more likely to seek help from a friend or peer than an adult (Boulton; 2005). Further, peer mentors have what could be called 'street knowledge' (Philip & Spratt, 2007) which may make them more relevant to their peers than teachers are.

Despite this, many schools do not need a formal programme as they believe they offer the necessary support through another means. Further, these programmes do require time and can create an additional workload (Knowles & Parsons, 2009). Poor communication between staff, mentors and mentees can lead to serious problems in the programme (Knowles & Parsons, 2009).

Literature Review part 2 – pastoral concerns

Pastoral concerns

The MBF states that much of the focus of peer mentoring programmes has been on pastoral issues, particularly **bullying** (Mentoring & Befriending Foundation, 2010).

Roach's study (2014) useful large-scale UK-based study found that **mentees were in fact more likely to be bullied** following the implementation of peer mentoring programmes. Roach speculates that the schemes may have actually **increased awareness of bullying** incidents and what constitutes bullying. Beatbullying case study: noted a substantial **increase in the levels of reported bullying by an average of 41%, but also a reduction in bullying incidents by an average of 38%** in schools participating in peer mentoring schemes (Mentoring & Befriending Foundation, 2010). However, Roach's key finding was that the mentored group had **significantly higher levels of school satisfaction** than the comparison group, which agrees with the idea that this improves amongst young people with a good peer support network (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987; Nickerson & Nagle, 2005).

Karcher (2007) chose to focus on 'CAMPs', or cross-aged mentoring programmes. Small studies have revealed **consistently positive results for mentees regarding attitudes towards school** (Karcher, 2005; Bowman & Myrick, 1987; Stoltz, 2005), **social skills** (Karcher, 2005) **and behaviour problems** (Bowman & Myrick, 1987). **For mentors, high schools pupils were found to improve their moral reasoning and empathy** (Ikard, 2001) **and their connection to their school** (Stoltz, 2005; Karcher, 2006). Indeed, older mentors are more likely to benefit themselves from this engagement in a school activity than the mentees (Bowman & Myrick, 1987).

Resilience: Roach (2014) the presence of positive peer relationships has consistently been identified as providing protection from high-risk conditions – and indeed secondary school can be a high-risk environment, due to the pressure which young people face when confronted with, as just one example, public exams (Roach 2014; Powell 2016; Bugental, 2003; Hodges & Perry, 1999).

Literature Review part 3 – structure of the programme

Structuring the programme

MBF makes **clear formalisation of peer mentoring programmes is a necessity**. Roach (2014): school-based mentoring programmes should focus on school issues and actively involve teachers as coordinators. Also, the quality of each meeting was ultimately thought to be more important than the quantity of meetings.

It is also important for the programme co-ordinator to **meet with the mentors regularly**. High-school-aged mentors are seemingly more easily overwhelmed than adults (Karcher, 2007), effects of these programmes shrink when there is insufficient monitoring of mentors. Lack of supervision may result in mentors causing harm (Karcher, 2005).

The ways in which the mentors should be trained is undoubtedly important for reflection. The Big Brother Big Sister scheme in the US makes it clear that **mentors who undergo quality training had more success.** Houlston, Smith & Jessel (2009) found that 30.9% of secondary schools in the UK used an external trainer for mentors. The MBF priority = peer mentoring programmes include formalised training in order to make them more impactful.

The selection of the mentors is also important. E.g. The age difference between the mentors and mentees. Indeed, for the majority of young pupils in secondary school there is often a strong desire to be like an older pupil (Harris, 1998). Mentors who are less selfish and more socially-orientated are likely to be more successful (Karcher, 2007).

Finally: **girls**! The selection of peer mentors must reflect the diversity of the school and indeed allowing for the younger boys to hear from the girls at least in some instances may be highly valuable. Also close relationships are more important for girls than boys (Jack, 1991; Clark & Ayers 1993, Berndt & Keefe, 1995), and again it is evident that peer mentoring can be of key assistance with the transition between schools (Mentoring & Befriending Foundation, 2010). Girls are more likely to seek and provide emotional support and reassurance than boys though (Denton & Zarbatany, 1996). This may necessitate longer-lasting, more personal relationships.

Action Research: Three cycles

Prior (and later!) concerns:
Selection, Training, Deployment

Cycle 1:
Ladies lunch
Boys Playstation & Pizza

Girls survey (buddy?)

Lower School Introductory Assembly
Boys visiting LS groups – Friday A.M.
Weekly meetings
Photos & noticeboards

Charity (Sleep-out)

Cycle 2:

Charity:
-Tea & Talk (Mental Health Foundation fundraiser in Chaplaincy)
-Candy Canes (their idea!)

-Target Setting with LS

-James Allen collaboration
-Mental Health course

Cycle 3:

-Kahoot mood survey

-Revision clinic

-Middle School Panel

Final concerns:
-Selection, training and deployment!

Evaluation?

Prior (and later!) concerns:
Selection, Training, Deployment

Cycle 1:
Ladies lunch
Boys Playstation & Pizza

Girls survey (buddy?)

Lower School Introductory Assembly
Boys visiting LS groups – Friday A.M.
Weekly meetings
Photos & noticeboards

Charity (Sleep-out)

Cycle 2:

Charity:
-Tea & Talk (Mental Health Foundation fundraiser in Chaplaincy)
-Candy Canes (their idea!)

-Target Setting with LS

-James Allen collaboration
-Mental Health course

Cycle 3:

-Kahoot mood survey

-Revision clinic

-Middle School Panel

Final concerns:
-Selection, training and deployment!

Conclusions

School priorities

Be proactive in developing in our pupils an understanding and awareness of mental health issues;

Ensure that pupils can make a smooth transition into the School and between sections;

Promote amongst all good physical and mental health, including emotional intelligence, resilience and self-awareness;

Provide a safe and secure environment for our pupils.

Charitable efforts, and "Provide a broad range of co-curricular options to ensure that each student can find his/her niche in the School and to ensure that there are opportunities for every pupil to develop self-confidence".

Visits to Lower School & weekly meetings?
-Quality, not quantity!

Mental Health?

Transition:
Welcome events and follow-up events
Buddy system?

Events:
Charity events
Discussion panels

Visibility
Photos, noticeboards, social media

Implications?

Selection and training?

Events:

	Lower School	Middle School	Sixth Form
Autumn 1	Tutor groups: target setting	Assembly: time management	Welcome events
Autumn 2	Assembly: giving thanks	Tutor groups: mental health	Candy canes fundraiser
Spring 1	Tutor groups: health	Assembly: Transition/Sixth Form	Mental Health clinic
Spring 2	Assembly: transition	Tutor groups: revision	Thank you cards?

Appendix 9: Response to CUREC application, December 2017 (anonymised)

Dear [redacted]

How can a peer mentoring programme be developed in order to help meet a school's pastoral care development priorities?

The above application has been considered on behalf of the Departmental Research Ethics Committee (DREC) in accordance with the procedures laid down by the University for ethical approval of all research involving human participants.

I am pleased to inform you that, on the basis of the information provided to DREC, the proposed research has been judged as meeting appropriate ethical standards, and accordingly, approval has been granted.

If your research involves participants whose ability to give free and informed consent is in question (this includes those under 18 and vulnerable adults), then it is advisable to read the following NSPCC professional reporting requirements for cases of suspected abuse

http://www.nspcc.org.uk/globalassets/documents/information-service/factsheet-child-abuse-reporting-requirements-professionals.pdf

Should there be any subsequent changes to the project which raise ethical issues not covered in the original application you should submit details to research.office@education.ox.ac.uk for consideration.

Good luck with your research study.

Sincerely,

With kind regards,

Liam

Dr LF Gearon
Chair DREC
Department of Education
University of Oxford

Appendix 10: CUREC: Letter to Headmaster (anonymised)

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

15 Norham Gardens, Oxford OX2 6PY
Tel: +44(0)1865 274024 Fax: +44(0)1865 274027
general.enquiries@education.ox.ac.uk www.education.ox.ac.uk

Director Professor Jo-Anne Baird

[redacted]

Dear [redacted]

I am writing to enquire about conducting research in school this academic year. As you know, I am studying for the Master's in Learning and Teaching at Oxford University, supervised by [redacted]. In my final research project "How can a peer mentoring programme be developed in order to help meet a school's pastoral care development priorities?" I will explore how the peer mentoring programme can be developed in order to provide more effective pastoral support in the school setting.

The research will involve a series of interventions throughout the year to improve the scheme. This will impact the Year 13 Peer Mentors themselves, as well as Lower School tutees and new Year 12 pupils primarily. Both the Directors of Sixth Form and Lower School have agreed to collaborate with me on this, and I will ask Lower School tutors to assist me as well.

By participating in the research, the school would be contributing to a project that will help develop the literature on peer mentoring schemes in schools, as although programmes such as this are commonly used in schools in the USA, and in businesses and universities in the UK, the literature on school programmes here is not extensive.

I hope to conduct this research during the academic year 2017-18. Surveys will take place at three key points: the end of the Autumn half term; the end of the Autumn term; and the end of the Spring term, in order to assess the interventions and inform the continuation of the scheme. There may be interviews or focus groups arranged towards the end of the programme too.

Oxford University has strict ethical procedures on conducting ethical research, consistent with current British Educational Research Association guidelines. The University also

recognises, however, that my study is a piece of practitioner research, and that schools already operate with the highest ethical standards. Therefore only your formal consent as headteacher is necessary, and not that of individual parents or staff. However, throughout the research, students and other teachers will be able to refuse to participate in any research activities at any time.

All participants, including students, teacher and the school, would be made anonymous in all research reports. The data collected would be kept strictly confidential, available only to my supervisor [redacted] and me, and only used for academic purposes. It will be kept for as long as it has academic value.

If you are happy for me to proceed with this study, please confirm that using the attached reply form. If you have any concerns or need more information about what is involved, please contact me or my supervisor. Further, if you have any questions about this ethics process at any time, please contact the chair of the department's research ethics committee, through: research.office@education.ox.ac.uk

Thank you very much for your time.

Yours sincerely,

[redacted]

How can a peer mentoring programme be developed in order to help meet a school's pastoral care development priorities?

[redacted]
University of Oxford, Department of Education

[redacted]

[redacted]

☐ We do not wish to participate in this project.

☐ We would like to find out more about this project.

X We would like to take part in this project.

[redacted]
Head teacher's signature

Please return this form to me.
Thank you for your help.

Appendix 11: Action Cycle One surveys

Lower School tutor survey

1. **Do you feel that Peer Mentors have been introduced well to the Lower School?**						
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Please explain why.						
2. **Do you feel that the Peer Mentors have helped encourage an understanding of good physical and mental health?**						
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Please explain why.						

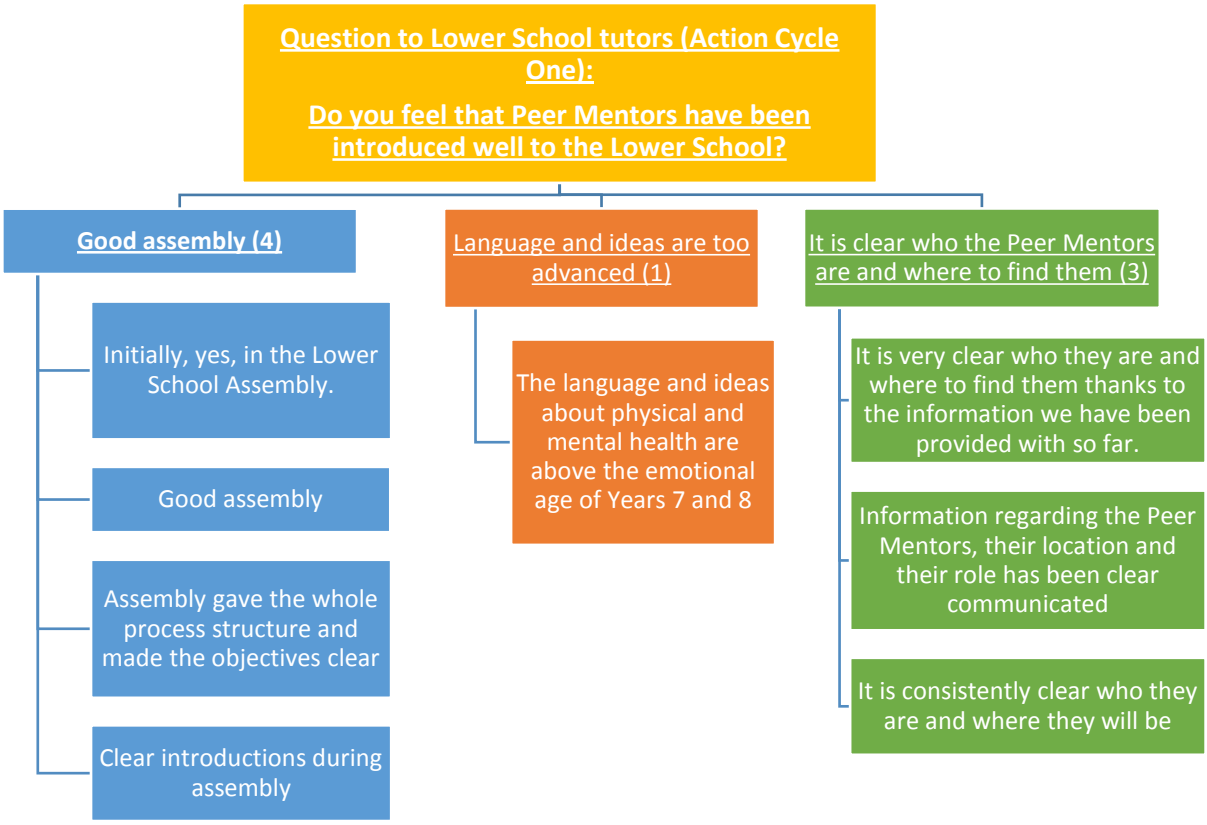
Thank you for your time!

Lower School pupil Survey

1. **Do you feel that Peer Mentors have been introduced well to the Lower School?**						
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Please explain why.						
2. **Have the Peer Mentors helped you feel settled in the Lower School?**						
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Please explain why.						

Thank you for your time!

Appendix 12: Example of Coded Data from questionnaires



Appendix 13: Middle School assembly questions (anonymised)

Please write your name under questions you would like to answer. Once everyone has signed up, you will then be assigned 1-2 questions to prepare an answer for.

Questions about Y11:
-How did you revise for GCSEs and how early did you start revising? Was it good enough/early enough?
[redacted]

-How hard is it to balance co-curricular with GCSE preparation? Any tips?
[redacted]

-How well did you do in your GCSE mocks? How did you improve for your actual GCSEs?
[redacted]

-What was the most challenging thing about GCSEs?
[redacted]

-What mistakes did you make with GCSEs?
[redacted]

-What would you do differently if you could do your GCSEs again?
[redacted]

Questions about Transition:
-What happens between Y11 and 12? (What events to help you transition/make friends) Have your friendship groups changed?
[redacted]

Questions about Sixth Form:
-How different is it with girls in school? (Common room/lessons/other) (girls can give a perspective too!!!!)
[redacted]

-What else is different about Sixth Form? (Activities/sport/relationship with staff/friendship group changes etc?)
[redacted]

-How hard is Y12 (and then Y13) compared to GCSEs?
[redacted]

-What has been your best moment in/the best thing about Sixth Form?
[redacted]

Beyond:
-What are your plans after Sixth Form? (Is anyone planning a gap year/apprenticeship?)
[redacted]