Teacher professional development: an enquiry into how far the introduction of a programme of peer-to-peer coaching can improve teacher performance and well-being

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Teacher professional development: an enquiry into how far the introduction of a programme of peer-to-peer coaching can improve teacher performance and well-being.

Abstract

The purpose of this practitioner research was to understand the impact of the introduction of a programme of peer-to-peer coaching, in place of traditional observations and judgemental feedback, on the performance and well-being of teachers in a local authority maintained primary school.

Following some coaching training and working in traids, teachers undertook a programme of peer-to-peer coaching. Each was observed and coached in relation to a self-selected focus. Data was gathered at baseline and post-intervention via questionnaires and self-evaluation ratings of the quality of teaching against agreed indicators.

Responses describe coaching as a more positive, developmental practice than traditional observations that moved practice forward more effectively, with specific metacognitive and collaborative features highlighted as being instrumental. Limitations of both traditional observations and relating to the coaching programme were exposed.

Data is restricted to teachers perceptions of impact as reported effects were not verified by any other means. Within this context, it is possible to make recommendations relating to successful implementation of peer coaching for professional development and the role of other forms of observation and feedback.

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Introduction

This research explores the use of peer coaching for teacher professional development. The research was conducted in an English, local authority maintained primary school where I was headteacher and practitioner researcher.

The School is a two-form-entry town school in an area of low deprivation, with diversity broadening in recent years to include families with a wider range of socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. Four years prior to the commencement of my headship Ofsted had judged the school to be ‘satisfactory’, two years later a ‘good’ judgement was secured and this status was maintained in a 2017 short inspection. Pupil attainment was consistently above national averages against most statutory measures, but progress through key stage two was not consistently strong for all pupils in all subjects and for some vulnerable groups of pupils.

The introduction of peer coaching in the school began in the autumn term 2016; this initial phase formed my MLT part two research project (Norris, 2017). Prior to this, continuing professional development (CPD) for teachers consisted mainly of training courses, moderation and standardisation activities, and monitoring and feedback of teaching and pupils’ work provided by the senior leadership team (SLT).

The introduction of peer coaching was motivated by concerns relating particularly to the nature of feedback provided to teachers. Feedback came only from senior leaders, was predominantly judgemental, and was led by the observers’ views of strengths and areas for development based largely on Ofsted descriptors of ‘outstanding’, ‘good’, ‘requires improvement’ or ‘inadequate’ teaching (Ofsted 2015).

In recent years there has been growing recognition that, due to their subjectivity and the invisible nature of learning (Coe, 2014), lesson observations are unreliable as a means of judging the quality of teaching (MET Project, 2013 and Coe, 2014), which draws into question their use as a basis for accurate, evaluative feedback. With the introduction of its 2015 inspection framework, Ofsted ended its practice of grading individual lessons. Despite the growing research evidence and the change in inspection practice, we were not alone in continuing to judge teaching and provide feedback for improvement based on senior leaders' observations of individual lessons. The habit had been widely adopted (Coe, 2014) in schools across the country as a symptom of the performative nature of the English education system (Ball, 2003 and Ball, 2017).

This performative and externalised context of teachers' work and development, and the resulting lack of professional trust and confidence felt by many teachers (Ball, 2003), was evident in my own school and was reported by colleagues in other schools. It could be argued that teachers' lack of trust in their professional judgements regarding the quality of their teaching was brought about by what Ball describes as 'a regime of accountability' (Ball, 2017: 57) and 'the terrors of performativity' (Ball, 2017: 59), and that this may be compounded by SLT lesson lesson observations, which are inextricably linked to performance management processes, can encourage teacher reliance on extrinsic evaluations of their effectiveness and have the potential to increase pressure on already overburdened (Higton et al. 2017; NAHT, 2017) teachers.

We were not unique in identifying the need to improve professional development for our staff. In his foreword to The Sutton Trust's report on improving professional development Dr Lee Elliot Major, the Chief Executive of the Trust declared:

> So it should shock us all that many of today's teachers do not benefit from the professional learning they need and deserve. Yes, there are schools with development programmes that appear to be effective; but they are the exceptions not the rule. (The Sutton Trust, 2015: 2)

Where significant improvements in teaching had been achieved in our school, these had been the result of sustained programmes of collaborative support, led by the needs of the individual teacher; in 2016 the Department for Education (DfE) published The Standard for Teachers' professional development, stating that professional development should include 'collaboration' and that programmes of professional development should be 'sustained over time' (DfE 2016: 6).

The aim then, was to move towards an approach to CPD that was grounded in research evidence and afforded teachers greater autonomy, greater trust in their professional judgement and a greater sense of self-efficacy; a more humane, personalised and effective approach to enabling teachers to be their best. Our strategy was to introduce reciprocal peer coaching as a means of securing improvements in teaching through collaborative, sustained and teacher-led support.

For over two decades researchers have been gathering evidence showing peer coaching to be an effective professional development tool (Showers and Joyce, 1996; Bowman and McCormick, 2000; Suggett, 2006; Lofthouse, Leat and Towler, 2010) and among the potential benefits of coaching and peer-networking is 'allowing teachers greater ownership of professional development' (Rhodes and Beneicke, 2002: 302). There is now wide recognition that coaching can be 'used

effectively to enhance teaching skills and drive up performance in educational organisations' (van Nieuwerburgh, 2012: 3).

The first phase of implementation of a peer coaching programme is described in my MLT Part Two assignment (Norris, 2017). At the end of this first phase teachers' views were gathered:

- 100% of teachers reported that the peer coaching had led to improvements in their teaching compared with 62% being able to give examples of how previous professional development experiences had led to improvements.
- Greater ownership and ability to personalise support were identified as key features of the coaching that led to impact on teaching, as well as small steps problem solving, additional time to reflect on practice with a colleague and opportunity to return to the conversation.

The findings led us to conclude that further exploration of the benefits of peer coaching for teacher professional development would be of merit. A preparatory review of literature addressed the following questions:

- What is the importance of teacher professional development? What is the current picture of teacher professional development in England and how has the national education context shaped existing approaches?
- What can we learn from research about best practice in CPD? What are the barriers to access and implementation?
- How has the use of coaching for teacher professional development evolved? What does research evidence tell us about its use in supporting effective CPD?
- Can we establish a clear definition of coaching in education and what models of coaching have been applied to professional development in schools?

- What is the case for the use of lesson observation for professional development and can this fit a coaching model?
- In summary: what evidence is there about the impact of coaching on teacher development, performance and well-being and on outcomes for pupils? What factors influence successful implementation, sustainability and impact?

Review of Literature

This review of literature will consider the importance of professional development for teachers and the current state of teacher professional development in England with reference to the wider policy around this. The aim is to establish a clear context for my research by examining current practice in CPD; considering the nature and implications of the relationship between government policy and practice; and exploring messages from research.

The scope, development and merits of coaching for teacher professional development will be explored with attention to relevant research and professional literature. This analysis will be compared with the what we've learned from research about effective CPD.

In order to clarify the nature of the research being undertaken, the relationship of coaching to mentoring and definitions of each will be discussed, along with an examination of specific models of coaching with relevance to educational settings. The aim here is to understand the mechanisms of coaching and identify the values and beliefs on which coaching is based.

Finally, key learning around the potential impact of coaching on teacher development, performance and well-being will be drawn together with consideration of conditions and factors that have been found to influence the successful implementation, the sustainability and the degree of impact that coaching may yield.

The reviewed literature includes government policy and guidance documents, professional literature and research papers. The policy documents are those specific to education in England that are current or published within the last two decades and deemed to have some remaining influence on current practices. I have limited the professional literature and research papers to anglophone countries since the late 1990s with one exceptional reference to a study conducted in the 1980s when coaching in education was in its infancy.

In order to, within the space of this paper, provide an overview of the breadth of research evidence related to CPD, I have drawn from literature that provides a synthesis of research evidence rather than each individual research report. With regards to my specific focus of the use of coaching in education, primary research sources have been referenced.

What is the importance of teacher professional development?

There is clear evidence that high quality teaching has a positive impact on pupils' progress in learning. Hanushek and Rivkin (2006) report an 'impressive' magnitude of difference in the pace of learning in pupils taught by the most effective and the least effective teachers, with up to a year's additional progress made. Researchers in New Zealand found that students taught by the teachers who had taken part in high quality CPD were making twice as much progress as students in other classes

(Parr et al., 2007) and in their review of evidence from nine studies, researchers in the U.S. concluded that where teachers were engaged in well-designed CPD programmes lasting more than 14 hours, there was a ‘positive and significant’ effect on student achievement’ (Yoon et al., 2007). TheTeacher Development Trust (TDT) concludes:

> The research evidence is clear that the most important action that schools can take to improve outcomes for students is supporting their teachers to be more effective. (TDT online, 2018)

So, where teachers are engaged in high quality CPD teaching quality is raised and pupil learning improves. The nature of high quality CPD will be explore in the next section.

What is the current picture of professional development in England and how has the national context shaped existing approaches?

Following the launch of the DfEE 2001 professional development strategy, a survey of teachers’ perceptions was conducted. They found that most teachers believed school and national priorities to be the principle drivers for CPD and that these ‘had taken precedence over individual needs’ (Hustler et al., 2003: 1). They also found that an important inhibitor to training was financial cost.

Despite the publication of further standards and CPD guidance documents in the intervening years (TDA, 2007a; TDA, 2007b), in its 2010 report the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) found that ‘the quality and nature of continuing training available is very uneven’ for teachers in the United Kingdom (Musset, 2010: 34).

A TDA commissioned report (Opfer and Pedder, 2010) was more damning. Bringing together insights from literature with the results of a mixed-method study including a national survey, researchers identified several issues related to the effectiveness of CPD in England:

- a lack of classroom based, collaborative and research-led CPD despite strong evidence that these approaches are effective;
- CPD that is ineffective in its duration and contrary to research showing 'a positive correlation between sustained, long term CPD and changes in teaching practice' (Opfer and Pedder, 2010: 421);
- CPD that is ineffective in its form, most frequently engaging teachers in 'passive forms of learning' (Opfer and Pedder, 2010: 421) rather than problem solving or putting skills into practice;
- 'little indication that current CPD is having an impact on raising standards' (Opfer and Pedder, 2010: 418) because despite teachers reporting impact, this tended not to go beyond a personal level;
- while the wide range of benefits reported by teachers surveyed was consistent with those identified in the literature review, there was significant variance indicating that benefits were not universal and depend greatly on teacher and context characteristics.

More positively, there was congruence between school leaders' views and research literature in that school and classroom-based CPD, with a clear focus on improving pedagogy and learning, such as workshops, collaborative networks and coaching, provides greater benefit and value for money than externally based CPD.

The authors later published an article relating to their findings entitled 'The Lost Promise of Teacher Professional Development in England' (Opfer and Pedder, 2011). The title suggests a disappointing picture of the state of professional development for teachers in England and was sadly not the last word in this vein.

Lofthouse and Leat, describe teacher professional development in England as, 'a generally ineffective system of professional learning for change in schools' in which 'many teachers describe their CPD as compliancy based and centrally controlled' (2013: 10). The OECD TALIS 2013 survey found that while teachers in England report above average participation in training courses, they have lower than average participation in more sustained, in-depth and research led activities and less time overall (OECD, 2014).

While the overall view is conclusively that continuing professional development for teachers in England has remained insufficient and ineffective during the last two decades, there is recognition in the literature that examples of excellent practice exist, but that these are few and far between (The Sutton Trust, 2015).

What can we learn from research about best practice in CPD? What are the barriers to access and implementation?

Drawing on literature in which the broad field of research relating to teacher CPD has been reviewed, it is possible to discern commonly identified characteristics of effective CPD. Timperley (2007 and 2008), Walter and Briggs (2012), and Stoll, Harris and Handscomb (2012), on the basis of evaluated research evidence, find that effective CPD involves collaboration; is sustained overtime; provides opportunity for practical, concrete and class-based learning; draws on external

expertise; and is supported by active leadership. Walter and Briggs (2012) and Stoll, Harris and Handscomb (2012) also identify the need for CPD to be personalised to the individual teacher or school and, to some degree, be recipient driven. Stoll, Harris and Handscomb (2012) along with Timperly (2008) find that effective CPD requires a clear focus on pupil outcomes and should be based in research evidence. Stoll, Harris and Handscomb (2012) identify professional challenge as an integral component with Timperley (2008) highlighting the importance of maintaining momentum, and Walter and Briggs (2012) determining that mentoring and coaching are among the strategies that make the most difference to the effectiveness of CPD for teachers. They could also be a vehicle for providing the challenge and momentum. The findings in these three evidence reviews, echo the conclusions of Opfer and Pedder's (2010) report with regards to the need for CPD that is collaborative, provides opportunities for practical application and sustained over time.

A 2014 summit held in Washington D.C. brought together school leaders from countries including the U.S. the U.K. Australia, Canada, Finland and Singapore. Their aim was to create 'a practical guide to support the effective professional learning of teachers' (Coe et al., 2014: 8). They considered the latest research evidence on professional learning and considered the use of observation and feedback. With regards to the latter, they concluded that observations should be used as 'a development tool creating reflective and self-directed teacher learners as opposed to a high stakes evaluation or appraisal' (Coe et al., 2015: 7). A clear message can be drawn from this work regarding the lack of support for the use of lesson observations to grade lessons or teachers.

Their recommendations for effective CPD, published in the Developing Great Teaching report (Cordingley et al. 2015), are that CPD should utilise external expertise; in most cases be sustained; include peer support and learning, while also drawing on new evidence theory and practice; and be informed by research evidence.

While there is widespread agreement about the nature of high quality continuous professional development for teachers, the schools and teachers accessing this remain a small minority. The report also gives guidance on what doesn't work: didactic, unsustained CPD activities have little or no impact on improving teaching and learning (Cordingley et al., 2015: 8), yet this is this what the vast majority of teachers in England are encountering (Opfer and Pedder, 2010; OECD, 2014).

So, despite a robust body of evidence identifying what is effective in terms of teacher CPD, schools in England are, predominantly, not putting the research into practice. Some insights into the reasons for this can be gained from the outcomes of the 'A world-class teaching profession government consultation' (DfE, 2015), which found time, quality (defined as either poor quality or lacking knowledge to choose) and cost, to be significant barriers to regularly undertaking high quality professional development. It's worth noting that while there were 456,900 full time equivalent teachers working in state schools in England in November 2015, there were only 176 responses to this government consultation. It may be that time was also a barrier to completing a response.

Describing the context for schools over a decade ago, Ball (2003) described the performative nature of the public sector in England. He defined performativity as:

> a technology, a culture and a mode of regulation that employs judgements, comparisons and displays as a means of incentive, control, attrition and change - based on rewards and sanctions (Ball, 2003: 216).

In the introduction to this paper, I outlined my concerns about the impact of this performative context in my own school; the literature confirms that our experience is not unique. For example, Hobson and Malderez (2013) express frustration that while there is research evidence to suggest that the use of appropriately employed school-based mentoring can enable the professional development of trainee teachers, the requirement placed on those acting as mentors to also act as assessors and gatekeepers, creates a conflict that can contribute to far less positive, or even negative, impact.

The researchers describe this as 'judgementoring' characterised by the failure to create a safe and trusting relationship in which the mentee feels able to be open in seeking support; 'restrictive' and 'mentor-led' feedback that focuses on the mentor's judgement of the positive and negative aspects of practice, with little consideration to approaches that differ from their own; and by a detrimental impact on the mentee's well-being and self-esteem and professional development (Hobson and Malderez, 2013: 4).

Lofthouse and Leat (2013:10) are more explicit in their description of the impact of a performative culture on teacher professional development. They describe CPD for teachers in England as:

> …dominated for over a decade by preparedness for inspection…[often] aligned to accountability systems…[and] driven by national policy.

We should not be surprised then that ‘many teachers describe their CPD as ‘compliancy based and centrally controlled’ (Lofthouse and Leat, 2013: 10).

After warning of the dangers of performativity in his 2003 article, ‘The Teacher’s Soul and the Terrors of Performativity’, Ball (2017) describes the impact of this ongoing accountability culture. To those in the teaching profession, they are well known themes: ‘increased emotional pressure and stress related to work’; increased pace and intensification of work’; ‘changed social relationships…decline in sociability of school life’ and diminishing opportunities for professional discourse; ‘an increase in paperwork, systems maintenance and report production’; ‘increased surveillance of teachers’ work and outputs’; ‘a developing gap in values, purpose and perspective’ between senior leaders with overall accountability, budget responsibility and pubic relations and teaching staff with a primary focus on curriculum, student’s needs and record keeping (Ball, 2017: 60).

In 2016 The Standard for Teachers’ Professional Development (DfE, 2016) was published drawing on the evidence presented in Cordingley’s (2015) report. The Teacher Workload Survey 2016 (DfE, 2017; DfE, 2018) was conducted and the publication of a workload reduction toolkit for schools (DfE online, 2018) followed.

There is then recognition from the Department for Education that excessive workload exists for staff in schools and is a barrier to effective CPD for teachers (DfE, 2018). However, there appears to be no acknowledgement of the seemingly insurmountable barrier created by the conflict between the demands of our

standards and accountability driven education system and clear evidence from research about the nature of high quality professional development for teachers.

We are yet to see whether workload reduction and the publication of a professional development standard will be sufficient to overcome the challenges of a far reaching culture of performativity and high-stakes accountability, and lead to the consistently high quality CPD that our teachers, and our children, deserve.

How has the use of coaching for teacher professional development evolved and what does research tell us about its use in supporting effective CPD?

In 2015 van Nieubwerburgh, Knight and Campbell presented their Global Framework for Coaching and Mentoring in Education with the purpose of bringing together best practice, supporting the field of academic research and being of practical use to those working within education (van Nieuwerburgh and Campbell, 2015).

The figure originally presented here cannot be made freely available via ORA because of copyright. The figure was sourced at Campbell, J. and van Nieuwerburgh, C. (2018) A Leader's Guide to Coaching in Schools, Creating Conditions for Effective Learning, USA: Corwin

Figure 1: Global Framework for Coaching in Education (Campbell and van Nieuwerburgh, 2018: 5).

The framework provides an overview of applications for coaching in an educational context. Leadership coaching is used widely by leaders and to support leaders in educational and other professional settings. Coaching for students might focus on goal setting, behaviour management or academic progress. Coaching for community engagement is a relatively less well researched practice that could include working with parents or enlisting coaches and mentors from a school's wider community to work with students. Coaching for the development of professional practice in schools may be applied to teacher goal setting and development, supporting professional learning, collaborative working and classroom observation and feedback (van Nieuwerburgh and Campbell, 2015). It is on this final category that we will now focus our attention.

I referred above to the DfEE 2001 professional development strategy. This drew on the United States based research of Showers and Joyce (1988), who found that the translation of teacher training into practice can be enhanced by the participant's engagement in coaching. Their work had begun in 1980, motivated by reports that 'in the 1970s evaluations of staff development that focused on teaching strategies and curriculum revealed as few as ten percent of the participants implemented what they had learned' (Showers and Joyce, 1996:12). They conducted a series of studies that gave teachers the opportunity to participate in weekly 'seminars, or coaching sessions, focused on classroom implementation and the analysis of teaching'. Their research findings were consistent: 'implementation [of teaching and curriculum strategies learned] rose dramatically' (Showers and Joyce, 1996: 12). Furthermore, they found that this applied whether the experts or the participating staff themselves consulted the coaching sessions.

Kohler et al. (1997) conducted research into the effects of peer coaching on teacher and student outcomes. Their study was carried out with four elementary school teachers in the United States. Each teacher implemented a new teaching strategy in phase one without support, in phase two with coaching from a recently retired teacher with experience in coaching and in using the strategy, and in phase three again without the coaching support. They used mixed methods to gather baseline and post-intervention data including teachers' perceptions about the impact of the coaching on effective implementation of the teaching method, as well as observable procedural changes. Their findings supported those of Showers and Joyce: these refinements to teaching are 'more likely to occur under conditions of collaboration' (Kohler et al.,1997: 248).

In a larger study, also in the United States, Bowman and McCormick (2000) compared the impact of peer coaching for preservice elementary teachers with that of existing university supervision methods. Thirty-two participants were involved, with an experimental group of sixteen being trained in peer coaching techniques. During the course of a seven week training period, lessons were observed and reviewed in a post lesson conference. For the experimental group lessons were observed by a peer and the conference took the form of a conversation about strengths, weaknesses and suggested improvements within a peer coaching dyad. This feedback was regular and immediate and in addition to feedback from a university supervisor. The control group received only observation and feedback from a person in a position of authority, the university supervisor, although this was less regular than that experienced by the experimental group and, due to time pressures, the conferences were not consistently preceded by a lesson observation. The impact of each condition was measured through the use of pre

and post-assessment data in the form of a video taped lesson and an audio taped post conference, as well as an anonymously completed attitude scale in which participants rated several dimensions of their field experience. The researchers found that the group receiving regular peer coaching ‘achieved greater adeptness in the targeted objectives than those receiving traditional supervision’ (Bowman and McCormick, 2000: 261). While it is not possible to ascertain from their findings whether it was the greater regularity of feedback or the coaching style of the feedback that led to superior performance in the experimental group, their findings suggest that peer coaching is at least as robust as the traditional model and that regular feedback in the form of peer coaching has a positive effect on the quality of teaching. They suggest that another advantage of participating in peer coaching is the development of habit of collaboration, which is ‘a valued and often necessary factor for effective schooling’ and ‘fosters expert instruction’. (Bowman and McCormick, 2000: 261).

Following on from the 2001 professional development strategy (DfEE, 2001), the inclusion of guidance on coaching in subsequent school improvement documents (DfES, 2003) gave further support to the use of coaching in schools in England. In this suite of publications, coaching is described as a three part process that includes a discussion supporting planning, an observed lesson and a post-lesson analysis discussion. Additional guidance for schools in England was to follow, with the Mentoring and Coaching CPD Capacity Building Project (CUREE, 2005). The project documentation promoted mentoring and coaching as tools to ‘help increase the impact of continuing professional development on student learning’ (CUREE, 2005:1). The framework described ten principles for coaching including the need for a relationship of trust, the importance of collaboration with colleagues as well as

seeking out specialist expertise, and the aim of moving towards increasing responsibility being taken by the professional learner for the development of their own knowledge and skills. A clear correlation can be seen between these principles and research evidence relating to requirements for effective CPD discussed above (Timperley, 2007; Timperley, 2008; Walter and Briggs, 2012; Stoll, Harris and Handscomb, 2012). The CUREE framework differentiated between two different types of coaching for professional development: specialist coaching and collaborative (co-)coaching. The former providing coaching from a colleague with expertise specific to the goals of the learner and the latter being reciprocal coaching with a fellow professional learner, which others have described as peer coaching. We will explore these further, along with other coaching models, in the next section of this review.

Drawing on CUREE's framework, The National College for School Leadership (NCSL) published a workbook (Creasy and Patterson, 2005) and accompanying resources, which sought to set coaching within the context of other educational developments, and to identify practical ways in leaders could embed 'a coaching culture in schools' (Creasy and Patterson, 2005: 5).

Case studies describing the use and impact of coaching in schools in England were emerging at this time. For example, Suggett, a primary school headteacher who described coaching as 'an approach whose time has arrived' (Suggett, 2006: 3), reported on the development and impact of coaching in four primary, one special and one secondary 'focus' schools. His report is based on the experiences and perceptions of middle or senior leaders in these schools, all of whom shared the view that coaching should be non-directive, non-judgemental and driven by the

coachee, and all of whom were utilising the same model or structure (Whitmore's GROW model, see p.31 below) for coaching conversations in their schools. At least one of the interviewed leaders from each school had participated in an extended coach development programme and was using coaching in their leadership role. They reported that they had coached people in a range of roles and that coaching conversations included informal discussions in corridors as well as planned sessions as part of a formal, timetabled programme. Suggett declares his lack of impartiality as a researcher, recognising that he and many of those interviewed were passionate advocates of coaching prior to this piece of research. It is possible also that further bias exists in the findings because the semi-structured interviews used to gather data were only conducted with school leaders, who mainly took a coaching role, and not from those they coached. Nevertheless, Suggett reports that 'clear findings emerge' including that coaching 'enhances the social/emotional atmosphere of the school' and that it 'produces gains for staff and pupils and builds on individual and organisational capacity' (Suggett, 2006: 15).

Further afield, researchers in Australia sought to explore the impact of 'developmental coaching' with high school teachers (Grant, Green and Rynsaart, 2010). Fifty high school teachers voluntarily took part in a coaching programme. Participants were assigned to a coaching group or to a 'waitlist' control group. Those in the coaching group engaged in ten coaching sessions over a twenty week period, conducted by ten experienced professional coaches. Data was gathered using a range of well-established scales, indexes and assessment tools to measure attainment of personal goals; resilience; depression, anxiety and stress; workplace well-being; and leadership styles. They found that participation in coaching not only facilitated goal attainment, but also 'enhanced self-reported leadership and

communication styles' (Grant, Green and Rynsaart, 2010: 165) and that the coaching group reported 'reduced stress, increased resilience, and improved workplace well-being'.

Adding to a growing collection of professional guidance documents promoting the use of coaching in schools in England, a 'practical guide for schools' was published (Lofthouse, Leat and Towler, 2010) drawing on a two-year research project undertaken by the Research Centre for Learning and Teaching at Newcastle University and funded by CfBT Education Trust and the National College (Lofthouse et al, 2010). The research involved thirteen schools in four regions of England. The researchers' aim was to observe, analyse and develop methods of improving coaching practice in schools. Lofthouse and her colleagues draw attention to the wider context of professional development for teachers in England, highlighting barriers to effective CPD including a lack of coherence, effective leadership and opportunity for school based collaboration despite widespread recognition in the value of collaborative professional learning.

Time pressures, competing priorities and staff turnover in the participating schools led to difficulties in carrying out the coaching and collecting evidence. Research data was however gathered and took the form of video taped coaching sessions, interviews with the schools' coaching co-ordinators and senior leaders, focus group meetings with teachers and an online questionnaire for teachers involved in the project. Findings were used to answer three research questions relating to the nature and impact of coaching sessions, how coaches can improve their practice, and how coaching was being used in the context of whole school improvement and professional development.

The researchers found that the coaching sessions were popular, compared favourably to general professional development and were seen as more personalised. Coaches were successful in establishing rapport, but video evidence from lessons was in many cases not directly referred to and the focus of discussion tended to be general themes rather than attending to the 'critical moments or the small detail of teaching and learning' with little reference made to 'research informed pedagogical principles' (Lofthouse et al., 2010: 4). The researchers concluded that there is 'room for substantial improvement in coaching practice in schools' particularly with regard to coaches' ability to challenge the thinking of coachees, the use of video evidence and analysis, and increasing the level of responsibility taken by the coached teachers for analysing their own practice. Significant issues were identified in the management of coaching in schools and its implementation in the context of a 'culture of hierarchical management [which along with] a focus on short term measurable outcomes can militate against a longer term commitment to a culture which encourages professional enquiry' (Lofthouse et al., 2010: 5). Only one school in the study was found to have an effective and sustainable model in place for the management of coaching. Researchers concluded that coaching can significantly contribute to enabling schools to move towards a culture of self-evaluation and collaborative inquiry; that it can improve the CPD experience of teachers making it school-based and classroom focused while informed by research evidence; and that is is able to 'improve teaching by providing feedback to teachers and allowing them to reflect intensively on classroom evidence [specifically, in the case of this study, where this has been] generated by video' (Lofthouse et al., 2010: 5). While the work of Lofthouse and her colleagues therefore finds further evidence to support the many potential benefits of coaching

for professional development in schools, they also clearly describe the challenges to successful implementation within the context of the English education system.

Changes to that system were brought about with the formation of a coalition government in 2010. Their white paper (DfE, 2010) saw the academies agenda widening and the responsibility for school improvement shifting away from government toward a self-improving school system led by newly designed teaching schools. In response, along with its guidance for schools on creating and leading a self-improving system (Hargreaves, 2010; Hargreaves, 2011), the National College for Leadership of Schools and Children's Services promoted coaching as a vehicle for 'upskilling the workforce in times of change' (Lindon, 2011). Lindon's report drew on research carried out in four secondary schools at different stages of creating a coaching culture. Data was drawn from questionnaires and semi-structured interviews to analyse the development of a coaching culture, the practical implementation of coaching and its impact. Lindon reported that coaching led to an increase in collaborative working, more productive dialogue about teaching and learning and improvements to planning and behaviour management. Further, coaching was seen to improve leadership development and that 'impact was seen in the deepening of learning for pupils that was backed up by attainment and progression data' (Lindon, 2011: 3). Lindon's report does not however acknowledge any of the barriers to the implementation of coaching highlighted by Lofthouse and her colleagues (Lofthouse et al. 2010).

Influenced by research and by education policy, recognition of the potential of coaching to 'positively affect learning experiences for both the "teacher" and "student" in educational settings' (van Nieuwerburgh, 2012: 18) has become

widespread in England in the last two decades, with Adams arguing that, within the national context of increasing 'school-to-school and peer-to-peer support…coaching is now more relevant than ever to education' (2015: 6). While this may be true, as with the wider issue of continuing professional development for teachers, the potential of coaching in education is yet to be fully realised. It's clear that a belief in the potential of coaching is insufficient to overcome the didactic habits and accountability structures that have become so entrenched (Lofthouse, 2018). However, while there is no explicit reference to coaching in the current Standard for Teachers' Professional Development (DfE, 2016) evidence from literature discussed here demonstrates that coaching is an appropriate and effective tool for providing the 'collaboration and expert challenge' facilitating a 'clear focus on improving and evaluating pupils outcomes' and enables professional development for teachers to be 'sustained over time'.

Can we establish a clear definition of coaching in education and what models of coaching have been applied to professional development in schools?

The term coaching lacks definitional clarity (van Nieuwerburgh, 2018). A dictionary search will reveal definitions of a 'coach' as a type of bus and of the verb 'coaching' as a form of instruction or advice giving. Whitmore (2017) highlights this lack of a suitable definition for the practice of coaching, pointing out that the first of these definitions is the most useful and not the latter as one might expect, because it indicates a journey. His own definition of coaching, which is regularly referred to as a standard, emphasises that coaching is not about giving instruction or advice:

> Coaching is unlocking people's potential to maximise their own performance. It is helping them to learn rather than teaching them (Whitmore, 2017: 12, first published 1992).

Hattie (2012:72) describes coaching in the specific context of teacher learning:

> Coaching involves empowering people by facilitating self-directed learning, personal growth and improved performance.

His description emphasises that it is the coachee not the coach who directs learning in coaching. The definition offered by van Nieuwerburgh (2012: 17) is more explicit in describing the interactions involved in coaching and specifics that coaching is a conversation between two people:

> a one-to-one conversation focused on the enhancement of learning and development through increasing self-awareness and a sense of personal responsibility, where the coach facilitates the self-directed learning of the coachee through questioning, active listening, and appropriate challenge in a supportive and encouraging climate.

Coaching is often discussed with mentoring and while both are talk interventions, there is a clear distinction between the two that is sometimes missed. The National College defines mentoring as involving 'passing on knowledge and offering support based on a mentor's work and experience to a less experienced colleague' whereas coaching 'start[s] from the premise that people have the resources within themselves to achieve their personal and leadership potential' and that a coach 'has the skills to allow the client to access his or her own resourcefulness to come to their own solutions' (NCLT, 2013: 4). Furthermore, 'when focused on improving teaching and learning, coaching is usually informed by evidence'.

In addition to distinguishing between coaching and mentoring CUREE's (2005) framework distinguished two types of coaching: 'specialist coaching' and 'collaborative (co)coaching. In specialist coaching, the coaching is provided by someone with a specific area of expertise that supports the goal of the coachee. In this regard it could be seen to sit somewhere between the directed process of

mentoring and the reciprocal professional learning premise of co-coaching. This diagram taken from the framework illustrates where mentoring, specialist coaching and co-coaching overlap and differ.

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Figure 2: Mentoring and Coaching (CUREE, 2005: 4)

Van Nieuwerburgh explicitly refers to the relationship between mentoring and coaching as a continuum with the directive practice of mentoring towards one end and coaching towards the non-directive end. He places instructional coaching, which has similarities to CUREE's specialist coaching (described below), between the two.

Figure 3: coaching-mentoring spectrum (van Nieuwerburgh 2012: 16)

The figure originally presented here cannot be made freely available via ORA because of copyright. The figure was sourced at van Nieuwerburgh, C. (Ed) (2012) Coaching in Education, Getting Better Results for Students, Educators and Parents, London: Karnac

In the review of research literature and in defining coaching and describing its relationship to mentoring, we have begun to explore different models of coaching used in educational settings.

Although van Nieuwerburgh (2012) defines coaching as a one-to-one conversation, believing this to be most effective due to the requirement for a relationship of trust, he recognises that coaching approaches may be used in group settings. In describing the GROW model, Whitmore (2017) also addresses this issue, explaining that the format can be applied to one-to-one coaching, team coaching or self-coaching. The widely known GROW model was developed by Graham Alexander and Sir John Whitmore (Whitmore, 2017, first published 1992). It was used in Suggett's (2006) research schools and as the structure for coaching conversations in Grant, Green and Rynsaart's (2010) study (both described above).

GROW provides a four stage structure for a coaching conversation through which the coach, largely through the use of questioning, guides the coachee.

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Figure 4: The GROW model (Whitmore, 2017:96)

The initial stage helps the coachee to determine a goal for the session as well as for the short and long term; the second, 'reality', stage focuses on recognising and exploring the coachee's current situation; in the 'options' stage, the coachee is encouraged to consider possible options for action that will enable movement from

the current reality towards the goal; and in the final stage, the coachee decides on a course of action, identifying what will be done, when it will be done and by whom. Crucially, there is also focus on the 'will' or motivation of the coachee to take this action, identification of possible barriers and enablers to taking these actions, and agreement of the measures of achievement and accountability (Whitmore 2017).

The model is a simple one, which focuses on changing behaviour. It's simplicity makes it an ideal introduction to coaching, but other models may provide more scope for deeper exploration of the reasons that a goal has not yet been achieved or the complex issues that must be tackled in order to achieve it. While Grant, Green and Rynsaart (2010) use the GROW model to provide a structure for coaching conversations, they chose to incorporate a cognitive-behavioural, solution-focused approach. Cognitive behavioural approaches deal not only with behavioural aspects of change, but also from the perspective that goal attainment is best achieved through understanding the four domains of human experience, namely one's thoughts, feelings, behaviour and environment, and the reciprocal relationship between them (Grant, 2003). A solution-focused viewpoint orientates the focus of coaching towards strengths and solutions rather than 'problem diagnosis and analysis' (Grant, Green and Rynsaart, 2010: 156). This approach, while suitable for use by professional coaches, is unlikely to be appropriate for use by internal coaches in schools whose training will be comparably minimal.

The National College of Teaching and Leadership (2013) proposed their five step CEDAR model as a model for both coaching and mentoring in schools. It was designed to be used by those with both training and previous practical experience of mentoring and coaching.

Figure 5: CEDAR Model (National College 2013)

The figure originally presented here cannot be made freely available via ORA because of copyright. The figure was sourced at National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL) (2013) The CEDAR Framework

Source: National College, 2013

The purpose of the contracting stage is to agree objectives and outcomes and is therefore comparable to the goal setting stage in the GROW model. The 'explore' and 'deepen' stages refer to the coach's ability to employ active listening and powerful questioning techniques exposing deeper aspects of a situation such as the coachee's skills, values and environment. In the 'act' stage, action planning and accountability are agreed and the final stage allows for review of progress. While this model reflects some stages of the GROW model, it draws on psychological coaching theories to delve deeper into a coachee's motivations and context in order to secure change.

A coaching model that has developed in the USA by over the last decade is Instructional Coaching (Knight and van Nieuwerburgh, 2012). This evidence-based approach, the authors propose, may be of value in the UK where there are 'no evidence-based coaching models focused on improving the practice of teaching' (Knight and van Nieuwerburgh, 2012: 101). The model of instructional coaching developed by The Kansas Project (KUCRL, 2018) is based on an equal partnership between the coach and coachee in which Knight (in van Nieuwerburgh,

2012) describes the relationship between an instructional coach and the coachee as being based on seven principles: equal partnership, teachers having ‘choice regarding what and how they learn’, the voice of the teacher being empowered and respected, authentic dialogue, reflection, praxis - the application of learning to real life practice during the professional learning, and the expectation of reciprocity in learning between coach and coachee (Knight 2012: 99). The process is based on seven practices:

enrol - teachers can chose whether not to participate

identify - the teaching practices to be shared

explain - the coache explains the practice in precise and provisional terms

modelling - coaches offer to model the practice in the classroom

observe - the coach offers to observe the teacher using the practice and discuss the how the lesson went

explore - collaborative discussion about any data the coach has collected

refine - ongoing support to maintain and refine use of the new practice

It is possible to draw parallels between instructional coaching and specialist coaching (CUREE, 2005). Both require the coach to be an expert or specialist and to use their expertise to model, and explain a practice to a less experienced or skills colleague. In this way they are both similar to mentoring. The key difference however, the importance of which is made particularly clear in the literature on instructional coaching, is that the relationships must be one of equal partners, with decision making and choice ultimately in the hands of the teacher being coached. For me, this is what differentiates coaching from mentoring and many other forms of professional learning.

Even more important than the model of coaching employed are the values and skills of the coach. CUREE's (2005) ten principles include trust and collaboration and the Instructional Model described earlier in this section sets out seven principles that form the basis for the approach. Adams (2016) describes core coaching skills as including providing space and employing active and reflective listening, questioning, clarifying and summarising and van Nieuwerburgh includes giving and receiving feedback and 'bias towards the positive' (2017:107) as essential skills for coaching.

What is the case for the use lesson observation for teacher professional development and can this fit a coaching model?

Before concluding this review of literature, I return to the issue of lesson observation, which I expressed concerns over in my introduction to this paper. In recent years there has been a growing backlash against the use of judgemental lesson observations illustrated by social media activity such as the #noobservation tweets on twitter earlier this year (Lofthouse, 2018). When used ineptly lesson observations can be a negative, demoralising experience that undermine a teacher's professionalism (Adams, 2016), and evidence shows that judgements made on the basis of observed lessons are largely inaccurate (Coe, 2014) and thus not helpful in developing teaching. In his discussion of lesson observation in the modern education system, Adams (2016: 57) refers to a quote from the eminent humanist psychologist Carl Rogers:

> I have come to the conclusion that the more I can keep a relationship free of judgement and evaluation, the more this will permit the other person to reach the point where he recognises that the locus of evaluation, the centre of responsibility, lies within himself.

Adams argues that the application of psychological theory to lesson observation can:

> support us in making observation a constructive learning experience that has a positive impact on teacher's subsequent motivation to change and develop (Adams, 2016: 57).

He goes on to describe a non-judgemental, non-evaluative, coaching psychology approach that is collaborative, promotes self-efficacy and is based on drawing attention to evidence in order to develop practice.

Lofthouse too recognises the value in non-judgemental observation and, with colleagues at the University of Newcastle, has developed a 'collaborative, enquiry-based observation' model that is aligned with a coaching approach in that it promotes a 'greater sense of ownership of the observation by the teacher being observed', non-judgemental feedback on what has been noticed by the observer, and the use of questions to stimulate productive professional dialogue and development (Lofthouse, 2018: 15). She includes that:

> Without links to judgements [lesson observations] can be affirming without being graded and they can be developmental without being based on a deficit approach.

Literature Review Summary

This review of literature has highlighted the importance of high quality CPD for teachers in ensuring the best possible outcomes for pupils in schools. It has revealed that while there are examples of excellent practice, the vast majority of teachers in England still do not have access to the sustained, classroom-based, evidence driven development opportunities that research has shown to be most effective (The Sutton Trust, 2015, Lofthouse and Leat, 2013). The reasons for this are complex and not easily overcome for individual schools as they are entwined in

a wider national context of performativity, characterised by factors such as accountability measures, excessive workload and performance related pay.

There is clear evidence that the use of coaching for teacher professional development is an effective mechanism for and enabler of high quality CPD that assists teacher development (Kohler et al., 1997; Browne, 2006;) improves teaching performance (Lofthouse, et al., 2010) and enhance teachers well-being (Grant, Green and Rynsaart, 2010). While the evidence about impact on pupil outcomes is less compelling there are examples including Lindon's (2011) study that show a positive link.

It is apparent that implementing a programme of coaching that is effective in securing these improvements is far from straight forward. The culture and habits resulting from a proliferation of accountability measure and pressure to perform have eroded professional trust and made the spirit of true collaboration and partnership required for effective coaching difficult to obtain. There is evidence however, that in seeking to introduce coaching approaches to our schools we nurture those relationship of trust (Suggett 2006) and collaborative, professional enquiry on which coaching for effective professional development can thrive.

Building on this review of research, policy and professional literature and on my knowledge of the context and needs of my own school, I intend, through my own research, to explore the following questions:

- How far does a programme of reciprocal peer coaching lead to improvements in teachers' ratings of their own performance?

- What can be identified about the process of coaching that moves teaching practice forward?
- What effects can be identified, including on teacher well-being, of replacing external judgements in the form of traditional lesson observations and feedback with peer lesson observation, coaching and self-evaluation?

Methodology

The intervention in this practitioner research was a programme of reciprocal peer coaching. Participants were primary school teachers at various stages of their careers. Peer coaching for teacher professional development had been introduced in the school year prior to this research activity. The longer term plan was to implement and embed a programme of peer coaching for professional development that included teachers and teaching assistants, school leaders and office, premises and lunchtime staff. Initially it was intended that this would be in place after an introductory period of two years, but as we progressed it become apparent that three or four years would be a more realistic timescale for including all staff in an effective, manageable and sustainable programme of professional development coaching. Prior to the intervention that is the subject of this research, two preparatory stages were undertaken in the school. The first of these, the initial stage, was the introduction of peer coaching and was the subject of my MLT 2 project (Norris, 2017); the secondary stage was the preparatory work of training and skills development which took place over two school terms before the intervention was implemented. I have described these below to provide the necessary context for my research.

Initial Stage: Introducing Peer Coaching

The first phase, following a questionnaire to ascertain current perception and experience, was to develop a shared understanding of coaching and how it differs from mentoring, and to introduce teachers and senior leaders to coaching skills and principles (CUREE, 2005; Adams, 2016; van Nieuwerburgh, 2017, described on p. 34). This training took place during after school professional development meetings. Having undergone some coaching training, I elected to lead these myself.

Whitmore's (2017) GROW model (see p. 30) was introduced. This model was chosen for its simplicity and its suitability 'for coaches without psychological training' (Passmore, 2008: 76), as the vast majority of participants had no, or very little, prior experience or knowledge of coaching. Teachers then practised using coaching skills within the GROW structure. This was done in groups of three each taking the role of coach, coachee and observer in turns. The observer's function was to notice the use of coaching skills and provide feedback to their colleague in the role of coach.

The next phase involved teachers undertaking a series of coaching sessions, working in pairs. Staff expressed a preference for working in pairs rather than the groups of three used in the training phase, as they felt that this would better enable openness and trust. In the training phase, the topic of coaching was left open, with teachers encouraged to chose a topic unrelated to work due to the group nature of the training; in this series of peer coaching sessions they were asked to choose either a self-identified professional development goal or a goal relating to the whole school improvement plan. Before commencing the paired sessions, boundaries of confidentiality and transparency were agreed so that teachers knew that they would only be asked to share goals and agreed actions with senior leaders, not the content of the discussions.

After the sequence of four paired coaching sessions, anonymous questionnaires were completed by eleven teachers and semi-structures interviews were carried out with four of these. Responses informed decisions about the next steps for peer coaching in the school. Significantly all teachers participating in this phase of the study agreed that coaching had led to improvements in their teaching and were

able to give examples; all regarded the coaching conversations positively and all expressed the desire for further opportunities for coaching colleagues, with the vast majority (83%) indicating that they would like further training. Full findings are presented in my MLT 2 paper (Norris, 2017).

On the basis of the outcomes and feedback, it was determined to continue further with the use of peer coaching for teacher professional development in the school. Among the questions we wanted to explore further was whether we could implement a more effective way of measuring improvements in teaching rather than simply asking teachers whether they believed they had improved. Our response to this is is described in the 'collection of data' section below.

Secondary Stage: Developing Peer Coaching

Before beginning another series of peer coaching sessions, consideration was given to several issues: further training, participation and grouping of staff, and the involvement of senior leaders.

Further Coaching Training

The initial stage of the introduction of coaching had taken two terms with training happening in the autumn term 2016 and the practice sessions in spring term 2017. At the end of this period, because teachers expressed the desire for additional training and because the training so far had been minimal, further training led by an external provider was arranged.

In the 2017 spring term, a member of the senior leadership team attended a three day, off-site course in coaching, led by a recommended independent provider.

Inspired by the course and following discussions between the provider and the senior leadership team, we agreed to proceed with this trainer's support.

A three day training course was provided in school for six teachers who would take the role of 'lead' coaches. This took place in the summer term of 2017. The training reinforced the definition of coaching as a non-judgemental, coachee-led conversation aimed at providing support and challenge. It included putting into practice the key coaching skills of active listening, reflecting and summarising, and questioning. Four teachers were invited to this training on the basis of the leadership team's perception of their capacity for coaching, and of their potential influence on other staff. The second deputy head and I, completed the six. We believed it was important for all members of the senior leadership team to be trained, due to their ability to drive momentum in the implementation of coaching in the school (Lofthouse, Leat and Towler, 2010). In reality, I joined some of these sessions dipping in and out as workload and other commitments allowed. As a school group we were all committed to, and motivated by, the non-judgemental nature of coaching and until the second half of the third day, the training supported this. There was confusion and unease among the group when, at this point, guidance was given that a coaching conversation following a lesson observation should end with a summative judgement being made against agreed standards about the quality of teaching.

With the benefit of hindsight, this should have been apparent in the original discussions before the support of this trainer was secured. There is no suggestion that we were misled, but recognition with hindsight, that there was a lack of clarity and understanding before the training began.

Despite these misgivings, we were sufficiently reassured that judgements would be mutually agreed and would be made with reference, not to Ofsted criteria, but to criteria developed by school staff; the programme of training with the external coach therefore continued.

In the 2017 autumn term, the remaining teachers participated in one and a half days of coaching skills training with the external trainer, followed by some supported coaching with the internal 'lead' coaches who modelled the skills for others. It was largely for financial reasons that this model was chosen in preference to all teachers undertaking the three day training. However, we felt that this would not undermine the planned programme of coaching because there was sufficient expertise developing within the group of lead coaches to provide support for others.

By the end of the autumn term, all teachers had undertaken at least one and half days of skills training and had participated in practice coaching sessions as both a coach and a coachee.

Participation and Grouping

As with all decisions in the design and implementation of this project, decisions about staff participation and grouping for coaching were made in line with ethical guidelines (BERA, 2011) and with the aim of achieving best outcomes in terms of professional development, while taking into account practical considerations.

Participation in the programme of peer coaching was not explicitly voluntary as we entered the secondary stage of implementation because the option not to participate was not discussed. However at the end of the initial stage of introducing

peer coaching, all teachers involved had expressed the desire for further opportunities for peer coaching, so voluntary participation was assumed. The questionnaires used in the spring term research cycle included explicit information about the intended use of data and completion of these was on the basis of voluntary, informed consent.

Other ethical considerations were the wellbeing of staff, their capacity for participation and potential issues relating to their professional capabilities. At this time in the school, no teacher was undergoing informal or formal capability support and none had revealed stress or illness that might reduce their working capacity. Had either of these circumstances been present, it would have been appropriate to discuss and come to an agreement regarding participation with the individual teacher. Similarly, if issues had arisen during the course of the coaching programme it would have been appropriate to consider and discuss withdrawal.

In the initial peer coaching stage, teachers had worked in groups of three to practice skills, then in pairs in the initial series of coaching sessions. As a staff group we discussed the merits of each, deciding to work in triads for the development stage. This was to avoid coaching conversations losing focus and becoming informal chats between friendly colleagues, and to provide support for staff who were still relatively inexperienced coaches. The groups were decided by the senior leadership team based three factors:

- the extent of coaching training and experience; one ‘lead’ coach was allocated to each triad to act as a role model
- the practicalities of timetabling; part time staff were grouped with colleagues who worked on the same days

- and to some extent on personality characteristics, such as a tendency to positivity or negativity.

Inclusion of Senior Leaders

Another consideration with ethical implications was whether to include senior leaders in the coaching triads. Milner and Couley, (2016:31) suggest several challenges faced when an individual occupies the dual roles of manager and coach. These include the manager's ability to promise confidentiality and lack of access to sufficient additional time. While it was my perception that the latter would cause challenges, the former was by far the more compelling reason for not including myself in the coaching triads. As the person responsible for teachers' performance management reviews and resulting pay progression recommendations, I felt that my participation would be highly detrimental to developing the climate of non-judgemental, non-hierarchical trust and openness that we believed to be key to the coaching process. In my role as researcher there was also the possibility of bias, or conflict with the protection of anonymity in data collection.

My colleagues on the senior leadership team, the two deputy heads, took a half way position in which they, as members of the group of lead coaches, were additional (fourth) members of triads, dropping in and out to support the process in groups where numbers meant it had not be possible to place another lead coach.

Practising in Coaching Triads

Within the triads teachers would take three roles in rotation: coach, supporting coach or co-coach and coachee.

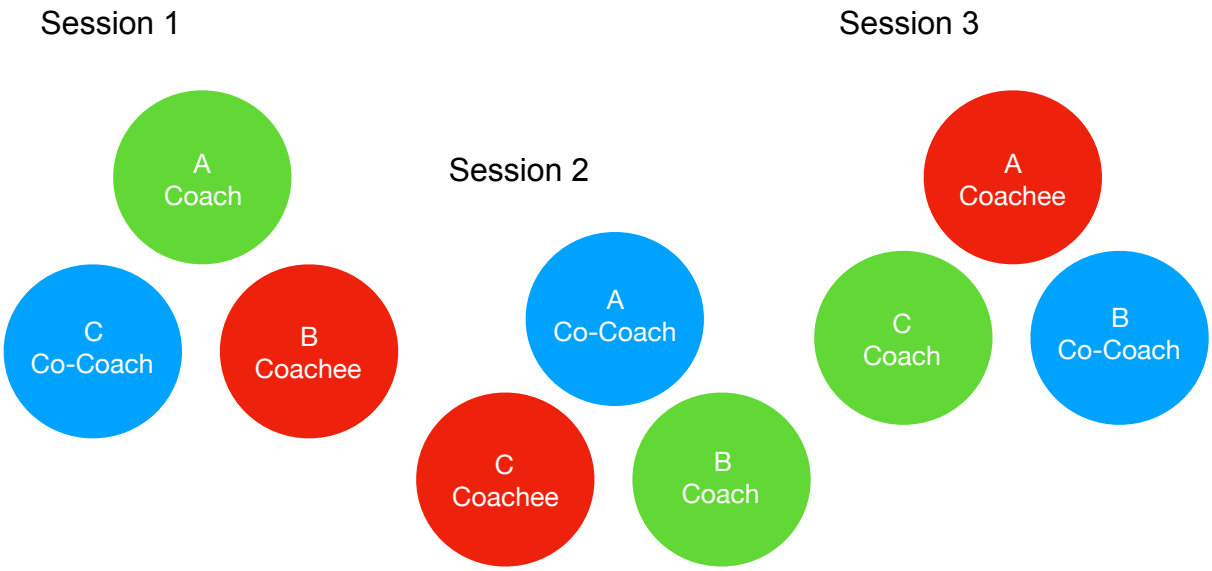

Figure 6: Rotation of roles in coaching triads

Throughout the autumn term 2017, in addition to skills training, teachers participated in a programme of coaching that would act as a practice run for the research intervention; a repeat of the programme in the spring term 2018. This programme provided each triad with six half day sessions together, meaning that each teacher was twice observed by their colleagues (once in each half term) with a coaching session immediately after. The focus of the observation and the subsequent coaching session was predetermined by the teacher being coached. At this stage no formal record of the coaching was required, but teachers were encouraged to keep their own notes about agreed actions and progress.

At the end of this autumn programme and before finalising plans for the programme to take place in the spring term, I asked for informal feedback in relation to

teachers' experience of coaching that term. This took the form of individually written sticky notes, colour coded to indicate what was going well and any desired changes. Positive feedback related to time for beneficial reflection for both the coach and coachee, the non-threatening and non-judgemental nature of the coaching, a growing positive atmosphere, the opportunity to visit classes and colleagues in different parts of the school, and the developing confidence to take risks.

The desired changes mainly related to concerns around the clarity of focus for coaching, the perceived need for a written record, and the repeated message that the time provided was too great, as teachers would prefer to have less time out of class.

As a result of this feedback the programme for the spring term was adjusted. Instead of a half day release time being given to each triad for each session, the half day was shared between two triads. Where teachers had requested that their coaching took place in the afternoon rather than the morning to avoid being out of class for maths and English, this was accommodated. A coaching record sheet was provided (appendix 1) as an aid for the coachee, rather than as a formal source of data collection. Although some teachers requested direction regarding the focus for coaching sessions, in the interests of maintaining the coachee-directed nature of coaching, a concept that was not yet embedded among staff, we collectively devised a list of 'characteristics of effective teaching' that teachers could refer to for guidance. An explanation of creation of this document is included the description of data collection (p.46) .

Research Stage: Design and Implementation

Building on learning from the data and informal feedback gathered during the initial and developing stages of peer coaching, the research intervention, a programme of reciprocal peer coaching, took place over eight weeks of the 2018 spring term. This was a duplication of the autumn term programme in that teachers worked in triads, each taking turns in the role of coach, co-coach and coachee, and that each triad met six times over the term enabling each teacher to be observed and coached twice. The spring programme differed from the autumn programme due to the implementation of the changes resulting from the feedback described at the end of the previous section, and because the programme was fitted into a shorter school term meaning that the period of time between sessions was often shorter.

The same regard to ethical considerations was made in relation to participation, informed consent and openness (BERA, 2011) as described in relation to the autumn term programme (see p. 41-43).

In order to answer the three research questions, data was collected via two methods: a questionnaire and a self-evaluation rating against agreed characteristics of effective teaching.

A self-evaluation rating was chosen because it offered a method for teachers to evaluate their own practice without external judgement and thus meets the criteria for the first and third research questions. It was intended that completing a self-evaluation against agreed criteria prior to the programme of coaching would provide teachers with the support they had requested in identifying an area of focus for coaching sessions, but without taking the decision out of their hands. Completed

again at the end of the programme, without reference to baseline ratings, the tool provided a mechanism for identifying areas of perceived improvement in teaching following the peer coaching programme.

The design of the tool evolved through the process of implementing peer coaching beginning with the external trainer's work with us on the development of an evaluation document, in which teachers were asked to write lists of descriptors for each 'grade' of lesson. None of us in school was convinced that simply removing the 'outstanding', 'good', 'requires improvement' and 'inadequate' terminology from the top of the grid made this anything other than a re-creation of the Ofsted lesson observation grid that we were striving to leave behind; our concerns that this direction towards lesson judgements was at odds with our understanding of coaching and of what we were trying to achieve as a school, returned. Part way through the 2017 autumn term therefore, we made the mutual decision to end this partnership.

As a school team, we instead created our own document describing the characteristics of effective teaching (appendix 2). The characteristics in this document were based on teachers' analysis of research evidence (Coe et al. 2014, Hendrick and Macpherson, 2017, and Rosenshine, 2010) and were presented as a source of guidance for effective teaching. They were not broken down into shades or grades of effectiveness, as with Ofsted descriptors, nor were they to be used as a lesson-by-lesson check list. Instead they used a semantic differential rating scale (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011) which enabled teachers to demonstrate improvement, but not to attribute a judgmental heading, such as 'good' or 'outstanding' to their practice.

The characteristics against which ratings would be made, were organised under two headings, 'Learning Climate and Teacher Knowledge' and 'Teaching', and were presented as radar charts, at the suggestion of one of the teachers. This layout enabled ease of completion and visual interpretation (figures 7 and 8).

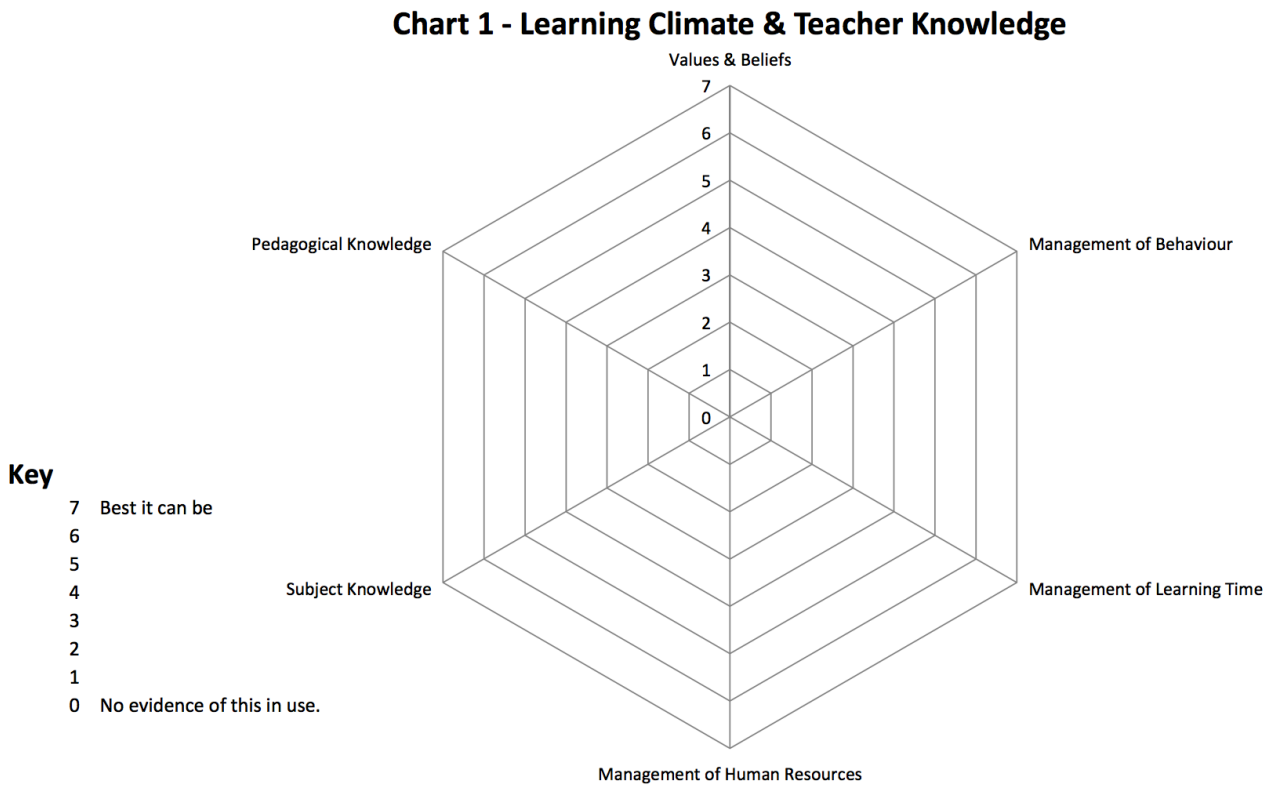

Figure 7: Characteristics of Excellent Teaching, Self-Evaluation Chart 1.

Instead of using opposing adjectives at the extremes of the scale, which in relation to the quality of teaching could have been 'highly effective….ineffective', I elected to use language that more appropriately reflected the characteristics being rated. As the effectiveness of the characteristics was supported by robust research evidence, it seemed appropriate to rate their application according to best use and absence of use, rather than in terms of effectiveness or ineffectiveness. The choice of language

was also intended to support the shift from a judgemental to a developmental climate by opting to describe the negative extreme as an absence of a strategy rather than as the negative use of a strategy. The extremes of the scale were therefore labelled ‘best it can be’ and ‘no evidence of this in use’. A seven point scale was deemed to allow sufficient scope for progression between the two extremes. In selecting the design of this self-evaluation tool is was recognised that each teacher would interpret each point of the scale differently and that intervals could not be assumed to be equal (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011). No advantage would therefore be gained by extending the range of the scale beyond this.

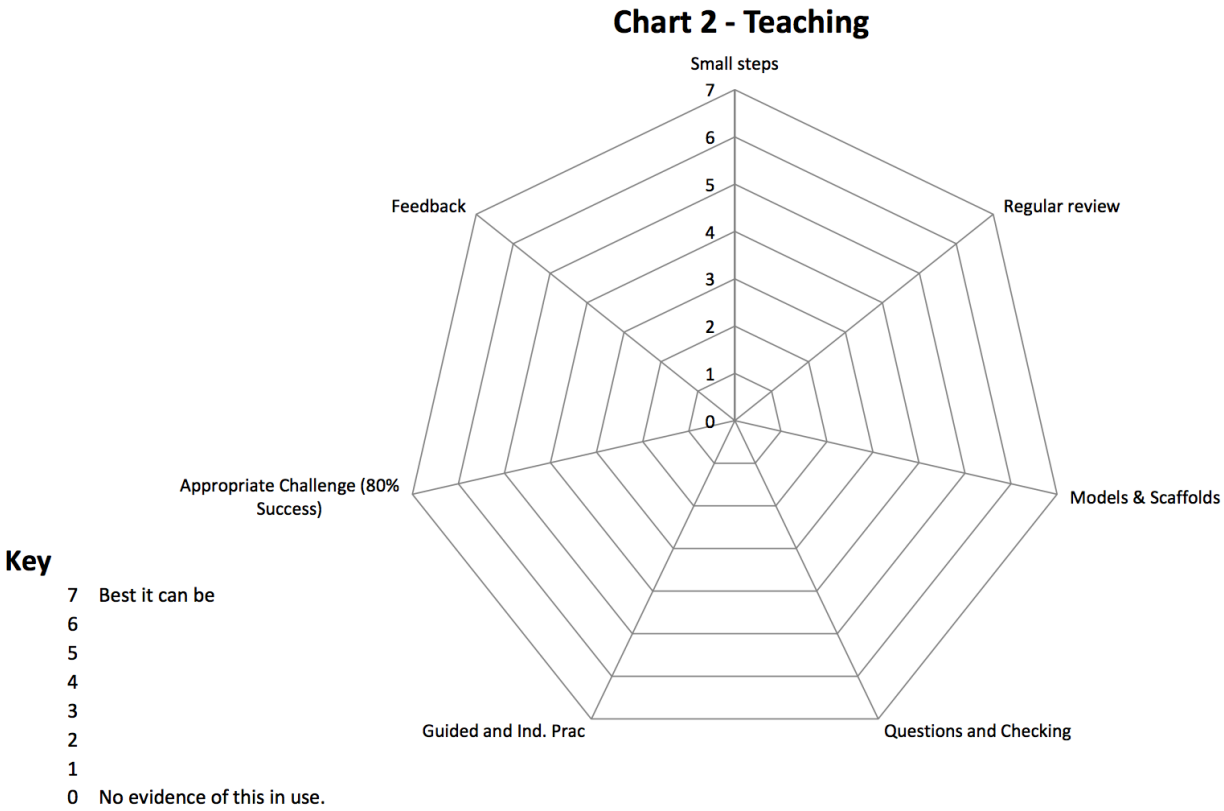

Figure 8: Characteristics of Excellent Teaching, Self-Evaluation Chart 2.

The second method of data collection was a questionnaire. A significant driver for choosing this method was anonymity for the respondent (Munn and Drever, 1990).

Questions, presented as statements, were designed under four different categories to answer the three research questions. The categories were loosely titled ‘traditional observation with judgements’, ‘peer observation with coaching, ‘impact on teaching/ performance’ and ‘impact on well-being’ with some statements addressing more than one.

The baseline questionnaire (appendix 3), completed in January before the research intervention, was made up of sixteen statements with responses indicated on a five point Likert scale (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011). The questionnaire completed after the intervention (appendix 4) was made up of eighteen statements with the same response scale as the baseline, one question requiring a ‘tick all that apply’ response and one requiring respondents to select and rank all responses that apply from a list of eight. Both questionnaires provided space for ‘comment/ explanation / example’ next to each response and the second questionnaire ended with an invitation to record any additional comments. This design was intended to provide not only quantitative data in the form of the number and percentage of responses, but also opportunity for teachers to provide reasons, explanations and opinions in a richer, qualitative form (Munn and Drever, 1990).

While a questionnaire affords the researcher insight into the participants perceptions of practice, it is by design ‘disconnected from the practices themselves’ (Townsend, 2013: 91) and must be recognised an indication of the participants subjective view rather than an objective refection of practice.

A pilot of both the self-evaluation and the baseline and post-intervention questionnaires was carried out with a group of teachers with no involvement in the

study. As a result some refinements were made to the language used, for example adding phrases such as ‘carried out by the SLT’ to ensure clarity around the nature of lesson observations and feedback being described. The order of questions was also refined so that questions designed to ask for similar responses to test consistency, were not consecutive. In the second questionnaire, the explanation that the first group of questions related specifically to coaching experience during the spring term programme was added.

In line with ethical guidelines (BERA, 2011) to ensure that participants were fully informed, written in the header and footer to the questionnaire were clear explanations about the intended use and audience of the data and the assurance that all responses would remain anonymous. Aware of the potential influence my roles as headteacher and researcher could have on participants’ responses, it was essential that not only were results reported anonymously, but also that research methods allowed data to be gathered anonymously. However, it was also essential that comparison of teachers’ baseline self-evaluation ratings with the post-intervention ratings was possible. To enable this, teachers were asked to use a pseudonym on the two self-evaluation documents. Because there was no need to compare individual baseline and post-intervention questionnaires, the content of which necessarily differed to reflect the information available at the time it was being completed, there was no request for names or pseudonyms on these. To further protect anonymity, the name and location of the school are not used.

Data paperwork is kept securely and electronic analysis files stored on a password protected device. These will be kept until the paper is complete and finalised and then destroyed or deleted.

Data Analysis

Analysis of data from the self-evaluation ratings will focused on the average and individual direction of change. At an individual level analysis will reveal the change in rating against each teaching characteristic for each anonymous teacher. Data relating to size of improvement in terms of the numerical ratings, will not been used for analysis. This is because it is not possible to assume equal intervals (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011) or to attribute differentiated significance to a change of one interval for example compared with a change of two or three intervals.

Questionnaire data will be analysed in terms of the degree of agreement or disagreement with each statement presented as the percentage of respondents. Explanatory comments will also be considered at a qualitative level.

Collaboration

In addition to the collaboration between staff engaged in the project, the development of the work involved partnership with an external provider and, despite agreement to end this relationship earlier than originally planned, visits from and to headteachers in other partner schools of hers developed my understanding of the possible applications of coaching in schools. On completion, the findings of the project will be shared with governors and staff in the participating school and it is intended that this written piece will be included in Growth Coaching International's 'Resources for Coaching in Education ' list (van Nieuwerburgh and 2018).

Findings and Discussion

Baseline Questionnaire Responses Relating to Experiences of Traditional Lesson Observations with Judgemental Feedback

Eighteen teachers completed the baseline questionnaire (appendix 3). Of these, two missed a page and so did not respond to the last six of the sixteen questions. The school employed twenty-one teachers including senior leaders.

Responses in relation to traditional lesson observation (figure 9), reveal that a significant 77% of teachers had dreaded formal lesson observations, with half strongly disagreeing and none agreeing that they contributed to teachers' well-being. An almost identical proportion (78%) to those who had dreaded observations, indicated that receiving feedback following these observations had been a positive experience, with 33% reporting that receiving feedback had been a negative experience.

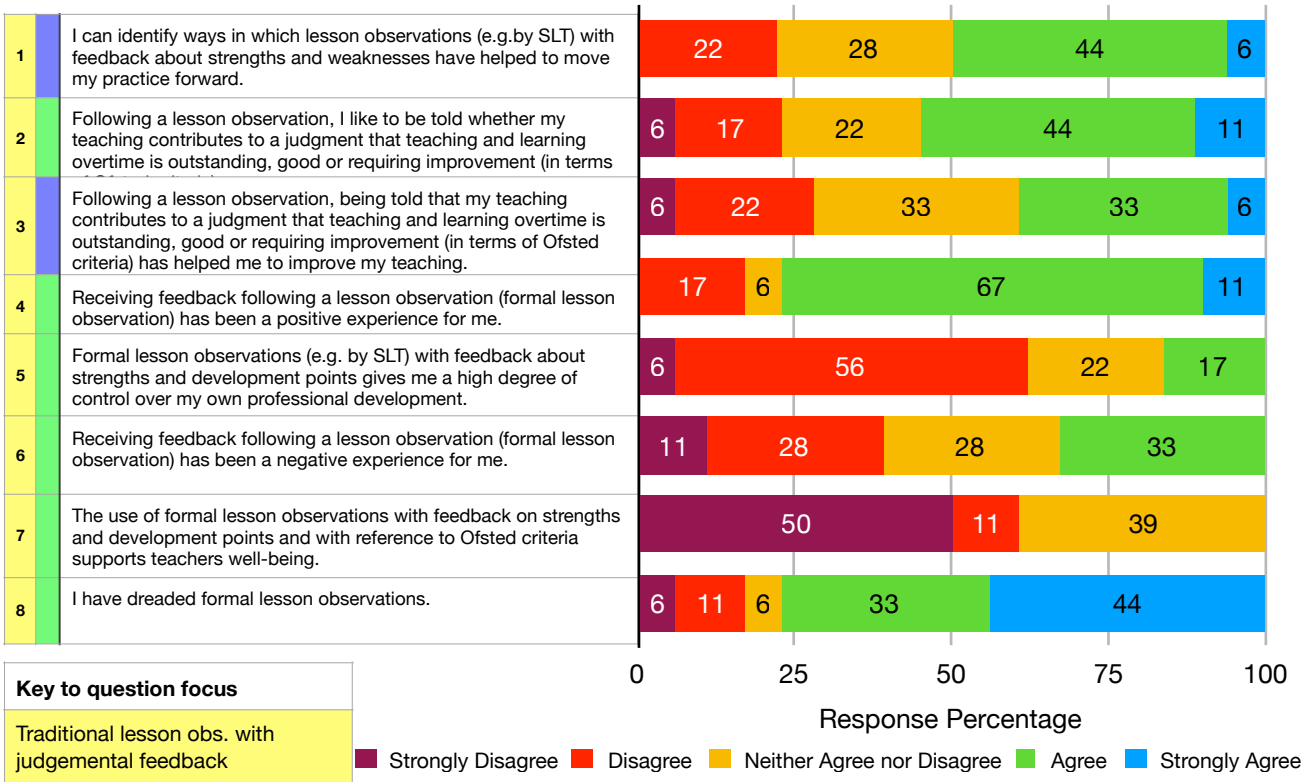

Figure 9: Baseline questionnaire responses relating to traditional lesson observations with judgemental feedback.

Analysis of teachers' comments suggests that positive experiences are on the condition of positive judgements:

> It's always good to receive some sort of praise and that is what is familiar. Equally though, it would be damning to receive anything less than 'good'.

…as is the impact of judgemental feedback and gradings on well-being,

> It depends on the feedback and how well any 'critical' information is presented and supported.

> Depends on the grade!

Caution should therefore be exercised when interpreting responses as to whether feedback has been a positive or negative experience, as it is possible that the correlation is between between the judgement or grade given and a positive or negative rating, rather than the overall experience and the rating.

In relation to feedback, comments reveal that while positive feedback can be welcomed:

> Validation (as long as it isn't too frequent!) is empowering.

…it is not necessarily helpful in moving practice forward:

> Fine if it's positive feedback, but not useful for developing negative points.

…and at worst has had a damaging impact:

> [I've] been in situations where it has been used to bring me down a peg or two.

> [I've had] previous bullying experiences.

17% agreed that traditional lesson observations gave them a high degree of control over their professional development with 62% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing that this was the case. These findings align with the view Lofthouse and Wright (2012) that observation and feedback in England operates in a cycle of

practice that undermines teacher agency and fails to encourage reflectivity and self-development on the part of teachers. Teachers' comments further reinforce this position:

> If feedback is based on a particular agenda, it's not always helpful.
>
> It highlights the points for development, but is only as useful as the observer is skilled.
>
> Not always [does it give me a high degree of control over my own professional development] - [it] can be driven by a school or outside focus, not necessarily my personal professional development.

These views mirror those expressed by teachers surveyed for the 2003 professional development study (Hustler et. al., 2003: viii) in which external drivers such as 'school development needs and national priorities' were seen to take precedence over the development needs of individual teachers. This finding may be seen to indicated that there has been little change in the external pressures felt by schools in the intervening fifteen years.

55% of teachers agreed that they like to be told the grade of their teaching after a lesson, while a smaller 39% perceived that being given this grade had helped to improve their teaching, with half indicating that feedback from SLT regarding observed strengths and weaknesses observed, had moved their practice forward.

The division in views is perhaps not surprising when research indicates that the subjectivity of gradings makes them unreliable (Coe, 2014), that observers are inconsistent in their ability to recognise effective teaching (MET Project 2013; Coe et al. 2015) and that the effectiveness of feedback is reliant on the clarity of the observation instrument and the quality of observer training (Murphy, 2013 and MET Project 2013), which teachers and senior leaders in schools in England rarely have.

In some cases the experience and usefulness of receiving an Ofsted style grade for teaching was described positively:

> I like to be clear about how I am teaching and where I can develop. Having guidelines using Ofsted criteria enables a starting point. Whether or not you agree, it means you can have a professional dialogue. I don't find it inhibits my teaching after a lesson observation.
>
> Positive feedback increased self belief and confidence.
>
> It has in the past helped me to see where I need to improved / [what I need to] focus on.

Some recognised that positive views may be linked to familiarity or habit in the observation and feedback methods adopted by schools, from which it can be difficult to break away:

> It is always helpful to know if SLT think you're 'on the right track'. Over the years it has just become second nature to receive 'a grade' observations without them feeling a little odd.
>
> In early practice this was useful as a scale to know where my practice fit - though on reflection using Ofsted criteria would not have been necessary for this.

Some felt that judgements and gradings of any kind were not particularly helpful to either well-being:

> Can be demoralising and not always comment on what's good.
>
> Feeling judged is never particularly helpful.
>
> I've found teachers are often already too critical of themselves and 'judgement' can hinder well-being.
>
> In the past this has made me feel terrible. A blanket judgement about my teaching seems unfair. I have felt (in the past) pitted against colleagues and forced (in a way) to criticise when I should be supporting.
>
> SLT always seem to find something wrong without necessarily commenting on what has improved / moved forward.

… or to securing improvements in teaching performance:

> Sometimes a formal observation informs what I'm already aware of but doesn't lead to improvement.
>
> It can be helpful, but as it is a 'one off' lesson, not always a good indicator of regular teaching practice.
>
> One knows what one does well so following an observation it's more about confirming what you do is 'right' rather than thinking about implementing growth.
>
> Because observations by nature are judgemental, it is usually stressful and then such a relief when over, that it is difficult to take in comments, improvements, development issues - let alone put them into effective practice.

The minority were more positive:

> There are always aspects of teaching that can be improved and lesson observations have given me dedicated time to properly discuss strengths and weaknesses in a professional, face to face way.

Discussion around the purpose of observation is key here; guidance from a Sutton Trust review (Murphy, 2013) is explicit in its conclusion that schools should distinguish between observation for the purpose of performance management or appraisal and those for the purpose of professional development. The experience in many schools is that there is lack of clarity and blurring of roles (Hobson and Malderez, 2013 and Milner and Couley, 2016) which can become barriers to improvement.

Baseline Questionnaire Responses Relating to Experiences of Peer Coaching to Date

Teachers perceptions of coaching at the baseline (figure 10) were in contrast with their perceptions of traditional observation and feedback. None agreed and 76% disagreed to some extent, that they had dreaded the peer coaching sessions, with 82% reporting that the autumn term coaching sessions had been a positive experience and 88% believing that peer coaching sessions contributed to teachers' well-being. 94% agreed to some extent and none disagreed that coaching gave them a high degree of control over their professional development, with some providing supporting comments:

> I like being able to select my area for improvement. We (generally) as a profession are reflective so this feels like its giving us control, which is positive.
>
> It provides opportunity to focus on exactly what you want.

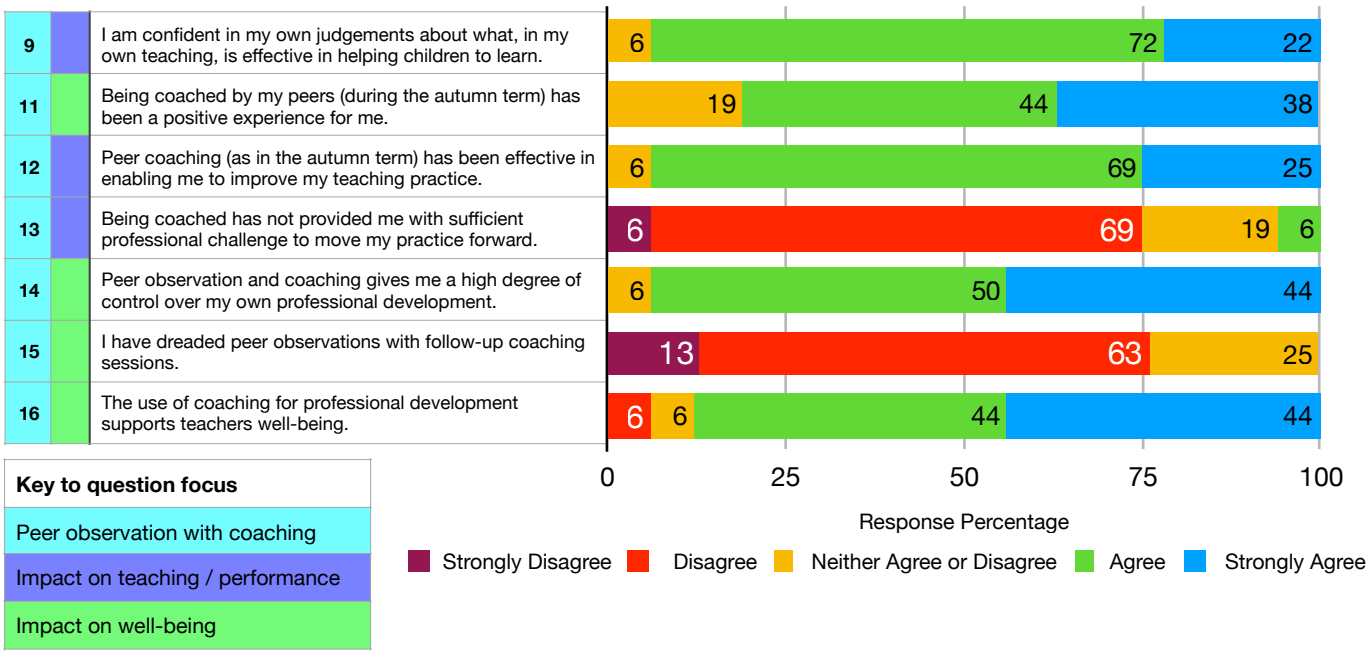

Figure 10: Baseline questionnaire responses relating to experiences of peer-coaching.

At this point 94% agreed or strongly agreed that they were confident in making judgements about the effectiveness of their own teaching, 94% agreed to some extent that peer coaching had enabled them to make improvements in their practice, and 75% agreed that peer coaching had provided a sufficient level of challenge to move their practice forward. These findings will be discussed in relation to relevant literature when compared with post-interventional data in the next section.

Teachers' commentary supports a largely positive view of coaching in terms of impact on well-being:

> Very positive and great for well-being.
>
> It has made me see/ experience observations in a different way.
>
> I was a little sceptical at first, before coaching, but it proved to be a really positive experience.
>
> It is a supportive method of professional development.
>
> This less formal way has definitely not made me dread staff coming into my lessons.
>
> Follow-up conversations are always held in a supportive way - [it] doesn't feel like you're being judged.
>
> I haven't done anything different in preparation for peer observations. It was far less stressful than formal observations.

…and on teaching performance:

> I found coaching really effective. It was great to have a discussion and talk through strategies. Coaching others also improved my own teaching through sharing ideas.
>
> It has been a positive experience to share ideas / techniques with other people that you might not normally work closely with.

Some expressed reservations regarding coaching focus, manageability of coaching programme and the expertise of the coaches:

> Really not sure. I struggled to find a clear coaching area that was small and specific.
>
> Positive to talk with other staff, BUT time in preparing class work when out of class has increased workload and made me more frustrated than positive about the time out of class.
>
> It depends greatly on the skills of the coaches. Effective practice comes from effective coaching.
>
> Need more time to think about coaching point.

A concern for some teachers was the issue of accountability. This was discussed in an end of autumn term review described in the methodology section (p. 45). There was discomfort with using a system that required no paperwork other than teachers' own notes. I had, as a result of these concerns, provided a coaching record sheet (appendix 1) on which teachers could record their coaching focus and agreed action points. While this provided a scaffold, there was no intention to collect (although some teachers handed them in voluntarily) or use any data from them. One comment referred to this agreed change:

> I think the introduction of guided sheet with action points will help with accountability.

… and highlights the 'norm' of accountability.

An additional statement was presented in the baseline questionnaire: 'In our school there is an established and sustained programme of professional development.' While this did not relate directly to the research questions, it was posed to ascertain teachers' views more widely of the existing provision for professional development in the school and therefore to provide context for their responses regarding

observations, coaching and improvements to well-being and performance. 6% of respondents strongly agreed, 75% agreed and 19% neither disagreed nor strongly disagreed with with statement.

Self-Evaluation Ratings: baseline compared with post-intervention data

Of the participating teachers, twelve completed both the baseline and post-intervention self evaluation of teaching. Due to part-time working, illness or other absence, some completed only the beginning or the end rating and so comparison was not possible.

Each rated their performance against six agreed characteristics of effective practice in establishing learning climate and teacher knowledge. Figure 11 shows that the average of teachers' individual ratings at against all characteristics was higher after the peer-coaching programme than before.

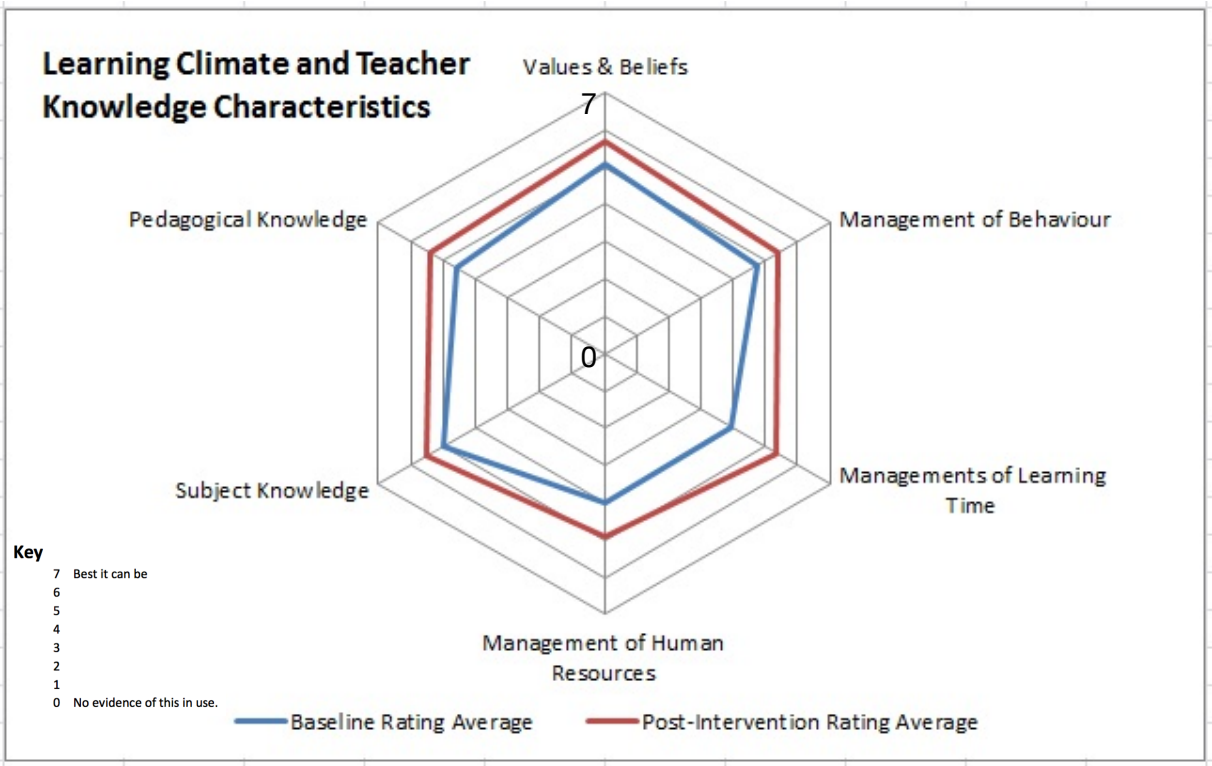

Figure 11: Teachers' self-evaluation of performance against agreed indicators for learning climate and teacher knowledge.

Using the same rating scale, figure 12 shows the average of teachers' self-evaluation ratings of their performance against seven agreed characteristics of effective teaching. Again, for all characteristics the average rating was higher after the peer-coaching programme than before.

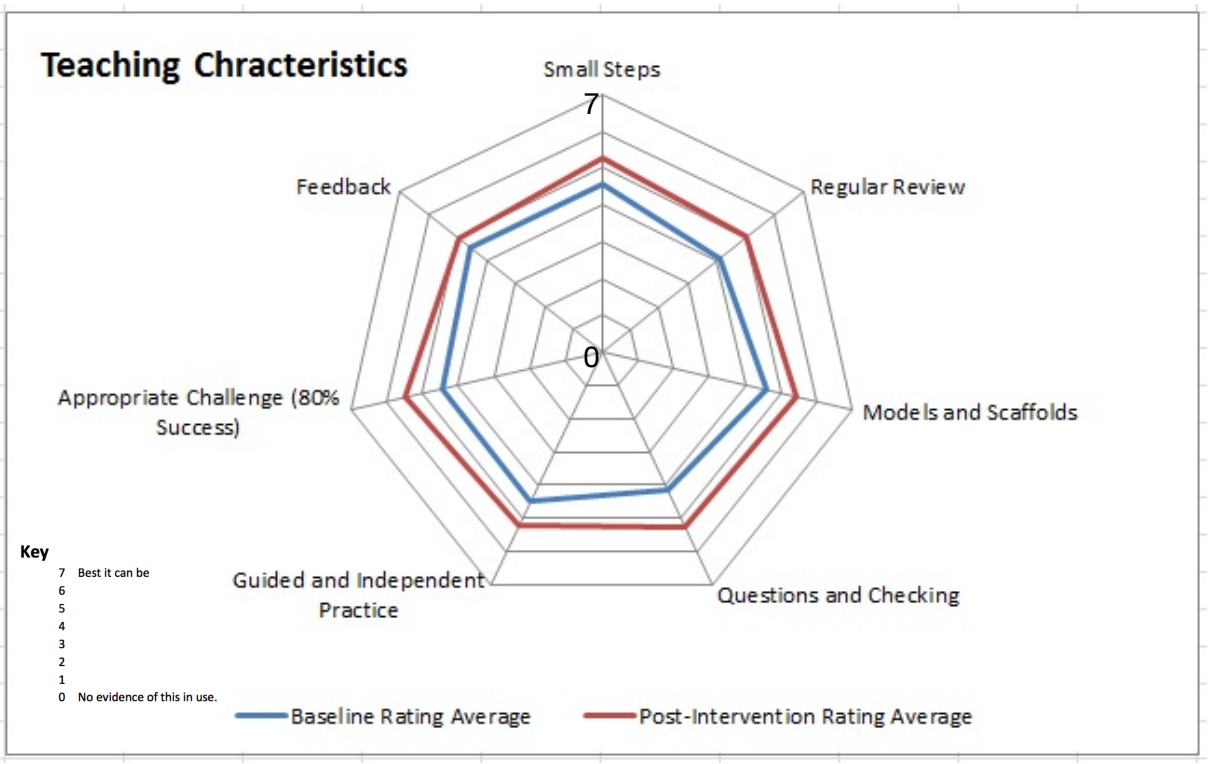

Figure 12: Teachers' self-evaluation of performance against agreed indicators for teaching

Analysis of data for individual teachers reveals that all teachers rated their performance to have improved in at least one of the characteristic areas, 92% in five or more areas, 83% indicated improvements in six or more characteristics, for 67% ratings improved in at least nine areas and 25% rated their performance to have improved in twelve of the thirteen areas.

Some ratings remained the same from baseline to post-intervention review and two teachers rated their performance against up to five characteristics to have declined since the baseline (figure 13).

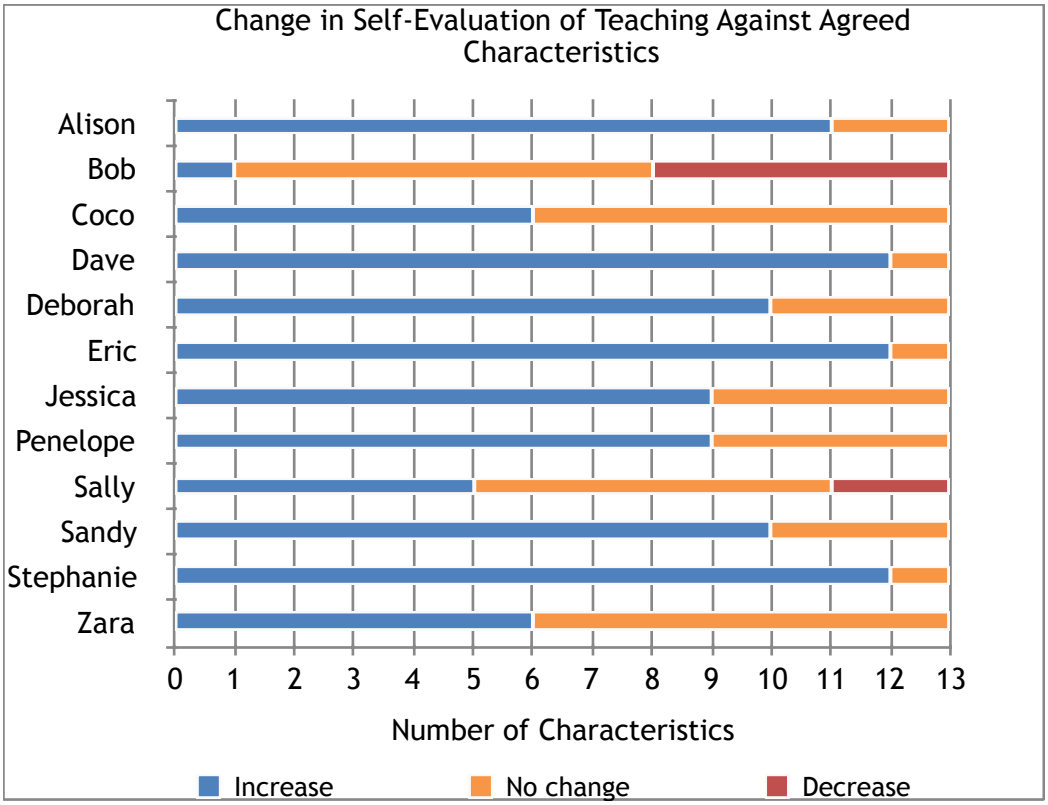

Figure 13: change in self-evaluation ratings for teachers individually (Pseudonyms used to ensure anonymity.)

From this data in isolation, it is not possible to establish a causal link in terms of the programme of coaching leading to improvements in teachers' self -evaluation of performance. We can however observe that against all agreed indicators, on average, self-evaluation ratings of teaching performance for this group of teachers improved following the programme of coaching and that for each individual teacher the rating of performance improved in at least one of the agreed indicators of teaching performance, with all but one teacher reporting improvements against at least five of the thirteen indicators.

Post-Intervention Questionnaire Responses

After the spring term programme of peer-to-peer coaching, teachers completed a second questionnaire (appendix 4). Fifteen questionnaires were completed. The difference in participation at the beginning and end points was due to staff illness and part-time working.

The findings from this questionnaire are grouped below under the heading of each research question. Within each section reference is made, where relevant, to the outcomes of the baseline questionnaire and, in the case of the first research question to teacher's baseline and post-intervention self-evaluation ratings of teaching performance (p. 61-63). Response data for some statements has been discussed in relation to more than one question where findings are relevant.

Research Question 1: How far does a programme of reciprocal peer coaching lead to improvements in teachers' ratings of their own performance?

Five of the twenty statements in the post-intervention questionnaire relate directly to the first research question (figure 14).

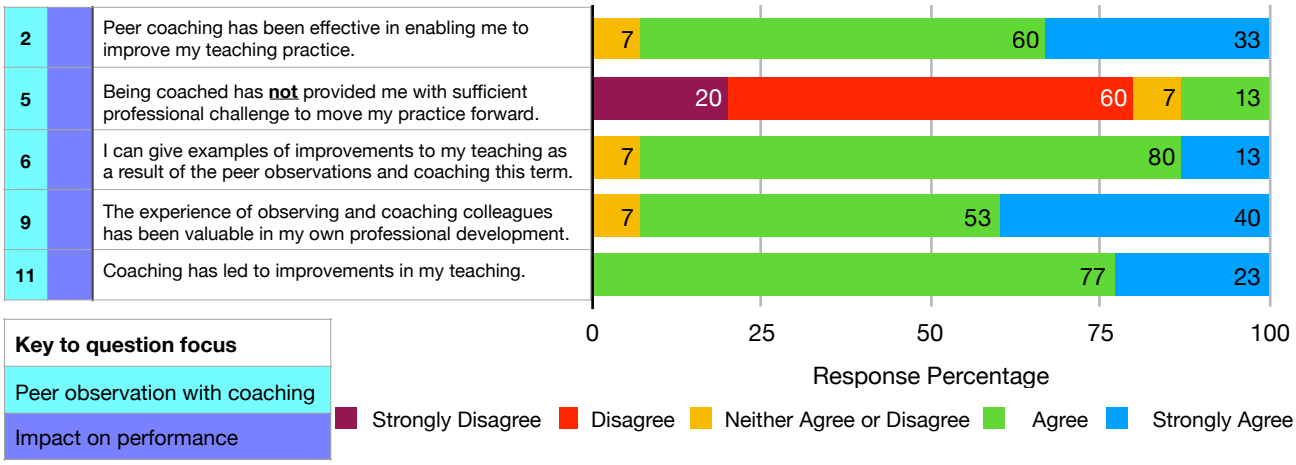

Figure 14: Post-intervention questionnaire responses relating to impact of coaching on teaching performance

The responses reveal that following the peer-to-peer coaching programme 93% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that coaching had been effective in enabling them to improve teaching practice; that, as a result of the peer observations and coaching, they could give examples of improvements to their teaching; and that the experience of observing and coaching colleagues had been valuable in their own professional development. 80% of the teachers in the study disagreed or strongly disagreed that coaching had not provided sufficient challenge to move practice forward with a minority 13% (two of the fifteen teachers responding) agreeing that there had been insufficient challenge. These findings reinforce those of Joyce and Showers (1996) in that it is not necessary for coaching to be carried out by expert coaches in order for positive impact on professional development to be observed.

At this post-intervention point, all teachers agreed to some extent that coaching had led to improvements in their teaching. This data, along with improvements shown in the self-evaluation ratings, gives strong support for peer-to peer coaching as an effective tool for improving teaching performance as demonstrated by a wide body of research (Joyce and Showers, 1996; Bowman and McCormick, 2000; Suggett, 2006; Browne 2006; Lord, Atkinson and Mitchell, 2008). Teachers' comments support this further:

> [The programme of coaching has] given me the confidence to try something new and consider how it effective it was in a supportive environment.
>
> Being coached on this [my chosen focus] helped me to realise that I actually had most of the solutions already and to resolve this and become more effective!
>
> The real benefit has been in considering a 'problem' with colleagues.
>
> It has been a far more specific process for me than traditional observation, which often focuses on several elements at once.

> It's been a great way to identify and share with colleagues how to move practice forward.

Comments revealed limitations and challenges experienced in the use of peer coaching. In some cases these reflected the limitations identified by others (Lord, Atkinson and Mitchell, 2008; Lofthouse et. al., 2010) such as level of challenge, allocating time for coaching, overcoming issues of guilt related to missing lessons and the clash of hierarchical management priorities with a move towards collaboration and self-evaluation. Others reveal additional issues such as work-load, flexility in terms of availability of on demand coaching and choice of coach, choice of coaching focus, which was also raised in the baseline responses, and changes to classroom behaviour when additional adults are present:

> I have found it hard to find time to consistently implement things I have trialled [as a result of coaching due to] planning / time constraints.
>
> Not always really known what to focus on - found coaching from outcome of lesson more valuable.
>
> I feel teaching is much more than time spent teaching the children and so far coaching through observations hasn't looked at these other aspects.
>
> [My practice has moved forward from discussions following other coaching observations but the outcomes from my sessions were not always relevant due to children behaving differently with 4, sometimes 5 adults in the classroom'.
>
> I sometimes worry I haven't picked up on something that would improve my own teaching.
>
> At times I have wanted to talk to another professional so at times the challenge hasn't challenged me and I needed to revisit sooner.
>
> It would have been good to change the triads and speak to other people over the weeks - it became quite repetitive.

These comments indicate the desire for coaching opportunities to be extended through widening the focus to include the teacher's role beyond the classroom,

allowing for change and selection of coaches to increase variety of expertise or select a coach with particular expertise.

Teachers gave many examples of the areas of practice that had improved as a result of the peer coaching programme, which can be categorised in relation to some of the agreed characteristics of excellent teaching (appendix 2):

Values and beliefs

> Supporting children to improve growth mindset.

Management of behaviour

> Strategies for getting the children to focus. [I] changed the way we run the classroom because of low PSED skills with this cohort.

> Strategies to improve children's listening and taking responsibility.

Management of learning time

> Changed guided reading to morning, straight after registration. Children much more focused and ready to go as soon as they arrive at school.

Management of human resources

> Include sports apprentice more effectively in my PE lessons.

> Managing my TA, [however] the feedback didn't improvement teaching.

Subject and/or pedagogical knowledge

> Work on high frequency words and spelling; new ideas to improve spelling in the class.

Small steps

> Introduction of even smaller steps provision

Models and scaffolds / Appropriate challenge

> talk for learning strategies

> After being coached on the topic of differentiation I made a list of different strategies and what actually works for future reference; I try to ensure three levels of of challenge…

Questions and checking

> focus on questioning.

Teachers' comments described how the experience of observing and coaching colleagues had been valuable to their own professional development. Some of these relate to the benefit of collaboration, which was also identified by Bowman and McCormick (2000) in their study of peer coaching:

> Good to see different year groups and classrooms. Good to share ideas.
>
> It has been really useful to coach alongside someone working in year group above me, to see and learn about expectations. Opened up good dialogue about best practice for particular age group.
>
> Time with other colleagues to discuss teaching.

…and others to the reassurance gained from realising that other share similar worries or concerns:

> Shared experience and views. Makes you realise others all have worries and stress.
>
> It has been affirming to help others and see that they are anxious about things I was surprised about!
>
> It has enabled me to support colleagues in a way in which I hadn't had the opportunity to previously.

Two of the five questions relating to this first research question repeat questions asked in the January baseline. Question 2 (figure 14, p. 64) of this post-intervention questionnaire repeats question 12 (figure 10, p.58) of the baseline and the responses match very closely, with 93% and 94% respectively agreeing to some extent with the statement 'peer coaching has been effective in enabling me to improve my teaching practice'. Given that the number of respondents was different in each questionnaire, the one percentage point difference is as close to an

identical result as possible. It could be that the lack of change following the coaching intervention could be due to teachers already having experience of a programme of peer coaching in school, as the baseline took place before the spring programme of coaching, but after the autumn 'practice run'.

Similarly, question 5 of the post-intervention questionnaire (figure 14, p. 64) repeats question 13 (figure 10, p.58) of the baseline. Again response percentages are similar with 80% disagreeing to some extent with the statement 'being coached has not provided me with sufficient professional challenge to move my practice forward' after the intervention compared with 75% disagreeing before. The small increase in disagreement could be attributed to increased skill as coaches become more experienced. However there was also an increase in agreement with the statement from 6% at the baseline to 13% post-intervention and a reduction in the percentage neither agreeing nor disagreeing. It may be that following the second programme of coaching that formed the intervention for this study, teachers had developed a clearer view about the level of challenge received.

Research question 2: What can be identified about the process of coaching that moves teaching practice forward?

In the post-intervention questionnaire, if teachers agreed that coaching had led to improvements in their teaching, they were asked to respond to the question 'what is it about the coaching process that moved your practice forward?'. Several options were presented as well as the option to select and specify a characteristic of coaching not offered in the list. Every teacher agreed that coaching had led to improvements in their practice and all indicated aspects of coaching that had, in

their opinion, led to this. They were asked to select all that applied from the list including the option ‘other’, which no-one chose.

Figure 15 shows the percentage of teachers indicating each option as a characteristic of coaching that moved their practice forward. All teachers selected ‘time to reflect on practice’ and ‘discussing my practice with others’ with 93% selecting ‘motivation from having agreed my actions with others’. The other options relating to questioning, coach’s suggestions, ability to decide own development focus and the opportunity to observe others all being selected by a significant majority (87%) of respondents.

Figure 15: Characteristics of coaching identified as moving practice forward.

The factors most frequently rated as moving practice forward relate to refection and collaboration. Lofthouse, Leat and Towler (2010: 36) conclude that ‘good coaching’ encourages teachers to be reflective and metacognitive in relation to their work. In this study we can see that teachers found that not only had the coaching encouraged reflection, but that they perceived this reflection to have been instrumental in moving practice forward. Collaboration is widely recognised

as being a key enhancer of teacher professional development (CUREE 2005, Timperley, 2008; Walter and Briggs, 2012 and DfE 2016) and was for all teachers in this study assessed to be a key factor in improving their practice.

The teachers were also asked to 'rank all that apply in order of value with 1 being most valuable'. The chart in figure 16 shows the mean rank of each with the two characteristics rated most highly on average being 'discussing my practice with others' and 'opportunity to observe other teachers'.

Figure 16: Characteristics of coaching ranked in terms of value in moving practice forward.

Collaboration was not only commonly selected, but also highly valued as a factor in moving practice forward, in the form of professional discussion and also through the opportunity to observe the teaching of others. To some degree the value of peer observation is brought into question by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) (Worth et al. 2017) study, which found no impact of teacher peer observation on student outcomes at GCSE. However, in many of the schools in their study peer

observations were already happening to some extent and although data from observations was reviewed and collated, it was not followed up with coaching conversations. In our school peer observations had not previously been routine and in our programme the focus was directed by the teacher being observed and the observation was followed by peer coaching. The other key difference is that in this study the impact of peer observation is being assessed by teachers in relation to their own performance and in the EEF study it was assessed through pupil outcomes data.

Further information on teachers' perceptions of what it was about the process of coaching that moved their practice forward can be found in responses to five additional statements in the post-intervention questionnaire (figure 17).

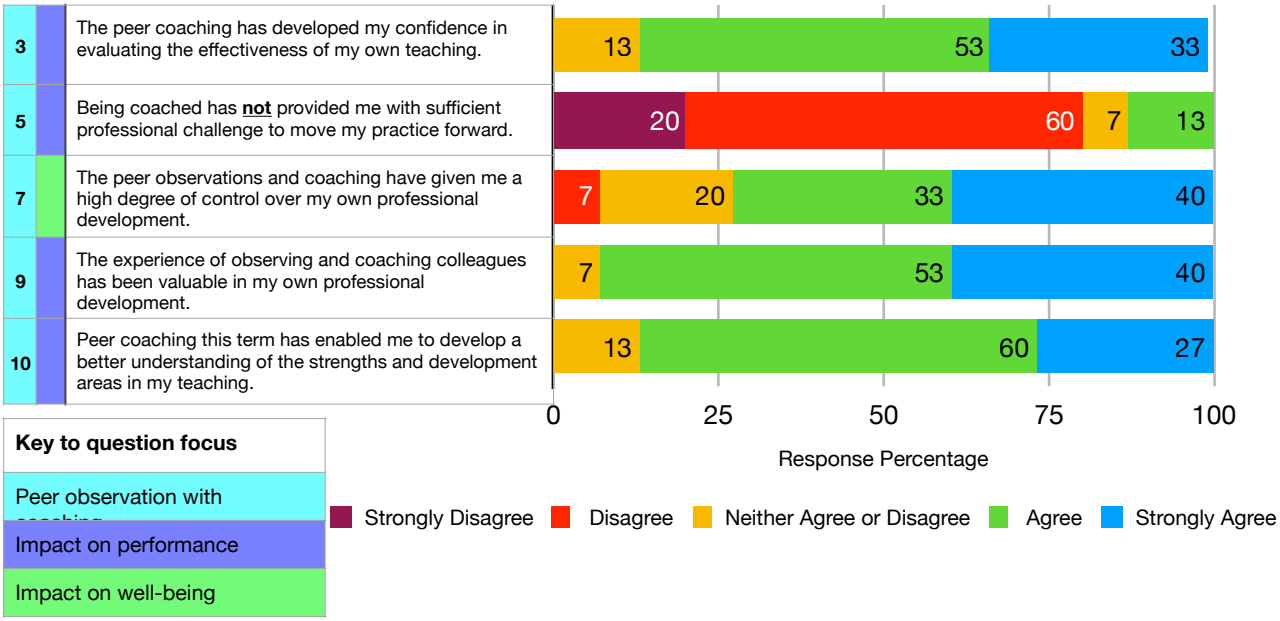

Figure 17: Questions relating to the process of coaching.

These give further support to premise that the act of observing and coaching colleagues provides valuable professional development for the coach. We can also

deduce that as 80% disagreed that coaching has not provided sufficient challenge, that the vast majority found the level of challenge provided by peer coaching to be sufficient to move practice forward. Challenge is an element that Lofthouse and her colleagues (2010) found lacking in their analysis of peer coaching practice and, as with our study, teacher coaches rather than expert coaches were used. It could be that teachers here judged there to be sufficient challenges, but that under experience or expert analysis the level of challenge would be evaluated to be less significant.

The findings also show a high level of agreement that coaching developed teachers' confidence in evaluating the effectiveness, strengths and development areas in their own practice and this was further supported by comments:

> Much more confident and I feel okay trying out new ideas and strategies.
>
> More realistic evaluation of own teaching -not as negative / self-critical.
>
> Definitely highlighted [strengths and development areas] and useful to be seen through peers' eyes. Sometimes identifying areas of development I wouldn't have thought of, just through conversations.'
>
> Positive feedback from colleagues has highlighted strengths I wasn't aware of.

In his case study analysis, Adams (2016: 86) finds similar outcomes from coaching including 'greater self-awareness' and 'improved confidence and self-belief'.

73% of teachers agreed that coaching provided a high degree of control over professional development and explanatory statements supported this:

> I have felt very in control and happy. A world away from where I was. Enjoyed identifying and improving my teaching.

> It has been beneficial to see other years further up the school…in a different key stage.
>
> Initial reflection on areas to improve/change; opportunity to follow this up through the coaching plan.

Others expressed concern about the degree of control:

> Too much - I think a combination of coaching and the brilliant basic drop-ins as that would highlight areas you might not be seeing yourself.'
>
> [Felt at times I have had to pick a coaching point rather than consider with discussion before - during - after.'
>
> A degree but not a high degree.

Of note is the drop in percentage agreeing that peer coaching had given a high degree of control from the baseline percentage of 94% to the post-intervention figure of 73%. The comments indicate that this may have been due to difficultly in choosing a focus for coaching in advance of sessions. Another possibility is that the prescribed timetable and frequency of sessions in what was a short school term, which is noted in many of the participant's comments throughout the post-intervention questionnaire, may have led to this change in response.

Participants were also asked to identify factors that would 'improve the effectiveness of coaching in moving your practice forward'. 27% identified 'further training to improve the skills of those involved in the coaching', with one explaining 'maybe a top up session to check that what we are doing is correct'. A significant 87% identified 'adjusting the timing / frequency of the coaching session' with explanatory comments expressing a wish to reduce the frequency of coaching sessions, largely due to the amount of time of of class, and issues with cover:

> Not so frequent. I spent a lot of time out of the classroom.

> I found the one every week for three weeks difficult - particularly as on the same day. In short spring term I felt I only taught minority of topic lesson, as these were taught by supply.
>
> Can be hard to think of a focus - sessions not so frequent?
>
> There has been a level of challenge in completing all sessions. Reducing the frequency too perhaps, one session in every hand term might feel more manageable.
>
> Have preferred this half term [compared with autumn] - we have managed to coach and have conversations in 40 minutes. Much more effective use of time.

The final comment relates to the change, following feedback from teachers, from the allocation of half a day to observe and coach to one school session (approximately an hour) in the spring.

Limitation relating to finding quality time for peer coaching have been described by other researchers (Lord, Atkinson and Mitchell, 2008; Lofthouse et. al., 2010). In designing this research time was provided within the school day so that teachers were not using lunch times or planning time or time at the end of the school day to carry out coaching.

<u>Research question 3: What effects can be identified, including on teacher well-being, of replacing external judgements in the form of traditional lesson observations and feedback with peer lesson observation, coaching and self-evaluation?</u>

This question focuses on the effects of removing traditional lesson observations carried out by a senior leader making quality of teaching judgements, either in the

form of an Ofsted grade or an assessment of strengths and development areas, in favour of peer observation and self-evaluation of strengths and development needs and against agreed indicators.

Findings come from responses to statements in the post-intervention questionnaire as well as from data gathered in the baseline questionnaire concerning the traditional observations participants has experienced in the past. The only observations that took place during the intervention period were those carried out for the purposes of peer coaching.

In teachers' responses (figure 18), 87% indicated that peer coaching had been a positive experience, with half strongly agreeing and an additional 14% agreeing that

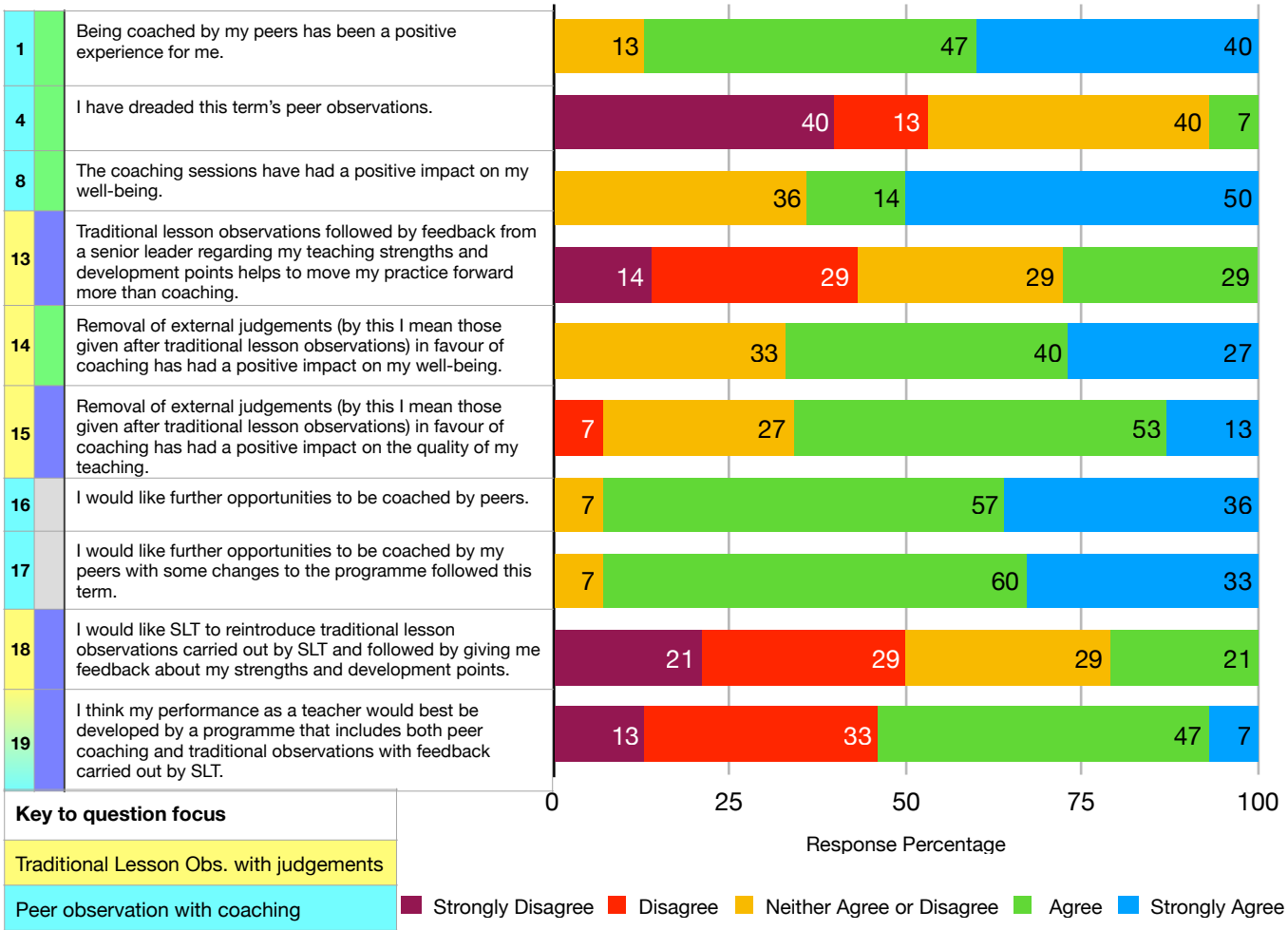

Figure 18: Questions relating to traditional and peer observation.

the coaching sessions had had a positive impact on their well-being. Although some participants neither agreed nor disagreed with these statements, none disagreed.

This was also true in response to the statement ‘removal of external judgements (by this I mean those given after traditional lesson observations) in favour of coaching has had a positive impact on my well-being’ with 27% strongly agreeing and a further 40% agreeing.

Teachers comments in relation to the experience of coaching enhancing well-being reveal a positive impact in terms of improving confidence, freedom and control achieved in self-evaluation, and the importance of relationships with coaching colleagues to the success of coaching:

> My confidence has grown. In the beginning I was quite negative, also nervous being with peers at different teaching stages.
>
> Non-threatening, relaxed / informal.
>
> Really positive - have felt in control and free to identify weaknesses and strengths.
>
> This has been both a supportive experience but also an opportunity to be more reflective of my practice and to challenge thinking around the issues chosen for development.
>
> [Agree] Especially in the latter stages when I stopped planning the coaching point and took the point from the lesson.
>
> Coaching triad has meant I have closer professional relationship with colleagues in other key stages.
>
> Colleagues have been very supportive whilst still providing a level of challenge that has made the process worthwhile.

Some found aspects of the coaching stressful due to the nature and constraints of this particular programme:

> Good to get together but it was very stressful at times doing it every week - missed a lot of class time.
>
> Coaching during lesson observations hasn't always been where I wanted support. [I] would like to look at other aspects of teaching.
>
> I found it took a lot of my time worrying about the focus being right and the coaching working.
>
> [Sometimes yes; sometimes no - leaving work for supply, not having work completed, so this causes some stress for workload / catching up.

Baseline data revealed that 77% of teachers had dreaded traditional lesson observations while none had dreaded peer-coaching sessions. At the post-intervention point a small 7% agreed that they had dreaded peer-coaching with 40% neither agreeing nor disagreeing compared with 25% in the baseline. Teachers' comments offer explanation for this increase in this neither agreeing nor disagreeing:

> It was quite difficult to think of two different foci in one term. It wasn't always possible to rearrange lessons so coaches could see a range of subjects.
>
> Not dreaded, but at times it hasn't fitted in - maybe a focus to consider. Having an allotted time didn't always fit in with what we wanted to focus on.
>
> Haven't dreaded, but found x2 cycles too much logistically in a short term.
>
> Not dreaded, but still get nervous.

53% disagreed that they had dreaded them with one commenting, 'I've actually really looked forward to them'.

Improvements in levels of stress and well-being experiences by teachers who have accessed coaching have been demonstrated (Grant, Green and Rynsaart, 2010)

and were reported by teachers in this study. Following the programme of peer coaching 67% agreed that the removal of external judgements in favour of coaching had a positive impact on their well-being with a similar 66% agreeing that this 'had a positive impact on the quality of my teaching'. 7% disagreed in response to impact on teaching, with none disagreeing regarding positive impact on well-being. The comments reflect the balance of these responses:

> Definitely positive - have felt much more in control and trusted to know my own teaching and also more motivated to improve.
>
> I get nervous so this helped that.
>
> Felt free to try new things without fear of criticism.
>
> [Agree] Yes although it is still helpful to have some sort of judgement to check that you're on the right lines.
>
> Had similar impact - you still had to focus on content & planning as you have colleagues with you.
>
> [Disagree] I feel confident to talk about my teaching with or without external judgement.

With regards to whether 'external judgements in the form of traditional lesson observations followed by feedback from a senior leader helps to move my practice forward more than coaching', views were split with 43% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing, 29% agreeing and the remaining 29% selecting the 'neither' response. Comments expressed uncertainty or disagreement:

> Fear and dread - 'drop in approach and non-threatening nature of coaching allow you to focus and reflect more effectively and motivates rather than feel criticised.
>
> I'm not sure they are <u>more</u> effective but I feel they have a different purpose - suggesting improvements you hadn't thought of. Both are useful in my opinion.
>
> [Disagree] Feedback from coaching is more specific and manageable.

When asked for their views on which method of observation, evaluation of practice and professional development they believe should be used in the future, almost all teachers (93%) agreed to some extent that they 'would like further opportunities to be coached' by peers with the same proportion agreeing that this should be 'with some changes to the programme followed this term'.

Concerning the reintroduction of traditional lesson observations carried out by SLT and followed by feedback about strengths and development points half disagreed, 21% strongly, 21% agreed (none strongly) and 29% neither agreed nor disagreed.

Finally, in response to the statement 'I think my performance as a teacher would best be developed by a programme that includes both peer coaching and traditional observations with feedback carried out by SLT' opinion was divided with 54% agreeing to some extent and 46% disagreeing to some extent.

Conclusions and Implications

It is important to recognise that data gathered in this research project was limited to teachers' own evaluations of practice and perceptions based on experience and is therefore highly subjective. However, valuable insights into teachers' experience of peer coaching compared with their experience of traditional observation and judgemental feedback, have been gained. Here I will summarise conclusions in relation to the research questions and explore the implications in for the participating school and for the application of coaching in education more widely.

How far does a programme of reciprocal peer coaching lead to improvements in teachers' ratings of their own performance?

Based on teachers perceptions and self-evaluation, the quality of their teaching improved as a result of the programme of peer coaching. These improvements in teaching performance were identified by all teachers and all were were able to describe specific examples. While some describe 'huge changes' in practice, for most these improvements can be identified in terms of small steps that are significance to teachers on a personal level and to their day to day practice.

In order to determine whether these improvements in teaching will lead to measurable improvements in children's learning, a wider range of data would need to be gathered, over a longer period of time.

In relation to this question, the findings add to a broad body of evidence supporting the use of coaching for professional development and improving teaching practice.

What can be identified about the process of coaching that moves teaching practice forward?

The collaborative nature of the coaching process is a key driver in moving practice forward, specifically the opportunity to discuss practice with colleagues, to observe peers teaching, particularly in other parts of the school, and to share ideas and problem solve with others.

Significant also is the non-judgmental character of coaching. This not only reduces teacher stress, but it affords teachers greater freedom to innovate and take risks in evolving their practice as they try out new ideas free from the fear of criticism.

The supportive and self-directed nature of coaching was seen to encourage and enable reflective practice, leading to growing professional confidence. Provided with support and space, teachers realise their ability to problem solve and are empowered to discover and create ways of improving practice.

The ability to self-direct and personalise the focus of professional development support through peer coaching, is an important factor in securing impact.

What was less evident in this study was the use of key coaching skills, such as questioning, to enable improvement. There are implications for the school in terms of providing further training for coaches to ensure that the benefits are maximised and go beyond those that can be gained from peer collaboration and support and from sharing of practice.

<u>What effects can be identified, including on teacher well-being, of replacing external judgements in the form of traditional lesson observations and feedback with peer lesson observation, coaching and self-evaluation?</u>

Removing traditional, judgemental lesson observations in favour of a programme of peer coaching and self-evaluation can reduce teachers' stress, increase collaboration, create a climate of mutual support and lead to identifiable improvements in teaching.

It is likely however that some aspects of traditional observations that are familiar to and valued by teachers may be missed, including validation in the form of positive judgements, the reassurance of advice and guidance from someone involved in

setting expectations, and the perceived benefits of benchmarking against recognised criteria such as the Ofsted framework.

It is likely, that as a programme of coaching develops and teachers become more confident in evaluating their own teaching and adept at working with peers to bring about improvements, this desire for external validation will reduce.

Introducing and implementing a programme of coaching brings challenges that are likely to derail progress and reduce the potential benefits if not overcome. The experiences during this study highlight some that may be encountered, and that have implications for this individual school and for the implementation of peer coaching for teacher professional development more widely.

One of the challenges we encountered was related to time for coaching. To avoid adding to teachers' workload, providing release time from class is essential. However, if this is too frequent, the teacher's well-being is harmed by the concern of being out of class too often and the need to leave planning or repeat lessons.

The structure and scope of coaching also needs to be considered and decisions made about whether teachers will be able to fully personalise their professional development through coaching. This may be achieved through being able to select when (not to a timetable but when needed) the coaching happens, the aspect of professional practice being developed; peer coaching need not be linked to observation, and who the most appropriate coach might be in terms of professional expertise.

Decisions on whether to move entirely to a peer coaching model or to retain some aspects of traditional observation for the purposes of performance management and monitoring of standards, will also need to be made. My recommendation is that these decisions are made collaboratively with staff and that consideration is given to the many other reliable ways of gathering evidence for the purposes of evaluating standards.

The development of videoing to support peer observation and coaching, and coaching models being designed specifically for use in education, such as the instructional model, should also be considered.

My gratitude and the last word goes to teachers participating in this study:

> I have really enjoyed the coaching approach. It has improved my teaching and self reflection and enabled me to share practice and learn from colleagues in a non-threatening and effect way.
>
> …coaching gives teachers ownership over their own personal professional development, which allows for a positive culture and climate of trust.
>
> I hope coaching will continue in school. I have been able to implement some huge changes based on the needs of the class…

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		1 **Strongly Disagree** (seldom/ never)	2 **Disagree** (to some extent)	3 **Neither Agree or Disagree**	4 **Agree** (to some extent)	5 **Strongly Agree** (often/ always)	**Comment / Explanation / Example**
16	I would like further opportunities to be coached by peers.						
17	I would like further opportunities to be coached by my peers with some changes to the programme followed this term.						Please provide explanation / details:
18	I would like SLT to reintroduce traditional lesson observations carried out by SLT and followed by giving me feedback about my strengths and development points.						
19	I think my performance as a teacher would best be developed by a programme that includes both peer coaching and traditional observations with feedback carried out by SLT.						Please give reasons.
20	I would like to add the following comments about my experience of coaching this term and its effectiveness in my teaching performance and well-being.						

Appendices

Appendix 1: Example of a Peer Coaching Record

Peer Coaching Record

(To be written and kept by coachee.)

What?	Who?	
Identified focus: To make my guided reading sessions more fluid, the other children are loud & interupt.	Coachee	
	Coach	
	Co-coach	-

Date of observation: 23.11.17

Date of coaching conversation: 23.11.17

Key actions / support agreed

What?	Who?	Date completed
move guided reading from PM to AM		27.11.17
children to have 2 adult sessions where possible		ongoing
create a new timetable		23.11.17

Notes about any planned review of follow up:

Guided reading sessions more successful, the children are more focused and the other groups work independently allowing my focus to be with the guided reading group.

Appendix 2: Characteristics of Excellent Coaching

Characteristics of Excellent Teaching

These Characteristics of Excellent Teaching have been identified on the basis of recent educational research and are supported by our own professional experience.

This document is not intended as a lesson check list, but as a guide and tool for reflection, self-evaluation and professional development.

Positive Climate for Learning

1. **Values & Beliefs**
   Everyone feels valued and can therefore be confident in sharing ideas and taking risks. There is a belief that all can achieve and that intelligence is not fixed; expectations are high. Success is attributed to effort rather than ability and resilience to failure is valued.

2. **Management of Learning**
   Management of behaviour, time and human resources enable and enhance progress in learning.

Content and Pedagogical Knowledge

1. **Teachers have secure subject knowledge** *and take opportunities to strengthen it.*

2. **Teachers understand the learning process,** *keep up to date with latest research and evaluate and refine the strategies they employ.*

Teaching (the magnificent 7)

1. **Presents new information in small steps**
   Working memory is small, handling only a few bits of information at once. Presenting new material in small steps avoids cognitive overload.

2. **Includes purposeful opportunities to revisit prior learning through daily, weekly and monthly reviews**
   Daily review strengthens connections of material learned freeing working memory for problem solving and creativity. The effort involved in recalling recently learned material embeds it in long term memory. The more this happens the easier it is to connect new material to prior knowledge.

3. **Provides models and scaffolds for learning**
   Modelling, sharing worked examples and teacher thinking out loud help clarify the specific steps involved in a new concept or process. Scaffolds are temporary supports to assist learning. They include models, cue cards and check lists.

4. **Asks questions and checks understanding**
   Questions can extend children's thinking, encourage learning review (see above) and allow teachers to check understanding. While less successful teachers as "Are there any questions?", more successful teachers check on all students.

5. **Provides opportunity guided and independent practice**
   Students need to time to rephrase, elaborate and summarise new material. They also need time for independent practice, which produces 'overlearning' - a necessary process for new material to be recalled automatically and ensure no overloading of students' working memory.

6. **Offers appropriate challenge**
   A success rate of around 80% has been found to be optimal, showing students are learning and also being challenged. Presenting new material in small steps supports success which, in turn, is likely to increase motivation.

7. **Provides impactful (timely) feedback.**
   Feedback should be specific (e.g. about what the learner has done well, accurate (not generously positive) and clear (e.g. "I can see you have focused on improving X and it is better than last time because...). It should encourage and support further effort and be given sparingly so it is meaningful.

Appendix 3: Baseline Questionnaire, January 2018, p.1

Teachers' Professional Development Questionnaire - January 2018

Dear Colleague,

This term I am conducting research for my Masters Degree in Learning and Teaching at the University of Oxford.

The title of this research project is:

Teacher professional development: an enquiry into how far the introduction of a programme of peer-to-peer coaching can improve teacher performance and well-being.

I have chosen this as the focus of my research because I believe this work will be beneficial to staff and pupils in our school and to work in the education sector more widely.

The aim of the study is to understand the impact of an introduction of a programme of peer-to-peer coaching on the performance (including professional development and well-being) of teachers in our school. Through my research, and building on our previous work on coaching in school, I intend to explore the following questions:

- How does the programme of peer-to-peer coaching improve teaching?
- What is it about the process of coaching that moves practice forward?
- What happens if external judgements are removed and replaced with self-evaluation against agreed indicators?

I am undertaking this work with the permission of the Chair of the Governing Body, under the supervision of my university tutor and with the approval of the Central university Research Ethics Committee (CUREC). Findings will be shared with staff and governors in the School with the aim of improving professional development for teaching staff and enhancing performance and well-being.

Please complete the questionnaire below indicating your level of agreement with each statement and adding comments where relevant. I will ask you to complete another questionnaire are the end of this term to gather further views about your experiences of coaching and its impact on your teaching and well-being. All responses will remain anonymous. Thank you, Louise

		1 **Strongly Disagree** (seldom/ never)	2 **Disagree** (to some extent)	3 **Neither Agree or Disagree**	4 **Agree** (to some extent)	5 **Strongly Agree** (often/ always)	**Comment / Explanation / Example**
1	I can identify ways in which lesson observations (e.g.by SLT) with feedback about strengths and weaknesses have helped to move my practice forward.						
2	Following a lesson observation, I like to be told whether my teaching contributes to a judgment that teaching and learning overtime is outstanding, good or requiring improvement (in terms of Ofsted criteria).						

Appendix 3: Baseline Questionnaire, January 2018, p.2

Teachers' Professional Development Questionnaire - January 2018

		1 **Strongly Disagree** (seldom/ never)	2 **Disagree** (to some extent)	3 **Neither Agree or Disagree**	4 **Agree** (to some extent)	5 **Strongly Agree** (often/ always)	**Comments**
3	Following a lesson observation, being told that my teaching contributes to a judgment that teaching and learning overtime is outstanding, good or requiring improvement (in terms of Ofsted criteria) has helped me to improve my teaching.						
4	Receiving feedback following a lesson observation (formal lesson observation) has been a positive experience for me.						
5	Formal lesson observations (e.g. by SLT) with feedback about strengths and development points gives me a high degree of control over my own professional development.						
6	Receiving feedback following a lesson observation (formal lesson observation) has been a negative experience for me.						
7	The use of formal lesson observations with feedback on strengths and development points and with reference to Ofsted criteria supports teachers well-being.						
8	I have dreaded formal lesson observations.						
9	I am confident in my own judgements about what, in my own teaching, is effective in helping children to learn.						

Appendix 3: Baseline Questionnaire, January 2018, p.3

Teachers' Professional Development Questionnaire - January 2018

		1 **Strongly Disagree** (seldom/ never)	2 **Disagree** (to some extent)	3 **Neither Agree or Disagree**	4 **Agree** (to some extent)	5 **Strongly Agree** (often/ always)	**Comments**
10	In our school there is an established and sustained programme of professional development.						
11	Being coached by my peers (during the autumn term) has been a positive experience for me.						
12	Peer coaching (as in the autumn term) has been effective in enabling me to improve my teaching practice.						
13	Being coached has not provided me with sufficient professional challenge to move my practice forward.						
14	Peer observation and coaching gives me a high degree of control over my own professional development.						
15	I have dreaded peer observations with follow-up coaching sessions.						
16	The use of coaching for professional development supports teachers well-being.						

Appendix 4: Post-Intervention Questionnaire, March 2018, p.1-2

Teachers' CPD / Coaching Review Questionnaire - March 2018

Dear Colleague,

Thank you for engaging with the coaching programme this term. I'd value your feedback on your experience of the coaching process, its effectiveness in improving teaching and its impact on your wellbeing.

The results of this anonymous questionnaire will be shared with you and with governors and school leaders to inform plans for developing coaching for CPD and to support well-being across the school.

As you know, I will also be using the information gathered as part of my Masters Degree research. Further details of the study can be found at the end of the questionnaire.

Please complete the questionnaire indicating your level of agreement with each statement and adding comments where relevant. In addition to space for comment against every statement there are some questions that require a written response to help me to understand your experience of coaching. Some of the questions relate to your experiences of coaching this term and other relate to your wider professional experience. This is indicated at the beginning of each section.

Thank you, Louise

		1 **Strongly Disagree** (seldom/ never)	2 **Disagree** (to some extent)	3 **Neither Agree or Disagree**	4 **Agree** (to some extent)	5 **Strongly Agree** (often/ always)	**Comment / Explanation / Example**
	Questions 1 - 12 relate to your experience of coaching this term:						
1	Being coached by my peers has been a positive experience for me.						
2	Peer coaching has been effective in enabling me to improve my teaching practice.						

Teachers' CPD / Coaching Review Questionnaire - March 2018

		1 **Strongly Disagree** (seldom/ never)	2 **Disagree** (to some extent)	3 **Neither Agree or Disagree**	4 **Agree** (to some extent)	5 **Strongly Agree** (often/ always)	**Comment / Explanation / Example**
3	The peer coaching has developed my confidence in evaluating the effectiveness of my own teaching.						
4	I have dreaded this term's peer observations.						
5	Being coached has **not** provided me with sufficient professional challenge to move my practice forward.						
6	I can give examples of improvements to my teaching as a result of the peer observations and coaching this term.						Please give details here.
7	The peer observations and coaching have given me a high degree of control over my own professional development.						
8	The coaching sessions have had a positive impact on my well-being.						

Appendix 4: Post-Intervention Questionnaire, March 2018, p.3-4

		1 **Strongly Disagree** (seldom/ never)	2 **Disagree** (to some extent)	3 **Neither Agree or Disagree**	4 **Agree** (to some extent)	5 **Strongly Agree** (often/ always)	**Comment / Explanation / Example**
9	The experience of observing and coaching colleagues has been valuable in my own professional development.						If you agree, please explain how.
10	Peer coaching this term has enabled me to develop a better understanding of the strengths and development areas in my teaching.						
11	Coaching has led to improvements in my teaching.						
	11a. If you agree with statement 11, what is it about the coaching process that moved your practice forward? **Please rank all that apply in order of value with 1 being most valuable.**	☐ Time to reflect on my practice. ☐ Discussing my practice with others. ☐ The questions asked by my coach/coaches ☐ Suggestions made by by coach/coaches ☐ Being able to decide my own professional development focus ☐ Motivation from having agreed my actions with others (who may enquire about my progress). ☐ Opportunity to observe other teachers ☐ Other (please specify):					

		1 **Strongly Disagree** (seldom/ never)	2 **Disagree** (to some extent)	3 **Neither Agree or Disagree**	4 **Agree** (to some extent)	5 **Strongly Agree** (often/ always)	**Comment / Explanation / Example**
12	Which of these factors would improve the effectiveness of coaching in moving your practice forward. **Please tick all that apply.**	☐ Further training to improve the skills of those involved in the coaching. ☐ Adjusting the timing / frequency of the coaching session. Please specify how: ☐ Other - please describe any other factors that you think would make the coaching more effective in moving your practice forward:					
		Questions 13 - 20 relate to your wider professional experience as well as this term's coaching.					
13	Traditional lesson observations followed by feedback from a senior leader regarding my teaching strengths and development points helps to move my practice forward more than coaching.						
14	Removal of external judgements (by this I mean those given after traditional lesson observations) in favour of coaching has had a positive impact on my well-being.						
15	Removal of external judgements (by this I mean those given after traditional lesson observations) in favour of coaching has had a positive impact on the quality of my teaching.						

Appendix 4: Post-Intervention Questionnaire, March 2018, p.5-6

Teachers' CPD / Coaching Review Questionnaire - March 2018

		1 **Strongly Disagree** (seldom/ never)	2 **Disagree** (to some extent)	3 **Neither Agree or Disagree**	4 **Agree** (to some extent)	5 **Strongly Agree** (often/ always)	**Comment / Explanation / Example**
16	I would like further opportunities to be coached by peers.						
17	I would like further opportunities to be coached by my peers with some changes to the programme followed this term.						Please provide explanation / details:
18	I would like SLT to reintroduce traditional lesson observations carried out by SLT and followed by giving me feedback about my strengths and development points.						
19	I think my performance as a teacher would best be developed by a programme that includes both peer coaching and traditional observations with feedback carried out by SLT.						Please give reasons.
20	I would like to add the following comments about my experience of coaching this term and its effectiveness in my teaching performance and well-being.						

Teachers' CPD / Coaching Review Questionnaire - March 2018

The results of this questionnaire will be included as part of the research for my Masters Degree in Learning and Teaching at the University of Oxford.

The title of this research project is:

Teacher professional development: an enquiry into how far the introduction of a programme of peer-to-peer coaching can improve teacher performance and well-being.

I have chosen this as the focus of my research because I believe this work will be beneficial to staff and pupils in our school and to work in the education sector more widely.

The aim of the study is to understand the impact of an introduction of a programme of peer-to-peer coaching on the performance (including professional development and well-being) of teachers in our school. Through my research, and building on our previous work on coaching in school, I intend to explore the following questions:

- How does the programme of peer-to-peer coaching improve teaching?
- What is it about the process of coaching that moves practice forward?
- What happens if external judgements are removed and replaced with self-evaluation against agreed indicators?

I am undertaking this work with the permission of the Chair of the Governing Body, under the supervision of my university tutor and with the approval of the Central university Research Ethics Committee (CUREC). Findings will be shared with staff and governors in the School with the aim of improving professional development for teaching staff and enhancing performance and well-being.

All responses will remain anonymous.

Thank you, Louise