The impact of a literacy/mentoring intervention on the outcomes of looked after children

Mairead Murphy

UCL Institute of Education

Doctorate in Professional Educational Child and Adolescent

Psychology

I, Mairead Murphy, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

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ABSTRACT

Background: Looked after children (LAC) are among the most disadvantaged groups of children with social, health, educational and economic outcomes that have long been a concern. Previous research has emphasised the importance of literacy skills, resilience, relationships and a sense of belongingness for improving outcomes for LAC, however, there is a lack of research to guide which interventions are most effective in promoting these domains.

Aim: To investigate the impact of a literacy/mentoring programme of 12 weeks duration on the literacy attainment, resiliency and sense of school belonging of LAC.

Sample: Fifteen LAC in year 4, 5 and 6 and 13 school-based mentors.

Methods: The study utilises a convergent, parallel mixed methods design. Participants completed measures of literacy, resiliency and sense of school belonging at baseline and post-intervention. Paired t-tests and The Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test were used to compare pre and post means. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants post-intervention to explore perceptions of the intervention including the factors that promoted the successful implementation of the intervention. Interviews were analysed using thematic analysis, guided by the work of Braun & Clarke (2006).

Quantitative findings: The results indicated that the intervention had a significant effect on reading comprehension, sense of school belonging and some aspects of resiliency, but not on other aspects of resiliency or on reading fluency or reading accuracy.

Qualitative findings: Two overarching themes were identified including ‘making a difference’ and ‘making the intervention work’. ‘Making a difference’ consists of two main themes ‘academic outcomes’ and ‘relationships’ and five subthemes. ‘Making the intervention work’ consists of four main themes ‘resource money matters’, ‘individualising the intervention’, ‘engaging the mentor’ and ‘making it better’.

Conclusion: Literacy/mentoring interventions have the potential to make a significant difference to LAC and warrant further robust research on a larger scale and wider implementation in schools.

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1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the concept of looked after children (LAC) in England, outlines the national context for this group of children, and discusses typical educational and mental health outcomes for the group. The chapter concludes with a discussion focused on interventions and approaches that have an important role in improving outcomes for LAC.

1.1 Looked After Children

LAC is the legislative term used to describe all children for whom the state undertakes parental responsibility because the adults caring for them are no longer able to do so. It includes those who are subject to a care order or who are provided with accommodation by social services for more than 24 hours (Department of Health, 1989).

1.2 National Context

In 2016 it was estimated that there were 70,440 LAC in England, representing approximately 0.6% of all children under 18 years of age (Department for Education, DfE, 2016). This figure has steadily increased over the last eight years and is now at its highest point since 1985 (DfE, 2016; Zayed & Harker, 2015). A high proportion of children entering the care system do so as a result of abuse or neglect, while a smaller proportion enter as a result of family dysfunction and stress. In addition some who enter are unaccompanied children seeking asylum (DfE, 2016).

LAC are among the most disadvantaged groups of children (Iwaniec, 2006), often coming from backgrounds of abuse, violence, poverty and neglect (Oswald, Heil, & Goldbeck, 2010). Unsurprisingly, these adverse experiences create risk for a range of social, emotional, behavioural and educational outcomes, with research consistently demonstrating that LAC experience disproportionately high rates of mental health difficulties and educational underachievement (Dixon, 2008; Meltzer, Gatward, Goddman, & Ford, 2003). Later in life, they are at high risk of being socially excluded (Dent & Cameron, 2003) resulting in outcomes such as over-representation in both prison (Centre for Social Justice, 2015) and homeless populations (Davison & Burris, 2014), and a higher likelihood of experiencing unemployment, drug and alcohol abuse, poverty, and poorer health than non-LAC (Centre for Social Justice, 2015).

Addressing these outcomes has increasingly become a subject of interest across the UK, and initiatives aimed to raise the academic achievement and promote the health and wellbeing of LAC now form part of government policy and legislation (e.g. The Children and Families Act, 2014; Department for Children, School and Families (DCSF), 2009; Department for Education and Skills (DfES), 2007).

1.3 Educational Outcomes Achieved by LAC

The poor educational outcomes achieved by LAC throughout primary and secondary school has been identified and acknowledged for decades (Stein, 2012). Despite improvements over recent years, these outcomes remain substantially below those of the general population (Weyts, 2004). In 2016, data from the Department for Education (2017) revealed that at the end of Key Stage 1, 50% of LAC achieved the expected levels in reading, 46% in mathematics and 37% in writing compared to 74%, 73% and 66% of the general population respectively.

The attainment gap widens as LAC progress through school; at the end of Key Stage 2, 41% of children achieved expected levels in reading, 41% in mathematics and 46% in writing, compared to 66%, 70% and 74% of non-LAC respectively, while just 13.6% of LAC obtained 5 A*-C grades at GCSE as opposed to 53% of all children (DfE, 2017).

Other educational measures of LAC that consistently compare unfavourably to those of non-LAC include exclusions, attendance (Brodie, 2009), dropout rates and progression to higher education. In 2015, 0.14% of LAC were permanently excluded from school – twice the non-LAC rate – and were five times more likely to have had a fixed term exclusion than non-LAC (DfE, 2017). Only 6% of LAC entered higher education compared with 50% of all other young people (DfE, 2015), while 41% of LAC were reported as 'NEET' (not in education, employment or training) compared with 15% of the general population (DfE, 2016). LAC are also four times more likely to have a special educational need, and approximately ten times more likely to have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan (EHC plan) than the general population (DfE, 2017).

1.4 Mental Health Outcomes

The statistics for mental health outcomes are equally bleak. Research provides compelling evidence that LAC have greater mental health needs than other groups of children even when compared to the most disadvantaged children outside the care system (Ford, Goodman, Meltzer, & Vostanis, 2007; Richardson & Joughin, 2000).

Meltzer, Gatward, Corbin, Goodman, & Ford (2003) conducted a comprehensive national study that provides extensive data regarding the mental health of LAC. Findings from this study demonstrated that 72% of LAC in residential care and 45% of LAC in foster homes had a mental health disorder compared to 10% of all children. Similarly, Ford et al., (2007) reported that the prevalence of a psychiatric disorder in LAC was between 45-49%, but in addition, they found that 'fewer than one in ten of the children looked after by local authorities had positively good mental health' (p.325). A number of more recent studies have reported higher levels of mental health difficulties amongst LAC (Ratnayake, Bowlay-Williams, & Vostanis, 2014; Sempik, Ward, & Darker, 2008; Stanley, Riordan &, Alaszewski, 2005). Findings across studies suggest that the most common psychiatric disorders amongst LAC are conduct disorders and emotional disorders with rates of self-harm and suicide being higher than their peers (Vinnerljung, Hjern, & Lindblad, & 2006).

Bazalgette, Rahilly and Trevelyan (2015) argued that despite research consistently demonstrating the unacceptably high prevalence of poor mental health among LAC, there is a lack of support for LAC and 'too often the emotional wellbeing and mental health of LAC is thought of as something that is the responsibility of specialist mental health services alone' (p.5). They identified five priorities for system change: embedding an emphasis on emotional wellbeing throughout the system, taking a proactive and preventative approach, giving children and young people a voice and influence, supporting and sustaining children's relationships and supporting care leavers' emotional needs.

1.5 What Works in Promoting Educational Achievement and Mental Health for LAC?

1.5.1 Improving Literacy Attainment

There is long standing evidence that literacy is an aspect of schooling that LAC

experience most difficulties with (Bald, Bean, & Meegan, 1995; Archer, Fletcher-Campbell, & Tomlinson, 2003). National data demonstrates that LAC fare significantly worse in their reading and writing attainment than other children, and writing skills lag behind all other subject areas.

The early development of literacy including learning to read fluently is believed to be a 'protective factor' as it is a strong predictor of success in school (Martin & Jackson, 2002; Sodha & Margo, 2010). Literacy provides the foundation for learning and is therefore critical to academic achievement (Espin & Deno, 1993). Good readers are more likely to engage with their learning, make progress (Coghlan et al., 2009) and become more resilient (Cefai, 2008). In contrast, individuals with reading deficits struggle to access subjects across the curriculum and as a result become unmotivated, developing problems with behaviour, self-esteem and attendance (Jackson & Martin, 1998).

Many researchers argue that not only are literacy skills important for academic success but are essential to desirable life outcomes such as wellbeing, employment and income (Bayless, 2010). Consequently, poor literacy skills not only threaten the academic achievement of individuals, but have significant implications for psychosocial outcomes and for society as a whole (Graham & Hebert, 2010; Greenburg, Jin, Kutner, & Paulsen, 2006; Kirsch et al., 2002).

1.5.2 Developing Resilience

In recent decades, there has been an increasing interest in the area of resilience research (Masten & Obradovi, 2008), its role in improving health and wellbeing (Hardy, Concato, &, Gill, 2004) and how resiliency theory can be applied to LAC (Bostock, 2001; Gilligan, 2004). A number of researchers (Daniel & Wassell, 2002; Gilligan, 2001) have argued that the development of resilience has significant advantages in helping LAC to better overcome adversity and can help to explain why a small number of LAC are able to maintain more stable and satisfying lives while the majority of this population do not.

Resilience is a complex and multifaceted construct (Cicchetti & Curtis, 2007), defined and conceptualised in many different ways across different contexts (Carle & Chassin, 2004). Broadly defined, resilience refers to the process through which positive outcomes are achieved in the context of adversity (Masten, 2001). More specifically, resilience is viewed as the complex interaction and operation of "protective" and "risk" factors which can be found at

individual, family and community levels (Masten, 2007). Protective factors are associated with positive outcomes and/or help to mitigate the negative effects of risk (Schoon & Bartley, 2008), while risk factors are associated with negative outcomes and/or enhance the negative effect of adversity on outcomes. Protective factors at the individual level include school achievement, positive self-esteem and social skills; familial level include supportive parents and family harmony; and community level includes factors such as positive informal and formal relationships, engagement in learning and sense of belonging. Risk factors are also at the individual, family and community level and encompass factors such as low self-esteem, poverty, loss, experience of abuse, school failure and peer rejection (Rowe & Stewart, 2009).

LAC are deemed to lack resilience due to their experiences that are often associated with exposure to risk factors from an early age (Coleman & Hagell, 2007) combined with a lack of protective factors. One of the key elements undermining the resilience of LAC is the likelihood of insecure attachments due to disrupted early relationships with primary caregivers (Yates & Masten, 2004). This was highlighted in the Care Matters report which stated that LAC "often lack stable relationships in their lives, resulting in ... a lack of resilience" (DFES 2007, pp.5-6).

There is a growing literature exploring how best to strengthen resilience. Gilligan (1998, 2001, 2004) identifies three sources of resilience: a secure base, good self-esteem and a sense of self-efficacy. A number of researchers (Daniel & Wassell, 2002; Gilligan, 2000; Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000; Newman, 2004; Rutter, 1999) emphasise the important role the school context can play in supporting these sources as it can provide a secure base with supportive adults and peers, as well as opportunities to build self-esteem and self-efficacy through educational success, friendships, and activities that harness talents and interests.

In addition, a positive school experience helps to build connectedness to school and engagement in learning, which are significant protective factors that contribute to resilience (Resnick et al., 1997). Resnick et al. (1997) argue that a sense of belonging to school and to family is the most important protective factor for young people. It is associated with a wide range of positive outcomes including increased self-esteem, life satisfaction, self-efficacy, motivation and

improved attendance and academic achievement (Goodenow, 1993; O'Rourke & Cooper, 2010; Osterman, 2000). In contrast, a lack of belonging to school can lead to disengagement, poor academic achievement and higher rates of school dropout (Osterman, 2000; Rumberger & Thomas, 2000). School connectedness may be particularly important to improving resilience and life outcomes for LAC given that they may lack a sense of belongingness to their families.

Other factors that have been found to impact on the resilience of LAC include a sense of agency (Rutter, 2006; Schofield, 2001), opportunities to make a contribution (Daniel & Wassell, 2002), regular school attendance, problem-solving and emotional-coping skills (Newman & Blackburn, 2002).

However, despite the increasing interest in resilience as a construct and the number of researchers who have identified its relevance to mental health and wellbeing, there are a number of conceptual and methodological concerns that are inherent throughout the literature (Luthar, Cicchetti & Becker, 2000) and provoke confusion and criticism of resilience theory. Owing to the lack of consensus on a definition (Kaplan, 2005) and the complexity and multifaceted nature of resilience, the study and evaluation of resilience is challenging. Based on the ecological view of resilience, it is not only necessary to understand protective and risk factors at the individual and environment level, but also how they interact and change over time to produce a resilient outcome. The process of assessing resilience is thus extremely complex, subjective and "fraught with major logical, measurement and pragmatic problems" (Glantz & Sloboda, 1999, p.110).

A number of researchers (Luthar et al., 2000; Luthar & Zelazo, 2003) have made distinctions between the terms resilience and resiliency. As discussed above, resilience reflects interactive processes between the child and the environment, while resiliency represents internal attributes, which are critical for resilient functioning (Prince-Embury, 2011). Given the complexity of resilience and the difficulties associated with its measurement, the current research will focus on the measurement of resiliency, since personal attributes can be more easily influenced through school-based interventions and can be measured more easily and precisely.

1.5.3 Mentoring

One strategy that seems particularly promising in terms of enhancing a range of academic, social and emotional outcomes for LAC is the use of mentoring programmes. Children need “the involvement of caring, competent adults” if they are to grow emotionally and to learn (Masten & Coatsworth, 1998, p.215). Therefore, mentoring has become an increasingly popular intervention to address the needs and circumstances of LAC (Mech, Pryde, & Ryecraft, 1995) as it provides opportunities to build a close connection with an adult, an experience that is often lacking in the lives of LAC (Martin & Jackson, 2002). It is argued that building positive relationships with a caring, consistent and reliable adult acts as a ‘protective’ factor and can promote a range of positive outcomes such as school engagement, a sense of belongingness, better attitudes toward school, and improved social relationships and academic achievement (Bergin & Bergin, 2009; Larose & Tarabulsy, 2005; Rhodes, 2005; Rhodes, Grossman & Rensch, 2000). In addition, supportive mentoring relationships have been found to help mentees to understand, express and regulate emotions (Pianta, 1999; Rhodes, 2002, 2005), and foster self-esteem and resilience including for those in care (Dent & Cameron, 2003; Jackson & Martin, 1998; Newman & Blackburn, 2002). Gilligan (2000) argues that teachers have a crucial role as confidants and mentors, especially for children with stressful home circumstances whose primary attachments are unsatisfactory, and “may do more for a child's craving for a “secure base” than elaborate efforts around engaging a child in weekly one hour sessions of therapy” (Gilligan, 1998, p.42). Given that Daniel (2006) argued that the need for a secure base may underpin all other domains of resilience, it seems likely that if mentoring can meet this need, it has the potential to be a very important intervention for LAC.

Other researchers have also supported the potential benefits of a high quality teacher-student relationship including enhanced engagement in learning, attainment (Koomen, Oort, Roorda & Spilt, 2011), social wellbeing and resilience (Pieters, Ritzen, & van Uden, 2014). Roorda et al. (2011) conducted a meta-analysis of 99 studies and found that a positive teacher-student relationship was particularly influential on the academic, social and emotional outcomes for students who were considered at risk for school failure.

However, it should also be noted that the outcomes of mentoring interventions found in the literature are inconsistent and findings of many studies are tentative

at best. Additionally, while there is a large body of evidence in the US related to mentoring, there is a lack of evidence base in the UK (Hall, 2003). Mentoring research will be reviewed in detail within the literature review.

1.5.4 Virtual Schools

Under the Children and Families Act 2014, all local authorities in England are legally required to appoint a Virtual School Head (VSH) (DfE, 2014). The VSH often works with a team of staff, and together they form a 'Virtual School'. The Virtual School's primary objectives are to improve the educational attainment of LAC, promote higher aspirations and raise the profile and of all LAC within the local authority they work for. This is achieved through careful monitoring of the children's progress and providing them with additional support when necessary. In addition, Virtual School's work closely with, and provide support to, the schools that LAC attend, foster carers and other relevant professionals as part of a collaborative, multidisciplinary approach to supporting the children.

In 2012, Ofsted reviewed the impact of Virtual Schools on the education of LAC in nine local authorities. The findings indicated that the Virtual School approach had good potential to improve the educational progress of LAC, reduce exclusions, improve attendance and enhance the children's overall school experience (Ofsted, 2012). Findings also demonstrated that some Virtual School's had a positive influence on a number of other outcomes in addition to education, such as emotional wellbeing and placement stability. However, the attainment discrepancy between LAC and non-LAC remained a challenge for most local authorities, and in some local authorities increasing financial pressures was seen as a significant barrier to promoting better outcomes for LAC.

1.6 Background to this Study

This study was conducted as part of the wider programme, 'Promoting the Achievement of LAC (PALAC)', which aims to improve outcomes for LAC by supporting practice in schools. The programme at UCL Institute of Education seeks to bring researchers, school practitioners and virtual school heads together to work collaboratively over a period of time, to investigate how the evidence base can be better applied to a particular setting.

The Virtual School in county X wanted to be involved with this initiative and

agreed to fund the implementation of an appropriate intervention. This was provided that the intervention was designed, facilitated and evaluated by a researcher at the university. The Virtual School involved in the current study was instrumental to the implementation and success of the intervention. The Virtual School Head agreed to appoint a project coordinator from the Virtual School to work alongside me to identify schools and LAC, obtain consent and ensure the intervention protocols were followed at each school. Additionally, they provided funding, a budget of £300 per child for resources and £360 remuneration for each mentor to deliver the intervention.

The current study also replicated a part of the study conducted by Hill, Male, Olisa, Radford, & Stuart (n.d.) in that it utilised an individualised literacy intervention and engaged class teachers to deliver the intervention. However, Olisa et al. (n.d.) found that the student teacher relationship was an important aspect of the intervention's effectiveness. Therefore the current study developed the literacy intervention to incorporate a mentoring component and utilised a mixed method design with an added qualitative component to explore factors that contributed to the effectiveness of the intervention.

1.7 Conclusion

Given the social disadvantage that LAC face and the growing numbers of children that are taken into care in the UK, it is of increasing importance to address the low educational attainment and poor mental health amongst this group. However, current interventions to support LAC typically focus on improving attainment outcomes or emotional wellbeing and mental health but fail to address their multifaceted needs in combination. It is therefore unsurprising that many of the current interventions to support LAC have not had the expected impact.

The findings outlined above indicate that building the resilience of LAC, providing support through mentoring and improving literacy skills are key to better life outcomes, therefore, interventions that bring these areas together to target both academic and emotional needs, may hold more promise. Educational psychologists (EPs) are well placed to support the development of multifaceted school-based interventions that aim to improve a wide range of outcomes for LAC.

Consequently, the aim of this research is to explore for LAC the impact of a literacy/mentoring intervention on literacy skills and academic outcomes, resiliency and sense of school belonging (SOSB), plus the factors that promote the successful implementation of such an intervention.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews the literature on the impact of mentoring and literacy interventions on school and psychosocial outcomes. Studies were included that either examined the impact of mentoring on LAC or focused on developing the literacy skills of LAC. As there were few mentoring studies that focused specifically on LAC, studies of mentoring interventions involving vulnerable children were included (see appendix A for literature review search strategy). The chapter concludes with the rationale for the current research project.

2.1 Mentoring

The literature on mentoring divides into four main areas: the impact of mentoring on academic achievement, the impact of mentoring on other school related outcomes, the impact of mentoring on social and emotional outcomes, and the impact of mentoring on LAC. Initially the concept of mentoring and school-based mentoring is explored in order to provide context for the review.

While it is generally agreed that there is no universally accepted definition of mentoring (Blechman & Bopp, 2005), most researchers agree that mentoring involves a more experienced individual (mentor) providing advice, guidance, feedback and support to a less experienced individual (mentee) (Rhodes, 2005). Across studies it is evident that mentoring programmes for young people vary substantially with different goals, settings, budgets and delivery formats (Keller, 2007). Mentoring programmes can be school or community-based, while mentors can be community volunteers, teachers, or older students. The seminal study on mentoring was a community-based (CBM) programme "Big Brothers/Big Sisters" (BBBS). The study undertaken by Tierney, Grossman & Resch (1995) found that the BBBS programme had positive effects on a broad range of outcomes related to school, delinquency, health, relationships and wellbeing. The positive findings led to the widespread adoption of many different types of mentoring programmes worldwide (Bauldry, 2006; Rhodes & DuBois, 2006; Sipe, 2002). Mentoring programmes were initially located in the community but were then implemented within schools (Wheeler, Keller & Dubois, 2010; Herrera, Grossman, Kauh, & McMaken, 2011). School-based mentoring (SBM) is now the most common form of formal mentoring in the U.S. (Portwood & Ayers, 2005). This SBM trend is also evident in UK schools (Knowles & Parsons, 2009) where government, educators and other

professionals have supported mentoring programmes in an attempt to promote important educational and psychosocial outcomes for youth.

Overall within the literature it is argued that a successful mentoring relationship has the potential to promote cognitive and socio-emotional development in vulnerable pupils (DuBois, Holloway, Valentine & Cooper, 2002; Rhodes, 2002, 2005) helping them to become successful adults. This is particularly important for children who lack a positive role model in their lives (Caldarella, Adams, Valentine & Young, 2009; Portwood, Ayers, Kinnison, Waris, & Wise, 2005) and/or who are at risk of academic failure, mental health difficulties and problematic interpersonal relationships. Furthermore, when mentoring programmes incorporate certain principles of best practice, the potential for mentoring to make a difference is enhanced. DuBois et al. (2002) identified a number of characteristics of the most effective programmes. The study largely focused on CBM rather than SBM and included studies dated between 1970 and 1998, therefore the study was not included in the current review per se, as it did not meet the specific search criteria. However, the findings will be outlined briefly here because it provides insight into important programme characteristics that have influenced the design of the intervention and the critique of the studies reviewed in the current study. DuBois et al. (2002) conducted a meta-analytic review of 55 studies to explore the effects of mentoring on emotional, behavioural, social, academic and employment outcomes, as well as the components of the intervention that contributed to these outcomes. Findings in DuBois et al's study indicated an overall small significant effect, with greater benefits reported for children with backgrounds of 'risk'. While the effects of mentoring were found to be modest within the review, the study highlighted a number of best practices that were associated with more positive outcomes. This included the provision of on-going training and support for mentors, structured activities for mentors and mentees, encouragement of parental involvement, good fidelity procedures and the recruitment of mentors whose backgrounds included experience in helping roles. Not only did this study demonstrate the importance of incorporating these best practices, findings also suggested that when these practices were not present, mentoring had the potential to cause harm.

2.2 School-Based Mentoring

SBM programmes are carried out in schools (Randolph & Johnson, 2008) with volunteers from the community or school recruited as mentors. The school setting is thought to provide an ideal context for mentoring, as pupils who are at greater academic, social and emotional risk are more easily accessed (Ryan, Whittaker, & Pinckney, 2002) and can be referred by their teachers, who are well placed to identify those likely to benefit. SBM programmes are also deemed cost-effective, easily supervised and provide opportunities for increased advocacy for mentees within the school community (Herrera, Grossman, Kauh, Feldman, & McMaken, 2007; Rhodes, 2002).

2.3 Review of Literature on School-Based Mentoring

A number of researchers have explored the impact of school-based mentoring. Across studies, it is evident that mentoring has influenced a range of school-related outcomes, such as behaviour (Bernstein, Rappaport, Olsho, Hunt, & Levin, 2009; Caldarella et al., 2009; Gordon, Downey, & Bangert, 2013; Herrera et al., 2007; Holt, Bry, & Johnson, 2008; Johnson & Lampney, 2010; McQuillin, Strait, Smith, & Ingram, 2015), attendance (Caldarella et al., 2009; Converse & Lingnugaris/Kraft, 2009; Eby, Allen, Evans, Ng, & DuBois, 2008; Gordon et al., 2013; Holt et al., 2008; Wheeler et al., 2010), dropout rate (Johnson & Lampney, 2010) and achievement (Caldarella et al., 2009; Herrera, Grossman, Kauh, & McMaken, 2011; Hickman & Garvey, 2006; McQuillin et al., 2015; Núñez, Rosário, Vallejo, & González-Pienda, 2013). Additionally, many studies have identified that social and emotional factors such as school connectedness (Gordon et al., 2013; Holt et al., 2008; Karcher, 2008; King, Vidourek, Davis, & McClellan, 2002; Portwood et al., 2005), interpersonal relationships (Caldarella et al., 2009; Eby et al., 2008; Kolar & McBride 2011; Wheeler et al., 2010) and self-esteem (Karcher, 2008; Kolar & McBride, 2011) are influenced through participation in a mentoring intervention.

2.3.1 Impact of Mentoring on the Academic Achievement of Vulnerable young people

The majority of studies examining the impact of SBM have focused on academic achievement as one of the primary outcomes. While some studies (Caldarella et al., 2009; Eby et al., 2008; Herrera et al., 2007, 2011; McQuillin et al., 2015; Núñez et al., 2013) found that mentoring had a positive effect on academic grades, other studies found that it had no overall impact (Bernstein et al., 2009;

Holt et al., 2008; Karcher, 2008; Kolar & McBride, 2011; Wheeler et al., 2010; Wood & Mayo-Wilson, 2012). However, what is clear across these studies is that SBM may impact differentially across subject areas, with children demonstrating improvements in some areas but not in others. McQuillin et al. (2015) found statistically significant improvements in mathematics, but not in English, reading or science. Herrera et al. (2007) found a statistically significant overall improvement in academic performance, but when subjects were reviewed individually, science and language skills significantly improved, while mathematics, reading and social studies did not.

Caldarella et al. (2009) is one of the few mentoring studies that reported a large effect size across all subject areas. Using a quasi-experimental pretest/posttest design they examined the impact of a school-based mentoring intervention on students at risk of emotional and behavioural difficulties. The outcomes included school grades, social skills and behaviour. The intervention involved 16 students, was implemented in one school for 5 months and utilised adult and university student volunteers as mentors. Results indicated that mentoring had a statistically significant impact on academic achievement, with large effect sizes across all subjects. However, the findings for the programme's impact on behaviour were conflicting. Teachers reported a statistically significant improvement in social competence and antisocial behaviour, while parents did not. Results also demonstrated punctuality improved over the course of the intervention, while absence rates increased significantly. Analysis of qualitative survey data aimed at evaluating the intervention suggested that while parents, mentors, students and teachers were generally positive about the mentoring experience, they identified the need for better communication between mentors and parents/teachers. Few details however were given about the fidelity of the intervention, mentor training or support. Additionally, the authors reported wide variation in the frequency of mentor/mentee meetings and problems in ensuring that college student mentors visited their student and attended mentor support meetings. Furthermore, the lack of a control for comparison and the small sample size chosen from only one school, limit the overall conclusions that can be drawn from the results.

Nunez et al. (2013) undertook a longitudinal cluster randomized controlled trial study to assess the effectiveness of a SBM programme. They measured the impact of the programme on the use of self-regulated learning (SRL) strategies,

self-efficacy and the perceived usefulness of SRL as well as mathematics and language achievement. Forty-seven pupils were randomly assigned to the mentoring group and 47 to a group that received support to develop study skills only. Outcome measures were assessed through school grades and a self-report survey given to mentees at baseline, 3, 6 and 9 months. Consistent with Caldarella et al. (2009) findings they found significant positive impacts on academic achievement, but in contrast to Caldarella et al. (2009) they found that effect sizes were small and statistically significant only after 9 months. They also found a positive and statistically significant increase in the use of SRL strategies, self-efficacy for SRL strategies, and the perceived usefulness of SRL strategies. These outcomes were significant after 6 months and demonstrated larger effect sizes with time (e.g. small effect sizes were reported after 6 months and medium after 9 months). Overall, they found that the intervention had a greater impact on the outcomes related to the SRL strategies than it did for academic achievement; however, this might be expected as the content of the mentoring programme was designed to support pupils to develop SRL strategies. A strength of this study included the rigor with which the mentoring intervention was delivered, with careful attention paid to the selection criteria for mentors, the standard of training and support. They also provided details of the validity and reliability of the data collection tool used to measure the SRL strategies and monitored the fidelity of the intervention throughout. However, as the author did not give the sample size calculation it is not possible to determine if the power for statistical calculations was reached.

In contrast to the studies that found that mentoring improves academic performance, other studies found that mentoring had no impact on academic achievement (Bernstein et al., 2009; Holt et al., 2008; Karcher, 2008; Kolar & McBride, 2011; Wheeler et al., 2010; Wood & Mayo-Wilson, 2012;).

Bernstein et al. (2009) undertook a comprehensive experimental study that explored the impact of 225 SBM Programmes across America on 17 outcomes in the domains of interpersonal relationships, academic achievement and engagement and high risk or delinquent behaviour. The study included a total of 2,573 participants; 1,272 randomly assigned to the treatment group and 1,301 to the control. Outcomes were assessed at baseline and 6 months using students' self-report data and school records of attendance and achievement. Overall there were no statistically significant impacts on any outcomes in the domains

discussed above. However, subgroup analysis revealed some differential impacts related to gender and age. In particular, there were a number of positive and statistically significant impacts of the programme for girls including scholastic efficacy, school bonding and pro-social behaviours, while boys demonstrated a statistically significant decline in pro-social behaviours. Additionally, there was a statistically significant improvement in truancy for younger students (below 12 years of age) when compared to students of the same age in the control. This study was important because it was one of the largest studies conducted, the sample was derived from a number of settings, it included a comparison group and the sample was derived through randomization. The intervention was well designed and followed best practice recommendations from previous studies (e.g. DuBois et al., 2002). However, the study had a number of limitations that may have led to a dilution of the impacts. Programme and mentor characteristics, as well as fidelity, varied across mentoring programmes. For example, mentors experience and backgrounds varied considerably (e.g. 20% of the mentors were of high-school age and 23% college age), as did the activities completed in the mentoring sessions and only 41% of mentors received on-going training. Additionally, 17% of the treatment group did not receive mentoring and 35% of the controls were found to have received mentoring from the programme or elsewhere in the community.

Bernstein et al's (2009) findings are supported by Wood and Mayo-Wilson, (2012), who carried out a statistically robust systematic review and meta-analysis of SBM programmes conducted between 1980 and 2011. Only experimental and quasi-experimental studies with control groups were included, giving 8 studies with 6,072 participants and 6 studies for the meta-analysis. They found no statistically significant impacts on academic achievement, attendance, attitude, self-esteem or behaviour. They also suggested that the impact of mentoring may have been difficult to determine because treatment and control groups were often receiving support from additional intervention programmes such as tutoring or counselling. They acknowledged that this may have distorted results, making it difficult to isolate the programme effects from other factors, and limiting the overall confidence in the findings.

Two studies identified found that mentoring had a negative impact on academic achievement (Hickman & Garvey, 2006; McQuillin, Smith, & Strait, 2011). McQuillin et al. (2011) undertook an randomised controlled trial (RCT) to

evaluate the effectiveness of a single semester mentoring programme which targeted vulnerable pupils to help ease their transition to middle school. Sixty students were randomly assigned to a mentoring programme and 60 students to the control. They found that the treatment group fared worse in most subject areas (English, languages, arts, mathematics and reading) and experienced statistically significant decreases in their reading grades. There were no statistically significant differences in behaviour referrals or connectedness to school or teacher. While this was a well-designed study utilising an RCT design with equal numbers of participants in the treatment and control, there were a number of limitations. There was a lack of formal fidelity monitoring making it unclear if intervention protocols were consistent across mentoring relationships. The authors also note that "the experimental construct validity of the mentoring intervention was in question" (p.857), making it difficult to ascribe changes to the intervention.

2.3.2 Impact of Mentoring on Other School Related Outcomes for Vulnerable young people

The impacts of mentoring on other important school-based outcomes such as attendance, dropout rates, attitudes towards school and behaviour have also been examined extensively. A number of studies have found that mentoring had a positive impact on behaviour (Converse & Lignugaris/Kraft, 2009; Gordon et al., 2013; Herrera et al., 2007; Holt et al., 2008; McQuillin et al. 2015; Wheeler et al., 2010), attendance (Eby et al., 2008; Gordon et al., 2013; Wheeler et al., 2010), attitudes towards school (Eby et al., 2008; Herrera et al., 2007; Kolar & McBride, 2011) and dropout rates (Eby et al., 2008; Johnson & Lampney, 2010), while other studies found no impact on behaviour (Herrera et al., 2011; McQuillin et al., 2011) or attendance (Bernstein et al., 2009; Converse & Lignugaris/Kraft, 2009). Furthermore, one study found that mentoring had a negative impact on attendance (Caldarella et al., 2009) and another a negative impact on behaviour (Hickman & Garvey, 2006). Overall however, while findings in these domains across studies are mixed, mentoring does appear to impact more positively on these outcomes when compared to academic achievement.

Johnson and Lampney (2010) explored the impact of a SBM programme on 57 at-risk students aged 11-15 years old. They adopted a non-experimental quantitative design to measure changes in attendance, academic achievement and behaviour. Thirty-five school staff were recruited as mentors and met with

mentees an average of twice a week throughout the school year. At the end of the year, grades, attendance and discipline referrals from school records were compared to the previous year. The study reported statistically positive impacts on all outcome measures. However, the study did not include a control so it is not possible to conclude that the changes were due to the intervention. Moreover, the study utilised school records data to measure outcomes rather than standardised tools. School records are subjective in nature, data may not be rigorously collected and the information may only be an approximation of the constructs to be measured. Another limitation to this study was the lack of details regarding the quality of the mentoring programme and fidelity of the intervention.

Holt et al. (2008) also found that mentoring impacted positively on school behaviour, but in contrast to Johnson and Lampley (2010), they did not find positive effects on attendance or academic achievement. They undertook an experimental study to explore whether a five-month mentoring intervention, delivered primarily by schoolteachers, could enhance school engagement. Twenty students were randomly assigned to a group who received mentoring and 20 students were assigned to a control. Findings suggested that students who were mentored demonstrated significant and positive effects on perceptions of teacher support, decision-making and school behaviour, but no effects were found on attendance, academic achievement, SOSB or academic self-efficacy. However, a per protocol analysis suggested that when mentees who did not meet with their mentors at least 6 times over the duration of the intervention were excluded from the analysis, the effects were stronger and SOSB reached statistical significance. At the six-month follow-up, there were no significant differences between any groups, indicating that the positive effects of mentoring did not continue beyond the intervention. A number of strengths to this study should be noted. The study employed a randomized, controlled design and included a six-month follow-up on attendance rates, academic achievement and behavioural problems. The study also attempted to explore potential mechanisms of change by assessing mentees' and mentors' perceptions of relationship quality and examined correlational data for each of the variables. In addition all 40 participants participated in a year long universal intervention that focused on enhancing students' transition to high school, and it is not known if this also impacted on the outcomes.

2.3.3 Impact of Mentoring on Social and Emotional Development of Vulnerable young people

In addition to school-related outcomes, researchers have identified that social and emotional development may be influenced through participation in a mentoring intervention. Some researchers have argued that changes in social and emotional development may be a more likely outcome for mentoring than changes in other areas such as academic achievement (Karcher, 2008; Portwood & Ayers, 2005); however, the former changes might influence academic achievement in the longer-term (Karcher, Kuperminc, Portwood, Sipe, & Taylor, 2006).

The positive impacts of mentoring in this domain have included enhanced self-esteem and self-concept (Karcher, 2008; Kolar & McBride, 2011), satisfaction with life (McQuillin et al., 2015), interpersonal relationships and social skills (Caldarella et al., 2009; Eby et al., 2008; Kolar & McBride, 2011; Wheeler et al., 2010), and connectedness to peers, school and adults (Holt et al., 2008; Karcher, 2008; King et al., 2002; Portwood et al., 2005). However, similar to SBM studies focused on measuring school-related outcomes, findings are mixed, with some studies reporting no impact (Bernstein et al., 2009; Herrera et al., 2007, 2011; Karcher, 2008; King et al., 2002; Wheeler et al., 2010; Wood & Mayo-Wilson, 2012) or declines in these areas (Karcher, 2008). In addition to mixed findings across studies, findings within individual studies were variable across social and emotional variables (Karcher, 2008; Portwood et al., 2005; Wheeler et al., 2010).

Mixed findings were evident in the King et al. (2002) exploratory study, which assessed the impact of a 5-month SBM programme for fourth grade students on self-esteem, and school, peer, and family connectedness. Twenty-eight students were assigned to the mentoring programme and 255 students to the control. Mentees met with their mentor twice a week for 1.5 hours. All participants completed a survey at baseline and post-intervention. Findings indicated that the school and family connectedness scores were significantly higher for mentored students than non-mentored students, while self-esteem and peer connectedness scores were not. They also found significant decreases in mentees depression symptoms and the likelihood to have bullied or fought with a peer. The mentoring programme in this study appeared to be carefully structured and delivered with good fidelity. A programme coordinator helped to

ensure consistency in the delivery of the programme and facilitated effective communication among all stakeholders. However, the results should be viewed with caution due to the non-random sample selection that included only fourth grade students selected from one school.

Portwood et al. (2005) study of the school-based "YouthFriends" programme also produced mixed findings. The aim of the study was to explore the impact of a SBM programme on cognitive and behavioural outcomes using a non-randomized, pre-test-post-test control group design. The study included 208 participants selected from five school districts across Kansas and Missouri. The experimental group consisted of 102 pupils who were mentored and a matched comparison group of 106 pupils. The programme took place over the academic year and utilised community volunteers as mentors. The programme emphasised the development of a personal relationship between the mentor and mentee rather than academic outcomes. Findings demonstrated that pupils who were mentored had a statistically significant higher score on sense of school membership at posttest, while there were no differences between the two groups on any of the other eight outcomes including self-esteem, self-concept and academic achievement. Further analysis indicated that when mentored and non-mentored students with low scores at baseline were compared, the pupils who were mentored improved significantly on community connectedness and goal-setting. Additionally, pupils with the lowest school grades, improved significantly in their grades compared to similar pupils in the control. Overall, the programme seemed to have the greatest influence on the those most in need.

This study highlighted some of the difficulties in evaluating SBM programmes. The researchers found it difficult to measure the dose of mentoring taking place or style of mentoring contributing to the outcomes because the information was not made available from school or programme records. Moreover, they did not give an explanation for the 18% attrition rate. It was also not possible to randomly assign participants to groups for ethical reasons; all pupils who wanted to participate in the mentoring group were given the opportunity. However, to reduce some of the problems associated with their chosen design, the authors recruited an equivalent comparison group.

Consistent with King et al. (2002) and Portwood et al. (2005) findings, Karcher's (2008) study demonstrated mixed findings across social and emotional

outcomes. However, unlike King et al., and Portwood et al., Karcher reported declines across a number of outcomes. He conducted a large-scale, RCT of a three-month SBM programme to examine the additive effect of SBM, in addition to other school-based support services. The study included 516 participants across 19 schools, with 252 randomly assigned to the group who received standard classes plus mentoring and 264 pupils who received standard classes only. Findings suggested that mentoring had a small but statistically significant impact on connectedness to peers, global self-esteem, self-in-the-present and perceived support from friends. No significant differences were found on 17 other constructs examined, including connectedness to school and teachers and social skills. Effects of the intervention were found to vary across gender and age groups, with high school female mentees benefitting the most and elementary males benefitting more than middle and high school male mentees. No positive effects were found for high school boys and a statistically significant decrease in connectedness to teachers was found. This group also experienced non-significant declines in connectedness to school, self-in-the-future, and cooperation within the school system. Additionally, middle school girls who were mentored reported lower self-control compared with middle school girls in the group receiving only standard services. While this study reported small effects on only four out of 21 outcomes and some negative effects were evident, a number of limitations may have impacted on the results of the study. There was poor differentiation between groups, 28 participants in the mentoring group did not receive any mentoring and four in the control did. Additionally, the quality of the mentoring programme may have influenced the findings. The author noted that the organization that delivered the mentoring programme did not follow many best practices recommended in previous research (e.g. DuBois et al., 2002). Mentors received limited training and support, and little structure was provided to guide mentoring sessions. Karcher (2008, p.111) concluded that the "study's estimates of the effects of SBM may well be substantially less than if more of these practices had been in place".

In contrast to Karcher (2008) and Portwood et al. (2005), Herrera et al. (2007) found that mentoring had an impact on school-related outcomes, but not on social and emotional outcomes. The study was a replication of Tierney et al's (1995) influential study, but evaluated school-based BBBS programmes rather than community-based ones. The study utilised an experimental design that included 1139 students, 565 of whom were randomly assigned to the treatment

group and 574 to the control, from 71 schools across 10 cities in the U.S. After 15 months, results demonstrated there were significant improvements in participants' perceived scholastic efficacy, academic performance, school behaviour and attendance compared to the control. Yet, in contrast to the Tierney et al. (1995) findings, the effect sizes were small and there were no significant changes in personal or social wellbeing scores. However, the positive outcomes, with the exception of lower rates of truancy, did not endure into the following school year when mentees were no longer receiving mentoring. The results of this study may have been limited by the reliance on student and teacher reports rather than on more objective measures. Nonetheless, this extensive study employed a rigorous design and included longitudinal data. The data collected in this study has been used for secondary analysis in a number of other mentoring studies (Rhodes, Lowe, Litchfield, & Walsh-Samp, 2008; Grossman & Rhodes, 2002).

2.3.4 Mentoring and LAC

A very small number of studies (Haight, Briggs, & Rhodes, 1999; Johnson, Martinovich, & Pryce, 2011; Renshaw, 2008; Taussig & Culhane, 2010) have examined the efficacy of mentoring programmes for LAC and all have found mentoring to be a positive intervention. Most of these studies focused on the impact of mentoring on social and emotional outcomes, while some also included school-based outcomes.

The most rigorous study identified was an evaluation of the Kempe Fostering Healthy Futures programme (Taussig & Culhane, 2010). Researchers employed an RCT design to assess the impact of a nine-month preventive mentoring and skills group programme, which aimed to improve the emotional wellbeing of LAC aged 9-11. The intervention incorporated best practices (e.g DuBois et al., 2002) including the recruitment of mentors with experience in a helping role or profession, providing mentors with on-going training and the provision of structured activities for mentoring relationships. The study included 156 children; 79 were randomly assigned to a group who received a skills-based curriculum in addition to mentoring, while 77 children were assigned to the control. Outcome measures were related to mental health functioning and included post-traumatic stress, dissociation, quality of life, coping, self-worth, social acceptance and social support. Children and carers were asked to fill in survey data at baseline (T1), at the end of the intervention (T2) and 6 months

post intervention (T3). Teachers were also surveyed 10 months and 22 months after baseline.

At post-intervention, children in the intervention group reported significantly higher quality of life than children in the control. While all other outcomes did not show any significant differences immediately after the intervention, additional effects after 6 months were apparent. Children in the treatment group had significantly fewer mental health and dissociation symptoms, and were less likely to have received mental health treatment. This was an important study as it is the only study examining the impact of mentoring on LAC that uses an RCT design. Additionally, the results are strengthened because data analyses were based on intention to treat and attrition rates were low at 9%. Furthermore, a range of perceptions was gathered for the purposes of measuring changes in mental health functioning, increasing the likelihood of gaining a more accurate understanding of any changes that took place in this domain.

However, the results of this study need to be treated with some caution owing to the inclusion of a skills group within the intervention, which may not be typical of other mentoring programmes. It is therefore not possible to determine which component of the programme, the mentoring or skills group, contributed to the greatest effects.

Two further studies (Johnson et al., 2011; Renshaw, 2008) examined the impact of mentoring for LAC and similarly focused on psychosocial outcomes, but unlike the study above, a number of school related outcomes were also measured. There were positive findings across domains, as well as some insignificant and negative findings. However, due to less rigorous designs, conclusions are tentative at best.

Johnson et al. (2011) examined the effectiveness of Therapeutic Mentoring (TM) in addition to other support services provided through the System of Care (SOC) programme. The study utilised a correlational design and the sample consisted of 262 LAC between the ages of 6 and 15 years. Participants were split into four groups based on the extent to which they received TM (no TM, prior TM, limited TM and substantial TM). A number of psychosocial domains such as child strengths and behavioural and emotional needs were measured using the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) tool at baseline, 6, 12 and 18

months. Results indicated that after 6 months, participants who received a substantial amount of TM and those who received no TM had significantly favourable outcomes on measures of family and social functioning, school behaviour, attendance and achievement relative to LAC who received a limited amount of TM. Additionally, participants who received limited and substantial TM for 18 months reported significant decreases in the expression of trauma symptoms compared to those who received no TM. No other significant differences between groups were found.

It is difficult to draw conclusions from this study. While there was a lack of significant differences between groups in many areas, participants receiving substantial TM had the best outcomes, and those receiving limited mentoring for a short duration (up to six months) fared worse, even when compared to those receiving no mentoring at all. However, the study did not use random assignment and did not report many important details of the intervention, making interpretation of results difficult. For example, participants were split into groups based on the extent to which they received TM, however, there was no explanation of what each category (e.g. 'substantial TM' and 'limited TM') meant in practice. Furthermore, there was a high level of attrition that was not explained. The study started with 262 participants, reduced to 106 at 12 months and 27 at 18 months, and some of the groups were left with as little as 3 participants. The scale of attrition in some of the groups at 12 and 18 months would have compromised the ability to conduct statistical analysis.

Renshaw (2008) carried out an evaluation of a pilot-mentoring programme aiming to support LAC to complete homework, develop social and life skills, improve school attendance and participate in social networks and group activities. This mixed method pretest/posttest study involved 28 mentoring providers who mentored a total of 449 LAC aged between 10-15 years. Most mentors met mentees for two hours each week over a period of nine months and engaged in a variety activities from leisure to school related tasks. The impact of the intervention was measured through qualitative and quantitative data including mentee evaluation throughout the relationship, semi-structured interviews with coordinators, social workers, carers, mentees and mentors and via survey data collected from all mentees. The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) was used to measure psychological wellbeing, and the second questionnaire focused on measuring domains such as school,

relationships, self-concept, and involvement in hobbies and activities. The SDQ was administered at baseline and towards the end of the intervention, while the second questionnaire was administered at baseline, midway through the intervention and at the end. Results from the second survey indicated that majority of the LAC improved in all areas of schooling including homework (56%), behaviour (60%), school work (68%) and attendance (73%). Interestingly, results in this domain were most positive for mentoring pairs that were school-based. Most pupils reported feeling better about themselves and their future (62% and 74% respectively), and that their relationships with others had also improved. For example, 68% felt family relationships had improved and 80% reported better relationships with friends. Pupils also reported increased opportunities to join new clubs and meet new people (73% and 87% respectively). After a period of six months, 127 pupils completed SDQ questionnaires. Except for 'Conduct problems', the majority of subscales improved. However, only one subscale ('Emotional problems') showed a statistically significant improvement. Towards the end of the mentoring relationship, a range of stakeholders including foster carers, social workers, grandparents and family friends were asked to complete a questionnaire. The consensus from returned questionnaires (n=263) was that pupils improved in the areas highlighted as areas of greatest need. The most positive gains were in the areas of 'Confidence' and 'Feeling better about themselves'. One hundred and two stakeholders also made general comments about the scheme and impact on the young person, of which 90% were positive.

While this evaluation provides preliminary evidence for the positive impact that mentoring can have, some of the results of the SDQ (e.g. conduct problems) indicated potential negative effects. However, there are several concerns regarding the quality of this study. The study design was pretest/posttest without a control group, and statistical analysis was only undertaken for the SDQ results, the only objective measure used. Further, attrition was a problem, only 28% (n=127) of the sample (n=446) completed the SDQ at baseline, and while this rose to 40% at T2, it fell again to 18% at T3. It is also unclear if results are based on changes from baseline to T2 or T3.

One final mentoring study (Haight et al., 1999) involving LAC was based on a subsample of data from a large national study of mentoring relationships within the BBBS programme (Tierney et al. 1995). The researchers compared a group

of LAC with a group of non-LAC, to establish whether there were differences in how the universal mentoring programme influenced a range of social and emotional outcomes. Each group consisted of 90 children, with the LAC group comprising all participants in the national LAC programme, while participants in the non-LAC group were matched with participants in the LAC subgroup based on variables such as gender, age and race. Each subgroup was further divided into a treatment group (56.1%) and waitlist control group (43.9%). Peer relationships were assessed at baseline and after 18 months using parental reports and a self-report scale given to each child. Findings revealed that LAC who were mentored were more likely than mentored non-LAC to demonstrate improved social skills and comfort and trust with adults. Additionally, when mentored LAC were compared to the non-mentored LAC, they showed improvements in their peer prosocial support and self-esteem. In contrast, non-mentored LAC, experienced decreased peer support over time (Haight et al., 1999) further supporting the potential value of mentoring relationships for LAC. However, outcomes in this study are based on parental reports only. Further perspectives would be beneficial to determine if others shared parent views.

2.3.5 Conclusion Regarding Mentoring Research

Findings across all mentoring studies indicate that mentoring can be beneficial on a range of important outcomes, particularly for vulnerable pupils (DuBois et al., 2002) and for younger children (Bernstein et al., 2009). In addition, when mentoring programmes adhere to certain “best practice” recommendations (e.g. DuBois et al., 2002), there is a stronger evidence-base demonstrating the success of mentoring on outcomes (DuBois et al., 2002; Portwood et al., 2005).

Nonetheless, there is a lack of consistent evidence supporting its implementation, and most meta-analyses (DuBois et al., 2002; Wheeler et al., 2010) and large-scale RCT’s of SBM (Bernstein et al., 2009; Herrera et al., 2007) demonstrate that impacts are modest at best. The inconsistencies in results and small effect sizes may be in part due to the vast differences across mentoring programmes. These differences include the duration of the mentoring relationship, activities undertaken within mentoring sessions and the mentors’ background and skills. The methodological rigour and fidelity of the interventions were also inconsistent.

In addition to these concerns, there is a lack of research that evaluates the effectiveness of mentoring on LAC, and it is therefore difficult to draw firm conclusions about the specific outcomes of mentoring on LAC, despite some positive initial findings. This underscores the importance of further research that not only evaluates the impact of mentoring on LAC but also focuses on which aspects of mentoring programmes impact on effectiveness. More research is therefore needed to establish if LAC benefit from having a mentor in school, how they benefit, and what factors contribute to these outcomes.

2.4 Literacy Interventions for LAC

A number of interventions have targeted improving the literacy skills of LAC (Griffiths, Comber, & Dymoke, 2010; Harper & Schmidt, 2012; Osborne et al., 2010). The majority have focused on developing reading skills (Flynn, Marquis, Paquet, Peeke, & Aubry, 2012; Fraser, Barratt, Beverley, & Lawes, 2008; Griffiths et al., 2010; Harper & Schmidt, 2012; Osborne, Alfano, & Winn, 2010; Vinnerljung, Tideman, Sallnäs, & Forsman, 2014; Worsley & Beverley, 2008) and have been delivered in a variety of formats such as increasing LAC's access to books, involving foster parents in reading activities with the children in their care, and tutoring programmes delivered in schools. In the following sub-sections four literacy interventions are discussed: the Letterbox Club, Paired Reading, Catch Up Literacy, and Teach Your Children Well (TYCW).

The Letterbox Club aims to improve literacy skills by encouraging LAC to engage with reading through the provision of free books and other materials such as stationary, which are sent directly to children in their foster homes. It was initially delivered in England and has now been implemented in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (Griffiths et al., 2010, Dymoke & Griffiths, 2010; Hancock & Leslie, 2014; Mooney, Winter, & Connolly, 2016; Winter, Connolly, Bell, & Ferguson, 2011). Findings across most studies demonstrated gains in literacy skills, with some studies demonstrating a significant improvement in reading ability (Griffiths et al., 2010; Winter et al., 2011). In addition, some of the qualitative feedback indicated higher levels of enjoyment and increased family involvement in reading. However, there is only one experimental study (Mooney et al., 2016) examining the effectiveness of this intervention, and results of this study suggested that the intervention was not effective in improving literacy skills or attitudes towards reading.

Griffiths et al. (2010) conducted two evaluations to assess the impact of a national pilot of the Letterbox Club and reported the qualitative and quantitative findings in two separate papers. The quantitative study evaluated the national pilot over two years and involved 765 children aged between 7-11 years old. They assessed the reading accuracy scores of 316 children in 2007 and 449 in 2008, using the Neale Analysis of Reading Ability pre and post intervention. Results from both years revealed significant improvements in reading scores, with children moving out of the lowest attaining group and moving into the higher attaining groups. In 2007, the percentage of children who were in the lowest standardised score range (69-89) decreased by 9%, while the percentage in the middle range (90-110) increased by 2% and the highest bracket (111-131) increased by 7%. The results in 2008 were similar; the children who scored within the lowest standardised score range (69-89) decreased by 9%, there were no changes in the middle range (90-110) and the highest bracket (111-131) increased by 7%. The qualitative findings of this study were gathered by exploring attitudes of 540 LAC and their carers towards the intervention using questionnaires. Dymoke & Griffith (2010) analyzed the questionnaire responses and identified four emerging themes: reading processes, response to books, identity as an independent learner and perceived impact of the texts on the foster carers. Overall, children and carers reported a high level of satisfaction and enthusiasm for the intervention, 84% said they 'liked it' or said, 'it was OK' and 16% 'didn't use it'. Additionally, they found that the intervention improved social activity within the family with siblings and carers becoming involved in reading stories. However, only 41% (n=221) of the children responded to the evaluation survey, therefore it is not known if those that did not respond shared similar views.

These findings are supported by Winter et al. (2011) who conducted an independent evaluation of the Letterbox Club using data that had already been collected by the Fostering Network in Northern Ireland. The data included 268 LAC aged 7-11 years old. The children's literacy and numeracy skills were tested prior to the intervention and 6 months later using the Neale Measurement of Reading Ability (Neale, 1997) and a mathematics measure specifically designed for the Letterbox Club intervention. All children made statistically significant gains in their reading accuracy, comprehension and numeracy skills. Specifically, the children made an average gain of 3.6 points on their standardised reading accuracy scores and 3.5 points on their standardised

comprehension scores and 35% of the children improved their number skills by one National Curriculum level. Further exploratory analysis revealed that rates of change were not influenced by the characteristics of the children or their participation in additional tuition.

However, while findings across these studies demonstrated improvements in reading skills, there were some important limitations. Most evaluations were carried out by the programme developers raising issues of objectivity.

Furthermore, all studies lacked a control group so it is not possible to attribute the positive progress to the intervention as progress made may have happened anyway. In addition, Winter et al. (2011) did not include details regarding the level of the children's engagement in the intervention so it is unclear if the children utilised the resources provided.

A recent study carried out by Mooney et al. (2016) attempted to address some of these limitations with a more rigorous evaluation of the intervention. The study employed an RCT design involving 116 LAC aged 7-11 years across Northern Ireland. Fifty-six children were randomly allocated to the intervention group and 60 to the control. Two questionnaires (The Neale Analysis of Reading Ability and The Elementary Reading Enjoyment Scale) were administered at baseline and six months later to measure literacy skills and attitudes towards reading. Findings suggested that the intervention had no effect on literacy outcomes or attitudes to reading. They collected qualitative feedback to ascertain the level of engagement and attitude towards the parcels amongst children and carers. The feedback indicated that simply receiving parcels was insufficient to change reading behaviour. Some children were indifferent to the parcels and did not engage with them. Children were more likely to read the books when they were matched to interests and ability; however, most children reported that they received some books that were not suitable. In addition, children who were positive about the parcels were more likely to be children who were already motivated to read and could identify the books that they would enjoy. Consequently, it is likely that the intervention was not effective in reaching the children most in need.

The findings of this study were important as it is the only experimental study exploring the impact of this intervention and results are in direct contrast to other

less rigorous studies. However, one critique is that the trial was underpowered due to the limited sample size. Given that The Letterbox Club is a popular intervention which has been rolled out across the UK, it is vital that further RCTs are carried out to further understand if and how this intervention can improve the educational outcomes of LAC.

Paired Reading is another literacy intervention that has been evaluated with LAC (Osborne et al., 2010; Vinnerljung et al., 2014). This intervention involved training foster carers to support their foster children's literacy skills by reading with them for 20 minutes a day, three times a week for 16 weeks. Vinnerljung et al. (2014) and Osborne et al. (2010) utilised different formats (individualised versus group) but focused on measuring the same outcomes and reported similar findings. Positive findings across both studies included increased enthusiasm for reading, better reading skills, improved confidence and stronger carer/child relationships.

Osborne et al. (2010) included 68 LAC and carers in their study. Measures of reading ability were taken pre- and post-intervention using a standardised reading test. The results demonstrated a statistically significant improvement in reading age by an average of 12 months. The ratio gain was also calculated and revealed that children improved by three months on average for each month they participated in the intervention. Further, the children who had the lowest reading scores at baseline were found to have made the greatest gains in their reading score post intervention. In addition, children who had stronger reading skills (i.e. scores above their chronological age at baseline) benefitted from the intervention, making at least two months' progress for every month they were involved in the intervention. The study also included the feedback from carers (n=16) all of whom were positive about the intervention. Improvements in children's confidence and motivation levels were highlighted, as well as how much they had valued the additional one-to-one time with their child. However, it is of concern that there was a high attrition rate of 51% and while the authors identified factors that may have accounted for this, they did not give sufficient detail about the numbers of children lost within each category. Furthermore, the views of the children were not included in this study and therefore their attitudes towards the intervention are unknown. Only 46% of the carers provided feedback for the intervention so the view of the majority of carers is therefore

unknown. In addition, the study design was unclear and did not include a control.

The Vinnerljung et al. (2014) study was carried out in Sweden and included 81 children aged 8–12. Each child's ability was measured pre-intervention and post-intervention with standardised literacy tests and a short version of the WISC-IV. Results were comparable to Osborne et al. (2010) findings; reading ages increased by 11 months on average as opposed to 12 months in the UK study. In contrast to the UK study, the Swedish study did not find any differences between the improvements of children with low scores on the literacy assessments pre-intervention compared to those with higher scores. Another finding that differed from the UK study was that children in the younger age range (8-9 years) did better than the older children (10-12 years). Younger children improved significantly on all five assessments administered, whereby effect sizes were all above the level 0.25. Children within the older category (aged 10-12 years) demonstrated significant improvements on four out of six assessments, however, smaller effect sizes were evident. In comparison to the UK study, there were several strengths; the inclusion of effect sizes, a larger sample size and a lower attrition rate (2.4%). This study also reported the compliance rate, with nine out of ten children/carers completing the expected amount of reading. However, the results were limited by a lack of control.

A further literacy intervention for LAC is Catch Up Literacy programme, which is a tutoring intervention that focuses on the development of reading skills through training foster carers to tutor the children in their care. Two pilot studies (Fraser et al., 2008; Worsley & Beverley, 2008) evaluating the effectiveness of Catch Up Literacy on LAC were identified. Both studies reported an improvement in reading skills and one study (Worsley & Beverley, 2008) found that the intervention was effective in improving confidence and self-esteem.

In the first of the pilot studies (Fraser et al., 2008), foster carers were trained to deliver Catch Up Literacy to LAC at home. The study focused on differences in pre-and post-test reading scores to examine the impact of the intervention on reading and comprehension skills. Ten LAC between the ages of 11-14 years engaged with the programme for one year. The literacy skills of each LAC were measured at baseline, six months and 12 months using the National Foundation for Education Research Sentence Completion and Comprehension Tests. All

children who completed the programme demonstrated improved reading and comprehension age at the end of the intervention. However, the results are limited by the small sample size, lack of control and high attrition rate; only 50% (n=5) of children completed the intervention. Furthermore, the fidelity of the intervention was a problem with most children completing fewer sessions than expected.

The second pilot study of Catch Up Literacy (Worsley & Beverley, 2008) was run in partnership with the educational psychology and specialist support service of Norfolk Virtual School. This study utilised a mixed methods pretest/posttest design to evaluate the impact of the intervention on literacy skills and self-esteem. Foster carers, specialist support assistants and learning support assistants delivered the programme to 26 LAC in the school setting, over an eight-month period. Reading levels were assessed at baseline, six months and nine months using a standardised reading test (Salford Sentence Revised Reading Test for Primary Learners). Results after one term (November-April) suggested that the average gain in reading age was 14.7 months, with an average ratio gain of 2.4. After two terms of Catch Up Literacy (November-June), the average gain in reading age was 17.15 months, with a ratio gain of 2.05. The results from this study should be viewed with caution as methodological rigour is of concern. The study did not include a control and many details of the study were unclear including the study fidelity, methods used to analyse the results and the number of children who completed the intervention. In addition, the report did not include a synthesis of the qualitative findings: qualitative information relating to only two children were reported.

Teach Your Children Well (TYCW) is another intervention that involves training foster carers to deliver a tutoring programme to children in their care. Flynn et al. (2012) and Harper & Schmidt (2012) evaluated the intervention using experimental study designs and found that the intervention improved some aspects of literacy but not others. Both studies focused on measuring the same outcomes but utilised different formats (individualised versus group) and reported contrasting results. Flynn et al. (2012) found the intervention had a statistically significant and positive impact on comprehension, while Harper & Schmidt (2012) found statistically significant improvements in the areas of reading and spelling. The magnitude of the effect sizes for both studies were the

same as those found by Ritter, Barnett, Denny and Albin (2009) in tutoring programmes for children in the general population.

Flynn et al. (2012) evaluated the impact of TYCW on 77 LAC, with 42 children randomly assigned to the tutoring group and 35 to the wait-list control. Trained foster carers delivered the programme to the children in their care in the home, over a period of 30 weeks. The intervention included 2.5 hours of literacy instruction per week, two hours' one-to-one direct instruction to the foster child in reading, and 30 minutes reading aloud by the child to the carer. Pre-and-post measures were taken of reading, sentence comprehension and spelling using standardised tools. A statistically significant relationship was found for sentence comprehension, but not for reading composite, spelling or word reading. Although the study used an experimental design and included a high level of detail regarding the methods and fidelity, it is nonetheless of concern that 29% of the intervention group withdrew from the study and seven of these cases gave reasons directly related to either the experimental or control condition.

Harper & Schmidt (2012) also evaluated TYCW but used small groups of three to four pupils led by university student volunteers. Sixty-eight children aged 6-13 years were tutored for 25 weeks. The study employed an experimental design with 33 children randomly assigned to the tutoring group and 35 to the wait-list control. This study measured the same outcomes and measures as Flynn et al. (2012). A comparison between the children in the treatment and control revealed findings in direct contrast to the results in Flynn et al. (2012) study. The intervention had a statistically significant, small to moderate effect on word reading and spelling but not for sentence comprehension. There were limitations to this study acknowledged by Harper and Schmidt. Firstly, most participants were aboriginal, however, the tool used to measure outcomes had not been validated for use with this population. Lacking cultural validation, the validity of the tool is questionable. Secondly, there seemed to be issues with the fidelity of the programme. The author noted difficulties they encountered monitoring fidelity, which resulted in an inability to determine which tutors implemented the programme with high fidelity and those who did not. They suggested that future studies should incorporate more extensive training for tutors and rigorous fidelity monitoring.

Olisa et al. (n.d.) also evaluated a tutoring intervention that used teachers to deliver the intervention rather than foster carers or community or university student volunteers. The study aimed to evaluate the impact of a 20-week tutoring intervention on the literacy and numeracy skills of LAC. It involved 25 LAC aged 5-11 years, 10 of whom were allocated to the literacy group, 10 to a numeracy group and 5 to a group who did not receive tutoring. However, the control was not included in the final analysis due to 40% attrition that left too few participants for meaningful comparison. The study utilised a pretest/posttest design to measure changes in the participants reading comprehension, reading accuracy, spelling, numeracy, receptive language skills, locus of control and self-esteem. Results suggested that there were significant improvements from pre-test to post-test in standard scores for the group as a whole (n=20) in reading, spelling, receptive vocabulary and locus of control, but not for number skills, listening comprehension or self-esteem. However, when results were analysed based on the intervention group, results indicated that spelling, reading, receptive vocabulary and locus of control improved significantly for children in the literacy group, while number skills, spelling, reading and locus of control improved significantly for children in the numeracy group.

A qualitative questionnaire to explore experiences of the programme was distributed to all children and teachers participating in the intervention. Fifteen teachers and 20 children responded. The results suggested that most pupils enjoyed the intervention and felt that the additional support had helped improve their performance in class. Reponses also indicated that the relationship with an adult had helped them feel more valued as a member of the school community. Reports from the teachers were also positive. All teachers believed that the intervention was worthwhile for their pupils and 73% valued the intervention in terms of their own professional development.

This study was key as it highlighted the importance of assessing children's needs prior to the intervention to guide the intervention programme, the benefits of recruiting teachers to deliver the intervention and the importance of the relationship to overall outcomes. However, as the findings of this study were limited by small sample size and lack of control group, the results should be viewed with caution.

Overall, there is some evidence that literacy interventions have positive effects for LAC, with encouraging results across all studies. The interventions also appeared to be viewed positively by the LAC involved as well as by their carers and teachers (Dymoke & Griffiths, 2010; Osborne et al. 2010). However, it is difficult to draw reliable conclusions about the effectiveness of literacy interventions because not only is the number of studies limited, but many were small-scale, lacked fidelity measures, did not include a control, and did not systematically gain the views of the children in determining success. Further well-designed studies that examine the impact of literacy interventions for LAC are needed.

2.5 Literacy/Mentoring Interventions for LAC

This section reviews the literature on literacy/mentoring interventions for LAC. Three studies in total were identified (Courtney et al., 2008; Knight, 2013; Tyre, 2012). Two studies reported positive improvements in literacy skills (Knight, 2013; Tyre, 2012), while the third (Courtney et al., 2008) found that the intervention had no impact on any outcomes.

Knight (2013) used a correlational design to examine the impact of The Love of Learning Programme, a literacy/mentoring intervention used in Australia to promote the literacy, numeracy and learning skills of children in foster care. A random sample of 180 mentors was surveyed to assess perceptions of the relationships developed with mentee, mentee engagement in the programme and improvement in mentee literacy skills. Of the 121 mentors who responded, 95.8% reported they had a supportive and positive relationship with their mentee, 64.1% reported their mentee was actively engaged with the programme and 74% believed that their mentee's literacy skills improved over the duration of the intervention. Statistical analysis indicated that the relationship, mentee engagement in the learning process and tenure in the programme had a significant impact on the mentors' perceptions of improvements in literacy skills, with relationship quality perceived as the most influential factor.

This study highlights the importance of relationship quality, but a number of limitations reduce the reliability of its findings. The impact of the programme and the factors influencing the outcomes are limited to mentors' perceptions. To gain a more comprehensive and reliable picture of the effectiveness of the programme, objective measures of literacy outcomes and views from a wider

range of stakeholder should have been sought. In addition, the response rate was only 67%, so it is unknown if the 33% who did not respond shared similar views. This study also lacks information regarding the programme as well as the intervention fidelity. Finally, the ability to attribute improvements to the intervention is limited by the lack of a control; some of the perceived improvement in the children's literacy levels may be attributable to natural progression of reading skills over time or factors other than the programme.

In the second study, Tyre (2012) examined the impact of the Educational Success Programme (ESP), an intervention designed to target literacy skills, while also helping participating pupils deal with social, emotional or behavioural issues. University students were recruited as mentors and were supervised and supported by a designated qualified teacher based at the mentees school. The study included 76 LAC across four middle schools in Washington State. LAC were allocated to groups based on the education they were receiving (general or special) and on the families, they were living with (birth, kinship, or foster care). Standardised curriculum-based measures were used to identify needs and monitor progress in reading fluency and comprehension at three different intervals throughout the academic year; autumn, winter and spring. Scores in autumn and spring were compared using paired-samples *t* tests. Findings suggested that all pupils made statistically significant gains in reading fluency and reading comprehension, with large effect sizes reported overall for pupils, as well as for students in general education only and special education only. In addition, 61% of children made the necessary gains for them to achieve or maintain grade-level expectations for reading fluency. This level of growth was not found however in reading comprehension. There were no differences in reading fluency or comprehension gains for pupils living with birth, kinship, or foster care families, suggesting that students made equivalent gains irrespective of home placement.

A strength of this study was that needs assessments were undertaken to ensure that mentoring sessions were individualised to each child. However, it is of concern that no details were given about initial training of mentors or treatment fidelity. Further, the result for the reading comprehension score was limited by a lack of data from 20% of participants. In addition, without a control it is impossible to draw firm conclusions about the impact of the intervention as the gains demonstrated may have occurred anyway.

The final study identified (Courtney et al., 2008) evaluated Early Start to Emancipation Preparation (ESTEP), a mentoring/literacy programme using a RCT design. The programme aimed to foster a mentoring relationship between the pupils and the tutor and at the same time influence a broad range of outcomes for LAC such as academic outcomes, school behaviour, self-sufficiency and social interactions. The study involved a total of 445 children aged 14-15 years; 236 were randomly assigned to a group accessing tutoring and 209 were assigned to a control who received services as usual. Each LAC in the tutoring group received up to 65 hours of home tutoring from college-student volunteers over a period of two years. Fifteen hours were allocated to preparation, mentoring and other activities. The reading ability of each young person was assessed at baseline, after one year and at the final two-year follow-up using the Woodcock Johnson Tests of Achievement III (a standardised and age appropriate tool), school grades and a short self-report survey related to school behaviour. The evaluation was limited to outcomes observed at the second follow-up interview (because participation in ESTEP was on-going at the first follow-up interview). In addition, although data for a broad range of outcomes was collected, only changes in data associated with educational outcomes were reported. Results indicated that there were no statistically significant differences between the ESTEP-Tutoring and control on any outcomes. There were, however limitations that may have influenced findings. The results may have been influenced by lack of adherence to the experimental protocol. Some of the control (12.3%) received some ESTEP-Tutoring while 38% of the treatment group did not engage with the tutoring programme. In addition, three-fifths of the pupils in the control received tutoring from other sources, and in comparison to the intervention group, were 50% more likely to receive school-based tutoring. Additionally, while the study measured the impact of the intervention on educational outcomes, there was little relation between tutoring activities and the school curriculum, reducing the likelihood of influencing school performance. It is important, therefore, that future interventions aiming to improve school outcomes engage teachers who can inform aspects of the intervention. The results may have also been impacted by the fact that tutors were expected to develop their own resources for the intervention. However, given that tutors were college students they may have lacked the necessary skills and experience to do this.

Overall, it is disappointing that while the literacy/mentoring programmes discussed above purported to be mentoring interventions to enhance both literacy outcomes as well as social and emotional outcomes, no details regarding the mentoring relationship were given and only changes in literacy outcomes were measured and reported. Knight (2013) found that the relationship quality was the most influential factor on literacy skills, so it is possible that mentoring contributed to a stronger relationship quality, which in turn influenced literacy skills. However, additional robust studies that combine literacy and mentoring are needed to further understand not only the impact on literacy skills but on psychosocial outcomes, and if and how the mentoring relationship influences these outcomes.

2.6 Conclusion

Across studies it is evident that the research is limited by small sample sizes, lack of control groups, poor fidelity measures and high attrition rates. Additionally, there is a lack of mentoring or literacy studies that specifically focus on LAC. It is clear therefore, that there is an urgent need for a stronger evidence base to guide intervention choice for LAC.

Despite these limitations, the findings demonstrate the potential impact that well-structured mentoring and literacy programmes can have. However, only two studies brought mentoring and literacy approaches together to address the diverse needs of LAC. But because both studies were poorly designed and only reported on academic outcomes, it was unclear if the intervention impacted on the social or emotional needs of the children.

To address the paucity of literature in the field, the methodological issues inherent across studies and the need for interventions focusing equally on both academic and emotional outcomes, the present study combines literacy and mentoring approaches to explore for LAC the impact of a literacy/mentoring intervention of 12 weeks' duration on the literacy skills and academic outcomes, resiliency and sense of school belonging, plus the factors that promote the successful implementation of the intervention.

3 METHODOLOGY

This chapter examines the research paradigm and design and identifies a rationale for the chosen framework. It also discusses the methods used to collect and analyse data, the ethical considerations and provides a detailed account of the intervention protocols. The timeline for the research tasks can be found in appendix B.

3.1 Rationale for Research Paradigm

Paradigms are underpinned by three main philosophical assumptions that inform the design and methods chosen for a research study: ontology, epistemology and methodology (Brannen, 2005). A review of paradigms led me to select a pragmatist approach as pragmatists believe there is no single or best way of deriving knowledge (Rorty, 1990). They focus on what works and finding solutions to problems (Patton, 1990) using all approaches to gain an understanding of the research problem (Rossman & Wilson, 1985). Pragmatists are not searching for truth, rather they understand that reality is complex, ever-changing and shaped by experience. They believe that something is only true if it works and only true for as long as it is useful; they conduct research within a particular context and approach problems from multiple perspectives (Creswell, 2009). A pragmatist approach allowed me to take both an objective and subjective stance, which was important, as both objective measures and the experiences of the participants were essential to addressing the research questions. As the study aimed to explore the impact of a literacy/mentoring intervention on literacy attainment, resiliency and SOSB of LAC, deductive approaches were considered most appropriate to identify quantifiable and generalizable patterns and commonalities across cases. However, the complexity of implementing interventions in real world contexts was acknowledged, and thus an exploration of multiple perspectives was deemed essential to gaining an understanding of what works and ways of improving practice.

3.2 Research Design

This is a mixed method study, defined by Tashakkori & Creswell (2007, p.4) as:

"research in which the investigator collects and analyses data and integrates findings, and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches or methods in a single study or programme of inquiry"

There are five main types of mixed methods design that differ in the priority given to the quantitative and qualitative data, the sequencing of data collection and the phase at which data is mixed (Creswell & Plano Clarke, 2011).

For this study a convergent parallel design was selected as the best means to address the following research questions:

1. What impact does a one-to-one literacy/mentoring intervention have on the resiliency of LAC?

2. What impact does a one-to-one literacy/mentoring intervention have on the SOSB of LAC?

3. What impact does a one-to-one literacy/mentoring intervention have on the literacy skills and academic outcomes of LAC?

4. What are the factors that promote the successful implementation of a literacy/mentoring intervention for LAC?

In a convergent parallel design (convergent/triangulation design) researchers use concurrent timing to implement the quantitative and qualitative aspects of their study. These two aspects are given an equal priority in addressing the research problems, with data sets remaining independent during the data collection and analysis, but later being mixed or merged in the discussion.

A one-group pre-test/post-test design was used within the quantitative arm of the study. The quantitative data was collected before and immediately after the intervention using assessments to measure literacy, resiliency and SOSB. Following the intervention, qualitative data was collected through semi-structured interviews (appendix C) to capture the subjective experiences and perceptions of all participants. Both types of data were analysed separately and later merged within the discussion section to generate a holistic view of the impact of a literacy/mentoring intervention and an understanding of the factors that facilitated its successful implementation.

3.3 Ethical Considerations

Ethical guidelines as determined by the British Psychological Society (2009) were adhered to throughout this study. Furthermore, this study was approved by the Ethics Committee at the Institute of Education, University College London (appendix D). Because LAC are a particularly vulnerable group of children, the ethical implications of research involving LAC are complex. The main challenges for this study were obtaining consent and managing potential vulnerability.

3.3.1 Consent

Gaining consent for LAC involvement in research is difficult as consent from a number of parties including foster carers, biological parents and the Local Authority may be required. For this study, the Virtual School were responsible for gaining consent for each child and the process took longer than anticipated. This delayed the intervention start date, which resulted in the timeframe being reduced from 15 to 12 weeks.

It was also important to ensure that all the children gave informed consent to partake in this research. Each young person was given an information sheet (appendix E) regarding the intervention and had the opportunity to discuss it with the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo). The SENCo at each school sought verbal consent from each LAC.

It was recognised that the children might have felt obliged to participate in the intervention, particularly as some class teachers were involved. Therefore, each LAC was made fully aware that participation was voluntary and that they had the right to withdraw at any point without prejudice. I also discussed the intervention and evaluation process with each young person and answered any questions they had prior to the intervention beginning. Following completion of the intervention, I reiterated the nature and purpose of the assessment process and checked consent. Only one young person decided that they did not want to do the reading assessment, while another did not respond to some questions on one questionnaire.

3.3.2 Distress Protocol

It was acknowledged that the children may have found it stressful to participate in some of the reading assessments as LAC are often below age-appropriate levels and may lack self-esteem. Furthermore, some of the subject matter included in the questionnaires could have caused distress, for example, questions focusing on friendships could distress an individual experiencing relationships difficulties.

Steps were taken to try and minimise potential distress. I met with the SENCo prior to meeting with the young person so that any potential issues were highlighted. Additionally, I found out the academic ability of each young person so that the assessments were started at an appropriate point, which helped to build confidence before moving on to the more challenging tasks. No questions were asked concerning the participants care background, and some questions within the questionnaire were adapted for sensitivity reasons.

I also ensured that a key member of staff was available in case participants became upset and needed support. Only one child appeared upset during the assessment process and was given the option of discontinuing. Subsequently, I accompanied the pupil in question to the key member of staff and informed her of the situation.

3.4 Methods

3.4.1 Sampling and Recruitment

This study utilised a purposive sample owing to the difficulties in recruiting LAC. These difficulties were related to the limited numbers in county X and issues related to gaining consent. The sample was restricted to primary schools because the intervention was an early intervention. I sought to keep the sample as homogenous as possible to allow a greater understanding of the group. To identify appropriate children, the Virtual Assistant Head Teacher (VAHT) sent letters (appendix G) to all primary schools in county X with information about the intervention and an invitation to be involved if they met the following eligibility criteria:

- “looked after” by the local authority
- Children in Year 4, 5 or 6
- Children who would benefit from literacy and mentoring support (as

established by the VAHT, school SENCo, class teacher and carer)

Thirteen schools who met the criteria contacted the VAHT to sign up. Following this, a letter with information about the intervention and the selection criteria was sent to social workers and foster carers. 'Opt-in' consent procedures were followed (appendix E). Consent from the LAC was also sought. In total, consent was obtained for 15 LAC across eight schools. Once the intervention group started the project, the Virtual School project coordinator attempted over several months to identify and recruit LAC to the waiting list control group. To make this an attractive option, those in the control would receive the intervention but delayed into the next academic year. The procedures to recruit to the control followed the same steps as the intervention group. The VAHT sent out information to all schools (appendix H) and followed this up with a phone call. Consent was sought for all identified LAC who met the criteria outlined above. The VAHT successfully gained consent for two children but this was below the minimum target of five. Consequently, a decision was made to omit the inclusion of a wait-list control. Regardless of this decision, the two children identified for it will participate in the intervention as planned.

3.4.2 Participants

This study involved 15 LAC aged 8-11 years: three boys and 12 girls, each attending one of eight mainstream primary schools in county X. The majority were of white ethnicity, reflecting the location of the schools in which the study was conducted. One child was adopted and moved from the county during the intervention, resulting in 14 children completing the intervention. The table below details the characteristics of participants.

Pseudonym	Gender	Ethnicity	Chronological age (first assessment)	Year group
1. Alice	Female	White British	11 yrs 0 mths	6
2. Anne	Female	Mixed	10 yrs 10 mths	6
3. Emily	Female	White British	10 yrs 9 mths	6
4. Emma	Female	White British	9 yrs 4 mths	4
5. Hannah	Female	White British	9 yrs 5 mths	5
6. Harry	Male	White British	7 yrs 11 mths	4
7. Hayley	Female	White British	11 yrs 0 mths	6
8. Holly	Female	White British	9 yrs 0 mths	5
9. Isaac	Male	White British	10 yrs 9 mths	6
10. James	Male	Mixed	9 yrs 4 mths	5
11. Kate	Female	White British	9 years 11 mths	5
12. Leanne	Female	White British	9 yrs 10 mths	5
13. Louise	Female	White British	9 yrs 9 mths	5
14. Lucy	Female	White British	9 yrs 11 mths	5
15. Wayne	Male	White British	10 yrs 6 mths	6

Figure 1: Participants characteristics

3.4.3 Intervention

3.4.3.1 Pilot Study

A pilot study was undertaken in February 2015 at two mainstream primary schools with four LAC aged 8-11 years. The intention was to explore the feasibility of the intervention as well as the suitability of the research instruments and procedures.

The findings of the pilot suggested that the intervention was perceived positively by LAC and mentors, and had the potential to impact positively on a range of outcomes. However, five issues were identified:

1. Training
2. Intervention fidelity
3. Recruiting LAC
4. Outcomes measures
5. Lack of prescribed structure for intervention

Training was offered to all mentors but only 1 of 4 mentors completed it. The lack of training impacted on motivation levels, commitment and contributed to some of inconsistencies found in the delivery of the intervention, including the number of times the mentor/mentee met as well as the duration and content of the sessions. One mentor also dropped out without explanation and this was found to have a particularly negative impact on one of the mentees. For the main study therefore, it was considered important that all mentors attended training. To maximise attendance, notice periods were lengthened, a choice of dates provided and the training was offered at a less busy period in the academic year. In addition, a strategy was put in place to provide training for those who could not attend the group training day. These mentors were offered 1:1 training from me. I also contacted mentors every three weeks to provide ongoing guidance and support.

To ensure the intervention protocols were followed, a project coordinator from the Virtual School was recruited to oversee the project (the VAHT). He contacted the SENCo at each school on a regular basis to gain feedback and to identify and resolve any issues with fidelity. Additionally, formal fidelity measures were put in place requiring mentors to record the activities undertaken and email them to me (appendix I). In addition, children were required to evaluate each session so that problems could be identified and quickly addressed (appendix J).

Recruiting LAC for the intervention was difficult in the pilot, with only four children participating. The main issue centred on gaining consent, which took longer than anticipated. To address this in the main study, the recruitment process was brought forward by three months, beginning in September 2016 rather than December.

Some of the outcome measures used in the pilot were deemed unsuitable and a decision was made to use alternative measures for the current study. The Child and Youth Resilience Measure CYRM (Ungar & Leibenberg, 2009) was used to measure resilience in the pilot; however, some of the items (e.g. religion and community) were considered not to be relevant to this study. Consequently, it was replaced with the Resiliency Scales for Children & Adolescents (RSCA) (Prince-Embury, 2005), which explores personal attributes rather than family or external resources.

In addition, the literacy measure used (York Assessment of Reading for Comprehension (YARC) (Snowling et al., 2009) did not seem to accurately reflect reading ability, and after talking with colleagues and EPs from other services, it was established that many were unhappy with the YARC as an accurate measure of literacy skills. The Diagnostic Reading Analysis (DRA) was chosen as an alternative measure as it is suitable for a wide range of ages and reading ability, children can readily engage with it, and it is relatively quick to administer.

One of the key findings in the pilot emphasised the importance of individualising the intervention to the needs of the child. However, the lack of prescribed structure impacted on mentors' confidence and seemed to cause uncertainty and demotivation. In addition, wide variations of activities were undertaken, making it difficult to measure impact. Therefore, in the main study, mentors were provided with a menu of literacy and mentoring strategies to choose from, which enabled individualisation while also providing a structure that focused on the outcomes of interest.

3.4.3.2 Programme Length, Duration and Frequency

The intervention was delivered for one hour per week over a period of 12 weeks, either in one 60-minute or two 30-minute blocks.

3.4.3.3 Activities Undertaken Within the Sessions

Mentors were given a menu of literacy and mentoring strategies/activities (appendix K) to use during their sessions and were asked to attempt some mentoring and literacy in each session (approximately 20 minutes of mentoring and 40 minutes of literacy). However, the importance of flexibility was emphasised so that mentors were clear that individualising the sessions to the needs of the mentee was the most important aspect of the intervention. If, for

example, emotional support was considered more beneficial than focusing on literacy, mentors were given the authority to spend a whole session on mentoring.

Mentoring strategies were designed to facilitate the relationship between the mentor and mentee and to address a range of social and emotional needs. These included a range of icebreaker activities as well as self-esteem and social skills resources.

The literacy strategies offered were based on the Reciprocal Teaching (RT) approach developed by Palinscar & Brown (1984). These strategies included prediction, clarification, questioning and summarising. The mentor first introduces the strategies while reading a text and begins to model each strategy several times. The mentor then encourages the student to start engaging with the strategies, for example by asking them questions such as 'What do you predict will happen next?'. Gradually the student starts to use the strategies more independently and the mentor plays more of a facilitating role to prompt deeper and more critical thinking. Activities to support this approach were taken from the book by Oczkus (2010).

3.4.3.4 Location and Timings

Careful attention was paid to where the mentoring took place to ensure that the venue was private and comfortable. A suitable day and time of the intervention were agreed between the mentor and child. Most sessions took place before or after school, and when this was not possible, care was taken to ensure that students did not miss their favourite subjects or were not routinely taken out of the same subject each week.

3.4.3.5 Recruiting the Mentors

Nine out of 15 LAC in this study were mentored by his or her own class teacher. Once the LAC had been identified as a potential participant for the intervention, the SENCo at each school approached the class teacher to determine their interest in taking on the role of mentor. Six out of 15 class teachers were unable to participate and consequently other staff members were invited to take the role instead. In total 12 teachers, 1 SENCo and 1 Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA) signed up as mentors. However, two teachers withdrew prior to beginning the intervention due to personal circumstances and were replaced, one with a SENCo and one with a qualified teacher working at the school as a

literacy support teacher (see figure 2 for the list of participating mentors). Two mentors mentored two children and 1 mentor left the intervention after 4 weeks as her mentee was adopted and left the school. Therefore, in total, 12 mentors completed the intervention.

Mentors received compensation (£360) from the Virtual School for the additional time required outside of their usual work responsibilities.

Pseudonym	**Gender**	**Position in school**
1. Abi	Female	SENCo
2. Charlotte	Female	SENCo
3. Chloe	Female	Teacher
4. Claire	Female	HLTA
5. Isabelle	Female	Teacher
6. Kathy	Female	Teaching assistant
7. Lee	Female	Teacher
8. Maria	Female	Teacher
9. Michael	Male	Teacher
10. Philip	Male	Teacher
11. Rosie	Female	Teacher
12. Sandra	Female	Teacher
13. Sarah	Female	Teacher

Figure 2: Mentors recruited to deliver the intervention

3.4.3.6 Training

Nine mentors attended a training event held at UCL IOE prior to beginning the intervention. A senior EP and I delivered the training across two sessions over five hours. The morning session included information regarding the learning outcomes and psychosocial needs of LAC, while the afternoon session focused on theory and practice with regards to mentoring and literacy (appendix L).

I also visited each teacher at his or her school for a one-hour training session after the pre-intervention assessments. This session was specifically to provide feedback on assessments and discuss the needs of the young person, as well as to provide and talk through a menu of literacy and mentoring strategies. The literacy strategies offered were based on the RT approach as there is substantial research supporting the effectiveness of these strategies in improving reading comprehension, which was highlighted as an area of weakness across the group. Suggested mentoring activities were focused on building the mentor/mentee relationship, peer relationships, self-esteem and resilience.

In total 5 mentors in this study did not attend the training event held at UCL IOE. Four additional children were signed up to the intervention at a date after the training and two of the teachers who did attend the training dropped out of the intervention before starting due to personal circumstances. As a result, they had to be replaced with individuals who had not attended the training. Steps were taken to ensure that all 5 mentors received the training they missed; this could not be done in a group but was done with each individual. Additional time with this group was added to the individual sessions that were organised after the pre-intervention assessments.

Mentors were given my contact number and email address so they could seek support and advice if they were experiencing difficulties in the implementation of the programme, or if evaluations and/or performance indicated that a mentee was not making progress. Moreover, I contacted teachers via email four times (every three weeks) throughout the intervention to gain feedback and offer support where needed. The project coordinator was also in frequent contact with the SENCo of each school by telephone or email to gain feedback and provide support.

3.4.3.7 Fidelity of Implementation

As discussed above, fidelity measures included a project coordinator who communicated closely with each school and the requirement that mentors email records of each session to me. In addition, children were required to evaluate each session so that any problems were identified and quickly addressed.

3.5 Data Collection

3.5.1 Measures

This section details the baseline and post-intervention measures administered in this study. I administered all measures.

3.5.1.1 Resiliency

Each LAC completed The Resiliency Scales for Children and Adolescents (RSCA; Prince-Embury, 2005). The RSCA is a self-report questionnaire designed to measure personal attributes related to resilience and is appropriate for children aged 9-18 years. The RSCA are composed of three scales; Sense of Mastery (MAS; 20 items), Sense of Relatedness (REL; 24 items), and Emotional Reactivity (REA; 20 items). Children were presented with each scale, and for each item were asked to choose their level of agreement or disagreement on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (Never) to 4 (Almost Always). The scales comprise of statements such as “I feel calm with people” and “I learn from my mistakes”. Scores are summed to obtain a raw score and from this a T score can be found for each of the three main factor scales, as well for two overall Index scores, Resource Index (RI) and Vulnerability Index (VI). Higher MAS and REL and lower REA T scores indicate more resiliency resources and less vulnerability.

Research suggests that the RSCA is a valid and reliable measure of personal resiliency (Prince-Embury, 2011). Internal consistency for all three subscales are good to excellent with alpha coefficients ranging from 0.85 to 0.90 within the 9-11 age band. The internal consistency for RI and VI is excellent with alpha coefficients of 0.93 for children aged 9-11 years. Test-retest reliability coefficients range from 0.79 to 0.88 across the three core scales for children aged 9-14 years (Prince-Embury, 2005).

The RSCA was selected due to its grounding in theory and previous research. It is based on the three-factor model of personal resiliency (Masten, 2004); and

construct validity of the tool has been established (Prince-Embury, 2011; Thorne & Kohut, 2007). The scale assumes that resiliency is multidimensional, and as a result separate scores for a number of different strands associated with resiliency can be calculated. Additionally, two summary scores can be gained for further simplification.

3.5.1.2 Sense Of School Belonging

Perceptions of belonging and psychological engagement in school were assessed using The Psychological Sense of School Membership Scale (PSSMS; Goodenow, 1993). The scale is an 18 item, self-report questionnaire designed to measure an individual's sense of feeling accepted, included, and supported by others in the school environment. Children are asked to rate statements such as "I am included in a lot of activities at this school" and "I can really be myself at this school" on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (not at all true) to 5 (completely true). Each item is scored and summed, with a higher score indicating a more positive view of school inclusion. Some reverse scoring is used (items 3, 6, 9, 12, 15).

The scale has demonstrated strong psychometric properties (Freeman, Anderman, & Jensen, 2007; Colon, Esparza, & Sanchez, 2005; Zumbrunn, McKim, Buhs, & Hawley, 2014) and has been used in a number of studies. Goodenow (1993) reported Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficients ranging from 0.77 to 0.88 across several diverse populations. Other studies have reported Cronbach's alphas of 0.76-0.84 (Basterfield, Govender, & Reardon, 2014; Govender et al., 2013). Researchers have reported acceptable test-retest reliability at between 0.56 - 0.78 (Hagborg, 1998; Shochet, Dadds, Ham, & Montague, 2006).

This measure was chosen because a sense of belonging to school has been found to be a key protective factor for young people and therefore important in the promotion of resilience (Kapoor & Tomar, 2016). In addition, it is deemed to be of prime importance to LAC as they often lack a sense of belonging to other 'communities' including their biological families. A SOSB can be fostered through the development of a warm, nurturing relationship with school staff, and so was deemed an important measure for this study. However, because a SOSB is not reflected in the RSCA as a measure in its own right, a decision was made to measure this aspect of resilience using a separate scale.

3.5.1.3 Reading Comprehension, Accuracy and Fluency

The DRA (Crumpler & McCarthy, 2007) was used to assess the reading skills of each LAC. It is an oral standardised reading assessment designed to test reading fluency, accuracy and comprehension skills in children aged 7-16. Children read short passages of text aloud and any errors are noted. Reading errors determine if the individual progresses to a more or less challenging one. Each passage is accompanied by a set of comprehension questions, which are administered orally. These questions assess a range of comprehension skills such as literal, inferential, predictive and vocabulary. The test allows for re-testing as there are two parallel forms (A and B). Williams (2015) conducted a detailed analysis of the inferential abilities assessed by the DRA. His findings suggested that it is a culturally fair test as responses to questions do not rely on background knowledge. In addition, the sampling of inference is consistent across parallel forms. Williams (2015) proposes that it is a preferable test in terms of psychometrics than other measures of reading comprehension.

I was aware that this test is relatively new and therefore lacks a substantive evidence base to support its use. However, as discussed above, the literacy assessment (with a greater evidence base) used in the pilot study was deemed unsuitable and an alternative test was needed. The DRA was recommended by colleagues as a tool suitable for a wide range of ages and reading ability, quick to administer and one that children can readily engage with.

3.5.2 Baseline Assessments

Following identification of participants and receipt of consent, a date and time for the assessment sessions was agreed in advance with the school SENCo at each school, who shared this information with the child and their carers. I visited each participant at their school, explained the purpose of the intervention and assessments to the children and asked for their consent to take part. I administered the baseline assessments on a one-to-one basis in a quiet room for approximately one hour. All students completed the RSCA, the PSSMS and the DRA (Form A). For the DRA, students began with the passage that corresponded to their chronological age. Participants were supported throughout the administration process to ensure that the item content was fully understood before a response was given.

3.5.3 Post-Intervention Assessments

Each mentor contacted me as they were approaching week 12 so that a suitable date and time for the post-intervention assessments could be arranged. After the final session, I visited each participant at their school, explained the purpose of the final assessments and asked for their consent to take part. On a one-to-one basis in a quiet room I administered the RSCA, the PSSMS and the DRA (Form B). The gap between pre-and-post intervention assessments was 14-16 weeks. In total, 13 out of 14 children completed the RSCA and DRA at baseline and post intervention, while 14 completed the PSSMS. One child did not complete the DRA at baseline due to her emotional state and one child did not understand a number of questions on the resiliency scale, thus the data associated with these assessments could not be included in the analysis.

All mentors and mentees were asked to participate in a semi-structured interview with me. In total 9 out of 14 children and 8 out of 12 mentors were interviewed. Five children and four mentors were not interviewed as they either did not give consent or were not available on the day I visited the school. Each interview lasted between 5 and 50 minutes. Specifically, the questions were designed to encourage participants to "reconstruct their experience" (Seidman, 1998, p.76) to gain insight into their perceptions about the intervention, the impact, and the components of the intervention that worked and those that could have been better.

3.6 Analysis

3.6.1 Quantitative Data Analysis

The standardised assessments were scored according to the instructions in the accompanying test manuals and were initially recorded in Excel before being subsequently exported into SPSS (version 24). The next step involved checking and correcting any errors in the dataset through close examination of the descriptive statistics including the mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum. The assumption of normality was then tested using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistic, which suggested that normality was a reasonable assumption for most datasets. In addition, the box plots suggested a relatively normal distribution shape (with no outliers) of the residuals, while the Q-Q plot and histogram also suggested normality was reasonable. Paired t-tests were used to compare the pre-and post means for all 'normal' data and a paired correlation was conducted to determine any significance. The test of normality revealed that

the outcomes for sense of mastery and reading accuracy at Time 2 were not normally distributed, thus a non-parametric test was selected for the analysis of data in these domains. The Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test was used to compare scores between Time 1 and Time 2 and to examine associated significance levels.

3.6.2 Qualitative Data Analysis

All 17 interviews were anonymised and participants given a pseudonym to protect anonymity. Interviews were saved securely as an electronic file. These files were shared with an experienced transcribing company who transcribed the interviews verbatim. I listened to each interview several times to familiarise myself with the data, and on return from the transcribing company, I checked the transcripts against the recordings to ensure accuracy. A sample of one of these transcripts can be seen in appendix M. The data was imported into NVivo 11, a commercial software product designed for qualitative data analysis.

The analysis process was guided by the work of Braun and Clarke (2006). This approach was chosen as it provides a structured methodology to analyze and synthesize large datasets in a meaningful way, and can be applied across a variety of theoretical frameworks (Braun & Clarke, 2012). In addition, the method allowed me to look across the entire dataset at both the mentees and mentors perspectives, enabling the identification of common themes. This process can help to build a more detailed and rich account (Braun & Clarke, 2006) of participant's experiences of the intervention. Taken together, this information can be used as a starting point to inform best practice in this area.

I followed an essentialist, inductive, data-driven approach identifying the themes on a semantic level (Braun & Clarke, 2012). The analytical steps and methods are summarised in Figure 3 and discussed briefly below:

Stages and Process involved in Qualitative Analysis

Phase 1

This involved transcribing the data, reading and listening to the data and generating initial ideas. Transcripts were then imported into NVivo (Version 11).

Phase 2 (appendix N)

Open coding involved reading the data and deriving codes based on the participants' words and developing descriptions of these codes to guide decisions for inclusion at later stages.

Phase 3 (appendix O)

This involved grouping together open codes into meaningful units that enabled the development of a framework to support further data analysis. The transcripts were re-read and recoded using this framework.

Phase 4 (appendix P)

Categories were reviewed and further in-depth analysis resulted in the identification of subcategories. For example, the theme "individualising the intervention" was coded on into the subcategories "being flexible", "giving choice" and "going the extra mile". All categories were scrutinized to ensure that no data had been overlooked and that all data were coded to the appropriate categories.

Phase 5 (appendix Q)

This involved refining all categories and subcategories by cross-checking content, condensing and merging nodes of similar content. This resulted in a final framework, which included two overarching themes, six main themes and five subcategories.

Phase 6 (appendix R)

This describes the steps taken to write the report. The first step involved the generation of analytical memos to summarise the content of each category. Compelling extracts were then identified to illustrate key aspects of each theme. Subsequently, the report of the analysis was written up with an analytic narrative that related back to the research questions.

Analytical Process (Braun & Clarke, 2006).	Braun and Clarke Practical Application in NVivo	Strategic Objective	Iterative process throughout analysis
1. Familiarizing yourself with the data	**Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideasImport data into the NVivo data management tool**	**Data Management** *(Open and hierarchal coding through NVIVO)*	Assigning data to refined concepts to portray meaning
2. Generating initial codes:	**Phase 2 – Open Coding- Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collecting data relevant to each code**		
3. Searching for themes:	**Phase 3 - Categorisation of Codes – Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme**		Refining and distilling more abstract concepts
4. Reviewing themes:	**Phase 4 – Coding on - Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (level 1) and the entire data set (level 2), generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis**	**Descriptive Accounts** *(Reordering, 'coding on' and annotating through NVIVO)*	Assigning data to themes/concepts to portray meaning
5. Defining and naming themes:	**Phase 5 - Data Reduction - On-going analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story [storylines] the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme**		Assigning meaning
6. Producing the report	**Phase 6 –Generating Analytical Memos - Phase 7 – Testing and - Validating and Phase 8 Synthesising Analytical Memos. The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis**	**Explanatory Accounts** *(Extrapolating deeper meaning, drafting summary statements and analytical memos through NVIVO)*	Generating themes and concepts

Figure 3: Stages and Process involved in Qualitative Analysis - Adapted from Braun and Clarke (2012).

4 RESULTS

4.1 Quantitative Results

4.1.1 Literacy Results

Table 1: Literacy results

	Pre		**Post**		**P value**
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Reading comprehension (Raw score)	7.5	2.7	9.9	3.9	0.05
Reading fluency (Ability score)	78.6	19.3	74.1	20.0	0.26
Reading accuracy (Standard score)	108.9	20.1	118.9	15.9	0.13

A paired-samples t-test was conducted to examine the impact of the intervention on reading fluency and reading comprehension. There was a significant difference in the mean comprehension score before (m=7.5, s=2.7) and after the intervention (m=9.9, s=3.9, t(12)=1.77, P=0.05 (one tailed). However, there was a non-significant decline in the mean reading fluency score before (m=78.6, s= 9.3) and after the intervention (m=74.1, s=20.0, t(12)=0.67, P=0.26 (one tailed).

A Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test revealed a non-significant improvement in reading accuracy following participation in the intervention, z =-1.14, p=0.13 (one tailed). The median score increased from pre-intervention (Md=113) to post-intervention (Md=130).

4.1.2 Resiliency Results

Table 2: resiliency results

	Pre		**Post**		**P value**
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Sense of relatedness	41.8	9.2	53.2	17.3	0.02
Total resiliency	47.2	9.7	54.3	13.7	0.03
Emotional reactivity	55.2	11.4	49.9	11.9	0.07
Sense of mastery	47.0	15.6	52.0	18.8	0.14

A paired-samples t-test was conducted to evaluate the impact of the intervention on Sense of Relatedness, Emotional Reactivity and Resiliency. The analysis revealed a significant difference in the mean Sense of Relatedness score before (m=41.8, s=9.2) and after the intervention (m=53.2, s=17.3), t(12)=2.45, P=0.02 (one tailed). In addition, the analysis revealed a significant difference in the mean total Resiliency score before (m=47.2,s=9.7) and after the intervention (m=54.3, s=13.7), t(12)=2.03, P=0.03 (one tailed). However, findings demonstrated non-significant differences in the mean Emotional Reactivity before (m=55.2, s=11.4) and after the intervention (m=49.9, s=11.9), t(12)=-1.57, P=0.07 (one tailed).

A Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test revealed a non-significant increase in Sense of Mastery following participation in the intervention, z=-1.08, p=0.14 (one tailed). The median score increased from pre-intervention (Md=48) to post-intervention (Md=61)

4.1.3 Sense of School Belonging Results

Table 3: SOSB results

	Pre		**post**		**P value**
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
SOSB	69.4	11.3	77.4	8.4	0.003

A one tailed paired-samples t-test revealed a significant difference in the mean SOSB score before (m=69.4, s=11.3) and after the intervention (m=77.4, s=8.4), t(13)=3.28, p=0.003.

4.1.4 Summary of Quantitative Results

These results indicate that there was a significant effect of the intervention on reading comprehension scores between Time 1 and Time 2. While there was also an improvement in reading accuracy, the difference was not statistically significant. The reading fluency score was found to decline between Time 1 and Time 2, however, the change did not reach statistically significant levels.

In terms of resiliency, there was a significant effect of the intervention on sense of relatedness and the total resiliency score, but not on emotional reactivity or sense of mastery. The analysis also found a statistically significant effect on SOSB.

Overall, the findings suggest that the intervention did have a significant effect on reading comprehension, sense of relatedness, SOSB and the total resiliency score, but not on reading fluency, reading accuracy, sense of mastery or emotional reactivity

4.2 Qualitative Results

4.2.1 Theme 1: Making a Difference

The main overarching theme Making a Difference is about the impact that the intervention has had on the LAC's social, emotional and academic outcomes. The overarching theme is divided into two main themes: Building Relationships and Academic Outcomes. Each main theme is further divided into subthemes described below.

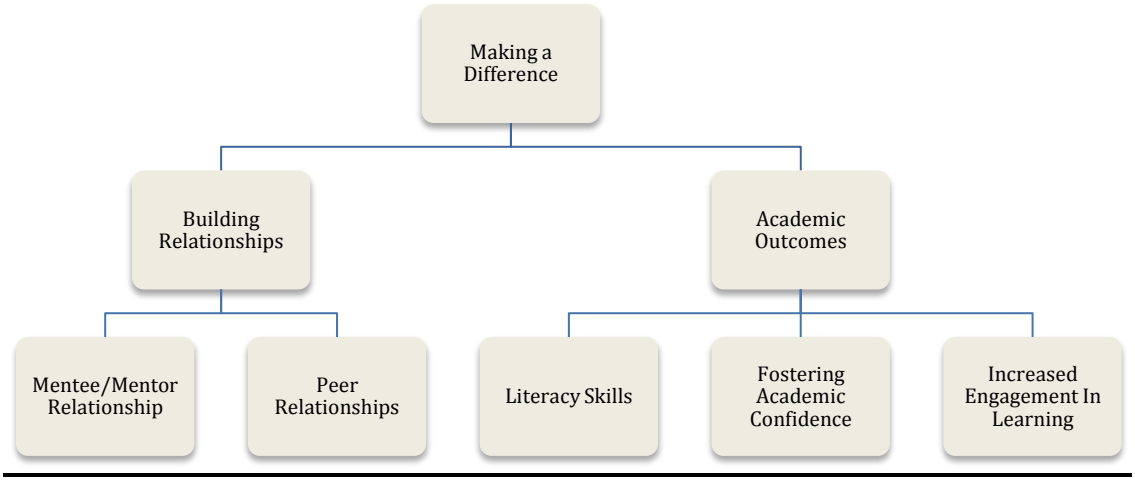

Figure 4: Theme 1: Making a Difference

4.2.1.1 Building Relationships

This main theme of Building Relationships is divided into two subthemes: The Mentor/Mentee relationship and Peer Relationships.

Mentee/Mentor Relationship

This subtheme describes the importance of the mentee/mentor relationship, the value that both mentees and mentors placed on the relationship and the impact of this relationship on the children.

Mentors brought a range of personal and professional experience of working with LAC, some were the children's class teachers or SENCOs.

> *I was already developing a very strong relationship with Holly anyway. Because she's part of my responsibility in that I'm the designated teacher for LAC (Mentor Charlotte)*

I'm Olivia's class teacher…it was seen that it would be quite good for her to develop a relationship with me (Mentor Michael)

However, this pre-established relationship was not essential. One mentor did not know her mentee prior to the intervention, but had personal experience of caring for LAC, was really motivated, and used her experience to build an effective relationship.

The mentees descriptions of their feelings about their mentors were evidence in that they felt the relationship with the mentor was an important part of their experience. They described the bonds that had been established and how much they enjoyed being with the mentor.

What was the bit you enjoyed the most? (Interviewer)
Being with Ms Charlie (Mentee Emily)

You get a bond with the teacher that you probably wouldn't get in class (Mentee Wayne)

He's kind; he helps me learn (Mentee Emma)

Mentees specifically asked for more sessions, were happy to give up their free time to participate in these, and all stated that they would continue in the mentoring relationship given the choice.

She's really enjoying the sessions. She's asking for them, so I don't want her to miss out (Mentor Abi)

Alice suggested to me that we did an hour session on the Thursday so like the last day of term (laugh) she wanted to stay until 4.30. And its times like that when you realise that actually she really valued it (Mentor Lee)

I still want to go, still want to do it (Mentee Emma)

Mentors emphasised that spending time talking and listening to the mentee facilitated the development of a secure relationship.

And we've just being very chatty, played games. I mean we've done a lot of the icebreaker activities (Mentor Abi)

I think I've got a lot closer just if he had been a member of the class (Mentor Isabelle)

We'd spend 15 minutes just talking …it's actually sort of strengthened our relationship…the teacher pupil relationship (Mentor Michael)

Mentors described how mentees valued the opportunity to spend time with the mentor outside of the constraints of the classroom and school timetable, and as

feelings of trust developed over time, mentees began to reveal more about themselves.

> *She's actually beginning to open up more in this last I would say 2 or 3 weeks…which I don't think ever would have happened in the time and constraints of a classroom situation (Mentor Rosie)*

> *I mean he's opened up; he's opened up about lots of things. And I can guarantee that without the sessions, without having that opportunity. That would never have taken place (Mentor Chloe)*

Mentors also valued the opportunity to work with the mentee on a one-to-one basis and could see the positive impact that the relationship had on the mentees. They described the experience as enjoyable, rewarding and a privilege, and all mentors stated that they would like to continue the role of a mentor if given the opportunity.

> *It's a real privilege (Mentor Rosie)*

> *I really enjoyed it. I've got a lot from it …I feel really happy that I've done this for him. Because he's a totally different person (Mentor Chloe)*

> *Having that time to do what probably I wanted to do with my career is kind of, yeah a real privilege (Mentor Lee)*

Many went beyond their expected role, demonstrating the care that they had for the mentees. One mentor continued the mentoring sessions during school holidays, another organised a surprise birthday celebration for her mentee and another arranged an author to autograph a book for her mentee.

> *It was her birthday the next day so the 4 of us had a little birthday cake and sung happy birthday (Mentor Lee)*

> *We did 2 sessions based from her home and those were during the half terms (Mentor Claire)*

> *Wayne wasn't there at the time of signing because it was after school. I went and got it signed on his behalf…that has done so much for him (Mentor Chloe)*

One mentor described feelings of satisfaction, as it was evident that there were reciprocal exchanges of trust, respect and care. She described an example of how her mentee demonstrated this to her.

> *She brought me in a piece of birthday cake because it was my birthday…and then organised with some other girls to make me a birthday card and get everyone to sign it (Mentor Lee)*

As the mentee/mentor relationship developed, mentees were more open to help and support and many of the discussions that took place in the mentoring

sessions were related to issues that were pertinent to the mentee. Mentors helped the children to develop useful strategies to deal with some of their difficulties more effectively, e.g. the transition from primary school to secondary, exams and coping with emotional distress.

> *We talked a lot about the school I am going to next year. I was a bit like nervous that I was going to get lost (Mentee Hayley)*
>
> *He can now identify how to solve his problems. Maybe not all of them but he's on the right path. Before he didn't have a clue and that's why he'd punched someone, or put his head on the table, or just start crying (Mentor Chloe)*

Mentors commented on the positive impact that dealing with these issues had on mentees wellbeing and resilience.

> *She is definitely less tearful (Mentor Charlotte)*
>
> *For a long time at the beginning of the year Jacob had really quite a solemn look on his face. he's got a smile on his face and he's really like a different boy to the beginning of the year (Mentor Isabelle)*
>
> *And he's got such horrible problems (Gets upset) but he's now stronger. He's a much happier person, who I feel happier saying goodbye to (Mentor Chloe)*

Many of the mentors believed that the positive mentor/mentee relationship facilitated mentees enjoyment of the intervention and in turn this promoted better attitudes towards school, supporting them to feel happier and more settled.

> *I think for her to feel valued and for me to just have that designated time with her has made a huge difference to her settling in. Her view point on school has changed dramatically, at the beginning it was just she did not want to be here (Mentor Lee)*
>
> *At the beginning of the year she was just so negative towards everything and you know she would smile and laugh in those sessions (Mentor Lee)*
>
> *Now she's settled and she's happy (Mentor Claire)*

Many of the mentors already had relationships with the mentee as they were the children's class teachers or school SENCOs.

> *I was already developing a very strong relationship with Holly anyway. Because she's part of my responsibility in that I'm the designated teacher for LAC (Mentor Charlotte)*
>
> *I'm Olivia's class teacher…it was seen that it would be quite good for her to develop a relationship with me (Mentor Michael)*

However, this pre-established relationship was not essential to the development of a high-quality relationship. One mentor did not know her mentee prior to the

intervention, but had personal experience of caring for LAC, was really motivated, and used her experience to build an effective relationship with her mentee.

> *This is right up my alley…so that's kind of really made it seem quite meaningful to me (Mentor Claire)*

Peer Relationships

This subtheme describes improvements in peer relationships as well as the ways in which these relationships were fostered within the intervention.

In addition to the mentor/mentee relationship, participants also talked about the positive impact of the intervention on peer relationships. Mentees and mentors gave examples of fewer disagreements and more positive interactions with their peers.

> *She has a more secure relationship with her friend. And the fall outs…now that hasn't been a problem (Mentor Charlotte)*

> *There were some issues with friends…But actually that's improved a lot recently as well. Like there has been a lot less of those issues (Mentor Michael)*

> *He's surrounding himself with good role models, he keeps away from children that could get him into trouble (Mentor Isabelle)*

One mentor believed that the intervention had a significant impact on social relationships within the classroom. She described how the class members developed a more positive perception of the mentee due to the reduction in his negative behaviours and improved academic engagement. His peers were therefore more willing to engage with him and he started to form better friendships.

> *Before I think children stayed away from him. (Laughs) because he was in a bad mood. Whereas now, you know, he's a lovely member of our class, who children are happy to be with…He has play dates and that never used to happen (Mentor Chloe)*

> *And then in front of the class I'll say, wow you're the best predictor (RT strategy) I have ever met (Mentor Chloe)*

One mentee indicated that the most helpful aspect of the intervention for her was the support she received from her mentor in relation to managing her friendships. Her mentor encouraged her to reflect on some of the re-occurring friendship issues she had experienced and helped her to think about how she could avoid such issues in future.

You said you'd like more sessions if you could, what would you like to do more sessions for? (Interviewer)

To keep on being friends with my friends. Like keep my friends because I always break up with them…Because we'd been talking about trust and whenever he says, just think back on what I've said and then I think back on what I've said and then it's come back to me and then I won't do it again (Mentee Emma)

Mentors and mentees described several different ways in which social skills were addressed during the mentoring sessions. Some of the activities within the sessions were focused on discussing and reflecting on specific peer difficulties to help them to think about more conducive ways to manage such issues in future.

Her friendship issues at school as well are much better. Because we do, I do talk about it with her (Mentor Claire)

Another way mentors supported the development of social skills was to incorporate activities involving peer participation and interaction into sessions. This enabled the mentee to practice and consolidate social skills in a supportive and positive environment. Mentors gave examples of mentees working with their peers on collaborative activities such as Lego, cooking and board games. One mentor described how her mentee was given the role of 'teacher' and successfully worked with a peer to teach him the literacy skills he had learnt in the mentoring sessions.

I was first with my 3 friends and then we were playing a game and then we'd take it in turns playing a game (Mentee Louise)

We did then try to do things that they could bring back to the class…we made brownies during SATs week and things like this you know…so that they could share (Mentor Rosie)

He's making a poster for his buddy about reciprocal reading (Mentor Chloe)

4.2.1.2 Improving Academic Outcomes

This main theme describes the ways in which the intervention impacted academic outcomes. It is divided into three subthemes based on the area of impact: literacy skills, engagement in learning and academic confidence.

Literacy Skills

This subtheme describes mentee and mentor perceptions of the impact that the intervention had on literacy, particularly in the areas of reading, comprehension and writing skills. It also includes improvements observed in the classroom as

well as the corresponding positive wider impact. In addition, the theme describes some of the literacy activities within the sessions that facilitated improvements.

Most mentors perceived that mentees had made good progress in their literacy skills. They described improvements in spelling, generating ideas for writing tasks, reading and understanding more complex texts. These changes resulted in some mentees moving 'up' a reading level, or 'up' a set in English.

> *Her comprehension and getting the work done and coming up with some really good ideas, were all sort of things that she's definitely improved on during the sort of 12 weeks (Mentor Michael)*
>
> *He's actually, he moved up in English group. So he physically moved from one table to another table… I'm about 99% sure that without the project, he wouldn't be leaving with the repertoire of skills that he has now got (Mentor Chloe)*

Mentees also believed that the intervention had helped them and were able to identify their improvements in reading and writing.

> *Every time I did a good book I went up a new level (Mentee James)*
>
> *Because now I don't get stuck on so many words (Mentee Kate)*
>
> *Now I'm really good at prediction (and) I can read efficiently (Mentee Wayne)*

The mentees also felt that they were making less mistakes in class, that the quality of their work had improved and that they were becoming more independent in their work.

> *All the lessons have all been very useful and my work has apparently improved in class (Mentee Hayley)*
>
> *We get like blobs in our book and see what mistakes we've made and I haven't got much blobs in my book now (Mentee Leanne)*
>
> *Now I don't, like, when we write stories and all that I don't go to another person and say can you help me, I just, now I can actually think and write now (Mentee Kate)*

Mentors described the wider positive impact that the improvement in literacy had in the classroom, as mentees required less adult support, which enabled others in the class to have more.

> *But actually getting to the point where sort of the TA that normally helps her is actually going around helping other people now because Olivia is getting a little bit more sort of independent (Mentor Michael)*

He moved physically from one table where that was happening. To another one where there was less support. To the point where the teaching assistant didn't actually work with him and could work with somebody else on that table (Mentor Chloe)

Two of the mentors did not think that the literacy skills of the children they mentored had improved. However, they explained that this was due to the impact of emotional issues on their mentee, rather that the intervention per se. These mentors therefore focused on building emotional resilience throughout most of their sessions rather than literacy, as this was what they believed their mentees needed at that time. It was important for them that they had the opportunity to respond to the individual needs of the child and that the intervention was flexible enough to allow that.

Her emotional state gets in the way. We had to do quite a bit of mentoring (Mentor Charlotte)

I think the emotional side was probably where I found more progress could be seen (Mentor Lee)

Mentors designed a range of literacy activities to promote the changes described above. It was evident that sessions were fun, varied and creative, and that both mentee and mentor enjoyed the experience. Mentors described some of the literacy activities undertaken in their sessions, many of which were supported with educational games.

We did a spelling game or a word generating game or planning then we use that in the second half (Mentor Claire)

I wanted less words. I wanted pictures. It's a Pie Corbett technique (Mentor Abi)

Two mentors used cooking to enhance literacy through reading and following recipes.

I had the opportunity to get him into the cookery club…he was so excited (Mentor Isabelle)

We made brownies during SATs week (Mentor Rosie)

Mentees emphasised that the literacy activities in the sessions were exciting and believed they were unlike typical classroom activities.

Instead of like just writing, writing, writing…She actually like makes it fun by saying let's play a game to make the story (Mentee Kate)

We didn't do boring reading comprehensions. We did chalking on the playground. So like we would read something, we had like a word and then we would clarify it on the playground (Mentee Hayley)

We read a bit of Alice and Wonderland and we did like acting. Like acting out story (Mentee Hayley)

Mentors drew on their previous experience and training to help them deliver relevant, individualised and effective literacy support. For example, some of the mentors used paired reading and all mentors utilised reciprocal reading strategies

I'm quite lucky 'cos I've been teaching quite a while and I've been literacy coordinator. These diamond nines, story essays are from training I've been on (Mentor Abi)

To start with I read the page and he followed…And then eventually he started just reading himself without feeling too nervous (Mentor Isabelle)

We did summarising too. So we drew pictures and that would help to summarise the story to (Mentee Hayley)

Increased Engagement in Learning

This subtheme describes the impact of the intervention on mentees' motivation and attitudes towards learning in the classroom.

Mentors believed that mentees were more motivated and engaged in the classroom, evidenced by less disruptive behaviour, paying more attention, contributing more and completing more work.

Isaac in the classroom would have been very loud, very disruptive, talking out and would have escalated that volume you know to get the attention, he now sits in class and works, he sits and reads (Mentor Rosie)

She feels that she can come up to me a lot more. And I can sort of motivate her to sort of complete work a lot easier (Mentor Michael)

Before, he wouldn't put his hand up for anything and you'd have to get things out of him. You know just get him and it was like getting blood out of a stone at times. Whereas now, his hand is up straight away (Mentor Chloe)

Mentees were reported to have developed more positive attitudes towards learning.

Just to see her development really…like towards me and also towards her work, her attitude I think has improved (Mentor Michael)

When I spoke to you before you said literacy was the thing that you struggled the most with (Interviewer)
Yeah I quite enjoy it now (Mentee Emily)

Mentors described how mentees started reading and writing for enjoyment and were choosing to read and write outside the classroom, with one mentee even entering a writing competition.

> *I mean he entered a writing competition, which he wouldn't have done before (Mentor Chloe)*
>
> *In regards to enjoying reading, I don't think she's ever been a reader. And I think it's because she's not read at depth…she's suddenly wanting to read (Mentor Abi)*
>
> *So she spent two full sessions just writing her story. And she enjoyed that (Mentor Claire)*

Mentees described how they had discovered the enjoyment of reading and were taking books home.

> *I enjoyed, well like reading..,reading it's like a place where you can go to for anything, if you're sad, stressed, anything, you can go to a book, read it. So it's a different world (Mentee Wayne)*
>
> *We read The Magic Finger, but we're still reading it but right now it's at my home, by the side because I have been reading it (Mentee Kate)*
>
> *Yeah it was really fun because we were reading Lola Rose (Mentee Emily)*

Mentors who were the children's teachers discussed the ways in which the role of a mentor and class teacher complemented each other and promoted engagement and learning within the classroom.

> *She had a tendency just to shut down and not do any work. So it's helped me as a teacher because now I know what sort of, what interests she has, what she responds well to (Mentor Michael)*
>
> *I think perhaps it gives me that opportunity that if something is not right in class, I can address that (in the sessions)…So she has more happily gotten on with her work (Mentor Lee)*
>
> *I took some of the things that I did notice in the class and was able to address them in the sessions… Now because the relationship I have with him, I can bring him back to focus, to concentrate in class in a way that's much easier and more calm (Mentor Rosie)*

Fostering Academic Confidence

This subtheme describes the ways in which the intervention influenced academic confidence and the impact this had on learning and achievement.

Most mentors commented on the positive impact of the intervention on mentee academic confidence and self-esteem.

He's more confident. He's proud to show his work to people. Like a different child, like a different child (Mentor Isabelle)

His confidence in reading and writing has gone through the roof (Mentor Chloe)

Mentees were starting to identify their own strengths and abilities, which was not the case for many of the children prior to the intervention.

Well my reading has got better, a lot more better than at the start of the year. I think my writing and spelling is better (Mentee Hayley)

Now I can read efficiently (Mentee Wayne)

I don't go to another person and say can you help me, I just, now I can actually think and write now (Mentee Kate)

Mentees stated that they felt more confident in class and as a result were more willing to read texts in front of others, ask questions and share their work.

I think a lot more, like, confidence with like reading out stuff in class. Sometimes Ms Bailey would ask us like do you want to read your work out, I said no, but sometimes I say yes now (Mentee Hayley)

I like learning how to read out loud without getting nervous… I've been reading out loud to her and like there's nothing really to be scared of (Mentee Emily)

Mentees were also attempting more tasks and persevering with these when in the past, they would have given up due to a lack of self-belief and confidence.

She likes the fact that it's got a bit harder. And she acknowledged the fact it got harder, no I'm not going to be able to do this, it's got a lot harder. Oh yes I can do this (Mentor Charlotte)

He has taken to Spanish like you wouldn't believe. He's picking up a vocabulary. He's top of the class (Mentor Rosie)

One mentor explained that the mentoring helped her mentee develop confidence to do the SATs exams, in contrast to other pupils who were nervous.

A bit of reassurance was given, we did some worked examples of the grammar paper that we'd been practicing in class. And it helped to settle him, 'cos when you went into the room all the other kids were a little bit nervous. And he was really calm (Mentor Chloe)

4.2.2 Theme 2: Making The Intervention Work

This overarching theme is focused on participants' perceptions of the elements of the intervention that contributed to making it work. Four main themes were identified: resource money matters, individualising the intervention, engaging the mentor and improving the intervention.

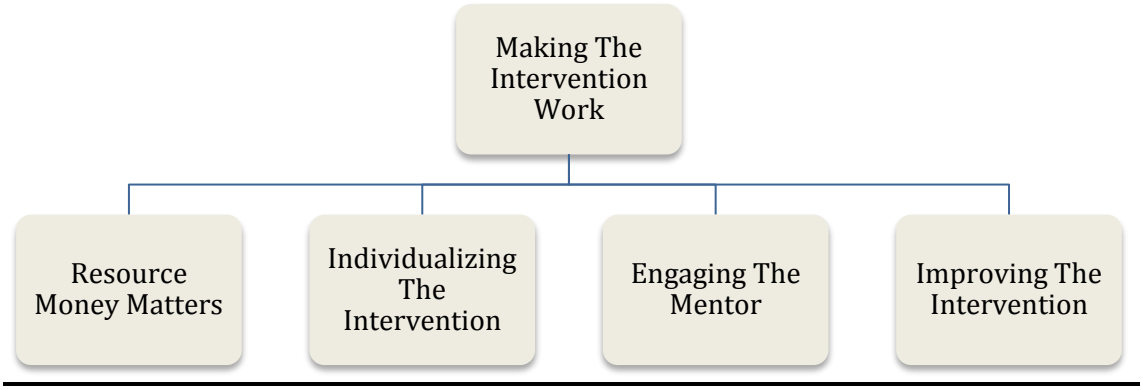

Figure 5: Theme 2: Making The Intervention Work

4.2.2.1 Resource Money Matters

This main theme describes the importance of the resource money. It discusses the advantages of having the money, including its role in supporting mentee/mentor relationships, its centrality to the individualisation of the intervention and meeting mentee needs and how it facilitated mentee enthusiasm towards the intervention and feelings of self-worth.

All mentors emphasised that the resource money, which they used to buy snacks, drinks and educational resources such as stationary and books, was integral to the intervention. They described how this helped set the intervention apart from other interventions that LAC typically experience.

> *I think that (resources) had a lot to do with his attitude towards this whole process. He felt valued by it (Mentor Chloe)*

> *She came in and went, oh right, these sessions might be slightly different…a biscuit, mini eggs just made her kind of think, oh actually this might be fun (Mentor Abi)*

> *The resource money was fantastic (Mentor Claire)*

The money gave mentors the opportunity to buy resources that were meaningful to the children. The children treasured these items and it contributed to their sense of self-worth and importance.

> *She never used to have a pen in school...so I got a fountain pen for her which is like, that is really important to her now, to the extent where she got quite upset one day when she couldn't find it and it had gone missing (Mentor Lee)*

> *I gave him the pens ages ago. But the way that he carries them, he carries them like they're gold (Mentor Chloe)*

> *Out of everything that you've done, what would you say worked well? (Interviewer) Having the games, she knows that they were for her, they were bought for her only (Mentor Claire)*

All the mentees referred to the items that were purchased for them and made it clear that they valued this component of the intervention.

> *When this author came, she brought me in this book called the X (Mentee Wayne)*
>
> *We had the whole box of Lego (Mentee Isaac)*

Mentors were pleased that they could use the resource money creatively and flexibly as it allowed them to meet the children's individual academic and psychosocial needs.

> *The budget that was provided was very generous and with that I used it to buy a lot of books , art materials and Lego (Mentor Rosie)*
>
> *Gangster Granny was just the book she wanted (Mentor Charlotte)*
>
> *And that was one of the resources I bought…they're self-esteem builders and feel good cards (Mentor Claire)*

One mentor purchased a book that her mentee mentioned she started in her previous school but never got to finish as she moved placement.

> *She said she never got to the end, so she wanted to read that one. So we chose that in the library and then we ordered a copy for her (Mentor Lee)*

In many instances the money made it possible to engage in activities that promoted the development of closer relationships with the children. For instance, one mentor used some of the money to purchase breakfast items and a tablecloth so that she could share breakfast with her mentee at the start of the session.

> *And we had a table cloth…so I made an issue of it. That this is you know, we're having breakfast together…And he quite liked that I think that aspect of it (Mentor Chloe)*

Another mentor took her mentee on a shopping trip so they could choose resources together.

> *We went to Hobby Craft and got art supplies to set her up with colours and stickers and glitter glue and all that kind of stuff. And then the second half term in May we went to Waterstones (Mentor Claire)*

However, one mentor commented that while the resource money (£300) was essential, less money would have been sufficient.

> *I don't think it needs to be as great as it is, to be quite honest (Mentor Charlotte)*

4.2.2.2 Individualising the Intervention

This main theme describes the importance of giving mentors the authority to tailor the intervention to the children's interests and needs rather than following a predetermined format with specific targets.

Individualising the intervention allowed mentors to design meaningful and engaging sessions, enabling them to involve mentees in decisions about session content and thereby ensuring that activities and resources were matched to mentee's specific interests.

> *We started the first session we did spend a long time choosing the book. And then we started with her favourite authors and we talked (Mentor Abi)*
>
> *She was very creative, she likes drawing. And that was something that I definitely worked on during these sessions (Mentor Michael)*

One mentor chose a text that addressed similar life experiences to that of her mentee. This provided an opportunity to talk about issues that were pertinent to the mentee in a supportive, structured and non-intrusive way.

> *There are some aspects (of the book) that link to Emily's life. We spent a lot of time talking about them (the characters) and our views and what choices they should make (Mentor Abi)*

As well as mentees interests, mentors also considered the learning needs and preferred learning styles of mentees to maximize learning.

> *It was just done in a more, in a fun practical sense. Which I thought really played to her learning strengths (Mentor Abi)*
>
> *So now we're working on good, just good letter formation without joining (Mentor Isabelle)*

One mentee with a kinaesthetic learning style described the importance of having physical artefacts that enabled her to engage more effectively in learning.

> *I find it more helpful to have stuff that's like in front of you, like physical stuff that I can touch (Mentee Hayley)*

Mentors highlighted the importance of having flexibility within the intervention; this provided the opportunity to adapt the sessions to mentees' specific needs as the intervention progressed, helping to ensure the sessions remained relevant and engaging.

Especially Maria towards the end, that flexibility was vital. We would have lost it by now with her otherwise (Mentor Rosie)

Cos you know it never goes to plan does it really. Other things happen, the writing competition took a bit longer…we redrafted it about three times I think by the time he then typed it up (Mentor Chloe)

The fact that it was very flexible and pointedly flexible was important (Mentor Claire)

Mentors valued the combination of mentoring and literacy as it gave them permission to flexibly respond to academic and psychosocial issues that inevitably arose for the children over the course of the intervention.

It was important to have both literacy and mentoring. It was important to have permission, to have the time, to discuss whatever needed to be discussed. That it wasn't just focused on moving forward in core curriculum subject (Mentor Charlotte)

You then need to think about when you actually meet the child what's going on, what frame of mind as well. Because if something has happened, and the child isn't happy, then you're not actually going to be able to get anywhere (Mentor Isabelle)

One mentor commented that even though literacy could not be a main focus in her sessions due to the emotional state of her mentee, having a literacy element was beneficial as it provided a focus with many activities that they could engage in together. Ultimately this facilitated relationship building, trust and comfort, which created an environment conducive to offering emotional support.

Having that focus of having some reading was good because it prompted (discussion), then we got a book and even if I necessarily wasn't doing completely the right thing, it was still that we had something to share and something to work on together (Mentor Lee)

Mentors gave examples of some of the emotional support offered and difficult life circumstances that were addressed within the sessions

We actually sat down and we came up with questions to ask her brother. 'Cos it was their first meeting in six weeks (Mentor Abi)

Yeah and he had a failed contact that we spent some time talking about. There was a session about his mum, where we had to speak about problems. And what he could do. (Mentor Chloe)

4.2.2.3 Engaging the Mentor

This main theme describes some of the factors that contributed to the mentors' motivation, commitment and effectiveness throughout the mentoring process. It includes perceptions about training, having autonomy and communication with carers.

Mentors believed that the training provided them with the essential knowledge and tools to enable them to deliver the intervention successfully. All mentors valued the menu of mentoring and RT strategies that they could draw on.

> *The suggestions you gave very useful…I have referred back to the hand-outs a lot. (Mentor Abi)*

> *Most of the resources that we got in that session, when we went up to London I have used and have definitely helped (Mentor Michael)*

Some of the mentors explained that the training helped them to gain a deeper understanding of the learning outcomes and psychosocial needs of LAC, ultimately resulting in increased empathy and motivation and a better understanding of how to meet these needs.

> *You realise just how needy they are. I had no idea (Mentor Isabelle)*

> *For me those hard hitting facts were what carried this. So I think that was really, really valuable…It was a huge incentive for me to be hell bent on making an improvement (Mentor Chloe)*

> *Working with children in care isn't the same as working with other kids and there's certain things that, certain approaches that probably wouldn't work (Mentor Claire)*

One mentor emphasised that the training helped him to feel more confident during the process and believed that there was a notable difference in confidence levels between the teachers who had attended the training and those who had not.

> *The training was really helpful. I think that we, myself and Chloe definitely felt an advantage having gone to that compared to the other teachers in the school that didn't go…I felt a lot more confident going in to it actually having that training (Mentor Michael)*

Two mentors who did not attend the formal group training day felt less confident in the role and questioned if what they were doing was good enough.

> *I think personally I just panicked a little bit, am I doing the right thing, am I doing enough…I think the training would have helped to kind of learn a bit more about that (Mentor Lee)*

> *I would've liked to have done it. Because I probably could've done better if I had done it (Mentor Charlotte)*

Mentors enjoyed having the autonomy to draw on their own experience and skills to deliver the intervention in a way they felt was best.

It's allowing people to kind of use their teaching skills, to give them a framework, I've liked that, then I knew what I had to do but I could put all my own spin on it, I have enjoyed that (Mentor Abi)

The permission to work the way I thought was best. And I think it's gone well. That we didn't have to sort of achieve this learning outcome this day and this learning outcome another day because she does get that every day at school anyway (Mentor Claire)

We did a lot of creative activities which were just very enjoyable for me and her (Mentor Rosie)

For most mentors communication with the mentees' carers improved and became more frequent as a result of the intervention. They described how they worked collaboratively with carers and how important this was.

I've spoken to her on the phone and I've emailed her quite a lot in this process (Mentor Chloe)

And have you been contacting her more as a result of the intervention? (Interviewer) Absolutely, on a regular basis…It's not just you and the child, it's you, the child and the foster parents as well, you've all got to be working together (Mentor Isabelle)

Because it feels more collaborative when you've got the carers involved (Mentor Claire)

Collaboration was particularly important whenever mentee behaviour changed, which helped mentors to better understand the causes.

I've had very close relationship with his foster mother… I have her email address and I just email her and I say Jacob has been acting up a bit today, has anything happened and then well (she said) he saw his real father on Sunday (Mentor Isabelle)

So I was on the phone to her carers and sort of unpicking what it is because you could tell you she was upset about something (Mentor Lee)

In addition, mentors described the positive feedback they received from carers with regards to mentees' home behaviour. This further motivated mentors to continue the intervention.

Yes she said that he's, most of the time he's like a different boy...we either email or talk at the end of the day (Mentor Isabelle)

And Mary in her emails to me has also said that his confidence. She's now seeing a different boy (Mentor Chloe)

Like at one point Tessa emailed us and myself and Mr Jimmy and just said it's the one day they come home and don't argue in the car. And it's the little things like that (Mentor Lee)

4.2.2.4 Improving the Intervention

This main theme describes some of the factors that mentors suggested would improve future interventions. It includes the timing and frequency of mentoring sessions, supervision and resources.

Mentors made suggestions about the timing and frequency of the mentoring sessions. One mentor suggested that while she observed an improvement in the literacy skills of her mentee, the timing of the intervention impacted on the extent that improvements could be realised as literacy assessments took place before the end of the intervention. She explained that they had not completed all 12 sessions by the end of year exams and suggested that the intervention should start earlier to increase the chances of the mentee reaching national required standards in assessments.

> *I do feel if we'd, even if we'd started it in September, we could've got her at national now (Mentor Abi)*

Other mentors agreed and felt that more sessions with their mentee would maximise effectiveness.

> *You know I can see their next steps, I can see their weaknesses and the strengths, the things that they know but I haven't had time to build on, as much as I'd like to (Mentor Rosie)*

> *it would be really interesting if we had another ten weeks…she's really started to open up about stuff and actually if we were doing it a lot longer, you know how much more would she open up (Mentor Abi)*

While informal supervision was offered to all mentors throughout the intervention, a few mentors said they would have liked more formal structured supervision. Some wanted further support to help them deal with issues encountered over the course of the intervention, e.g. dealing with defiant behaviour, dealing with the end of the mentoring relationship, how to manage differing dynamics as both a mentor and class teacher.

> *She was taking advantage of I think the informal relationship we had…she liked the mentorship, she would have had a mentorship, a whole hour you know so it was a bit of negotiation and being firm about the boundaries (Mentor Rosie)*

> *The only thing I felt a little bit uncomfortable about and this is I think the difference between being a class teacher, sometimes she wanted to discuss things (Mentor Lee)*

One mentor felt she would have benefitted from group supervision for a support network, particularly as she missed the initial group training.

Like if there was, like monthly meetings or something…I think I feel that for myself I still would want that support despite my background. Just to be able to anchor to someone else (Mentor Claire)

The benefits of a larger selection of resources was highlighted by several mentors.

I think sort of most of the resources that we got in that session, when we went up to London I have used and have definitely helped. But maybe just a few more (Mentor Michael)

I tried, I loved these, I tried everything. But this kind of thing (resource pack), this could be doubled in size, it would've been great (Mentor Abi)

However, interestingly, mentors scarcely used the electronic resource (Dropbox) that was set up for the group with further resources and an option to share resources between them. Mentors cited the lack of time as a contributing factor to this as they simply did not have any additional time to sort through the resources to determine appropriateness.

I didn't really use the Dropbox to be honest (Mentor Chloe)

I have to admit, just because I've tailored it to Olivia and getting into my own sort of routine, I haven't used it that much (Mentor Michael)

Although mentees were asked how the intervention could be improved, most responded that they were satisfied with the experience and did not suggest improvements.

Is there anything you would change or could make better do you think? (Interviewer)
I'm not sure but I think that, I'm not really sure (Mentee Isaac)

Were there any sessions that could have been better?(Interviewer)
No. All the lessons have all been very useful (Mentee Hayley)

Only one mentee suggested an improvement, which was to include other subjects in the intervention rather than literacy.

I could do something else instead of reading…Like history or maths (Mentee James)

5 DISCUSSION

This study explored the impact of a literacy/mentoring intervention of 12 weeks duration on the literacy skills and academic outcomes, resiliency, and SOSB of LAC, plus the factors that promote the successful implementation of such an intervention. This chapter critically discusses the quantitative and qualitative findings related to each of the research questions within the context of the existing literature. The limitations of the study are described alongside the implications for future research. The chapter ends with key conclusions and implications for future practice.

5.1 Literacy Skills and Academic Outcomes

The qualitative findings revealed that most mentors and mentees believed that the intervention impacted positively on a range of literacy skills including reading ability, comprehension and writing. Mentees were able to access more complex texts and as a result had moved up reading levels during the intervention. Additionally, the development in mentees' literacy skills led to improvements in the quality of their work in the classroom, with many working with increased independence; one moved up literacy groups from a table with a teaching assistant to one without.

Two mentors did not believe that the intervention had much impact on the literacy skills of their mentee as emotional support rather than literacy was the primary focus of their sessions. They explained that one of the mentees had only recently joined the school and her personal circumstances were traumatic, while the other was experiencing considerable change at home and was struggling to cope. Academic outcomes were thus not a priority.

The quantitative findings support an improvement in comprehension skills. However, there were non-significant improvements in reading accuracy and non-significant declines in reading fluency.

5.1.1 Comprehension

This study found that the literacy/mentoring intervention had a statistically significant impact on reading comprehension. This finding is consistent with previous research reporting statistically significant improvements in LAC's comprehension skills (Flynn et al., 2012; Fraser et al., 2008; Tyre, 2012; Winter et al., 2011).

The improvement in comprehension was greater than improvements in other literacy domains measured in this study. This was unsurprising given that much of the content of the intervention focused on bolstering comprehension skills as this had been highlighted as an area in which, on average, the children were weakest. The literacy training for mentors focused on RT, an intervention for improving comprehension skills, and the menu of strategies and activities provided to all mentors were linked to the four RT strategies recommended by Palinscar & Brown (1984).

Several researchers have argued that comprehension skills can be developed through helping individuals develop the skills that RT target including making predictions, clarifying, connecting events to prior knowledge, asking questions and summarizing (Nation & Angell, 2006). The mentors in this current study helped mentees to develop their comprehension skills by explicitly teaching these skills, modelling them and providing opportunities for guided practice and application (Dougherty-Stahl, 2004). Other studies that utilised RT approaches also found statistically significant improvements in comprehension skills (Hattie, 2008; Rosenshine & Meister, 1994). Therefore, the use of these strategies may help to explain the findings in this domain.

The qualitative findings from interviews and session records demonstrated that most mentors effectively utilised RT strategies throughout the intervention, whereby they incorporated several varied activities that encouraged mentees to apply each strategy to a given text. Mentors who were also the teacher of the mentee could introduce RT strategies into the classroom context, which meant that the learning derived from this approach was not confined to the 1:1 weekly sessions and was continuously reinforced across settings, further helping to explain the positive impact that the intervention had on comprehension skills.

These findings contrast with other studies (Courtney et al., 2008; Harper & Schmidt, 2012; Mooney et al., 2016) that reported insignificant effects on comprehension skills. However, Courtney et al. (2008) hypothesized that the disappointing findings in their study could be explained by the use of graduate students as mentors. They believed that mentors with specialist skills were more likely to have an impact due to the high rates of mental health, behaviour and learning difficulties amongst LAC. Harper & Schmidt (2012) also utilised student

volunteers while the Letter Box Club (Mooney et al., 2016) intervention relied on the LAC's own motivation to engage with literacy resources posted directly to them. It is therefore possible that the difference in the findings in this current study and the studies that did not report statistically significant improvements in comprehension can be explained by the use of mentors with a high level of skill and experience and that they were also provided with specific and focused training in this domain, which many participants saw as a strength of the intervention. Moreover, the current study recognised the importance of supporting psychosocial needs alongside literacy outcomes, and the mentors' experience and skill helped them to do this effectively. This was also a feature of the training provided to mentors. This is likely to have improved mentees' capacity to learn thereby enhancing their comprehension skills.

5.1.2 Reading Fluency and Reading Accuracy

The results demonstrated non-significant improvements in reading accuracy. While this finding is supported by a small number of other studies (Courtney et al., 2008; Flynn et al., 2012; Mooney et al., 2016), the findings contrast with a larger body of evidence that demonstrate the positive impact of participating in a literacy intervention on the reading accuracy skills of LAC (Harper & Schmidt, 2012; Wolfendale & Bryans, 2004; Winter et al., 2011; Griffiths et al., 2010; Vinnerljung et al., 2014; Tideman et al., 2011; Osborne et al., 2010; Olisa et al., n.d.). The development of reading accuracy skills was a key focus in this intervention, which makes this finding surprising. As reading accuracy is a fundamental component of comprehension, considerable instructional time was spent on basic word recognition and word analysis skills. For example, RT strategies encouraged the children to clarify words that they did not understand, mentors were on hand to support mentees to correct mistakes while reading aloud, mentors incorporated several word games that supported vocabulary development and mentees were encouraged to develop their own personal dictionaries and review them regularly.

On closer exploration of the scores, it was evident that this non-significant finding can be largely explained by a ceiling effect, whereby 8 out of 13 children had reached the top score for accuracy at Time 2. Thus while 8 children improved their score between Time 1 and Time 2, the test was insufficiently discriminating to measure the full range of change. Nonetheless, 4 out of 13 mentees results declined at Time 2 and this cannot be attributed to a ceiling

effect. However, 2 of the 4 children who failed to make progress needed a high level of emotional support, thus mentors reported that literacy could not be a focus within their sessions. The reduced literacy focus and emotional state of both mentees might explain some of the decline in the accuracy score. Additionally, the RT focus of the intervention was more supportive of comprehension than accuracy skills. Further investigation into this effect would be beneficial.

The non-significant decline in reading fluency was also unexpected as it was predicted that fluency would improve in line with comprehension skills. The literacy activities undertaken within the intervention incorporated a focus on improving word recognition. Therefore, it was hoped that, consistent with Tyre's (2012) findings, there would be gains in both fluency and comprehension skills. In addition, there is a strong literature base demonstrating the link between fluency and comprehension (Hudson, Lane, & Pullen, 2005; Pikulski & Chard, 2005; Wood, 2006), with researchers arguing that reading fluency predicts comprehension skills as fluent readers can recognize words accurately and automatically, thereby enabling them to focus on comprehending the text. Given that comprehension skills were found to have improved in this current study, it was surprising that not only did fluency not improve, it declined for some mentees. While no other literacy studies identified reported declines in reading fluency, one study identified reported non-significant improvements (Mooney et al., 2016).

One possible explanation for this decline could be related to the passages that the children were reading post-intervention. All participants were reading higher-level passages with more complex language than at the initial assessment, which may have slowed their rate of reading. In addition, the intervention supported the development of several important skills to enable the children to read for meaning rather than simply decoding the text, possibly resulting in decreased reading rates in the short term while the children were still learning to apply the strategies automatically and fluently.

In addition, the qualitative findings reported improvements in the children's academic engagement and confidence. Therefore, some of the improvement in reading comprehension (and accuracy) may also be explained in part by these affective factors. This is consistent with previous research that indicates that

engagement and confidence are significantly related to academic achievement (Fredricks, Blumenfeld & Paris, 2004; Hattie, 2009). Hattie (2009) argues that engagement and confidence contribute to an openness and willingness to learn and are key performance indicators central to academic achievement. The qualitative findings in these domains will be discussed below.

5.1.3 Academic Engagement

The qualitative findings suggested that mentees were more engaged and positive towards their learning. Mentors reported that academic motivation and behaviour improved, and rates of effort, persistence and participation increased within the classroom.

One possible explanation for the perceived enhanced engagement in this current study could be related to the mentor/mentee relationship. Several researchers have demonstrated the positive impact that the teacher-student relationship can have on engagement (Holt et al., 2008; Roorda et al., 2011). The relationship of trust and mutual respect between the mentor and mentee helped mentees feel more secure, relaxed and settled within the classroom. Therefore, this may help to explain the observations that mentees were better behaved, were asking more questions and were more willing to express their thoughts and feelings. In addition, mentors developed a good understanding of the mentees' strengths, needs, interests and preferred teaching and learning strategies, which helped them to motivate the mentees more effectively. This study found that it was the relationship as well as the professional expertise that mattered, rather than the utilization of class teachers as mentors. Not all mentors in this study were teachers, yet feedback indicated that mentees who were not mentored by their teacher were just as engaged in the classroom.

Another potential explanation for perceived improved engagement may have been related to mentee confidence. As children's literacy skills improved mentees became more confident and willing to take risks in their learning. Prior to the intervention, it was clear that many of the mentees did not persevere with tasks they perceived as challenging and confidence levels were low.

In addition, the motivating learning activities that took place within the sessions supported engagement. Mentees were introduced to interesting texts and fun activities that would not have been possible in the classroom context.

Consequently, mentees demonstrated increased enthusiasm for reading and writing, even choosing to engage in these activities for pleasure outside the classroom. Improvements in LAC's attitudes towards reading have been reported in other literacy studies (Dymoke & Griffiths, 2010; Osborne et al., 2010; Vinnerljung et al., 2014; Winter et al., 2011). A limited number of mentoring studies have also reported improved attitudes towards learning and school (Eby et al., 2008; Herrera et al., 2007). Eby et al. (2008) found that mentoring was more highly related to attitudes than other outcomes and Wheeler et al. (2010) argued that SBM programmes have greater potential to impact on outcomes such as attitudes in the short term that, in turn, generate longer term effects on outcomes such as academic achievement and delinquency.

Academic engagement per se has not been measured widely within mentoring or literacy studies. Instead studies have measured students' school-related cognitions and behaviours, which are used to infer levels of engagement in learning. Such measures have included discipline referrals, attendance, sense of mastery, SOSB and academic achievement. Findings in these areas across the literature are therefore difficult to compare, and it is not clear what the most sensitive measures of academic engagement are.

5.1.4 Academic Confidence

The qualitative findings indicated that mentees' academic confidence and self-esteem developed over the course of the intervention. Prior to the intervention, many of the mentees were hesitant to read, refusing to read aloud in class. They were also reluctant to share their work with others and ask questions when they were unsure. Most mentees held negative views about their abilities, often withdrawing and giving up when they perceived a task was challenging, however, post intervention, changes to these behaviours were evident. In addition, mentees could identify the skills that they had developed because of the intervention and were able to describe their strengths, which was a difficulty for many prior to the intervention. Interestingly, there were examples of mentees generalizing the confidence they had developed in literacy across several subject areas and within the wider classroom environment.

By supporting the acquisition of new skills and through providing praise, reassurance, feedback and opportunities to succeed, mentees began to develop

self-belief. For mentors who were also teachers, this support continued in the classroom setting, whereby the teacher could remind and praise the mentee about what they had achieved in the sessions. In addition, several mentors implemented RT in the classroom, and because mentees were already knowledgeable about the strategies, their peers perceived them as experts. This may have enhanced mentees' status within the classroom and in turn promoted confidence.

Several mentors reported that the development of confidence was one of the greatest areas of change for the mentee. This findings support the work of Renshaw (2008) who found that the most gains were in the areas of confidence and mentees feeling better about themselves. Additionally, the findings are consistent with qualitative feedback in several literacy studies that demonstrated improvements in confidence and self-esteem (Griffiths & Comber, 2011; Osborne, 2010; Worsley & Beverley, 2008), and in a number of mentoring studies that reported enhancements in self-esteem (Karcher, 2008) and more positive perceptions of academic ability (Herrera et al. 2011; Wheeler et al., 2010).

5.2 Resiliency

The current study measured three aspects of personal resiliency as well as a summary score (the Resource Index [RI]), representing overall resiliency. Findings revealed statistically significant improvements in the RI and in the Sense of Relatedness, but there were non-significant improvements in Sense of Mastery and Emotional Reactivity.

This is an important finding as no other literacy or mentoring studies were identified that have measured changes to LAC's resilience in response to an intervention. This is despite considerable emphasis placed on the importance of resilience for LAC within research and government policy (Daniel & Wassell, 2002; DCSF 2007; Gilligan, 2001)

While it is not possible to compare these results with other similar studies, the findings for each strand of resiliency can be related to mentoring and literacy programmes that have measured important outcomes associated with resiliency.

5.2.1 Sense of Relatedness

The statistically significant increase in Sense of Relatedness is supported by existing literature and theory. Because mentoring is founded on cultivating a supportive, trusting relationship between a mentor and mentee (DuBois & Karcher, 2005), it was expected that mentees would report a higher sense of relatedness. This is consistent with previous research that has linked mentoring to significant improvements in youths' perceptions of their relationships with adults (DuBois et al., 2002; Haight et al., 1999; Wheeler et al., 2010).

Interestingly, the positive relationship in this current study between mentors and mentees seems to have positively influenced other relationships in general. This finding is congruent with an extensive literature base supporting the positive impact that a close connection with a mentor can have on interpersonal relationships in general (Dent & Cameron, 2003; Eby et al., 2008; Jackson & Martin, 1998; Wheeler et al., 2010). These findings are also consistent with attachment theory (Bowlby, 1988), which proposes that a positive relational experience with an empathic, consistent and supportive significant adult can challenge and modify negative views that children may hold of relationships with adults. This may encourage more positive expectations about interpersonal relationships, and in turn promote their development (Rhodes et al., 2000; Thomson & Zand, 2010). Moreover, several researchers have emphasised the benefits that developing a connection with a teacher can have on interpersonal relationships (Frisby & Martin, 2010; Frymier, 2007; Meeker, Edmonton & Fisher, 2008; van Uden et al., 2014). Overall, given that most mentors within the current study were the LAC's teachers and were found to have developed strong bonds with their mentees, the statistically significant improvement in Sense of Relatedness is unsurprising.

The qualitative data in the current study support the quantitative findings. The data suggests mentees developed a strong and meaningful connection with their mentors and highlights the positive impact that the intervention had on peer relationships.

5.2.2 Mentor/Mentee Relationship

While most mentees knew their mentor prior to beginning the intervention, it was evident that the intervention provided a platform that enabled the relationships to strengthen. Many mentees emphasised that one of the most important aspects

of their experience was spending time with the mentor. They described feelings of being understood, liked, respected and cared for. As a result, many began to open up about their personal experiences and circumstances. They sought advice from the mentor, were receptive to support and engaged in therapeutic activities such as writing letters to siblings they were separated from, generating questions that they wanted to ask their biological parents and social workers, and explored different approaches to personal problems.

The finding that the children in this current study were open and honest so quickly, suggests that building a relationship with an adult within the school context who is already known to the young person may strengthen the mentor/mentee connection, enhance the relationship quality and in turn promote better outcomes. This is particularly relevant for LAC who often have difficulties building close relationships due to insecure patterns of attachment (Yates & Masten, 2004). The study of Olisa et al. (n.d.) also suggested that utilising teachers within the child's school was likely to improve the intervention success.

Importantly, the high-quality mentor/mentee relationship was also evident from the mentors' perspective. They described time spent with the mentee as a privilege. They spoke fondly of mentees and described several different examples that demonstrated the care they had for them. Many of the mentors went beyond the expected role, taking the mentee out during the school holidays, organising the mentees favourite author to sign a book with a special message and organising a surprise birthday celebration. It should also be noted that the strongest relationships appeared to be those whereby mentors demonstrated this high level of care.

Overall, it was evident that the mentor/mentee relationship was an important part of the experience and was central to the increase in this area of personal resiliency.

5.2.3 Peer Relationships

The qualitative findings in this study indicated that the intervention supported peer relationships. This is consistent with other studies that have found that mentoring is associated with better peer relations (Caldarella et al., 2009; Eby et al., 2008; Haight et al., 1999; Kolar & McBride, 2011; Renshaw, 2008; Wheeler et al., 2010). However, it is not clear within the evidence base how and why these changes have taken place (Karcher, 2005), and not all studies have found

improvements in social relationships (Herrera et al., 2007). Within the current study, it seems that positive developments in peer relationships arose due to mentoring sessions that focused on important social skills such as managing conflict as well as the inclusion of social activities (e.g. Lego, board games and cooking), which provided opportunities for mentees to expand their social network and practice the skills developed within the sessions. Other researchers have also proposed that mentoring may enhance peer relationships by supporting the development of social skills (Haight et al., 1999).

In addition, it was evident that peers perceived mentees in a more positive light. This happened in some cases as a direct result of improved behaviour, whereby several mentees developed more effective strategies and techniques for regulating their affect and no longer displayed aggressive behaviours or disrupted lessons. Additionally, mentors who were also class teachers acted as an advocate in the classroom, highlighting and celebrating the mentees strengths and abilities publicly and encouraging increased participation. This helped to shift peer perceptions of the mentee, to the extent that one child started getting invitations to play dates and parties, which had not happened previously. Herrera's (1999) findings support the argument that peers may perceive mentees in a more positive light, but suggests that the attention from a school-based mentor may boost the status of mentored pupils.

5.2.4 Sense of Mastery

Sense of Mastery increased over the course of the intervention, however, this was not statistically significant. This finding was unexpected considering the other quantitative and qualitative findings that demonstrate improvements to outcomes linked to Sense of Mastery, including self-esteem, academic achievement, confidence and academic engagement. However, compared to current literacy and mentoring literature, these results are perhaps less surprising as findings across studies in these domains are extremely variable. Inconsistencies are apparent across evaluations for different interventions as well as evaluations of the same interventions. For example, there are several studies exploring the impact of the LetterBox Club, and while some researchers, in line with this current study, reported positive findings for literacy attainment and engagement in reading (Griffiths et al., 2010; Winter et al., 2011), one rigorous experimental study found no evidence of favourable programme effects in these areas (Mooney et al., 2016). In addition, two studies exploring the

impact of Catch Up Literacy found positive changes in literacy attainment (Fraser et al., 2008; Worsley & Beverley, 2008) but only one of these studies, consistent with the qualitative findings in the current study, found improvements in confidence and self-esteem (Worsley & Beverley, 2008). Congruent with the qualitative findings in this study, the findings in the Wheeler et al. (2010) meta-analytic study indicated that SBM was effective in the promotion of a range of emotional outcomes such as global self-esteem, perceived scholastic efficacy and self-concept, but in contrast to this current study, no effects on academic performance were found. Some of these inconsistencies have been linked to the diversity of SBM and literacy interventions, the individualised nature of such programmes as well as variability in their design, quality of implementation and target population (Wheeler et al., 2010). Consequently, further qualitative research may be more useful to further illuminate why and how a given intervention has a specific impact on outcomes linked to Sense of Mastery and in what context.

It is also worth noting that it is possible that the findings in this study cannot be directly compared with other studies due to the differences in the psychological constructs being measured. While a Sense of Mastery is associated with outcomes such as academic success and self-esteem, the relationship may not be bidirectional. Further studies are needed that examine the impact of mentoring and literacy interventions on Sense of Mastery so that it is possible to disentangle which psychological processes are being affected through participation in the intervention and how these variables relate to one another.

5.2.5 Emotional Reactivity

Emotional reactivity, while improved, was found not to be statistically significant. This was surprising as part of the mentor's role focused on facilitating self-regulation and some researchers have argued that mentoring can help pupils to understand, express and regulate emotions more effectively (Pianta, 1999; Rhodes, 2002, 2005). In the current study, mentors supported self-regulation through modelling, helping mentees to develop important skills such as conflict resolution, anger and stress management, and provided opportunities to practice these. Mentors also continuously monitored and reinforced these skills within the intervention as well as throughout the school context.

The qualitative findings suggested that the intervention helped many of the mentees manage their emotions more effectively, thus these findings contrasted with the quantitative findings. The sessions provided a safe and supportive environment that encouraged mentees to open up about pertinent issues in their lives, and for mentors to offer emotional support. Mentors encouraged the development of important skills and strategies to deal with negative emotions and situations and some provided compelling examples of changes to mentee Emotional Reactivity. Given that the quantitative results demonstrated improvements in 10 out of 13 mentees' Emotional Reactivity score, a larger sample size may be required to increase the power to detect differences in this domain.

Emotional reactivity was not been measured in any studies reviewed for this study, though a small number of mentoring studies have measured behaviour, which is closely linked to the ability to regulate emotions. These studies provide some support for the qualitative findings in the current study, as many found that participating in mentoring interventions improved behaviour (Caldarella et al., 2009; Gordon et al., 2013; Herrera et al., 2007; Johnson & Lampney, 2010; McQuillin et al., 2015; Wheeler et al., 2010). However, there is also some limited support for the quantitative findings as a small number of mentoring studies also reported non-significant effects on behaviour (Bernstein et al., 2009; Herrera et al., 2011; Hickman & Garvey, 2006).

While behaviour as an outcome within literacy studies is not commonly explored, two literacy studies were identified that did so (Courtney et al., 2008; Tideman et al., 2011); both reported that a literacy intervention had no effect on behaviour. Though findings are mixed, the current findings suggest it is likely that the mentoring component has the most potential to positively influence emotion regulation and behaviour.

5.3 Sense of School Belonging

The findings in this current study demonstrated a statistically significant increase in SOSB. This is important given that a secure base, whereby a child feels as though they belong, is a fundamental building block of resilience and is closely related to school engagement, positive academic achievement and socio-emotional outcomes (Goodenow, 1993; O'Rourke & Cooper, 2010; Osterman, 2000;). Furthermore, LAC often lack a sense of belonging due to separation

from their birth families. They may also experience frequent placement moves and transitions, which can disrupt relationships and networks. Therefore, for some LAC, the school setting may be the only stable base where a sense of belonging can develop.

Higher SOSB scores are unsurprising in this current study as a core component of the intervention focused on building a strong connection between the mentor and mentee and many researchers have argued that a SOSB develops through positive interactions with teachers and other members of school staff (Goodenow, 1993; Osterman, 2000). In addition, the intervention aimed to promote positive peer interactions and create an environment in which mentees felt accepted, supported, included and respected, all of which are key contributors to feelings of belongingness (Goodenow, 1993). All mentees valued and enjoyed participating in the intervention, thus it is possible that as the intervention was based at school and all mentors were school staff, mentees may have associated their positive feelings about the programme and mentors with the school, thus improving school attitudes (King et al., 2002; Olisa et al., n.d.).

The findings are in accord with other mentoring studies that reported higher levels of school belonging (Holt et al., 2008; Karcher 2008; King et al., 2002; Portwood et al., 2005; Randolph & Johnson, 2008). King et al. (2002) hypothesised that statistically significant improvements in school belonging were due to the emphasis placed on building a positive mentor/mentee relationship. This corroborates the findings in the current study and again highlights the importance of the relationships on outcomes. Moreover, positive changes in this domain were greater than changes to other outcome measures in the current study, which is consistent with other researchers who have suggested that increased belongingness to school is one of the primary benefits of SBM (Portwood & Ayers, 2005; Randolph & Johnson, 2008).

5.4 Factors Promoting Successful Intervention

5.4.1 Resource Money Matters

The resource money provided by the commissioning authority was considered an extremely valuable element of the intervention, with some mentors describing it as the most important element. Mentors could purchase a variety of interesting

and relevant items that targeted specific literacy skills and psychosocial outcomes, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of the intervention.

A finding in this study was that mentees were motivated and engaged, enjoyed the intervention and asked for more sessions. All stated they would continue the intervention if given the choice and would recommend it to their peers. Most mentors believed that the resource money had a part to play in this, particularly as it helped set it apart from other interventions that they had experienced. Additionally, most of the mentees had few personal resources, and therefore valued being given items that their peers had.

The findings also suggested that the resource money facilitated the development of a strong connection between the mentee and mentor. Mentors utilised some of the money to purchase thoughtful and meaningful items for the children and to incorporate activities that promoted relationship building. These activities and purchases demonstrated that the children were important to the mentor and that they were 'held in mind', helping to set a foundation for building trust, comfort and a sense of security. Moreover, mentees developed a sense of self-worth because of being held in mind, as they recognised that their mentor valued and cared for them. Ultimately, the resource money was an important element in this intervention as it acted as a catalyst for promoting engagement, positive attitudes toward the intervention and stronger mentor/mentee relationships.

5.4.2 Individualising the Intervention

Mentors emphasised the importance of an individualised and flexible approach in operationalizing the intervention as it allowed them to target the specific and changeable needs of the mentee. Mentors adapted the session materials and activities based on mentees' needs, interests and preferred learning styles. It was evident that this was central to the effectiveness of the intervention as it ensured that the learning was relevant and promoted confidence, engagement and progress. Mentees who had been disengaged during lessons found that they were enjoying the literacy-focused activities within the sessions and this created a motivation for learning. The importance of individualisation was supported by Mooney et al. (2016) who argued that reading attitudes and attainment remained unchanged in their study because they did not match books to an individual's ability and interests.

Importantly, the flexibility provided an opportunity for the mentees' involvement in some of the decision-making. Mentees were provided with choices about resources and learning activities. This not only helped to ensure that the intervention was specifically targeted towards mentee interests, but also gave them a sense of empowerment and control. Existing literature demonstrates the importance of empowerment for LAC, as they often perceive that they are unable to influence what happens in their lives (Daniel & Wassell, 2002). In addition, several studies have found that providing choice within learning improves motivation, effort and academic performance (Patall, Cooper & Robinson, 2008). Thus, an important finding in the current study could be related to the importance of individualising the intervention as it provides opportunities for mentees to contribute to the planning and decision making process, which may in turn lead to higher motivation and engagement and more positive outcomes.

5.4.3 Engaging the Mentor

An understanding of the factors that contributed to the mentor's motivation is important, since commitment to the mentor role is assumed to influence the quality of mentoring. Mentors who are enthusiastic and passionate about the role are more likely to go beyond the minimum requirements of a mentor and in turn have more positive mentoring relationships and better outcomes (Chan et al., 2013).

The findings of the current study suggested that most mentors enjoyed the role and found it rewarding. All stated they would continue the role in the future if given the opportunity. Several factors were deemed important to mentor engagement.

The authority to individualise the intervention was central to mentor motivation and engagement. It reduced pressure to rigidly adhere to a predetermined format and specified targets, allowing creativity and control. In addition, it enabled mentors to utilise their prior skills and experience, innovate and work flexibly. Mentors reported that this increased their sense of enjoyment and satisfaction. Nonetheless, three mentors stated that while they acknowledged the importance of tailoring the intervention to the mentee, the lack of a specified structure impacted on their confidence initially, causing them to question what they were doing. It should be noted however, that two of these mentors did not

attend the initial group training, which may have contributed to their lack of confidence rather than the lack of specified structure per se.

Mentors also believed that while individualisation was important, they valued the resource pack provided and the guidance on its use given during the training session. Many of the mentors suggested that provision of a larger selection of resources would have been beneficial. However, mentors did not use the electronic resource (Dropbox) which had further resources and an option to share resources between them. Mentors cited lack of time as a contributing factor to this: they did not have enough time to sort through the resources to determine appropriateness. This suggests that the resources need to be readily accessible and initial training should highlight, discuss and share resources.

There were other aspects of the training that mentors valued. For example, the research and theory related to LAC and the typical outcomes amongst this group as it facilitated a greater understanding of the mentee. It was the first time that many of the mentors had been introduced to the research and statistical evidence on the prevalence of, and the contributing factors to, mental health problems and educational underachievement amongst this group. Developing mentors' understanding of concepts such as attachment theory, how trauma impacts on development and the importance of nurture and relationships was a key factor in promoting motivation and commitment to the intervention. Knowledge in these areas also helped mentors to feel confident in the approach that should be taken to support mentees, and the importance of having high aspirations, expectations and of a nurturing and empathic approach. Those who did not attend the initial training day felt less confident about the role despite receiving 1:1 training and support throughout. They believed they had missed something important and were more likely to doubt their approach at times. These findings are consistent with other researchers who have argued that training is important to programme outcomes as it enhances mentor commitment and programme understanding (Eby et al., 2008) and positively influences the quality and longevity of mentor/mentee relationships (Herrera et al., 2007). DuBois et al. (2002) however found that initial training alone did not moderate programme outcomes, while ongoing training and supervision did. This study reinforced the finding that mentoring programmes should include initial training in addition to opportunities for on-going training and support for the mentors (DuBois et al., 2002). However, a number of the mentors expressed

a preference for a regular, structured support session rather than the individualized 1:1 support offered to mentors throughout the intervention. In addition, a number of mentors believed that a group-based supervision would have been beneficial. It was suggested that the group format would allow for support from other group members, and provide an opportunity to gain a wider range of ideas for mentoring sessions.

It should also be noted that most mentors did not value the part of training focused on models of literacy development. They reported that it was too theoretical, and struggled to understand the material and its relevance. Some of the mentors indicated that its inclusion overcomplicated their role and negatively impacted on their confidence.

An additional factor that was deemed important was regular and close communication between the carers and mentors. This was actively encouraged and was reported as having a positive influence on mentors' motivation and commitment. This communication included phone calls and emails; however, much of the contact appeared to emerge informally when carers arrived at the school to bring the mentee to, or collect the mentee from, sessions. Through discussions with the carer, mentors built up an understanding of the mentee and relevant issues. Consequently, they were more emphatic and determined to support them. Motivation was further enhanced through the positive feedback they received from carers.

6 CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Limitations of Study and Recommendations for Future Research

6.1.1 Lack of Control Group

A criticism made by me in the literature review chapter of this thesis was that many intervention studies with LAC did not include a control. This is problematic because it makes it difficult to separate changes caused by maturation or other factors, from those directly attributable to the intervention. It was intended therefore that this study would have a control group; however, this proved impossible despite extensive efforts to recruit one. The Virtual School project coordinator attempted over many months to identify and recruit LAC to the wait list control, making the option attractive by offering the intervention to participants in the following year. Despite these efforts, only 2 LAC were successfully recruited, so a fair comparison group could not be formed. This limitation is common across studies focusing on LAC, as gaining access to this vulnerable group is difficult and the pool of LAC is small. Nonetheless, without a control it is not possible to assign outcomes, in themselves, solely to the effects of the intervention.

For LAC the inclusion of a control is particularly beneficial as it can help to isolate the impact of the intervention from other interventions that LAC typically participate in. In the current study it was difficult to gain accurate information regarding other interventions that the children were receiving. Most children were reported as not being involved with other literacy or social and emotional interventions alongside the literacy/mentoring intervention at school. However, it is possible that they were participating in interventions outside school. These factors cannot be controlled as it would be unethical to deny children the potential benefits of these other supports; however, any future study needs to consider how to control for these factors. In addition, it would be beneficial for future studies to use an experimental design to establish the efficacy of a literacy/mentoring intervention with more confidence. The comparison of a mentoring group, a literacy group and a literacy/mentoring group would help to clarify the relative impact and make it possible to attribute progress with more confidence to the different strategies and approaches used. However, this may have ethical implications considering the current study's support for a literacy/mentoring intervention combined.

6.1.2 Quantitative Measures

6.1.2.1 Self-report Measures

Resiliency and SOSB were measured using self-report instruments. While these measures are useful for determining the LACs' own perspectives about themselves and are an effective way to gather information quickly (Borgers, Hox & Sikkel, 2004), some potential validity and reliability problems are associated with self reports (Borgers et al., 2004). Self-report questionnaires are highly context dependent and responses can be influenced by several factors including interpretation of the question, the honesty of the participants, introspective ability and situational factors such as emotional arousal. To reduce some of these risks, I engaged in general discussion with the LAC to develop rapport and gauge their emotional state. One young person was deemed not to be in a good emotional state and therefore the meeting was deferred and appropriate action to support her was taken. I read the questions to the mentees, explained any ambiguity and assessed mentees understanding of the questions to ensure their accurate interpretation. One mentee appeared not to comprehend several questions on the resiliency scale (Prince- Embury 2005); therefore, his responses were excluded from the data analysis. A further drawback of these measures is the limited range of scores (1-5), which may not be sensitive enough to capture subtle changes over a relatively short period.

Several limitations relate to the tool used to measure literacy skills. Firstly, there is a lack of identified published research into the reliability or concurrent validity of the DRA assessment. In addition, the DRA presents the student's standardised score for comprehension and fluency as a range rather than providing an exact score, making it difficult to ascertain progress between Time 1 and Time 2. This meant that only reading accuracy could be measured with a score, while mentees comprehension and reading fluency progress were measured using raw scores and ability scores respectively. Limitations of using raw scores are recognised, including an inability to compare results across studies; however, this was the only meaningful way to determine progress. It should also be noted that because a ceiling effect was apparent for the reading accuracy measure for eight out of 13 mentees, the test was insufficiently difficult to measure changes in this domain accurately. Future studies should explore alternative literacy assessments.

6.1.2.2 Sample Size

The number of LAC recruited to the project was smaller than anticipated, despite taking many steps to ameliorate this issue. The Virtual School appointed a project coordinator to liaise with all schools in county X to identify children for the project and was also given the responsibility of obtaining consent for the children. The process started earlier in the academic year than was possible for the pilot study, to allow more time to gain consent. However, it was not possible to recruit more than 15 LAC due to difficulties gaining consent, and only 14 completed the intervention. Replicating the study with a larger sample size would be beneficial as it would provide greater power to detect statistically significant effects and would improve external validity. Future studies would benefit from a longer timeframe to support the lengthy recruitment process.

6.1.2.3 Sampling

I used purposive sampling rather than random. Children who met certain criteria (see section 3.4.1) were identified by schools, but only by schools who wished to participate in the project. Purposive sampling reduces the generalizability of the study because it is not possible to conclude that effects were solely due to the intervention as other confounding variables may have had an effect. For example, it is possible that the schools who were interested in taking part in the study were inclusive schools that focused on helping LAC feel supported, accepted and included. Therefore, the results may not be generalizable to LAC who attend less supportive schools. Future studies should ideally be randomised to improve internal and external validity.

6.2 Additional Implications for Future Research

Future studies should explore the impact of RT on the comprehension skills of LAC. In the current study the use of RT activities and strategies were implemented inconsistently across mentoring pairs, thus it was not possible to draw conclusions about their effect on comprehension skills per se. However, given that comprehension improved significantly and that most mentors utilised the menu of RT strategies and activities within the sessions, initial conclusions about RT impact are positive.

Some researchers (DuBois et al., 2002; Wheeler et al., 2010) have argued that mentoring may have longer-term benefits that cross-sectional studies fail to capture. Changes to outcomes such as attitudes and confidence may, in turn,

yield positive effects on outcomes such as academic achievement in the longer term. Therefore, longitudinal studies are needed to understand the full extent of these effects over time.

More studies of the impact of literacy support and mentoring on resilience are needed. While the current study found positive effects, further exploration would contribute to a limited evidence base. In addition, a full understanding of programme effects is often restricted with quantitative data collection methods, with most literacy and mentoring studies focusing on similar outcomes. Therefore, further qualitative studies that explore a range of perspectives would be useful to determine other potential effects. The current study did not consider the perceptions of carers or class teachers if they were not also the mentee's mentor. However, feedback from mentors who were the class teacher was extremely valuable as it gave insight into the wider impact of the intervention. Furthermore, several mentors gave indirect feedback from carers, which suggested that changes were evident at home. Therefore, triangulating LAC and mentor perspectives with those of a wider range of stakeholders (e.g. foster carers, social workers, class teacher) would allow a deeper exploration of the intervention's impact.

It would be interesting for future studies to examine the mediating effect of utilising teachers as mentors versus other members of school staff. A number of studies have demonstrated the positive impact of pupil-teacher rapport on a range of outcomes such as motivation and academic achievement (Frisby & Martin, 2010; Frymier; 2007), thus, utilising class teachers as mentors may have implications for wider impact and enhancing programme effectiveness.

The findings also suggested that the intervention facilitated peer relationships, which may also have contributed to important outcomes such as resilience and SOSB. While initial findings in this study suggested several ways in which mentors supported the development of social relationships, more research is needed to enhance confidence about how children achieve a sense of connectedness to peers and how mentors can facilitate this.

6.3 Implications for Practice

LAC are not a homogenous group and often have diverse needs. Therefore, interventions such as the one in this study, combining literacy and mentoring, to

target a broad array of individualised needs are likely to enhance impact. Its wider adoption should therefore be considered. However, a detailed understanding of a child's specific needs is essential to individualising the intervention effectively. Therefore, prior to beginning the intervention, there should be a thorough assessment of the LAC strengths and needs. EPs are well placed to carry out initial assessments of strengths and needs as they are skilled at taking a holistic approach and providing a perspective underpinned by psychological theory and knowledge. This involvement can support the development of appropriate individualised targets and contribute to advice regarding the most appropriate evidence-based strategies and approaches that should be utilised within the intervention.

EPs can support other aspects of the planning and implementation process, such as providing advice about the identification and recruitment of appropriate staff to deliver the intervention and training for these individuals. Regarding the current study, the intervention required committed and motivated mentors with a high level of skill and experience. However, despite their teaching backgrounds, the training was considered important and was instrumental to the development of empathy, skill and motivation. In addition, as highlighted in this study as well as by DuBois et al. (2002), ongoing structured supervision should be offered to those delivering the intervention to ensure effective delivery. EPs would be very well placed to provide this supervision.

As well as training for mentors, this study highlighted the need for whole-school training on LAC. Many of the mentors were class teachers working with LAC, but had not been aware of the theory and typical outcomes associated with LAC prior to the intervention. This knowledge is vital to supporting LAC effectively.

This study emphasised the importance of flexibility within intervention protocols. For LAC there needs to be an opportunity to opt out of pre-planned session material if necessary, in order to take account of the young person's changeable needs. This flexibility should also provide opportunities to empower the children by involving them in decision making about the activities, resources, and teaching and learning strategies utilised within the intervention. This is likely to promote a sense of agency, enhancing engagement and motivation.

This research suggests that a priority for schools should be building the quality of children's relationships. The relationship between the LAC and the mentor was essential to the outcomes in this study (including resilience, SOSB, academic engagement and confidence), highlighting the importance of interventions that are relationship focused. Given that LAC can have difficulties building relationships with adults, active measures to foster these relationships within interventions are important. This study emphasised several factors that appeared to facilitate the development of a secure relationship with mentors and should be considered when implementing an intervention. These include a budget for resources, initial icebreaker activities focused on getting to know the young person, spending time talking and listening, finding opportunities to demonstrate that the young person is 'held in mind', involving the children in decision making, and providing opportunities for child-led activities. In addition, an empathic, warm and positive approach was important. It should also be noted that most mentees already had pre-established relationships with their mentor, which is likely to have contributed to stronger bonds, particularly given the short duration of the intervention.

The findings in this research indicated that mentor motivation, training and recording adherence were key factors affecting the fidelity of the intervention. When schools implement interventions, they should consider recruitment processes that ensure staff who are motivated to make a difference are involved in delivering the intervention. Training should include an emphasis on the importance of following intervention protocols, while monitoring adherence to protocols needs to be built into the design. Furthermore, gaining pupil feedback after each session may enhance mentors' motivation and compliance, and play an important role in the maintenance of quality.

A small budget should be made available to the mentor to buy appropriate resources for the mentoring sessions. This had several advantages including igniting the LAC interest and enthusiasm towards the intervention and learning, facilitating the development of the mentor/mentee relationship and enhancing the children's sense of self-worth.

Close communication with the carer should be actively encouraged as this helped mentors to understand some of the difficulties the children were experiencing outside school, enabling them to provide appropriate support.

Additionally, the carers provided feedback, which had a positive impact on mentors motivation and commitment.

6.4 Conclusions

This is an important study because it demonstrates how EPs can help schools and other professionals to support the needs of LAC more effectively to promote better academic, mental health and life outcomes through the development, implementation and evaluation of evidence-based interventions. The study emphasises the importance of individualised interventions that adopt a holistic view of the child and target multifaceted needs in combination, and which are flexible enough to take account of pertinent issues as they arise. The interaction of literacy support combined with mentoring appeared to cause a synergistic effect, leading to significant improvements in comprehension skills, resiliency, SOSB, peer relationships, and academic confidence, engagement and attitudes. The literacy component provided a constructive and enjoyable focus that enabled confidence, academic skills and attitudes towards learning to develop, while also facilitating discussion about relevant issues to the children in a non-intrusive and non-threatening way. The mentoring aspect of the intervention was central to the development of the mentor/mentee relationship and provided the opportunity to target mentees' psychosocial needs. The quality of the relationship was fundamental to the outcomes, thus future interventions should prioritise factors that facilitate the relationship strength, including those that were highlighted in this study. Furthermore, given the importance of building connections with teachers, perhaps prioritising the class teacher as a mentor may be a particularly powerful approach. This study also identified several factors that supported the successful implementation of the intervention and suggests that interventions that include resource money, provide training and on-going supervision and support, encourage close communication with carers, and which begin early in the academic year are likely to be more effective. Overall, the findings in this study indicate that literacy/mentoring interventions hold a great deal of promise for LAC and warrant further robust research on a larger scale and wider implementation in schools.

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APPENDIX A: Literature review search strategy

Four separate systematic searches for empirical articles were conducted using the electronic databases ERIC, PsycARTICLES, PsycBOOKS, PsycEXTRA, PsycINFO, Academic Search Complete, British Education Index, eBook Collection (EBSCOhost) and E-Journals.

Search 1

The initial search aimed to identify studies related to mentoring and literacy interventions for LAC. Search terms used included school based mentoring, looked after children and literacy, as well as associated key words such as: foster children, children in care, reading skills.

Inclusion criteria

- Interventions that included both mentoring and literacy support for LAC

Results

The searches in electronic databases yielded 5 articles. However, after screening these, only 1 article was relevant. Therefore, further searches were carried out with a focus on mentoring interventions and literacy interventions, as opposed to interventions that combined these approaches.

Search 2

Search terms included looked after children and literacy interventions and all associated terminology (e.g. children in care, foster children, reading skills).

Inclusion criteria

For studies to be included in the review they had to meet the following criteria:

- An evaluation of an intervention aiming to improve literacy skills of LAC
- Literacy interventions targeting primary school aged LAC
- Published in English

Due to the lack of studies, I included:

- Studies regardless of year of publication
- All school aged children
- Unpublished studies/"grey literature", that is studies that had not been published in scientific journals after a referee process, e.g. government/agency reports

Results

The searches in electronic databases yielded 345 articles. These were screened for topic relevance in two stages. The first stage involved an initial screening process (based on title and abstract). This resulted in 32 studies, which were examined against the inclusion criteria. This process narrowed the sample to 9 relevant studies. A review of all reference lists of these 9 studies yielded five

further studies. The current review of literacy interventions for LAC is based on 14 primary studies.

Search 3

Search terms included looked after children and mentoring and all associated terminology (e.g. mentor, foster children, school based mentoring).

Inclusion criteria: Mentoring Studies Focused on LAC

For studies to be included in the review they had to meet the following criteria:

- An evaluation of a mentoring intervention for LAC
- School based mentoring intervention
- Adult as mentor
- Formal mentoring programme
- Published in English

Due to the lack of studies, I included:

- Studies regardless of year of publication
- All school aged children

Results

The searches in electronic databases yielded 103 articles. These were screened for topic relevance in two stages. The first stage involved an initial screening process (based on title and abstract). This resulted in 21 studies, which were examined against the inclusion criteria. This process narrowed the sample to 3 relevant studies. One further study was identified through a search of Google Scholar. The current review of mentoring interventions for LAC is based on 4 primary studies.

- Unpublished studies/“grey literature”, that is studies that had not been published in scientific journals after a referee process, e.g. government/agency reports

Search 4

Search terms included mentoring and vulnerable children. Associated key terms were also used including children at risk, mentor and low socioeconomic status)

Inclusion criteria: Mentoring Studies Focused on Vulnerable Children

For studies to be included in the review they had to meet the following criteria:

- An evaluation of a mentoring intervention for vulnerable children
- School based mentoring intervention
- Adult as mentor
- Formal mentoring programme
- Year of publication 2000-2017
- Published in English

Results

The searches in electronic databases yielded 434 articles. These were screened for topic relevance in two stages. The first stage involved an initial screening

process (based on title and abstract). This resulted in 80 studies, which were examined against the inclusion criteria. This process narrowed the relevant studies to 21.

APPENDIX B: Research tasks

Task name	Oct 2015		Nov 2015	Dec 2015	Jan 2016	Feb 2016		Mar 2016	Apr 2016		May 2016	Jun1 2016	Jul 2016
Information letters sent out to all primary schools in county X													
Mentee recruitment and consent process													
Control group recruitment and consent process													
Mentor recruitment													
Training day for mentors													
Administration of Time 1 (baseline) questionnaires													
Individual mentor training													
Commencement of intervention													
Administration of Time 2 (post-test) questionnaires													
Interviews with mentors and mentees													

APPENDIX C: Semi-structured interview questions

Questions for mentors:

Process/intervention itself

1) How many sessions did you do each week?
2) How many did you complete in total?
3) How long were the sessions?
4) How were you selected? What attracted you to this role?
5) What is your role at the school?
6) What other interventions has xxxxx been part of during the same period?

Experience:

1) What was the experience of being a mentor like for you?
2) From your experience of the intervention, what worked well?
3) Can you tell me about any issues that arouse?
4) Have you noticed any changes in xxxx since starting the intervention? Can you tell me about those? (e.g. literacy, confidence, social skills, engagement).
5) Has your relationship with xxxx changed as a result of the intervention?
6) What aspects of the intervention did you think were important (e.g. training, support, resource money mentee engagement)
7) If we were to run this program again, what advice would you give us in relation to doing that?
8) Would you get involved again?

Questions for mentees:

1) What kind of things did you do when working with xxxxx?
2) Tell me about Mr xx/Ms xx ?
3) What did you enjoy the most?
4) What would you change?
5) Were there any problems?
6) Do you think the intervention has helped you? In what ways? Tell me more about that (reading, confidence, relationship with teacher, feeling towards learning)
7) Would you like more sessions?
8) What would you say about the sessions if you had to explain to another young person what it was all about? Would you recommend it to them?

APPENDIX D: Ethics application form

Anyone conducting research under the auspices of the Institute (staff, students or visitors) where the research involves human participants or the use of data collected from human participants, is required to gain ethical approval before starting. This includes preliminary and pilot studies. Please answer all relevant questions in terms that can be understood by a lay person and note that your form may be returned if incomplete.

For further support and guidance please see accompanying guidelines and the Ethics Review Procedures for Student Research
http://www.ioe.ac.uk/studentethics/ or contact your supervisor or researchethics@ioe.ac.uk.

Before completing this form you will need to discuss your proposal fully with your supervisor(s).
Please attach all supporting documents and letters.

For all Psychology students, this form should be completed with reference to the British Psychological Society (BPS) Code of Human Research Ethics and Code of Ethics and Conduct.

Section 1 Project details			
a.	Project title		The impact of a mentoring/literacy intervention on literacy, resiliency and self esteem.
b.	Student name and ID number (e.g. ABC12345678)		Mairead Murphy
c.	Supervisor/Personal Tutor		Vivian Hill
d.	Department		Psychology
e.	Course category (Tick one)	PhD/MPhil ☐	EdD ☐
		MRes ☐	DEdPsy ☒
		MTeach ☐	MA/MSc ☐

		ITE ☐	
		Diploma (state which) ☐	
		Other (state which) ☐	

f.	Course/module title	DEdPsyc
g.	**If applicable,** state who the funder is and if funding has been confirmed.	N/A
h.	Intended research start date	22/2/16
i.	Intended research end date	3/6/16
j.	Country fieldwork will be conducted in *If research to be conducted abroad please check www.fco.gov.uk and submit a completed travel risk assessment form (see guidelines). If the FCO advice is against travel this will be **required** before ethical approval can be granted: http://ioe-net.inst.ioe.ac.uk/about/profservices/international/Pages/default.aspx*	England

k.	Has this project been considered by another (external) Research Ethics Committee?	
	Yes ☐	External Committee Name:
	No ☒ ⇨ *go to Section 2*	Date of Approval:

If yes:

- Submit a copy of the approval letter with this application.
- Proceed to Section 10 Attachments**.**

Note: Ensure that you check the guidelines carefully as research with some participants will require ethical approval from a different ethics committee such as the National Research Ethics Service (NRES) or Social Care Research Ethics Committee (SCREC). In addition, if your research is based in another institution then you may be required to apply to their research ethics committee.

Section 2 Project summary

Research methods (tick all that apply)

Please attach questionnaires, visual methods and schedules for interviews (even in draft form).

☒ Interviews ☐ Focus groups ☒ Questionnaires	☐ Controlled trial/other intervention study ☐ Use of personal records ☐ Systematic review ⇨ ***if only method used go to Section 5.***

☐ Action research ☐ Observation ☐ Literature review	☐ Secondary data analysis ⇨ ***if secondary analysis used go to Section 6.*** ☐ Advisory/consultation/collaborative groups ☐ Other, give details:

Please provide an overview of your research. This should include some or all of the following: purpose of the research, aims, main research questions, research design, participants, sampling, your method of data collection (e.g., observations, interviews, questionnaires, etc.) and kind of questions that will be asked, reporting and dissemination (typically 300-500 words).

The purpose of the research

- To provide an early intervention to raise the literacy skills and academic achievement of looked after children.
- To build the resiliency of looked after children.
- To improve the sense of school belonging of looked after children.

The main research question

1) What is the impact of a one-to-one literacy/mentoring intervention on the literacy attainment, resiliency and sense of school belonging of children who are in public care?

Aims

1. To investigate the impact of a literacy/mentoring intervention on the literacy attainment of children in public care.
2. To explore the impact of a literacy/mentoring intervention on the resiliency of children in public care.
3. To assess the impact of a literacy/mentoring intervention on the sense of school belonging of children in public care
3. To explore participant's (the LAC children as well as the teachers) experiences of the intervention in order to determine the components of the intervention that were deemed to influence its success.

Research design

An embedded mixed method design will be used. The primary focus of this study will use quantitative pre/post measures (standardized questionnaires and literacy assessment) to explore the impact of the intervention on the literacy skills, resiliency and sense of school belonging of a group of looked after children in X.

A secondary purpose will be to gather qualitative data to explore participant's experiences of the intervention. The qualitative data will be collected through interviews with participants, program records, and teacher and pupil evaluations and reflections, which will be recorded after each session.
The qualitative analysis will focus on thematic development across the cases and perspectives

Participants and sampling

Approximately twenty participants will be recruited from mainstream primary schools in X. 15 pupils will be in the intervention group and 5 pupils will be in the control group for comparison purposes. There will be a mixture of males and females who will be between the ages of 9 and 11 years old. The control group will be on a waiting list to participate in the intervention the following year.

The sample will be a purposive sample of looked after children. The Virtual Assistant Head

Teacher for North West X will select participants on the basis of:

- Year group (Year 4, 5, 6)
- Teacher referral (pupil who is likely to benefit from mentoring/literacy intervention)
- Geographic location (schools located in X)

The Virtual Assistant Head Teacher will send out letters to primary schools in X with information about the intervention and will invite schools to participate if they think they have children who would benefit from extra literacy support.

Method of data collection and kind of questions that will be asked

Quantitative data
Participants will complete questionnaire measures and a literacy assessment pre/post intervention. They will also complete 4 core scales from The British Ability Scales: Third Edition (BAS3) at baseline.
The questionnaires (see attached) for participants will include the following:

1. The Resiliency Scales for Children and Adolescents (RSCA) (Prince-Embury, 2006, 2007) is designed to measure personal resiliency within three developmental domains using three student self-report scales: Sense of Mastery, Sense of Relatedness, and Emotional Reactivity and the relationship of these factors to one another. The full measure includes 64 Likert-type items and yields two Index scores: Resource and Vulnerability.

Questions include:

"I am good at fixing things.", "People say that I am easy to upset.", "I have a good friend."

2.The Psychological Sense of School Membership Scale (PSSM) (Goodenow, 1993) is a measure students' school membership. The PSSM includes 18 Likert-type items and is designed to measure three specific factors: belonging , rejection, and acceptance.

Questions include:

"I am included in a lot of activities at this school.", "It is hard for people like me to be accepted here.","I can really be myself at this school."

3. Diagnostic Reading Analysis (DRA) is a literacy assessment, which consists of a series of graded passages to assess children's reading fluency, accuracy and comprehension attainment. Each passage is accompanied by a set of comprehension questions, which assess a range of comprehension skills.

4.BAS3 is an established standardised battery in the UK for assessing a child's cognitive ability. The researcher will be using four of the six core scales to measure Verbal Ability and Non-verbal Reasoning Ability. The Verbal Ability subtests include "Word Definitions" and "Verbal Similarities" and the Non-verbal subtests include "Quantitative Reasoning" and "Matrices".

Note: all questionnaires used to collect data are validated and are age-appropriate

Qualitative data

The researcher will conduct brief semi-structured interviews with a range of pupils and teachers. The researcher will select 1 pupil and 1 teacher from each school in order to elicit a range of views. This means that approximately 9 pupils and 9 teachers (as there are 9 schools) will be interviewed post intervention. Where there is more than 1 teacher and 1 pupil at the school, the

interviewees will be selected randomly.

Each interviewee will be asked approximately 5 questions (which will limit data in order to ensure manageability) related their experience of the intervention in order to determine the components of the intervention that were deemed to influence its success.

All interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed.

Questions will include: "Have you noticed any changes in xxx over the past 12 weeks?", "How do you feel the intervention went?"

2. The researcher will collect qualitative data from a range of sources to explore participant's experiences of the intervention. This will include data from program records, and teacher and pupil evaluations and reflections, which will be recorded after each session.

Procedure:
The literacy intervention will be conducted over a 15-week period, with each child receiving one-hour or two thirty-minute sessions of mentoring/tuition per week. The researcher will measure literacy, resiliency and sense of school belonging at Time 1 (pre intervention) and Time 2 (post intervention). In addition, the researcher will explore the pupils and teachers experiences of the intervention (post intervention).

December 2015
- Information letters sent to school regarding the intervention.
- Schools who are interested in taking part will contact the Virtual Assistant Head Teacher to sign up

-Information letters will be sent to the carers of each participant and consent sought from carers
- The looked after children are invited to take part in intervention and consent sought from each child individually

January 2016
- Training delivered to teachers and teaching assistants who are involved in the intervention. Teachers and teaching assistants will be invited to the Institute of Education and a trainee educational psychologist and the Director of the Professional Educational Psychology Training course will deliver training.

February 2016
Administration of Time 1 (baseline) quantitative survey, literacy assessment and cognitive assessment. The researcher will visit each school to collect the data, it will take approximately 1.5 hours.

March 2016
- Commencement of intervention. The literacy/mentoring intervention will be carried out over a period of 15 weeks, for 1 hour per week. Sessions will probably be split into two 30 minutes sessions and will take place during lunchtime or after school within the school. A teacher or LSA who work at the participant's school will deliver the intervention.

June 2016
- The intervention will be completed by 3/6/16
- Administration of Time 2 quantitative survey and literacy assessment. The researcher will visit the intervention location to collect the data. It will take approximately 1.5 hours.
- The researcher will interview 9 pupils and 9 teachers who took part in the intervention to explore their experiences of the interventions.

Section 3 Participants

Please answer the following questions giving full details where necessary. Text boxes will expand for your responses.

a.	Will your research involve human participants?	Yes ☒	No ☐ ⇨ *go to Section 4*

b. Who are the participants (i.e. what sorts of people will be involved)? Tick all that apply.

☐ Early years/pre-school ☒ Ages 5-11 ☐ Ages 12-16 ☐ Young people aged 17-18	☐ Unknown – specify below ☐ Adults *please specify below* ☐ Other – specify below

NB: Ensure that you check the **guidelines** (Section 1) carefully as research with some participants will require ethical approval from a different ethics committee such as the National Research Ethics Service (NRES).

c. If participants are under the responsibility of others (such as parents, teachers or medical staff) how do you intend to obtain permission to approach the participants to take part in the study?

(Please attach approach letters or **details of permission procedures – see Section 9 Attachments.)**

Once the looked after children are identified, schools will be approached as part of the selection process to establish whether the students would benefit from the programme/ whether schools are happy to take part (letter to schools is attached). Once the school has agreed to take part, Foster Carers will be sent a letter (see attached), which will include information about the intervention and evaluation of the intervention. Carers will be asked to sign the reply slip and send it back to the school.

d. How will participants be recruited (identified and approached)?
The Virtual Assistant Head Teacher for North West X will recruit looked after children who go to mainstream school in X, on the basis of:

- Children who are looked after
- Year group (Year 4, 5, 6)
- Need (pupil who is likely to benefit from mentoring/literacy intervention)
- Geographic location (X)

The Virtual Assistant Head Teacher will contact the SENCO of each school in X to invite the school to take part in the intervention if they have children who meet the criteria above.

Once permission is granted from the young persons school, the school will send out letters to the carers of each young person to seek consent.

If the carers grant permission for the young person to partake in the intervention, the young persons teacher will meet with them to explain what the intervention involves and the methods that will be used to evaluate progress. They will ask the young person

	if they would like to participate.
e.	Describe the process you will use to inform participants about what you are doing. Foster Carers will be sent a letter (see attached). The letter will include information about the intervention and will explain the voluntary nature of the intervention; the carer will be ask to share the information with the child and seek their view of participation prior to consent. The participant's teacher will explain what will take place during the mentoring/literacy sessions and the methods that will be used to evaluate progress. They will also give each young person an information sheet (see attached) which will outline what the intervention will involve. In addition, the researcher will verbally explain what the intervention will involve and will answer any questions that the young person has. The researcher will also explain the evaluation process and check if the pupil wants to participate. All communication with each young person will be tailored to his or her level of understanding. Age, cognitive ability and emotional status will be taken into account
f.	How will you obtain the consent of participants? Will this be written? How will it be made clear to participants that they may withdraw consent to participate at any time? *See the guidelines for information on opt-in and opt-out procedures. Please note that the method of consent should be appropriate to the research and fully explained.* 'opt-in' consent procedures will be followed and consent from carers and the child will be obtained. Once participants are identified, schools will be approached as part of the selection process to establish whether the students would benefit from the programme/ whether schools are happy to take part (letter to schools is attached). If the school agrees to take part, Foster Carers will be sent a letter (see attached), which includes information about the intervention and evaluation of the intervention, carers will be asked to sign the reply slip and send it back to the school. Letters will explain that participant's have the right to withdraw at any time without providing a reason. They will also be informed that they can retrospectively withdraw their consent, and that their data will be removed and destroyed if they request. The participant's teacher will explain what will take place during the mentoring/literacy sessions and the methods that will be used to evaluate progress. They will also give each young person an information sheet (see attached) which will outline what the intervention will involve. The teacher will ask the young person if they would like to take part and will emphasise that the decision is entirely voluntary and that the young persons decision will be respected without prejudice. In addition, the researcher will verbally explain what the intervention will involve and will answer any questions that the young person has. The researcher will also explain the evaluation process and check if the pupil wants to participate. The researcher will also gain verbal consent from each participant before carrying out the assessment and will remind participants they may withdraw consent to participate at any time. The researcher will monitor verbal and non-verbal cues for each child throughout the data collection to ensure the child remains happy to take part. The researcher will only utilise data that has not been withdrawn.
g.	**Studies involving questionnaires:** Will participants be given the option of omitting questions they do not wish to answer? Yes ☒ No ☐
	If **NO** please explain why below and ensure that you cover any ethical issues arising from this in section 8.

h.	**Studies involving observation:** Confirm whether participants will be asked for their informed consent to be observed. Yes ☐ No ☐
	If **NO** read the guidelines (Ethical Issues section) and explain why below and ensure that you cover any ethical issues arising from this in section 8.
i.	Might participants experience anxiety, discomfort or embarrassment as a result of your study? Yes ☒ No ☐
	If **yes** what steps will you take to explain and minimise this? It is possible that participants may feel uncomfortable when answering some of the questions on the survey (e.g. the survey asks about friends and views on school). In addition participants may not feel comfortable carrying out the literacy and cognitive assessments if they have had negative experiences with assessments in the past. In order to minimise this risk, all participants will be with the researcher who will support participants throughout the process. The researcher will explain the survey and other assessments first and ask if they are happy to proceed. In addition, the participants teacher will be aware that they are undertaking some work that could potentially cause upset and will provide a safe space with somebody to talk to if the child is upset. In addition, if questions/assessments appear to be causing discomfort/anxiety, participants will be given the option to discontinue or move on and the researcher will inform the mentor so that they can provide support if necessary. If **not**, explain how you can be sure that no discomfort or embarrassment will arise?
j.	Will your project involve deliberately misleading participants (deception) in any way? Yes ☐ No ☒
	If **YES** please provide further details below and ensure that you cover any ethical issues arising from this in section 8.
k.	Will you debrief participants at the end of their participation (i.e. give them a brief explanation of the study)? Yes ☒ No ☐
	If **NO** please explain why below and ensure that you cover any ethical issues arising from this in section 8.
l.	Will participants be given information about the findings of your study? (This could be a brief summary of your findings in general; it is not the same

	as an individual debriefing.) Yes ☒ No ☐
	If **no**, why not?

Section 4 Security-sensitive material
Only complete if applicable

Security sensitive research includes: commissioned by the military; commissioned under an EU security call; involves the acquisition of security clearances; concerns terrorist or extreme groups.

a.	Will your project consider or encounter security-sensitive material?	Yes ☐ *	No ☒
b.	Will you be visiting websites associated with extreme or terrorist organisations?	Yes ☐ *	No ☒
c.	Will you be storing or transmitting any materials that could be interpreted as promoting or endorsing terrorist acts?	Yes ☐ *	No ☒

* *Give further details in* ***Section 8 Ethical Issues***

Section 5 Systematic review of research
Only complete if applicable

a.	Will you be collecting any new data from participants?	Yes ☐ *	No ☐
b.	Will you be analysing any secondary data?	Yes ☐ *	No ☐

* *Give further details in* ***Section 8 Ethical Issues***

If your methods do not involve engagement with participants (e.g. systematic review, literature review) ***and*** *if you have answered* ***No*** *to both questions, please go to* ***Section 10 Attachments.***

Section 6 Secondary data analysis Complete for all secondary analysis

a.	Name of dataset/s		
b.	Owner of dataset/s		
c.	Are the data in the public domain?	Yes ☐	No ☐
			If no, *do you have the owner's permission/license?* Yes ☐ No* ☐
d.	Are the data anonymised?	Yes ☐	No ☐
		Do you plan to anonymise the data?	

		Yes ☐ No* ☐ *Do you plan to use individual level data?* Yes* ☐ No ☐ *Will you be linking data to individuals?* Yes* ☐ No ☐	
e.	Are the data sensitive (DPA 1998 definition)?	Yes* ☐	No ☐
f.	Will you be conducting analysis within the remit it was originally collected for?	Yes ☐	No* ☐
g.	**If no,** was consent gained from participants for subsequent/future analysis?	Yes ☐	No* ☐
h.	**If no,** was data collected prior to ethics approval process?	Yes ☐	No* ☐

** Give further details in **Section 8 Ethical Issues***

*If secondary analysis is only method used **and** no answers with asterisks are ticked, go to*

Section 9 Attachments.

Section 7 Data Storage and Security

Please ensure that you include all hard and electronic data when completing this section.

a.	Confirm that all personal data will be stored and processed in compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA 1998). *(See the Guidelines and the Institute's Data Protection & Records Management Policy for more detail.)*		Yes ☒
b.	Will personal data be processed or be sent outside the European Economic Area?	Yes ☐ *	No ☒

*** If yes,** please confirm that there are adequate levels of protections in compliance with the DPA 1998 and state what these arrangements are below.

c.	Who will have access to the data and personal information, including advisory/consultation groups and during transcription? The researcher. The researchers supervisor.
During the research	
d.	Where will the data be stored? Electronic data will be stored on an encrypted USB drive and hard copies will be locked in a secure cabinet, which can be accessed by the researcher only. The data will be anonymised, students will be assigned an ID number and

	personal information such as addresses will be kept separate from any data collected. The data will be destroyed with a paper shredder when the data is no longer required.
e.	Will mobile devices such as USB storage and laptops be used? Yes ☒ * No ☐ ***If yes,** state what mobile devices: USB stick and laptop ***If yes,** will they be encrypted?: Yes the USB is encrypted and the laptop is password protected
After the research	
f.	Where will the data be stored? Electronic data will be kept on an encrypted USB stick and hard copies of data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet at the researchers house.
g.	How long will the data and records by kept for and in what format? Electronic data will be kept on an encrypted USB stick and hard copies of data will also be kept for 5 years after the research.
h.	Will data be archived for use by other researchers? Yes ☐ * No ☒ ***If yes,** please provide details.

Section 8 Ethical issues

Are there particular features of the proposed work which may raise ethical concerns or add to the complexity of ethical decision making? If so, please outline how you will deal with these.

It is important that you demonstrate your awareness of potential risks or harm that may arise as a result of your research. You should then demonstrate that you have considered ways to minimise the likelihood and impact of each potential harm that you have identified. Please be as specific as possible in describing the ethical issues you will have to address. Please consider / address ALL issues that may apply.

Ethical concerns may include, but not be limited to, the following areas:

- Methods
- Sampling
- Recruitment
- Gatekeepers
- Informed consent
- Potentially vulnerable participants
- Safeguarding/child protection
- Sensitive topics
- International research
- Risks to participants and/or researchers
- Confidentiality/Anonymity
- Disclosures/limits to confidentiality
- Data storage and security both during and after the research (including transfer, sharing, encryption, protection)
- Reporting
- Dissemination and use of findings

Safeguarding/child protection

The research will include delivering an intervention to children and young people, participants will also work with the researcher so that the intervention can be evaluated. It is important that participants are protected from potential harm and abuse; in keeping with safeguarding legislation, all adults working with participants will have an enhanced DBS check. It will be teachers who deliver the intervention and the researcher will evaluate the intervention (see attached DBS check).

Informed consent:

Although taking part in the intervention is voluntary, the participants may feel that they have to do what their teachers/carers ask of them and may feel unable to refuse to take part. In seeking consent participants will be made aware that participation is voluntary and that they have the right to withdraw at any point without prejudice. Each participant will be given information about the intervention individually and the information will be tailored to his or her level of understanding. Age, cognitive ability and emotional status will be taken into account. The name and contact details of the researcher will be given in case participants have any questions at any point. The teacher will ensure that the participant is happy to continue with the mentoring support in each session and the researcher will also confirm that they are happy to participate with the evaluation process every time that they work with a participant.

Vulnerable participants and sensitive topics

The vulnerability of LAC is well documented. Participants may disclose information that needs to be passed on to another agency. If this occurs during one of the mentoring sessions, teachers are fully aware of how to proceed as they have had safeguarding training. The researcher will ensure that they know the schools safeguarding policy and procedures and who the designated safeguarding officer is in case participants disclose information that needs to be passed on. No questions will be asked concerning the participants care background. In addition, any questions asked will be screened and adapted to ensure sensitivity. For example, questionnaires that refer to "parents" will be adapted so that it refers to "carers" instead. Participants may find it stressful to participate in some of the assessments because looked after children are often below age appropriate levels and often lack self-esteem. Participants will not be forced into taking part in any assessments and will be informed that participation is voluntary. If participant's show signs of distress the researcher will not start/continue the assessment and will let the participants school tutor know so that they can offer support. In addition the researcher will find out participants' academic ability in advance so that they can start with tasks that match ability, helping to build self-confidence before moving on to the more challenging tasks.

Confidentiality and anonymity

All data will be anonymised and confidential. It will be stressed that anything participant say will be confidential and would not be reported in any way that allowed them to be identified. Students will be assigned an ID number and personal information such as addresses will be kept separate from any data collected, therefore, even if hardcopies of data go missing/is misplaced on the journey back from the school (immediately after collecting the data), it will not be possible to trace the data back to participants. All research data will be stored on an encrypted USB stick and will be stored (along with hardcopies of data) in a secure cabinet. In addition, participants names will not be used in the reporting. Only the researcher and the researcher's supervisor will have access to the data and participants will be assured of this, however, participants will also be made aware about limits of confidentiality (namely the obligation on the researcher to share disclosure).

Use of a control group

The control group will not take part in the intervention until the following year. This may be construed as unethical as these children will have to wait a year until they can benefit

from the intervention. However, this group are not able to take part in the intervention this year because the schools did not sign up in time, meaning the teachers did not get the necessary training and will therefore have to wait until the training is offered again the following year.

Section 9 Further information

Outline any other information you feel relevant to this submission, using a separate sheet or attachments if necessary.

Section 10 Attachments Please attach the following items to this form, or explain if not attached

a.	Information sheets and other materials to be used to inform potential participants about the research, including approach letters	Yes ☒	No ☐
b.	Consent form	Yes ☒	No ☐
	If applicable:		
c.	The proposal for the project	Yes ☐	No ☐
d.	Approval letter from external Research Ethics Committee	Yes ☐	No ☐
e.	Full risk assessment	Yes ☐	No ☐

Section 11 Declaration

	Yes	**No**
I have read, understood and will abide by the following set of guidelines.	☒	☐

BPS ☒	BERA ☐	BSA ☐	Other (please state) ☐

I have discussed the ethical issues relating to my research with my supervisor.	☒	☐

I have attended the appropriate ethics training provided by my course.
☒ ☐

I confirm that to the best of my knowledge:

The above information is correct and that this is a full description of the ethics issues that may arise in the course of this project.

Name	Mairead Murphy
Date	22/1/16

Notes and references

Professional code of ethics
You should read and understand relevant ethics guidelines, for example:
British Psychological Society (2009) *Code of Ethics and Conduct*, and (2014) *Code of Human Research Ethics*
or
British Educational Research Association (2011) *Ethical Guidelines*
or
British Sociological Association (2002) *Statement of Ethical Practice*
Please see the respective websites for these or later versions; direct links to the latest versions are available on the Institute of Education http://www.ioe.ac.uk/ethics/.

Disclosure and Barring Service checks
If you are planning to carry out research in regulated Education environments such as Schools, or if your research will bring you into contact with children and young people (under the age of 18), you will need to have a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) CHECK, before you start. The DBS was previously known as the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB)). If you do not already hold a current DBS check, and have not registered with the DBS update service, you will need to obtain one through at IOE. Further information can be found at http://www.ioe.ac.uk/studentInformation/documents/DBS_Guidance_1415.pdf

Ensure that you apply for the DBS check in plenty of time as will take around 4 weeks, though can take longer depending on the circumstances.

Further references
The www.ethicsguidebook.ac.uk website is very useful for assisting you to think through the ethical issues arising from your project.

Robson, Colin (2011). *Real world research: a resource for social scientists and practitioner researchers* (3rd edition). Oxford: Blackwell.
This text has a helpful section on ethical considerations.

Alderson, P. and Morrow, V. (2011) *The Ethics of Research with Children and Young People: A Practical Handbook.* London: Sage.
This text has useful suggestions if you are conducting research with children and young people.

Wiles, R. (2013) What are Qualitative Research Ethics? Bloomsbury.
A useful and short text covering areas including informed consent, approaches to research ethics including examples of ethical dilemmas.

Departmental use

If a project raises particularly challenging ethics issues, or a more detailed review would be appropriate, you may refer the application to the Research Ethics and Governance Administrator (via researchethics@ioe.ac.uk) so that it can be submitted to the Research Ethics Committee for consideration. A

Research Ethics Committee Chair, ethics representatives in your department and the research ethics coordinator can advise you, either to support your review process, or help decide whether an application should be referred to the Research Ethics Committee. *Also see' when to pass a student ethics review up to the Research Ethics Committee':* *http://www.ioe.ac.uk/about/policiesProcedures/42253.html*		
Reviewer 1		
Supervisor name	Emily Munro	
Supervisor comments	Discussions with Mairead and her application demonstrate an understanding of the ethical issues involved in research with looked after children and that appropriate systems and processes are in place.	
Supervisor signature	[redacted]	
Reviewer 2		
Advisory committee/course team member name	Vivian Hill	
Advisory committee/course team member comments	Mairead has a good grasp of the ethical issues that may emerge and has fully considered how to respond.	
Advisory committee/course team member signature	[redacted]	
Decision		
Date decision was made	Approved	
Decision	Approved	☒
	Referred back to applicant and supervisor	☐
	Referred to REC for review	☐
Recording	Recorded in the student information system	☐

Once completed and approved, please send this form and associated documents to the relevant programme administrator to record on the student information system and to securely store.

Further guidance on ethical issues can be found on the IOE website at http://www.ioe.ac.uk/ethics/ and www.ethicsguidebook.ac.uk

APPENDIX E: Information sheet for LAC

Dear ……..,

You have been picked to be part of a project about reading. It is up to you to decide if you would like to be part of this or not, so to help you make up your mind here are some of the things involved:

What is this project all about?

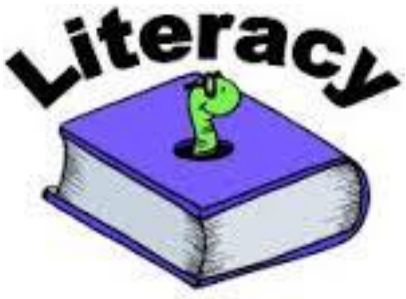
- The project is about helping you improve your reading skills and confidence
- You will spend 1 hour per week with your teacher (or another member of staff) outside of your lessons
- The project will last for 12 weeks
- The project will take place each week at a time that suits both you and your teacher

What will I be doing in each session?

- Each session will be planned based on your needs and interests
- In the first session you will have the opportunity to put forward your ideas about what you would like to do
- You will be doing fun tasks, which are designed to help you improve your reading skills. For example, you may have some games that help your writing and reading.

If you decide to take part, we would like to measure your progress over the 12 weeks, this is because we are doing research and we want the project to help, and will therefore be assessing your reading skills at the start and end of the intervention.

Thank you for listening. We will be in touch soon.



APPENDIX F: Information sheet for school

Literacy Research Project with London University/IOE and [redacted]

Hi [redacted]

I am writing to inform you that you have been selected as [redacted] Schools to be part of a funded Literacy Research Programme with London University and the IOE.

What is involved?

- The pupil will work with their class teacher (preferably) over a twelve week period of one to one sessions. One hour to be delivered weekly [redacted] inclusive.
- Before the programme starts and after it completes a Trainee Educational Psychologist from London University will visit the school and screen the pupils to assess a baseline and measure impact.
- During the three months the programme is in progress the school will have access to the Educational Psychologist to assist generally with issues in the school.
- The teacher(s) selected to take part will attend a one day CPD session at the Institute of Education [redacted]. At this session evidence of the impact of previous studies will be shared and assistance given with planning the programme.
- The Virtual School have agreed to fund [redacted] involved in respect of the time-commitment they are making to nominated Looked After Children.

Benefits of being part of the Programme

- The young person will benefit by having targeted literacy support
- The teacher will benefit through gaining a CPD opportunity with London University on a Literacy Research Project. They will also be paid [redacted]
- The School will be able to evidence their impact with regard to vulnerable students by partnership working with [redacted] and the Institute of Education.
- The School will have a set of one to one lesson plans which we hope will have demonstrated measurable progress. These can be applied across the school to the benefit of any students who are identified as underachieving.
- [redacted] will be able to work with partners to raise attainment of some of the students in their care.

Deadline

- As you can appreciate if you are not able to take up this offer we would like to approach other schools with this valuable opportunity.
- Please confirm whether you will be joining us in this exciting piece of research to support Looked After Children

APPENDIX G: Parent/Carer consent form

Dear Parent/Carer,

I'm writing to update you about an exciting new Literacy project that will be running at your child's Primary school during the Spring and Summer terms 2016.

In order to support the achievement of looked after children, the Institute of Education in conjunction with X Virtual School, has developed a new Literacy intervention that we are now offering to Primary schools in X. Each participating pupil will be mentored and tutored by a teacher from their school on a weekly basis, in order to improve their literacy and in particular their reading and comprehension skills.

In order to evaluate the impact of this scheme, we are also interested in measuring each pupil's progress and will therefore be assessing the children's literacy skills at the start and end of the project. This assessment data will be shared with the school to help support them in their work in the future.

London University has carried out a similar study previously, and pupils made very good progress.

Taking part in this new Literacy scheme is entirely voluntary, and this will be explained to each child. In fact, the child will be free to withdraw their participation at any time during the project, without needing to give a reason or explanation. The identity of participants is confidential, which means that the child will not be identified or labelled in any way. Previously, pupils have really enjoyed the additional input from school staff and have benefitted from the sessions.

If you are happy for your child to participate, please sign the consent slip below. For further information, please do not hesitate to telephone X, Assistant Headteacher for X Virtual School on X or email at X

Yours sincerely,

Xxx- Assistant Head teachers for X Virtual School.

……...

I confirm that I am / am not happy for …….. to participate in the literacy project as described above. All assessment and tutoring sessions will be carried out at school by school staff.

PLEASE RETURN THIS SLIP TO_____

(name of parent/guardian)
Signed:_____Date:

APPENDIX H: Consent form for control group

Dear Parent/Carer,

In order to support the achievement of looked after children, the Institute of Education in conjunction with X Virtual School, has developed a new Literacy intervention that is now being offering to Primary schools in X.

In order to evaluate the impact of this scheme, we are recruiting a group of looked after children who are not involved in the intervention this academic year and who will be part of a "comparison group". We are interested in measuring the literacy levels of each child within the comparison group over a period of 12 weeks. We want to compare the literacy levels of the comparison group with the intervention group to assess if the intervention has been worthwhile.

Each child in the comparison group will have the opportunity to meet with an Educational Psychologist who will carry out a number of assessments to build up a profile of each child's learning needs. Assessments will include literacy assessments as well as verbal and non-verbal ability tests and will take no longer than 1.5 hours. With your permission, the assessment data will be shared with the school so that they can support the needs of each child further. This information can also be shared with x Virtual School so that they can determine any additional support that may be needed.

Taking part in this scheme is entirely voluntary, and this will be explained to each child. In fact, the child will be free to withdraw their participation at any time during the project, without needing to give a reason or explanation. The identity of participants is confidential, which means that the child will not be identified or labeled in any way. Previously, pupils have really enjoyed the assessment process and have appreciated the additional input.

If you are happy for your child to participate, please sign the consent slip below. For further information, please do not hesitate to telephone …….., or email at ……

Yours sincerely,

……...

I confirm that I am / am not happy for ……. to participate in the scheme as described above.

PLEASE RETURN THIS SLIP TO_____

(name of parent/guardian)

Signed:_____Date:

APPENDIX I: Example of session record sheet

Pupil name: [redacted] Date: 15/03/16

Session 1 objective: For [redacted] **to understand the purpose of the intervention**
To begin to build a relationship with [redacted]
To introduce the four learning strategies we will be focussing on

Resources:

- Access to the library
- Plain cards for icebreaker
- great – ghastly – give – get format
- Names of four strategies on cards
- Definition of four strategies on cards
- Phases linked to four strategies on cards

Activities:

Mentoring Focus

- Ice breaker activity – both [redacted] and I to write on cards 3 things that we really like and 1 thing and that we do not. Swap cards and share
- Repeat - 3 things we are good at and 1 thing we would like to improve at.
- Play great – ghastly – give – get
- Ask about favourite drinks and biscuits for next session

English Focus

- Explain to [redacted] a bit about the project and what we will be focussing on. Introduce four strategies we will be learning to use - summarising/clarifying/questioning and predicting – give [redacted] four definitions – can she match then to the strategy – discuss.
- Give [redacted] a selection of phase such as I didn't understand the part where or The most important ideas are… [redacted] is to sort these under the four strategies – discuss. Then together decide what do we think summarising means? Repeat for strategies
- Go to library together to select a book. Discuss [redacted] favourite authors and the type of books she like to read. Choose book together - guide [redacted] to choose 3 books - she then decides on own which of the three she would like to read.
- Read first few pages of book together (take in turns as [redacted] has low confidence when reading aloud). Discuss the style of the author – is it going to interest [redacted]
- Complete evaluation form

Reflections : [redacted] was very relaxed from the beginning of the session and the ice breakers really helped. She enjoyed sharing likes and dislike – particularly when I made them funny – she was keen to share about herself and liked to add little stories about when she was good at certain things. It was very interesting choosing books together. Her favourite author is [redacted] which meant it was easy to guide to books that contained issues as many of hers do. She chose [redacted] – which will open up some very interesting discussion about mother and daughter relationship. Choosing to paired read the first few pages was a great idea as her nerves about reading aloud seem to reduce quickly. She seemed to really enjoy the session and her feedback was very positive.

Record Sheet – Session 5

Pupil name: [redacted] Date: 14.04.16

Session objective:

- to continue to build a positive, good relationship
- to help [redacted] to develop spelling strategies and to build her confidence in being able to form new words
- to encourage [redacted] to describe the for RT strategies and choose which she would like to use in today's session (she may need support/modelling with this as our last lesson was three weeks ago)

Resources:

1. Piece of paper with the word ***determination*** at the top and felt tip pens
2. Copy of [redacted]
3. Laminated flash cards
4. Sheet entitled: 'Using the Reciprocal Teaching Team When I Read'
5. Evaluation sheet (smiley faces)

Activities:

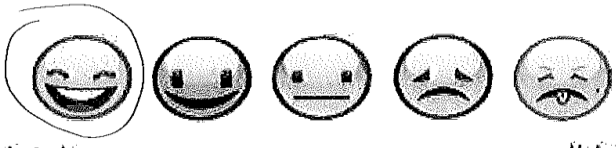
1. Chat about the Easter holiday and then try to make and then share as many words as possible from *determination*, accompanied by a drink and snack. (For a bit of fun we'll devise a point system for scoring, eg. 2 points for two-letter words, 3 points for three-letter words etc.)
2. Continue shared reading of [redacted] and then ask [redacted] if she can remember the different strategies we've been using to help us to understand what we've been reading. Can she name them and try to use them in today's lesson? [Use notes from RT pack to help if necessary]. While reading chapter 3 (page 20) 'How to Recognise a Witch', encourage her to use the **predictive** language we've shared (have flash cards of *I think…. I'll bet…. I wonder if…. I imagine…. I suppose….. I predict…. I think this text will be about….* ready to prompt if necessary); encourage her to **ask questions** (prompt flash cards again: *Who…. What…. When…. Where…. Why….. How…. What if…).*; encourage her to **clarify** (prompt flash cards again from RT pack) and encourage her to **summarise** (prompt flash cards again from RT pack). Allow time to share the sheet 'Using the Reciprocal Teaching Team When I Read' for us to assess how well [redacted] is using the RT strategies.
3. [redacted] to complete evaluation sheet.

Reflections: We chatted about our Easter holidays during which [redacted] and had had lots of fun. She really enjoyed finding as many words as possible in *determination* and ended up with 41 words all spelt correctly (she was thrilled by this because she lacks so much confidence with spelling). We shared some of mine which were new to her which she wanted to know the meanings of, eg. *mite, mire, rime, dint, deter, rant, miner* and *minor.* [redacted] wants to do this again, so we'll begin next week's lesson with a similar activity.

[redacted] could remember all four activities without prompting, even though our previous lesson had been three weeks earlier, and used appropriate language to describe them and how to use them. Before we began to read chapter 3 of [redacted] she predicted from the chapter heading and when Grandmamma was sad she accurately predicted the reason. She also used lots of *Why? When? Where?* And *What if?* questions. [redacted] reading is increasingly more expressive now and she stopped whenever she wanted to clarify a word she was unsure of, eg. *beastly, frantically* and was able to use the text to work out what they meant. We now need to focus on summarising the main points of a section or chapter chronologically.

APPENDIX J: Children's session evaluations

Session number..1.....



absolutely loved it! ⟷ didn't love it at all

Comments: It was really fun with [redacted].

Session number..2.....

absolutely loved it! ⟷ didn't love it at all

Comments: Dabbing and using Picture Prompts helped me to understand the Story better.

Session number...3.....

absolutely loved it! ⟷ didn't love it at all

Comments: We have been asking questions and Predicting what's going to happen next.

APPENDIX K: Example of mentoring and literacy materials

Mentoring materials

I work best when…..	I enjoy……..	I don't like…….
I am good at…….....	The best thing that has ever happened to me is……..	My favourite music is…….
I get worried by…….	I'm happiest when…….	I am learning to…….
I find it difficult to……..	I think what my friends like about me is……..	When I'm older I……..

All about me poster: using a piece of paper and colouring pens/pencils etc, create a poster with some facts about yourself. You can give yourself a nickname, and chose what information each of you will put on the poster, then show each other when you have finished and use for conversation.

4. My World

Have you seen a picture of the World? It is made up of different parts which you can see on a map. Because everyone's life is different, everyone sees their own world in a slightly different way.

Like the world, your life is made up of lots of different parts. If you think about yourself and what is happening in your life at the moment, what would it look like if it could be drawn?

I have a special piece of paper for you to draw all the different parts of your life in your own special world.

When you draw your own world think about the things that are happening in your life right now.

You may include things in your world that you find worrying, difficult, important, happy or sad.

When you have finished drawing your world, colour each different part like this:

COLOUR AROUND THE THINGS YOU ARE HAPPY WITH IN GREEN

COLOUR AROUND THE THINGS YOU ARE NOT SURE ABOUT IN ORANGE

COLOUR AROUND THE THINGS YOU ARE NOT HAPPY WITH IN RED

Literacy materials

Clarifying Words Bookmark

1. Identify the difficult word.

The word _____
is tricky, because

a. I had trouble pronouncing it.

b. I didn't know what it meant.

c. I didn't know what it meant, and I couldn't pronounce it.

2. Try to clarify the difficult word.

I tried the following strategies to understand the difficult word:

____ I checked the parts of the word that I know (prefixes, suffixes, base words, and digraphs).

____ I tried blending the sounds of the word together.

____ I thought about where I have seen the word before.

____ I thought of another word that looks like this word.

____ I read on to find clues.

____ I tried another word that makes sense in the sentence.

____ I reread the sentence to see if the word I figured out made sense.

Clarifying Ideas Bookmark

1. Identify the confusing part, which might be a sentence, paragraph, page, or chapter.

A confusing part is

_____

_____ ,

because

a. I didn't understand _____ .

b. I can't figure out _____ .

c. It doesn't make sense.

d. I don't get _____ .

e. This part isn't clear, because _____ .

2. Try to clarify the confusing part.

I tried the following strategies to understand the confusing part:

____ I reread the parts that I didn't understand and some text before that part.

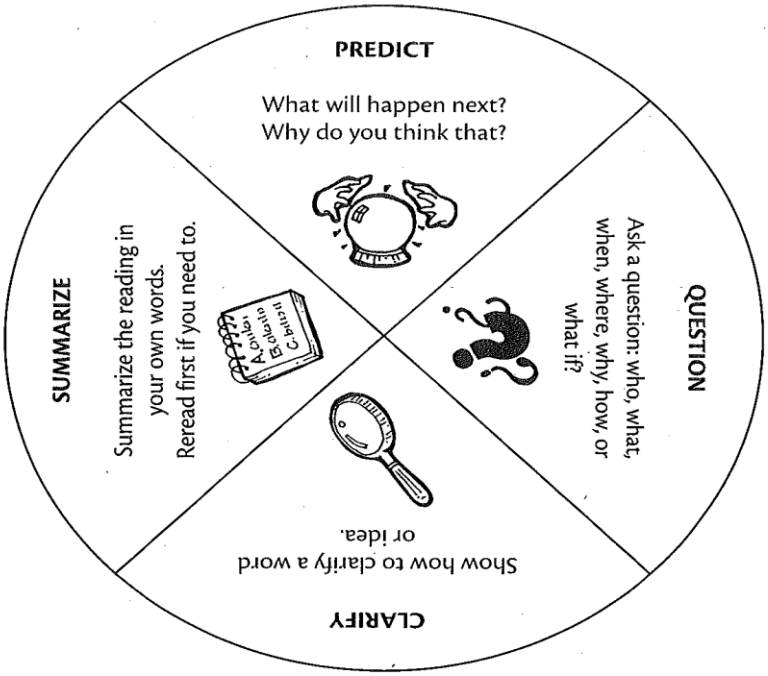
____ I read on to look for clues.

____ I thought about what I know about the topic.

____ I talked to a friend about the reading.

____ I visualized.

Reciprocal Teaching Spinner



When you land on a strategy that someone else already landed on, you can...

PREDICT
- Give a new prediction.
- Or, add a detail to the last one.

CLARIFY
- Choose another word or idea to clarify.
- Or, give more ways to clarify the same word or idea.

QUESTION
- Ask another question that begins with a different question word.

SUMMARIZE
- Give a new summary.
- Or, add to the previous summary.

APPENDIX L: Example of training material

Outcomes for LAC

Leading education and social research
Institute of Education
University of London

PALAC

Strategic approaches to monitoring and raising educational standards for LAC and support for learning.

Vivian Hill

www.ioe.ac.uk

Leading education and social research
Institute of Education
University of London

Why should we be concerned?

DFE data in 2013 states that:

- There were 68,110 children in public care in the UK.
- 67.8% have SEN
- 57% of them leave school without qualifications.
- 43% leave with one GCSE compared to 97% of all children
- 27% leave with 5 A-G GCSE compared with 89% of all children
- 15.3% left school with five or more GCSE's (inc. English and Maths) A* - C (7% in 2000) compared with 58% of all children.
- They are twice as likely to be excluded from school and 3 times more likely to have an exclusion.

Why should we be concerned?

2013 ONS data explains that:

- They are three times more likely to be a teenage parent
- 6.2% have a conviction or reprimand
- 45% of those aged 5-17 have mental health needs
- 3,980 were adopted in 2014
- 2014 Pupil Premium plus £1900 for looked after and recently adopted children….how will this be deployed?

Post 16

- 30% are not in education, employment or training compared with
- 13% of all children;
- A further 11% cannot be contacted;
- 59% were in education, employment or training;

Mentoring strategies

Positive listening tools

- ✓ **Focusing**: directing conversation when someone expresses a lot of detail, but cannot pinpoint the main issue. You can suggest what you see are the key points of what they have said, and then ask which is the most important issue to them.
- ✓ **Summarising**: checking that you have understood exactly what they are saying by repeating back to them what they have told you.
- ✓ **Clarifying**: listen to what the person is saying, clarifying and checking that you have understood correctly.
- ✓ **Paraphrasing**: taking what the person has said and putting into your own words, summarising the main points they have discussed.
- ✓ **Questioning**: using open questions, to give the opportunity to answer fully: who, what, when, where, why, how?

Negative listening tools

- ✓ **ADVISING:** problem solving, making suggestions. You are not LISTENING
- ✓ **JUDGING:** You label someone & have already decided what their issue is
- ✓ **PLACATING:** being nice, supportive, wanting to be liked- agreeing with everything
- ✓ **DREAMING:** half listening, their issue triggers a chain of private thoughts

- ✓ **DE-RAILING:** change the subject due to boredom or discomfort with topic

- ✓ **COMPARISON:** measuring yourself against the other person

Reciprocal Teaching (RT)

What is RT?
RT was developed by **Palincsar and Brown (1984)**. It involves scaffolded discussion based on four strategies that good readers use to understand text:

Summarising Drawing out main ideas and important information. 	**Clarifying** Identifying words or phrases that are either unknown or not understood. 
Questioning Asking questions about the text. 	**Predicting** Looking for clues in the text to anticipate what might happen next. 

Who and when?
- Primary or Secondary pupils.
- Average decoding (word reading) but poor comprehension.

What?
- Select a fiction or non-fiction text that pupils can access (children able to decode at least 80 words per minute making no more than 2 errors per minute).
- Introduce the strategies (all 4 at once or one per week depending on what is best for the pupils in the group).
- Use visuals (e.g. children could make posters) to support the learning of strategies.
- Children to practise strategies with adult/in pairs until they are confident.
- Adult to model strategies during each session to ensure that children are learning these metacognitive skills.
- Focus is on discussion, not writing.
- Each session to contain: adult modelling, student participation and a plenary that relates to strategies used.
- Students gradually take control over leading the sessions.
- See *Reciprocal Teaching at Work: Powerful Strategies and Lessons for Improving Reading Comprehension* by Lori Oczkus (2010) for lesson and resource ideas.

Why?
- RT provides children with a new approach to reading.
- It emphasises reading for meaning, rather than just a task that has to be done.
- It makes 'invisible' cognitive processes visible.
- The strategies and skills can be used across the curriculum and as part of whole-class teaching.
- RT promotes children's independence rather than focusing on the adult's role.

APPENDIX M: Sample interview transcript

Q: Have you noticed any changes in Wayne since he started the intervention?
A: Not being physically violent towards other children. Yeah and I'm not being funny. 'Cos he used to lash out before. And the only reason why would lash out, is when he felt hard done by. When his contact failed.
Q: And he didn't know how to express it?
A: Yeah, yeah.
Q: Ok that's really positive.
A: Not being violent and not crying and not, he'd put his head on the table and just refuse to do anything. So almost like closure, like his body's just have enough, I've had enough and I'm not doing anything. He used to do that.
Q: But not anymore?
A: Not anymore, no.
Q: And so as he's not being violent with others, has that helped his relationships?
A: Yeah relationships, yeah. Because he's made a really good friend. Who he'll, I'm sure, will continue to be friends with. 'Cos they've got a lot in common, in terms of interests, rather than family background. And he's now got; he has play dates with that child and that never used to happen. And yeah, more children are willing to work with him and play with him than before. 'Cos before I think children stayed away from him. (Laughs) because he was in a bad mood.
Q: Yeah, yeah.
A: Whereas now, you know, he's a lovely member of our class. Who children are happy to be with, they're happy to be with him.
Q: That's great.
A: Yeah and he's had a lot of positive feedback in, he's been one of the best kids at using a semi colon as well. With his new found confidence, he's made an effort across the board in other lessons. And in his writing, you know, he really nailed how to use a semi colon. And with a little bit of positive praise from myself that's brought him out. That's identified that he does that in front of his peers which is amazing. Because I've kids in my more able group who are not as great at using the semi colons. And you know for him his self-esteem within the class has, is really.
Q: His self-confidence and his position in the class almost?
A: Yeah, yeah, yeah because he's actually, he moved up in English group. So he physically moved from one table to another table. So he was getting, you know the LA's, the lower ability kids, you know. As much as you try and lead them, they do have to have a lot of modelling and a lot of support from adults. And he moved physically from one table where that was happening. To another one where there was less support. To the point where the teaching assistant didn't actually work with him. Could work with somebody else in that table. And she was there, in case he had a wobble and he needed her. But in fact he didn't.
Q: So he's more independent as well?
A: So, yeah, yeah. So for him, he has made really good progress.
Q: It sounds like the intervention went really well?
A: Really well.
Q: And I'm just wondering is there anything in particular that you think has helped contribute to that success? You mentioned the Reciprocal Reading book. Is there anything else?
A: The resources.
Q: And the resources?
A: Yeah that was really useful. 'Cos I think that had a lot to do with his attitude towards this whole process. He felt valued by it. He felt happy to you know, have

all of these lovely things. I just think the whole process; there have been so many factors that have come into play with this.

APPENDIX N: Phase 2 - Generating Initial Codes (Open Coding)

Phase 2 – Generating Initial Codes (Open Coding)	Interviews Coded	Citations (Units of Meaning) Coded
Academic motivation	9	23
Behaviour	4	8
Classroom impact	5	11
Communication between mentor and carer	5	17
confidence and self-concept	10	29
Evidence of mentee engagement from mentors view	7	27
Impact of relationship	6	27
importance of mentoring aspect of intervention	7	55
Individualising intervention	10	65
Literacy activities	9	31
Literacy Impact	12	48
Mentee mentor relationship	7	22
Mentees attitude towards intervention and engagement	9	35
Mentor selection, training and supervision	9	52

Phase 2 – Generating Initial Codes (Open Coding)	Interviews Coded	Citations (Units of Meaning) Coded
Mentoring activities	8	19
Mentoring activities-child	2	3
Mentors attitude towards intervention	7	32
Money for resources	9	33
Peer relationships	9	17
Place, environment, time and frequency of mentoring sessions	9	39
Relationships	2	7
Resilience	2	13
Transition and changes	6	18
wellbeing	5	13

APPENDIX O: Phase 3 - Searching for Themes (Developing Categories)

Phase 3 – Searching for Themes (Developing Categories)	Interviews Coded	Citations (Units of Meaning) Coded
Academic impact of the intervention	13	82
Academic motivation	9	23
Classroom impact	5	11
Literacy Impact	12	48
Literacy activities	9	31
Attitude towards intervention	14	67
Mentees attitude towards intervention and engagement	9	35
Evidence of mentee engagement from mentors view	7	27
Mentors attitude towards intervention	7	32
Key components of the intervention	13	285
Importance of mentoring aspect of intervention	7	55
Mentoring activities	8	19
Mentoring activities-child	2	3
Individualising intervention	10	65
Mentor selection, training and supervision	9	52
Money for resources	9	33

Phase 3 – Searching for Themes (Developing Categories)	Interviews Coded	Citations (Units of Meaning) Coded
Place, environment, time and frequency of mentoring sessions	9	39
name change	6	24
Social and emotional development	10	70
Behaviour	4	8
Confidence and self-concept	10	29
Relationships	2	7
Communication between mentor and carer	5	17
Mentee/mentor relationship	7	22
Impact of relationship	6	27
Peer relationships	9	17
Resilience	2	13
Transition and changes	6	18
Wellbeing	5	13

APPENDIX P: Phase 4 - Reviewing Themes (Drilling Down)

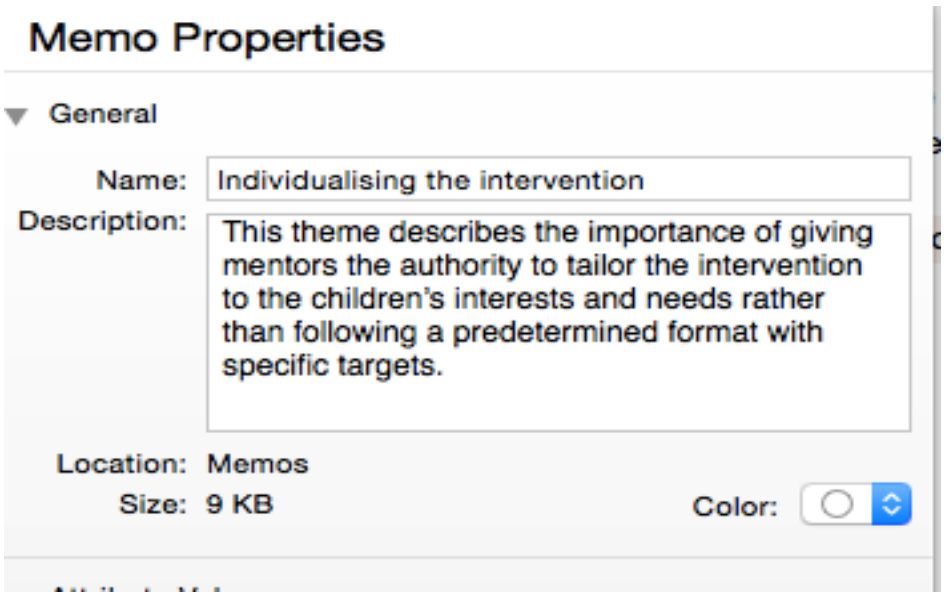
Phase 4 – Reviewing Themes (Drilling Down)	Interviews Coded	Citations (Units of Meaning) Coded
Academic impact of the intervention	14	97
Academic motivation	9	27
Classroom impact	6	22
Literacy Impact	12	48
Attitude towards intervention	14	102
Mentees attitude towards intervention and engagement	14	63
Mentors attitude towards intervention	7	39
Key components of the intervention	13	277
Communication between mentor and carer	5	18
Developing the mentee/mentor relationship	8	30
Engaging the Mentor	8	33
Individualising intervention	10	88
Being flexible	9	72
Giving choice	8	25
Literacy activities	9	31
Going the extra mile	5	12
Making it better	7	33
Resource money matters	9	34

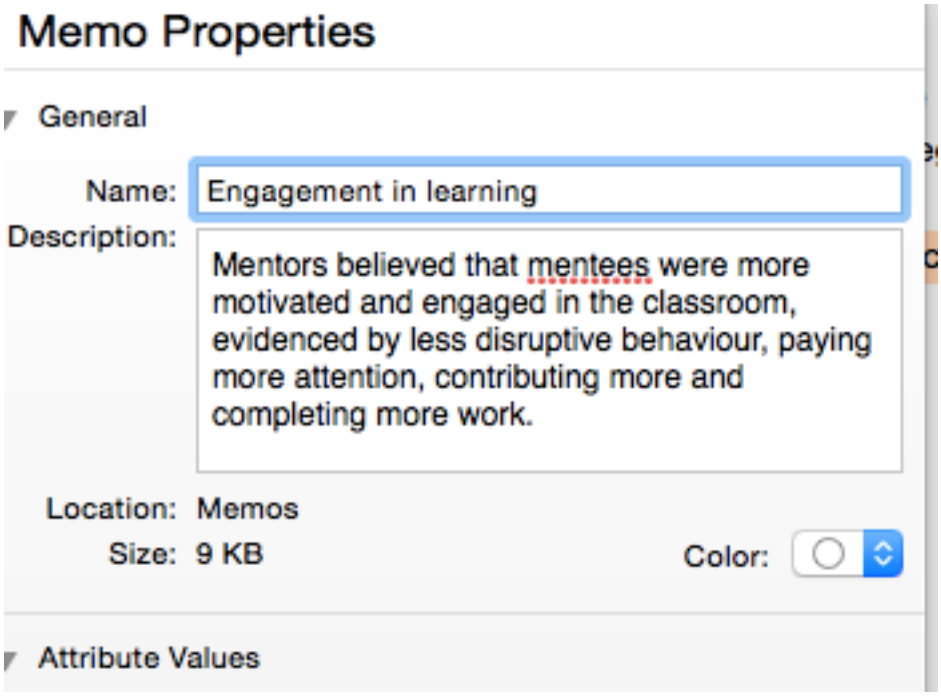
Phase 4 – Reviewing Themes (Drilling Down)	Interviews Coded	Citations (Units of Meaning) Coded
Name change	6	24
Social and emotional development	10	64
Confidence and self-concept (2)	10	29
Relationships	2	8
Peer relationships	9	17
Resilience and wellbeing	7	27
Resilience	3	14

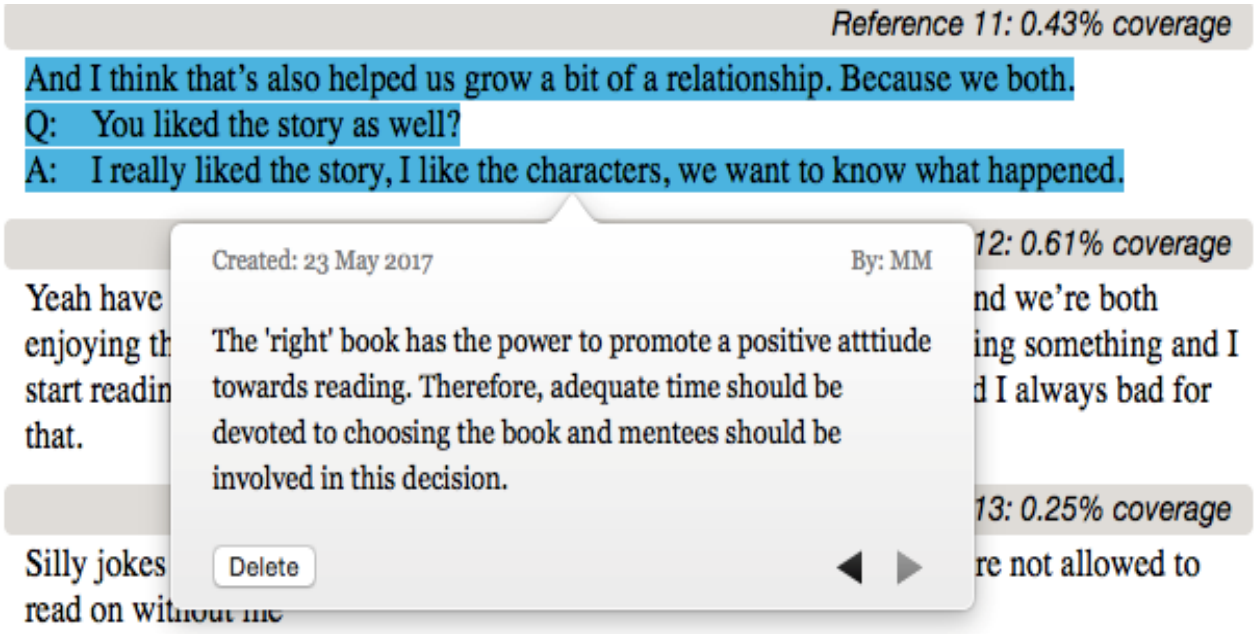
APPENDIX Q: Phase 5 - Defining & Naming Themes (Data Reduction)

Phase 5 – Defining & Naming Themes (Data Reduction)	Interviews Coded	Citations (Units of Meaning) Coded
Making a difference	17	317
Academic outcomes	15	167
Engagement in learning	14	64
Enhancing literacy skills	15	68
Fostering confidence	11	33
Developing relationships	15	150
Mentor mentee relationship	15	130
Peer relationships	10	20
Making the intervention work	15	290
Engaging the mentor	8	67
Individualising intervention	11	118
Making it better	7	27
Resource money matters	9	36

APPENDIX R: Phase 6 - Analytical memos






Reference 11: 0.43% coverage
And I think that's also helped us grow a bit of a relationship. Because we both.
Q: You liked the story as well?
A: I really liked the story, I like the characters, we want to know what happened.
12: 0.61% coverage
Yeah have
nd we're both
enjoying th
ing something and I
start readin
d I always bad for
that.
13: 0.25% coverage
Silly jokes
re not allowed to
read on wi
Created: 23 May 2017
By: MM
The 'right' book has the power to promote a positive atttiude towards reading. Therefore, adequate time should be devoted to choosing the book and mentees should be involved in this decision.
Delete