



at the heart of the community

The SRB Raising Achievement Enhancing Employability Project



<http://www.simonmidgley.co.uk/achieving/rhsraising.htm>

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Background to the SRB: RAEE Project

WHAT IS SRB: RAEE?

RAEE stands for Raising Achievement/Enhancing Employability. The Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) provides funding for the scheme which aims to raise achievement and enhance employability of under-achieving students. The project is a partnership between Lancashire County Council, LAWTEC and ELTEC. It is a 7 year project open to all non-selective secondary schools in East Lancashire. The project started in April 1996 and over three years 50 schools were phased into the scheme, each school participating in the scheme for 5 years. The project was designed to enhance the education and employment prospects of young people and promote equality of opportunity.

WHAT ARE THE AIMS OF SRB:RAEE?

The stated aims of the SRB:RAEE Project are to involve a range of community partners in order to adopt a pro-active, multi agency approach to support young people at risk of under-achieving for educational, behavioural or cultural reasons.

It aims to do this by:-

- Making optimum use of existing information to identify the target group of students to be involved in the project;
- Identifying barriers to achievement and employability;
- Identifying, developing and implementing relevant support strategies to overcome these barriers.

HOW IS SRB:RAEE ORGANISED?

The project is managed by the ELEBPs (East Lancashire Education Business Partnerships) and encourages schools to work with as many community partners as they feel necessary.

Students who have the potential to achieve much more than they are at present are targeted for inclusion on the Project: they are under-achievers as distinct from low achievers.

SRB: RAEE at Rhyddings High

PROJECT HISTORY

1997-98

Rhyddings came on-stream in the Autumn Term of 1997 when students from Year 7 and 10 were selected for the Project (see the section on Enrolment later in this document.) The Project appointed Simon Midgley to co-ordinate the Project with Year 10 students and Joanne Chorlton to co-ordinate and develop Year 7 work.

1998-99

Those students already on the Project continued as Years 8 and 11, and a new cohort of students was enrolled from Years 7 and 10. In the summer of 1999 the first group of Y11 students graduated from the Project. Joanne Chorlton left the Project to gain further qualifications and Simon Midgley was employed for 2.5 days each week to co-ordinate all SRB Project work in the school.

1999-2000

Existing SRB students continued on the Project (subject to the student review process) as they moved up into Years 8, 9, and 11. Joining them were new students from Years 7 and 10. Thus in 1999-2000 all five year groups were part of the SRB Project.

Project staffing continued as before.

2000-2001

All year groups continued on the Project. There were no new Year 10 enrolments as for the first time there was a Year 9 cohort to move up.

2001-2002

The final year of the Project continued as in 2000-2001. SRB funding for the Project ceased on 31/3/02.

2002-2003 and after

The Project continues but funded by the school not the SRB.

Monitoring

SRB is monitored in school via the Faculty of Student Support. The SMT member with line management responsibility is Mr P. Trickett (Deputy Head).

ENROLMENT ONTO THE SRB PROJECT

SELECTION CRITERIA

The main criteria for selection is that of under-achievement as distinct from low-achievement. When selecting students the Project considers:-

- Students displaying signs of underachievement which may include:
 - poor attendance,
 - inappropriate behaviour in and out of class,
 - lack of confidence,
 - failure to complete classwork and/or homework,
 - poor organisational abilities,
 - low self-esteem,
 - disaffection,
 - below average levels of literacy and/or numeracy,
 - low standards of personal care and appearance
 - lack of support from home

- Form tutor recommendation.
- Subject teacher referral.
- SAT & CAT data.
- Primary record if applicable.
- Parental concern.

SELECTION PROCEDURES

In the first three years of the Project enrolment took place in the Autumn term from Years 7 and 10. Now that all years are on-stream enrolment will be from Year 7 only with replacements from other Years when an SRB student graduates from the Project or otherwise leaves.

Year 7 enrolment

A short-list of around 20 students is created by the SRB Co-ordinator and Head of Student Support based on information from: primary schools, form tutors (who will include any concerns raised by subject teachers), parents, and students themselves. It includes any quantitative data when and where this is available e.g. KS2 test results, CAT test results, reading and spelling assessment results.

This information is then considered by the SRB Co-ordinator, Head of Student Support and Year Co-ordinator. From it, eight students are selected for inclusion on the Project. An attempt is made to maintain a mix of students which reflects that of the school as a whole.

This procedure is normally complete by Autumn half-term.

STUDENT AND PARENTAL NOTIFICATION

Once students have been selected a meeting is held for them by the SRB co-ordinator to explain the SRB Project and their selection. At the same time, a letter is sent home to their parents together with a short brochure explaining the SRB Project. Where a contact phone number is available, parents are also telephoned by the SRB co-ordinator who further explains the Project and invites parents into school to meet him. As an alternative, the SRB co-ordinator may visit the student's home if this is more convenient for the parents. The co-operative and voluntary nature of the Project is stressed.

If any parents decide they do not wish their child to be part of the Project, the student is replaced by someone else from the original short-list.

If a student's parents wish them to be included in the Project a permission slip is signed by them and returned to school.

STAFF NOTIFICATION

School staff are informed of which students are enrolled on the SRB Project via the Staff Bulletin. In this they are also invited to

contact the SRB Co-ordinator if there are any difficulties with students missing particular lessons.

Project updates are included in the Bulletin in the same way.

INDUCTION ONTO THE PROJECT

Once the Year 7 students have been accepted onto the Project, the SRB co-ordinator constructs an initial timetable of meetings with the students and then notifies them of the location and time of the first meeting.

The First Meeting

At this meeting the day to day running of the SRB Project is explained to the students. Their SRB timetable is explained to them and reviewed. A copy is given to them. Students are given appointment labels to stick in their school diary reminding them of when their meetings are and validating their absence from a lesson. Students who lose their homework diary are given a small orange notebook into which the timetable is stuck.

The Second Meeting

The aim of this meeting is to work with the student to develop an individual development programme. The barriers to achievement which have been identified are discussed with the student and tentative strategies suggested for improvement.

Where Successmaker is part of the student's RIP they are enrolled on the course/s and shown how to access and run the program.

RHYDDINGS INDIVIDUAL PROGRAMMES (RIPs)

Once the student has attended the first few meetings with the SRB co-ordinator, an Individual Programme is drawn up (Rhyddings Individual Programme : RIP). This lists the identified barriers to achievement and the strategies which it is intended to employ to overcome these.

The RIP is a working document which is reviewed as the SRB co-ordinator gets to know the student better and is able to work with them to identify more closely the barriers to learning and achievement. Together, the co-ordinator and student can identify which strategies work best for them in helping to increase achievement. The initial RIP should be in place by the end of November and reviewed and revised before Spring half-term of the following year.

In school, copies of the initial RIPs are given to Head of Student Support and made available to other staff following normal Student Support faculty procedures.

A copy of the RIP is sent to the student's parents. This may contain suggestions of ways in which they can become involved in developing their child's achievements. They are invited to come into school or contact the SRB Co-ordinator to discuss the strategies to be employed.

Once in place, each RIP is formally reviewed at least once each year. The procedures for this review are outlined in the section on Review and Evaluation. Targets set in the RIP are monitored / reviewed by the SRB Coordinator at each SRB tutoring session where these are part of the student's programme.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SRB PROGRAMME

The responsibility for the day-to-day implementation and development of the SRB Programme belongs to the SRB co-ordinator (Simon Midgley).

One-to-One meetings

Early on in the Project's life it became clear that regular, one-to-one meetings with each student were very important in raising individual achievement.

Unless students have moved to the monitoring only stage of their individual programme each student is timetabled to see the SRB co-ordinator at least once each week. Originally, if the student was following a literacy / numeracy development programme then these meetings were more frequent, up to a maximum of three per week. However, timetable pressures meant it was impractical to continue this frequency except in a small number of cases.

Each student's schedule of meetings is in their school Diary. A master copy is held by the SRB Coordinator and the Head of Student Support and is also displayed in the Student Support Suite.

Sessions are during the school day. To avoid the same lesson being affected each week, a rolling four-week timetable is in operation so that the same lesson is affected only once a month. Where particular circumstances dictate, SRB timetables may be modified to fit in with subject teachers' wishes and preferences.

When necessary or appropriate an SRB session may take place during break, the lunch hour, before or after school. The aim of timetabling is to tailor each student's meetings to their very particular circumstances and in collaboration with other staff.

Not all SRB students are timetabled in this way. Some (especially in Years 10 and 11) receive SRB support by negotiated demand.

Length of sessions varies, from 15 minutes for a student who is working on one Successmaker module to 50 minutes where the lesson the student has left is one which precludes rejoining half-way through, e.g. P.E., or where the student has had explicit permission to complete work in the less hectic and more individual surroundings of the Project's base.

Year 10 and 11 students

Year 10 and 11 students see the SRB co-ordinator less frequently in lesson time as GCSEs approach. Much depends on each student and the subjects studied. SRB time may be used for subject-related coursework where a one-to-one approach may be beneficial in getting work done. The overall aim is always to increase achievement.

If the student has a business / industry mentor they may see the SRB co-ordinator less frequently as the mentor takes on responsibility for developing the student's achievements.

Location of meetings

Students meet the SRB co-ordinator in the Student Support Suite.

Content of meetings

SRB sessions are used to implement and monitor the strategies noted on the RIP. Primarily they should be seen as teacher-mentoring sessions, i.e. as a time during the week when the student can talk through problems and resolve difficulties in a secure, non-threatening environment with access to teacher expertise.

Where a student's RIP specifies basic literacy and / or numeracy work is needed then these sessions will be used mostly for the implementation of that programme, using the Successmaker ILS, other learning software or one-to-one teaching. The combination used depends on the individual student and the resources which are available at the time.

If a student is falling behind with coursework / homework these sessions may be used to help the student catch up, thus preventing future conflict with Staff and a downward spiral into disaffection. Ways of avoiding falling behind will also be discussed.

If a student is absent from school, these sessions may be used to contact home to find out the reasons for absence or to liaise with form tutors on actions taken so far re attendance.

Essentially these sessions remain flexible in order to respond to need - either pro-actively or re-actively. The underlying aim always being to increase achievement.

Staff involved

SRB sessions are run by the SRB co-ordinator but in Years 10 and 11 his work is supplemented by that done by the mentors from

business and industry who come in to work with some of the students (see the section below on Mentoring)

Record-keeping

Records of each SRB meeting are kept by the SRB Co-ordinator. These relate to what happened in the meeting and may include notes on action to be taken either before or at the next meeting by either the student or SRB co-ordinator. Where formal targets have been set these will be noted also (e.g. full attendance for the next week / half-term / term). The student is consulted as this session record is completed and their agreement negotiated for any targets set. These records are open for the student to view subsequently should they wish to review their progress to date.

Review of meetings and forward planning

The RIP outlines the strategies which are being followed with each student. Day-to-day implementation and modification of these strategies is recorded as part of the recording process noted above. The RIP is only reviewed formally, once a year (see P.16) but the student's progress is monitored at each SRB meeting and additional strategies implemented to raise achievement as necessary. These additional strategies are recorded in the weekly record of meetings which can then be referred to when revising the RIP.

Review and Reporting

Informal review and reporting

As noted above (P.15), student's progress and the effectiveness of the strategies being used are reviewed at each meeting and used to plan future strategies. Attempts are made to involve the student in the planning of each session so that the student's views become part of this informal review process. This approach follows from the voluntary, collaborative nature of the Project. If the student has some control over what happens in these sessions then their co-operation is more likely and the session should be more effective.

Comments made by Staff in informal discussion are another valuable form of feedback which helps the Project to work on real and immediate issues.

Formal review and reporting

Each student's RIP is subject to review at least once a year, although some may be reviewed more frequently depending on targets. This review gathers data on the student from subject teachers, form tutor, the student themselves and their parent/s or guardians.

Teacher data is gathered by the completion of proforma which allow them to indicate current levels of performance on a range of indicators and also whether this level represents an improvement or deterioration. Space is also available for comments.

Students' own views are gathered informally as noted above.

From this information a new RIP is prepared. Copies of the RIP are given to the Head of Student Support and the student's Year Co-ordinator. They are also available for other staff via the normal Student Support Faculty routines and procedures. Where an RIP concerns itself particularly with one teaching subject then a copy of the RIP will be given to the teacher/s involved.

Parents receive a letter informing them of what is happening with their child as part of this Review process. They are invited to contact the SRB Co-ordinator if they wish to comment on the progress their child is making or if they have any questions about the report or if they wish to add anything to the RIP.

The SRB Co-ordinator is also available at Parents' Evenings.

Where the Review process shows that the barriers to a student's achievement have been removed and the student is achieving in line with their potential, it is likely that student will leave the SRB Project subject to their and their parents' agreement.

Where the strategies employed are improving the student's achievement but the Review indicates that they are still needed, the student will remain on the SRB Project.

Where the Review indicates that the strategies employed are not raising achievement and where, over a period of time, student, parent and SRB co-ordinator have been unable to agree on workable alternative strategies then consideration is given to the student leaving the Project and other support strategies being used within the school.

Staff Updates

Staff are kept updated on the SRB Project via the weekly staff bulletin. This notes any matters relating to SRB students which Staff should be aware of. Once per term a fuller report on SRB is included as part of the bulletin.

SUCCESSMAKER ILS

Selection of students

Students whose RIP specifies lower than average literacy and / or numeracy levels are usually enrolled on the Successmaker ILS programme. (Integrated Learning System)

Students use the programme when they come for their SRB session. In the first year of operation of the SRB Project all students were enrolled on the system, from both Y7 and Y10. It soon became clear that its use in Y10 was less appropriate - a finding borne out by the final BECTa (British Educational Communications and Technology Agency) report into ILS.

Successmaker use is more suitable for short periods of time intensively than over a long period when motivation can wear off as the programme's novelty value declines.

By way of example, in the case of spelling, students who used the Successmaker spelling module (SPS) showed the following spelling age gains over a five month period, as assessed using the Parallel Spelling Test 3b:-

	S.A.	S.A.
Student A	10.8	12.4
Student B	10.0	11.4
Student C	8.4	9.4
Student D	9.8	10.8
Student E	8.4	9.6

Whilst it cannot be said that Successmaker was solely responsible for these gains it can be said that it was one strategy used with students who have shown spelling age gains over a five month period.

Successmaker is currently used in all years, but in Years 10 and 11 it is by student request as they take charge of their own learning programme. Often, it is used as an impartial way of demonstrating skill and ability by the student. Careful choice of student and subsequent careful review and management are the key to effective Successmaker use in Year 10 and 11.

Mode of use

We have found that whilst Successmaker is an effective strategy and allows students to work alone on tasks which are tailored to their abilities, it is even more effective if used in a paired situation

where the teacher (or sometimes other student) can work alongside the student. This mode of working also alleviates the issue of printing out and analysing Successmaker records. Time for this has often proved difficult to find. By working with the student, areas which need attention can be spotted without recourse to Successmaker records. These do however provide a summary of progress albeit in Successmaker's own terms.

Other Successmaker use

Successmaker is also used by other members of the Student Support faculty with their students when and where possible.

Other educational software

Students also have access to a range of other quality literacy and numeracy software to enhance their learning.

EVALUATION OF THE FIRST FIVE YEARS OF THE SRB PROJECT

The procedures and systems for the SRB Project at Rhyddings are now in place. Through on-going review of these, we have now become clearer as to what strategies work well but also where issues have still to be resolved.

The one issue which causes most conflict between teachers and students is failure to complete work on time. This includes homework in all years and coursework in Years 10 and 11. This can arise for a variety of reasons including disaffection and lack of motivation, and is certainly a factor in underachievement. Given this, SRB has seen it as a priority to encourage students to keep on schedule with work, but, given the realities, SRB also make provision for homework to be completed in one-to-one sessions with the extra help that is available here. By doing this, conflict situations are avoided and the student has the opportunity to experience success which hopefully will lead to enhanced self-esteem.

The review of SRB students' progress has been improved with the addition of regular staff feedback, both informal and formal as noted above. This has helped target areas which are causing difficulties and which could be in danger of becoming barriers to learning. More frequent feedback could be useful, but given pressures on staff time careful thought would need to be given to this

Withdrawal of students from timetabled lessons is sometimes difficult and has received constant revision over the period of operation of the Project. Students know when they should be attending an SRB session and most staff are willing to release them for this purpose, but where there are difficulties negotiation between the parties involved has usually resolved the issue.

All years are now on-stream. It was noted above that one-to-one meetings with students were seen as most important. With extra students on-stream careful management has been needed to ensure all students are seen as necessary. Involvement of extra staff should be considered.

Issues with SRB

Withdrawal of students from lessons for one-to-one sessions has caused some difficulties over the lifetime of the Project as noted

above. By reducing the time students spend away from lessons this issue has been minimised.

Where possible, students are seen at lunchtimes, at break, pre-school or post-school. However, none of these times allow enough time for any extended one-to-one tutoring. Flexibility in timetabling SRB sessions has been the best response here.

Over the first four years of the Project, most SRB locations were unsuitable venues for one-to-one or small group work, being small, poorly ventilated and heated, and, being multi-use environments, liable to much interruption and disruption. The new Student Support Suite provides more suitable accommodation. Its multi-use environment provides advantages as well as drawbacks.

Where attendance is an issue, parental contact is even more important. Difficulties where parents have no phone have been fewer following the increase in mobile phone ownership. A start has also been made on communication by email.

Increased contact with parents is noted on most RIPs. This increased contact has developed as planned with an SRB presence at all Parents' Evenings as well as by phone and personal appointment.

Early on in the life of the Project attempts were made to get students to record what they covered in their SRB sessions in special SRB Diaries. This was unsuccessful because the Diaries were an additional book for students to lose or mislay. Use of the school Diary to record work covered / targets set has begun but should be developed further.

As the Project became (and becomes) more popular numbers increased and time available for one-to-one mentoring / tutoring became harder to find.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

- Further develop the use of a student's school Diary for the student to record what they cover in an SRB session. This can then be reviewed by form tutor and parent, helping to keep them in the picture and maintain contact.
- To increase awareness of the SRB Project, further develop and publicise the Rhyddings' SRB Raising Achievement pages on the SRB Coordinator's website :-
(<http://www.simonmidgley.co.uk/achieving/rhsraising.htm>)
- Continue to encourage SRB students' parents to attend Parents Evenings to discuss their child's progress on the SRB Project.
- Students' own views are now a formal part of the SRB review process in all years.
- SRB RIPs are now available on-line so that Staff may access them from any location with an Internet link (home or school.)

Y10 and 11 business and industry mentoring project

THE MENTORING PROJECT

Background

A multi-agency approach is one of the key features of the SRB:RAEE Project. At Rhyddings, the involvement of people from business and industry is a key feature of the SRB Project in Years 10 and 11. Currently we have the services of nine mentors from a variety of backgrounds who see their student/s once every two or three weeks.

In September 2004 they are:

Mohammed Akhlaq	RHS / Ittefaq Centre mentoring co-ordinator
Emma Broadley	Former RHS student
Mike Booth	S.Martin's College
Stuart Duhan	Local Rotary
Jackie Hudson	ASDA
Michael Jackson	Local Rotary
Suzanne Murray	Lancs Education Business Partnership
Jennifer Pickover	ASDA
Ron Pickup	Local Rotary
Eva Sayed	via Local Rotary
Nisar Sayed	Local Rotary
Sergio Solazzo	Actor / Physico Theatre Publicity
Dawn Taylor	The Halifax
Christine Traill	ASDA
Anne Walker	Rhyddings Student Support

Mentor recruitment

Mentors are recruited through either LEBP or the school. Those mentors who have been recruited through the school have been personal contacts recommended by Staff. When recommended, mentors are contacted by the SRB Co-ordinator who explains the SRB Project to them and what mentoring involves. If they are willing to join the Project their names are forwarded to Bill Pugh at LEBP who sends them further details regarding mentoring and also forms for them to fill in so that Police clearance can be gained. Additionally he organises a mentor training session for them at LEBP.

Mentor induction

When clearance has been given, mentors are invited in by the SRB Co-ordinator, either singly or in small groups. Here they are shown

round the school and meet one or more members of the Senior Management team as well as Stephanie Brewerton, Head of Student Support. If possible, mentors also meet their student's form tutor. If this latter is not possible then an arrangement can be made for a meeting at a later date.

The Project is explained to the mentors in more detail and they have the opportunity to discuss it with Simon Midgley and ask any questions they may have.

The procedures to follow when meeting their student are explained to them: matters like who to contact in school, how to contact their student, where to meet their student and so on. All of this and other necessary information is contained in the Mentors' Handbook which each mentor is given. This handbook is updated each year to reflect changes such as school staffing, rooms and time-tabling.

At this first meeting they don't usually meet their student but if they wish to this is arranged.

The next step is to arrange the first meeting with their student once a pairing has been identified and agreed. This procedure is described in the sections below on mentor-student pairing and mentor meetings.

Student Enrolment

At the start of Year 10, SRB students are asked if they wish to take part in the SRB Business and Industry mentoring scheme. The benefits of this are outlined to them and if they wish to speak to a student who is already being mentored in Y11 this is arranged.

If the student expresses an interest a brochure and letter are sent home explaining the scheme to their parents. Parents are invited to contact the SRB Co-ordinator (Simon Midgley), by letter, phone or email, should they need any further information. If they agree to their child being included on the Project they sign and return a permission slip.

Mentor - Student pairing

The next task is for the SRB Co-ordinator to pair the student with a mentor. Student interests and barriers to learning are taken into account when setting up the pairing as well as mentor and student personalities, gender and ethnicity.

When a mentor is provisionally identified they are given background information on the student and asked if they are willing to act as mentor to them.

When a mentor agrees to a pairing the student is informed and a first meeting is arranged by the SRB Co-ordinator in collaboration with the mentor and student. This first meeting, during school time, is to allow the mentor and student to assess if they are likely to be able to form a good, mentoring relationship.

If mentor and student agree to continue meeting a letter is sent home to inform parents who will be working with their child, and the mentor is provided with further, more detailed information on the student contained in that student's RIP. A meeting with the student's form tutor or a particular subject teacher may be set up if the mentor feels this would help them with the mentoring process.

Mentor - student meetings

Location

These have taken place in a variety of often unsuitable locations. For a short period a dedicated mentoring room was available which was refurbished to provide a comfortable and relaxing environment to help reinforce the more adult and business-like nature of the mentoring process. Refreshments were available in the room. From March 2001 this room was no longer available. Currently, the Student Support Suite now provides more suitable and more permanent accommodation. Further accommodation may be available as part of the New Build at Rhyddings.

Timing

Meetings between mentor and student are usually every two to three weeks, although some mentors prefer to meet more regularly for the first few meetings. Sessions take place during normal lesson time but mentors try to vary times of meetings so as not to affect the same lesson each time. Each session lasts for between 30 minutes and one hour.

The dates and times of meetings are entered in an appointment folder kept in the Student Support Suite and are also entered in an on-line calendar (see p.27). Appointment cards are given to students with the time and date of the next meeting on them. These validate students being allowed out of lessons.

Content of meetings

The mentor and SRB Co-ordinator will have discussed the particular barriers to achievement which a particular student has and what could usefully be discussed during mentoring meetings. The actual content of the mentoring sessions is left to the mentor themselves who will develop it to suit their individual student. In general terms, sessions are likely to focus on what a student can

be doing now to raise their achievement in school and to increase their chances of getting on a suitable course or obtaining an appropriate job when leaving school.

Individual mentors may set either short-term or longer-term targets for students to achieve

Feedback

Mentors provide feedback on what is happening during mentoring sessions to the SRB Co-ordinator. This feedback ideally takes place immediately after the meeting, or, immediately before the next meeting. Additionally, the SRB Co-ordinator may contact the mentor by phone or email later if this is felt necessary. Feedback is also received during the regular mentors' meetings which take place each term or more frequently if desired or necessary.

After mentors' discussion of the issue, formal records of meetings with students are not kept as mentors have expressed the feeling that this would detract from the informal nature of the mentor - student relationship. The aim of the mentoring relationship is to be unlike other school-based adult-student relationships. Most mentors do keep informal notes of what has happened in sessions to help them plan the next session.

SRB Mentoring Project Meetings

These meetings are held once per term subject to mentors' commitments.

The meetings are convened by the SRB Mentoring Co-ordinator (Simon Midgley) who sends an agenda to all mentors, the SRB East Lancs Education Business Partnerships contact, Rhyddings Head of Student Support and the Deputy Head with oversight of the SRB Project (Paul Trickett).

Minutes from the meetings are distributed to all those invited to the meeting either by post or email.

Rhyddings High School virtual mentors centre (VMC)

This area on the web has not proved useful because of low take-up by mentors. It was an area on-line for those mentors who have access to the Web. It was a private area accessible only by invitation. All mentors were eligible to join as were staff in school with a need to know mentoring arrangements. The main purpose of the VMC was to allow easy access to a calendar detailing mentor-student meetings and the SRB mentoring scheme meetings noted above.

The Calendar is now the only on-line feature which has proved useful and has survived. It contains information extracted from the school calendar such as dates of school terms and when examinations are (e.g. GCSE, SATs and CATs).

At present there is a very popular on-line section of the SRB Coordinator's Raising Achievement website which makes available SRB information to a wider (world-wide) audience. See <http://www.simonmidgley.co.uk/mentoring/rhsproject.htm>

Evaluation

Mentors and students complete mentoring evaluation forms towards the end of Y11 to help us evaluate and improve the mentoring scheme.

EVALUATION OF THE MENTORING PROJECT SO FAR

Mentoring is one of the strategies employed at Rhyddings by the SRB Raising Achievement - Enhancing Employability project.

The academic year 1998-99 saw the first SRB students to graduate who had had been part of the SRB mentoring project. Since then, the mentoring project has become an established feature of our work with students.

Number of mentors involved varies each year as some leave and new ones are recruited. As mentors leave the Project, systems are in place to recruit and induct new members and provide them with guidance.

Communication between mentors, students and co-ordinator were an issue to be resolved initially. Communication routines now exist with Simon Midgley, the SRB co-ordinator playing a key part. Where a mentor has email this is the preferred route for communication.

Regular meetings between mentors are a pivotal part of this communication. Once a term seems to be a suitable interval.

The acquisition and refurbishment of a room in school where mentors could meet their students played an important part in helping the mentoring process succeed. This refurbishment was a joint venture between SRB, Careers and EMAG staff who shared the room which was booked via an appointment folder kept in the room. When complete, the new Student Support Suite may provide equivalent facilities.

Email has played a part in maintaining communication and is an area for development as more mentors come on-line. It has also been a method of reaching our contacts at EBP, who are often not available by other methods.

The on-line dissemination of information about mentoring at Rhyddings has been highly successful and continues to be developed.

(See <http://www.simonmidgley.co.uk/mentoring/rhsproject.htm>)

Barriers to the mentoring project

As well as the successes noted above there have been issues which have slowed or blocked development.

- The problem with finding and keeping a suitable room held up progress until the Student Support Suite was completed.
- Lack of regular meetings in the first six months of the Project also hampered development. This has now been resolved.
- Mentors commented on initial difficulties in contacting the SRB co-ordinator. Email and mobile phone have helped to minimise this.
- Withdrawing students from normal lessons for mentoring is a concern with some staff. Mentors have responded to this by trying to vary the times at which they meet with students so that the same lesson is not affected each week or fortnight, but as meetings are only once a fortnight or three weeks then this should not be a major issue.
- Refreshments are an aid to the mentoring process but initially were difficult to provide. When mentors have a base to work from this is less of an issue.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

- The Rhyddings SRB / Mentoring presence on the web should continue to be developed as it arouses interest around the world and provides contacts.
- As Rhyddings develops its internet use consideration should be given to initiating a tele-mentoring scheme using email, fax and texting.

Homework Club

Background

The framework set out by the DfEE in "Extending Opportunity: a national framework for study support", (<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/opps/frame.htm>) describes the contribution which homework clubs can make to schools' wider programmes of out of school hours learning activities.

The document notes that homework clubs can lead to gains in academic performance, self-esteem, confidence, motivation, a positive attitude to learning and the formation of new skills.

These are some of the very qualities which SRB students are poor in and which were mentioned in the first section of this document. Given this, then the provision of homework club facilities would seem vital. This was recognised in the Student Support Faculty Improvement Plan, 1998-2001. Action Point SS4 sees the need,

"to continue to provide opportunities to extend learning beyond the school day via the development of homework club and associated activities."

Homework Club goes some way to fulfilling this need.

Homework Club at Rhyddings

Homework Club runs on two days a week (Tuesdays and Thursday) after school from 3:10 - 4:15pm in the Student Support Suite.

The club is open to all Year 7-9 students. SRB students are encouraged to attend if they have homework difficulties.

In the Club students have access to support from members of the school's learning support staff and may also use ICT, including (when available) Internet access, to research, manipulate and present information.

Cross-curricular software which is difficult to timetable into lessons is available for use also.

Monitoring and evaluation

The student's school diary / planner is stamped each time they attend homework club and informal observation notes what tasks they are involved in.

From this it can be seen that the Club attracts around 20 students on each of the two nights it runs. More students would attend but lack of computers discourages them.

Future developments

- When additional resources permit Homework Club should be extended – either to run on more nights or in more locations or both.

(This document is also available on-line as a .pdf file at:-

<http://www.simonmidgley.co.uk/achieving/srbdownloads/handbooklatest.pdf>)