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I am a teacher and aspiring middle leader in a large primary school in Northumberland. The socio-economic profile of the school is of children from mainly affluent families. There is a minimal percentage of FSM and pupil premium children (5 %) and a low percentage of SEN children (4 %). Overall attendance in the school is 97 % which is above national expectations. In the space of two years the school has faced several changes including, converting from a first school to a primary school, experiencing our first cohort of Upper Key Stage 2 pupils, moving into a new school build and becoming part of a newly formed, multi academy trust.

The focus of my project was to improve the quality of mental health and wellbeing of pupils in Upper Key Stage 2 through a targeted resilience intervention program. A wellbeing survey identified a selection of children who were experiencing barriers to their learning which were potentially linked to their social and emotional wellbeing and in some cases their own mental health. At the beginning of the project measurable wellbeing data was collected from all pupils taking part. Although the primary aim of the intervention was to improve wellbeing, research showed that resilience programs can have an impact on behaviour, attendance and academic outcomes. There was also the hope that an improvement would also be seen in pupil progress and/or attainment. English and maths progress and attainment data was collected for all pupils involved. Another aim of the project was to raise the profile of mental health and wellbeing within the whole school and wider school community.

Intervention sessions were carried out by me and by members of my team with identified children. During the project, pupil voice surveys took place to monitor the impact of the intervention and to ensure that there was no negative impact. All pupils were enjoying the sessions and were able to explain the positive impact it was having on their wellbeing. After the project, wellbeing data was collected again along with progress and attainment data. When compared to baseline results the wellbeing data showed that participants displayed decreased levels of anxiety and depression and therefore had improved wellbeing. However, there had been little change in pupil progress or attainment.

An improvement in wellbeing was something that we were able to measure after two terms of work. As a team we also discussed why there was not an immediate improvement in progress and data. Research had shown that a whole-school approach to emotional learning strongly correlated with higher attainment. However, improvements in this area are not instantaneous. Improving wellbeing over time should show improved levels of progress and/or attainment, but this may not be seen or recorded for years to come. Therefore, the conclusion of the project was that pupils need to be supported with their mental health and wellbeing over longer sustained periods. This was discussed with all staff and it was agreed that the resilience intervention would continue to run and be expanded to all year groups within the school.

The project has been successful in improving children's wellbeing and raising awareness of mental health and wellbeing, both within the team and at a whole school level. As a team, we delivered various CPD sessions to staff about the intervention program and mental health and wellbeing. At the end of the initiative the team had made huge improvements in their understanding and with supporting pupils who may have mental health concerns. They moved from having minimal knowledge in this area to being confident in spotting the early signs of stress, anxiety and depression. The CPD given to all staff has also started us, as a school, on the important journey of beginning to address mental health and wellbeing with a whole school approach.

Participating in the NPQML programme has developed me as a leader. It gave me the knowledge and understanding to work with a team effectively. As I developed and changed as a leader I saw improvements in my coaching skills and communication skills. My delegation skills improved, as I learned the importance of and how delegation was key for our growth together as a team. Giving the team ownership of the initiative throughout helped us to become a high performing team for the duration of the project. We consulted together during team meetings, adjusted the

project plan when needed and monitored the success of the project together. If I had not developed this leadership skill, I believe that the project may have failed.

I found the face to face days invaluable as the time spent with others who were also participating in the NPQML programme was very useful. We were given the chance to discuss our projects together and to share our experiences and reflections about our leadership skills and how they were developing. Completing a 360 diagnostic was also a useful experience. In my final 360 assessment, my raters made positive comments on my communication skills, relationships with others, my motivation and collaborative work. Some key comments were:

'L is an excellent communicator within a huge range of scenarios within school and is able to communicate effectively with children, staff, parents and other relevant adults, varying her tone and manner with ease.'

'L has excellent relationships across the entire school and shows a great awareness of how to manage these positively and sensitively.'

The NPQML programme has helped me to develop in all leadership areas and I now feel better equipped to step into a middle leader role in the future. I am more aware of the skills needed to lead others and I am also more aware of the skills I already have and those I need to continue to develop in the future.

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