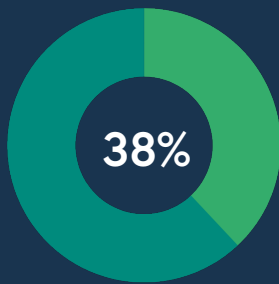# Peer Mentoring Impact

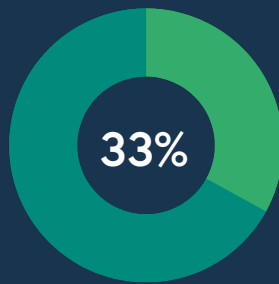## 2022/23 Impact Report

OPPIDAN
EDUCATION

Key Insights

Taken from surveys pre and post **peer mentoring programme**.

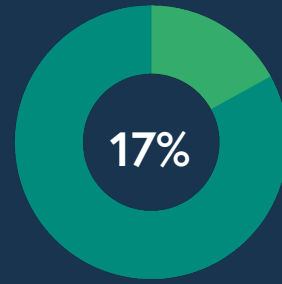## Y12 Mentors

38%

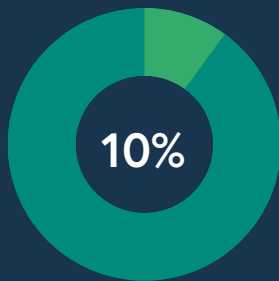Increase in the perceived benefit of having a mentor

33%

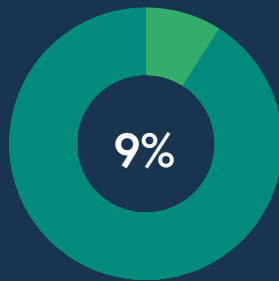Increase in confidence in knowing how to mentor

17%

Increase in their own belief of being an excellent mentor
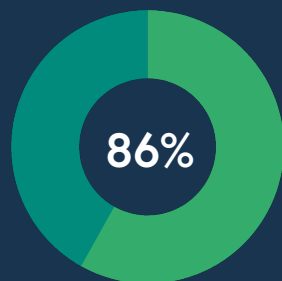
Remove Mentees

10%

Increase in feeling of belonging at school

9%

Increase in feeling that pupils matter to others at school

86%

Of mentees expect to do extremely well at school

Executive Summary

Increased Benefit of Having a Mentor: Y12 mentors experienced a significant 38% increase in perceiving the benefits of having a mentor. This finding demonstrates the program's effectiveness in creating a supportive environment and fostering positive relationships between mentors and mentees.

Improved Mentoring Knowledge and Confidence: Y12 mentors reported a 33% increase in confidence in their mentoring knowledge and a 17% increase in belief in their excellent mentoring skills. The program effectively enhanced mentors' abilities to provide valuable guidance and support to their mentees.

Enhanced Sense of Belonging: Remove mentees showed a 10% increase in their feeling of belonging at school, indicating that the program positively impacted their perception of their place within the school community. This sense of belonging is crucial for academic and socio-emotional well-being.

Increased Expectations for Academic Success: An impressive 86% of remove mentees now expect to do extremely well at school, demonstrating the program's positive influence on their academic aspirations. The mentoring relationships and support provided by the mentors likely contributed to this positive shift in expectations.

Strengthened Mentor-Mentee Relationships: Both mentors and mentees reported strong relationships, with mentors rating their relationships with mentees an average of 8/10. Mentees highlighted the value of having someone to talk to and appreciated the bond formed with their mentors, contributing to their overall positive experience.

8.4/10
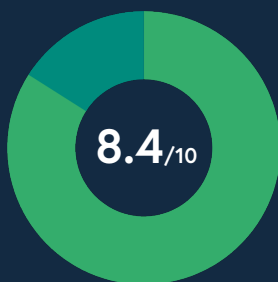
Mentor Training Day

7/10
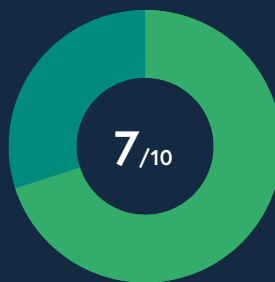
Overall Programme:
Average Mentor Rating

Sample Size: The impact is collected from the 118 Y12 and 23 Removes who completed both the pre and post survey.

Context

In September 2023, as part of Harrow's 'Living Together Conference', Oppidan Mentors provided a day's training session to the entire cohort of lower sixth (Y12) pupils. Following the training, each sixth-form mentor was paired with a Remove (Y10) mentee, with one-to-one peer mentoring sessions taking place throughout the Autumn and Spring terms.

The program aims to foster reciprocal and supportive relationships between pupils from different year groups. These relationships aim to bridge the gap and overcome hierarchical divisions that can exist in spaces where inter-year interaction is limited - building community and fostering positive relationships across year groups, especially within individual House contexts.

The initiative acknowledges the influential role that young men can have on each other within school environments. It seeks to leverage this influence to bring about positive changes among young men.

This was the third year of the Oppidan peer mentoring programme at Harrow, and the first in which Y12 mentors had been a Remove mentee themselves.

Programme Aims

The project's primary objective is to facilitate meaningful communication among young men, enabling them to express themselves more effectively. This process aims to foster stronger bonds across year groups.

For the sixth-form pupils (Y12), the program aims to enhance their skills as they prepare for life beyond school. Simultaneously, for the Removes (Y10s), the program offers crucial pastoral support within the house group from an older student.

An intended outcome of the program is an increased social and emotional awareness among pupils, leading to an improvement in school community and more enjoyable experiences for all.

Evaluation Methodology

Captured longitudinally, the following data is taken from surveys sent to each group of pupils at two time points. For the Y12 mentors this is before they completed their mentor training and upon completion of their peer mentoring sessions. For the remove mentees, this is before their first peer mentoring session and their final mentoring session.

Data was collected on motivation and confidence using adaptations of the MSLQ motivated learning scale, combined with bespoke questions on safeguarding and mentoring techniques. This quantitative data was combined with qualitative feedback collected over two student focus groups to form a mixed method approach that puts student voice at the centre of impact analysis.
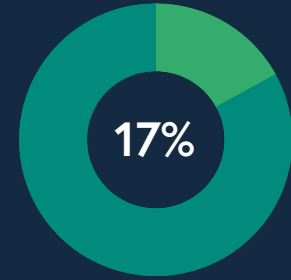
Changes over the Programme: Y12 Mentors
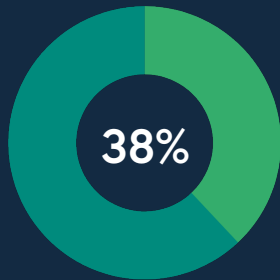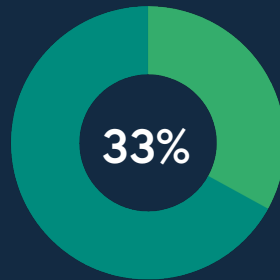
38%

Increase in the perceived benefit of having a mentor

33%

Increase in confidence in knowing how to mentor

17%

Increase in their own belief of being an excellent mentor

Mentor Motivation

Following the programme, pupils felt more motivated about the role of peer mentor, increasing by 11%. On completion of their sessions, pupils increasingly believed that mentoring techniques were 'important' and 'interesting' and found being a mentor more 'exciting' after the programme. After completing their sessions, pupils increasingly saw the benefits of having a mentor, rising by 38%.

Mentor Confidence

The pupils became increasingly confident in their ability to mentor over the course of the programme, rising in confidence by 13%. Pupils felt they were more capable relative to other school peers to deliver 'excellent' mentoring and felt more confident that they understood mentoring techniques upon competition of their sessions.
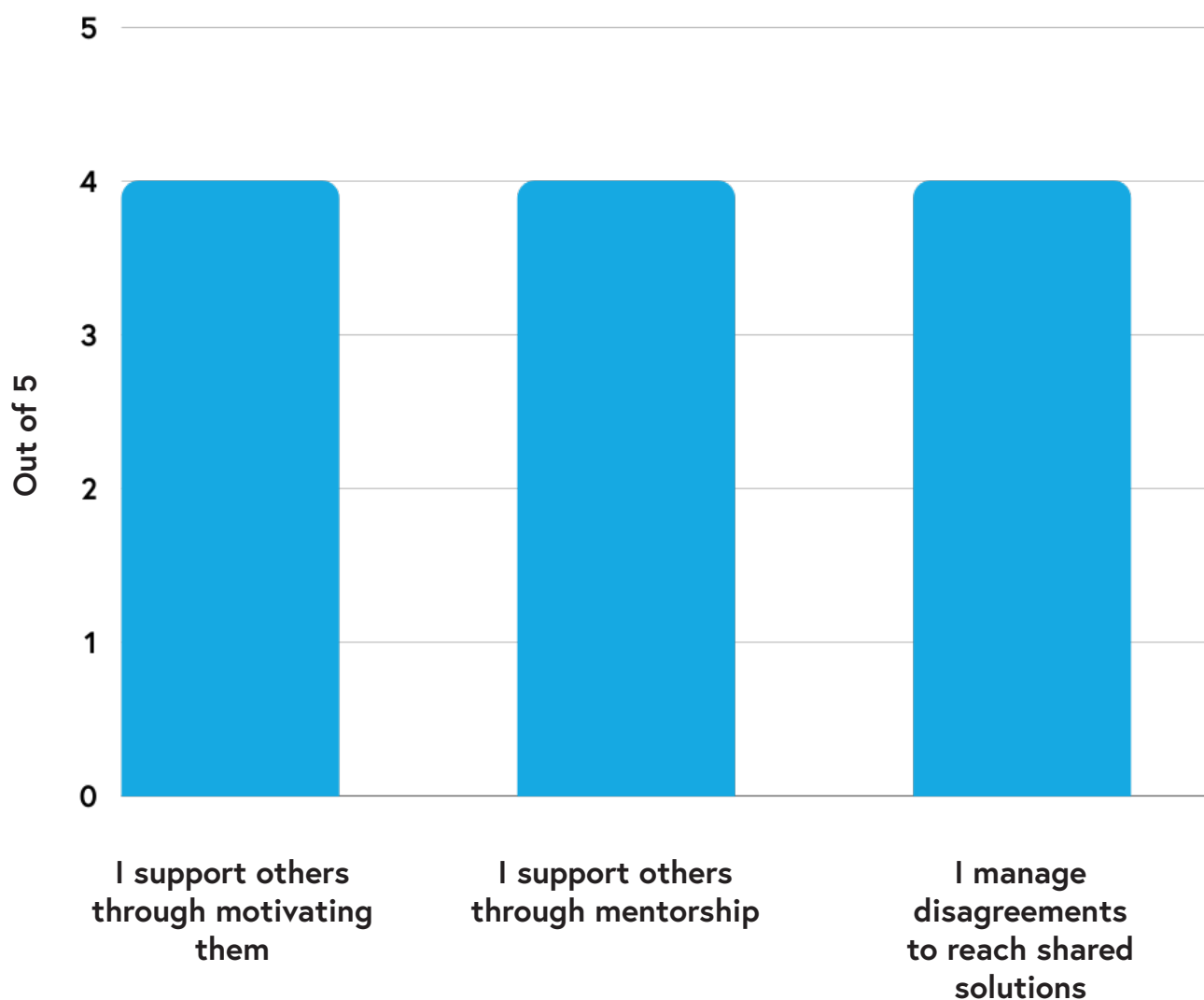
Value of Mentoring

The mentors see the highest value in mentoring to be in providing a space for students to discuss things they might not talk to other adults about. Following their sessions, the mentors saw the role of a mentor as increasingly diverse – primarily as a role model but also as an advisor and a guide.

Leadership

Following the programme, the mentors felt confident that they had been able to effectively support their mentees. Mentors were able to motivate and encourage their mentees. Studies have shown that mentors who can empathize with their mentees and provide guidance based on shared experiences are more likely to establish strong rapport and deliver meaningful support.

The mentors' ability to manage disagreements and reach shared solutions reflects the development of critical conflict resolution skills, which are essential for effective mentoring relationships. This demonstrates that the program not only enhances mentors' confidence but also equips them with the necessary skills to provide valuable support to their mentees.

Pupils' confidence as a mentor

The mentors scored highly in measures of mentoring confidence. Each of the measures improved over the course of the programme, with the most significant increase seen in mentors' belief that they know a great deal about mentoring. The observed increase in pupils' confidence in their ability to mentor by 13% can be attributed to the development of essential mentoring skills and competencies during the program.
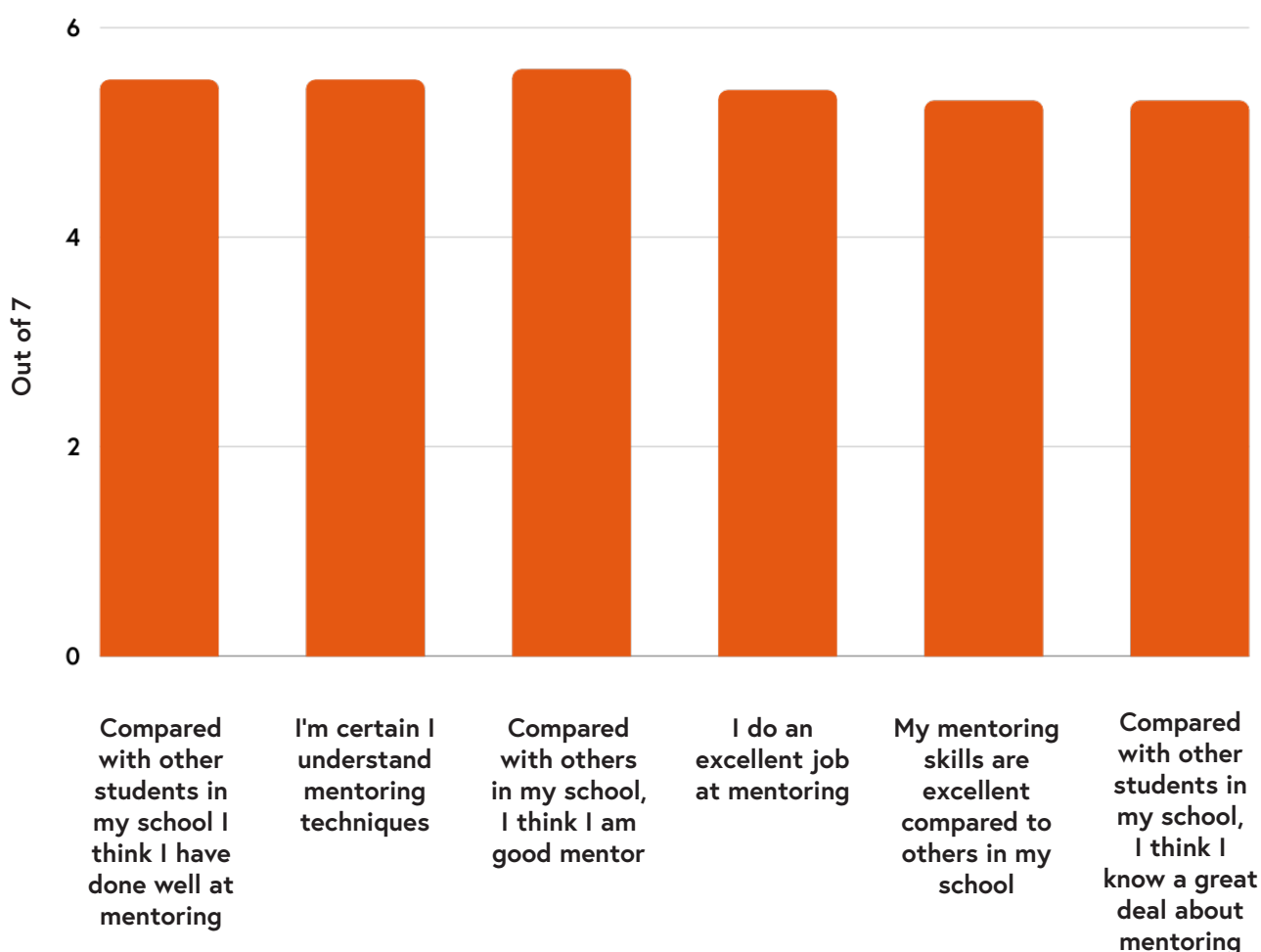
Pupils' motivation to mentor

Following the programme, pupils felt more motivated to become peer mentors. Pupils increasingly believed mentoring techniques were 'important' and 'interesting', and were increasingly 'excited' to become mentors after the programme. The significant increase in pupils' motivation about the role of peer mentor by **11%** can be attributed to the positive experiences and outcomes they witnessed during the program.

> " I believe the programme was a very valuable experience and was an excellent opportunity to develop important skills.

Year 12 Mentor

> " The true aspect of being a mentor is being someone they are able to talk to.

Year 12 Mentor

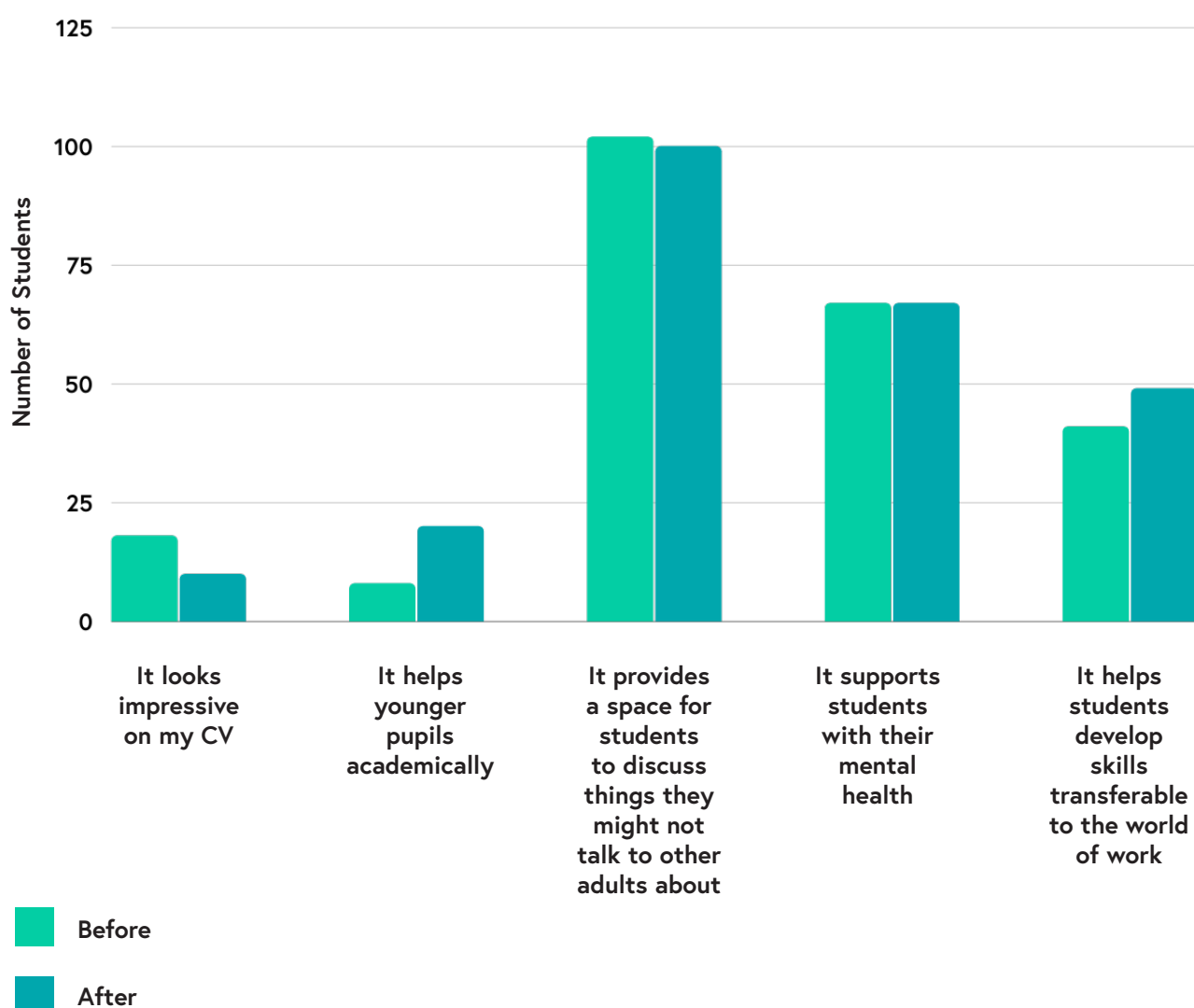> " It is very helpful not only for the mentee but also for us mentors.

Year 12 Mentor

> " It was a really valuable experience for me and I really value the skills I have gained.

Year 12 Mentor

# Changes in pupils' understanding of the value of mentoring

Following the programme, pupils on average saw the most valuable aspect of mentoring to be to provide a space for students to talk about things they may not discuss with another adults (85% of pupils selected this). Pupils also increasingly saw mentoring to help students with their mental health (57% of pupils selected this). The mentors' recognition of the highest value of mentoring in providing a safe space for students to discuss sensitive topics aligns with the research that emphasizes the importance of mentoring relationships in creating supportive and trusting environments. This suggests pupils had more altruistic rather than self-serving motives as mentors.

Number of Students

- It looks impressive on my CV
- It helps younger pupils academically
- It provides a space for students to discuss things they might not talk to other adults about
- It supports students with their mental health
- It helps students develop skills transferable to the world of work

Before
After

Changes in pupils' definition of a mentor

After the programme, more Y12s saw a mentor as a guide, a teacher, a friend and an advisor. This conveys how students increasingly saw mentors to be people who are both aspirational, yet approachable, pointing towards the strengthened relationships they developed with their mentees. The mentors' evolving perception of their role as diverse, encompassing roles such as role model, advisor, and guide, reflects the multifaceted nature of effective mentoring relationships that involve providing support, guidance, and modelling positive behaviours.

Before

After

8/10
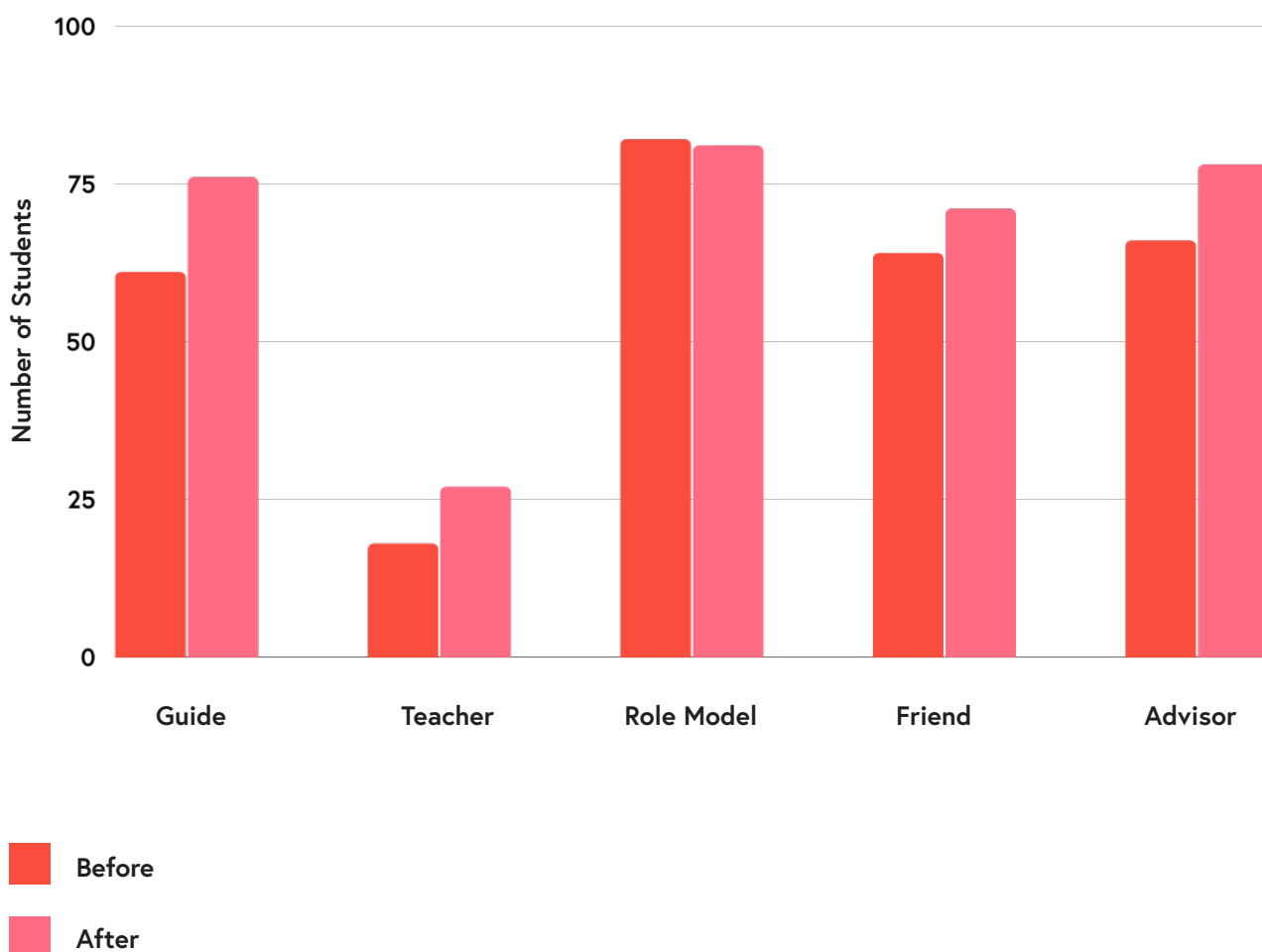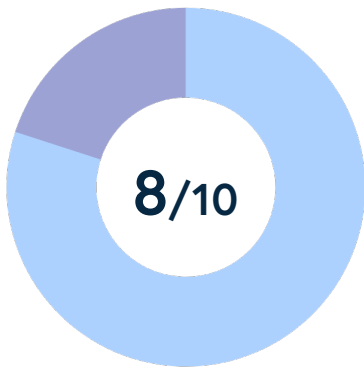
Strength of mentor relationship

When asked whether they had formed a strong relationship with their mentees, the average score was very high at 8/10. Studies have shown that the formation of strong mentor-mentee bonds contributes to various positive outcomes, including increased mentee satisfaction, engagement, and overall well-being.

The mentors' qualitative feedback highlighting the development of strong friendships and the value they place on the time spent with their mentees further reinforces the positive impact of the program in fostering meaningful connections and supportive relationships. This demonstrates the program's efficacy in creating a nurturing environment where mentors and mentees can build strong, meaningful relationships that contribute to positive youth development.

"
I really enjoyed talking and bonding with my mentee and I feel that creating that bond is necessary for schools to implement.
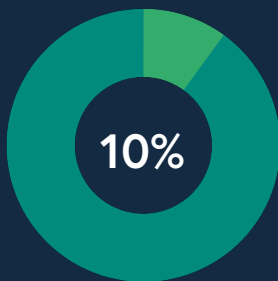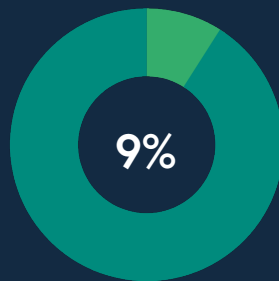
Year 12 Mentor

"
It helped me form a bond with my mentee, and it was interesting to get to know him better. I feel we both have new perspectives due to the programme.

Year 12 Mentor

Changes over the Programme: Removes Mentees

10%

Increase in feeling of belonging at school

9%

Increase in feeling that pupils matter to others at school

86%
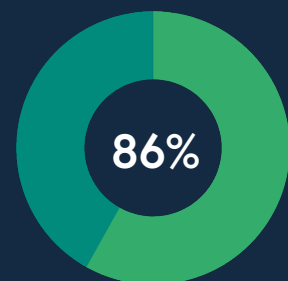
Of mentees expect to do extremely well at school

> It is helpful to speak to someone who is not in your year group about a wide range of topics; from specific school subjects to general life decisions.

Year 10 Mentee

> Good way to get to know the L6, knowing you have someone to go to.

Year 10 Mentee

Mentee Community Perception

Following the programme, mentees felt an increased sense of school community. Having an older mentor to support and guide them, added not only to their feeling of belonging at school, but also of mattering to others in their school.

The 9% increase in feeling that they matter to others at their school signifies a stronger sense of belonging within the school community. Research demonstrates that a sense of belonging is essential for students' academic and socio-emotional well-being. Mentoring programs can foster this sense of belonging by providing mentees with a supportive relationship with their mentors and opportunities to connect with peers, ultimately creating a positive school community.

The 10% improvement in the overall sense of belonging at school indicates that the program has positively impacted mentees' perception of their place in the school environment. Students who feel a sense of belonging are more likely to engage in school activities, develop positive relationships with peers and teachers, and experience higher academic motivation. The mentoring program may have provided mentees with a support system and a safe space to express themselves, fostering their sense of belonging.
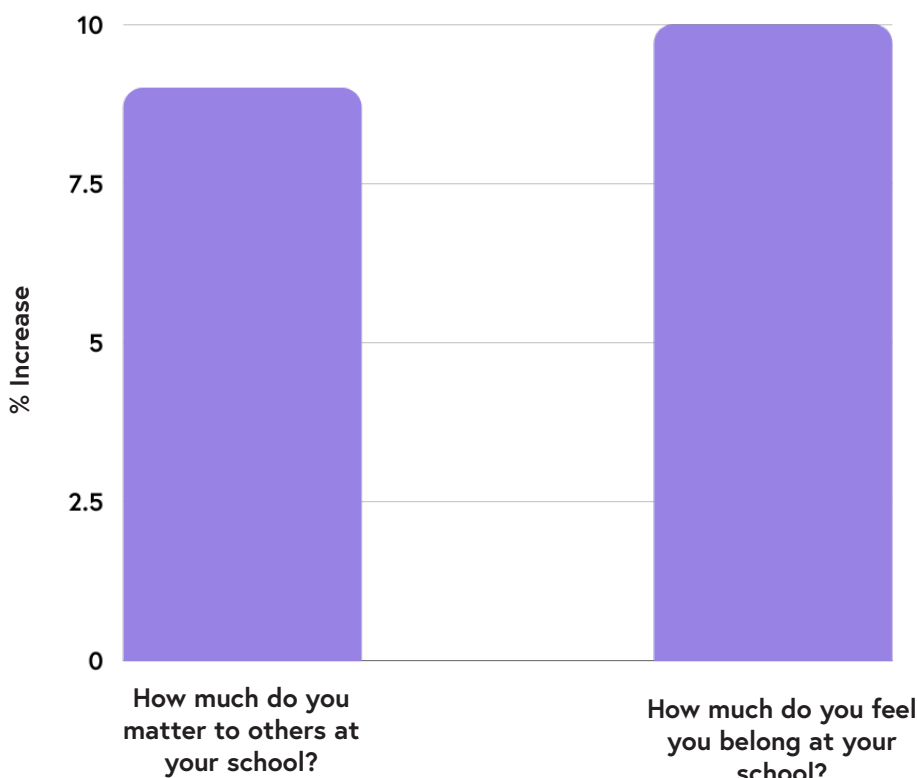
Self-Efficacy

Following the programme pupils reported particularly high levels of average self-efficacy, this is measured using the MSLQ self-efficacy sub-scale which analyses pupils' belief in their capacity to execute the behaviours necessary for academic success. The mentoring programme does not have an academic focus, but qualitive feedback suggested that mentors were able to provide valuable reassurance around academic hurdles. Positive self-beliefs and expectations are associated with academic success and motivation.The mentoring relationship may have provided mentees with encouragement, support, and feedback, fostering their confidence in their abilities and academic potential.

Research suggests that mentoring programs can positively impact students' emotional well-being by providing support and guidance, helping them develop coping mechanisms, and promoting a sense of agency and control over their academic and personal lives. By experiencing consistent support from their mentors, mentees have gained a greater sense of self-efficacy.
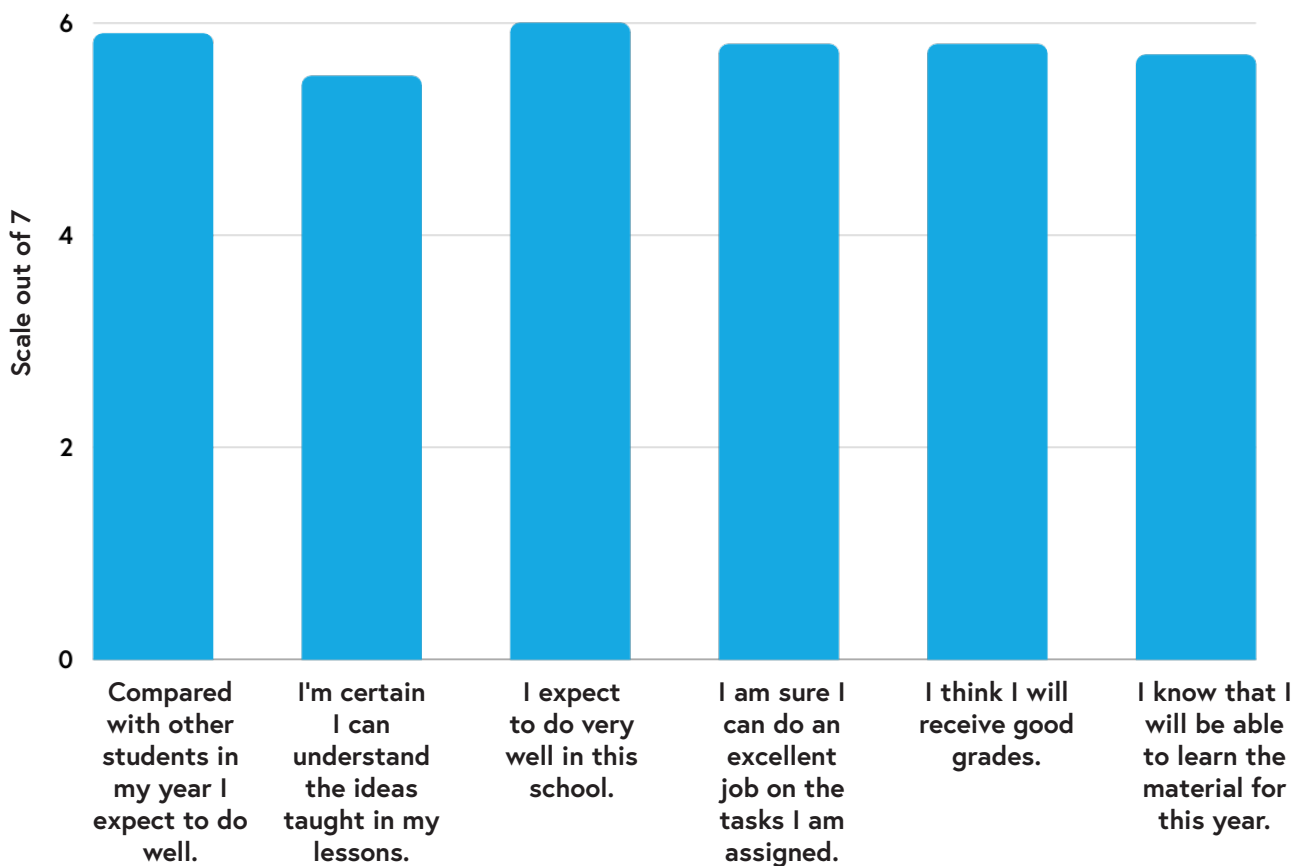
Mentee Awareness

Effective mentors and mentees possess emotional self-awareness and the ability to manage their emotions. They recognise how their emotions can impact their interactions with their peers and demonstrate empathy, compassion, and a sincere desire to support others. Following the programme, the mentees showed an increase both in their self-awareness of own feelings and acknowledging in the feelings of their friends. The regular interactions with their mentors likely facilitated discussions and reflections on emotions, enabling the mentees to better understand and manage their feelings.
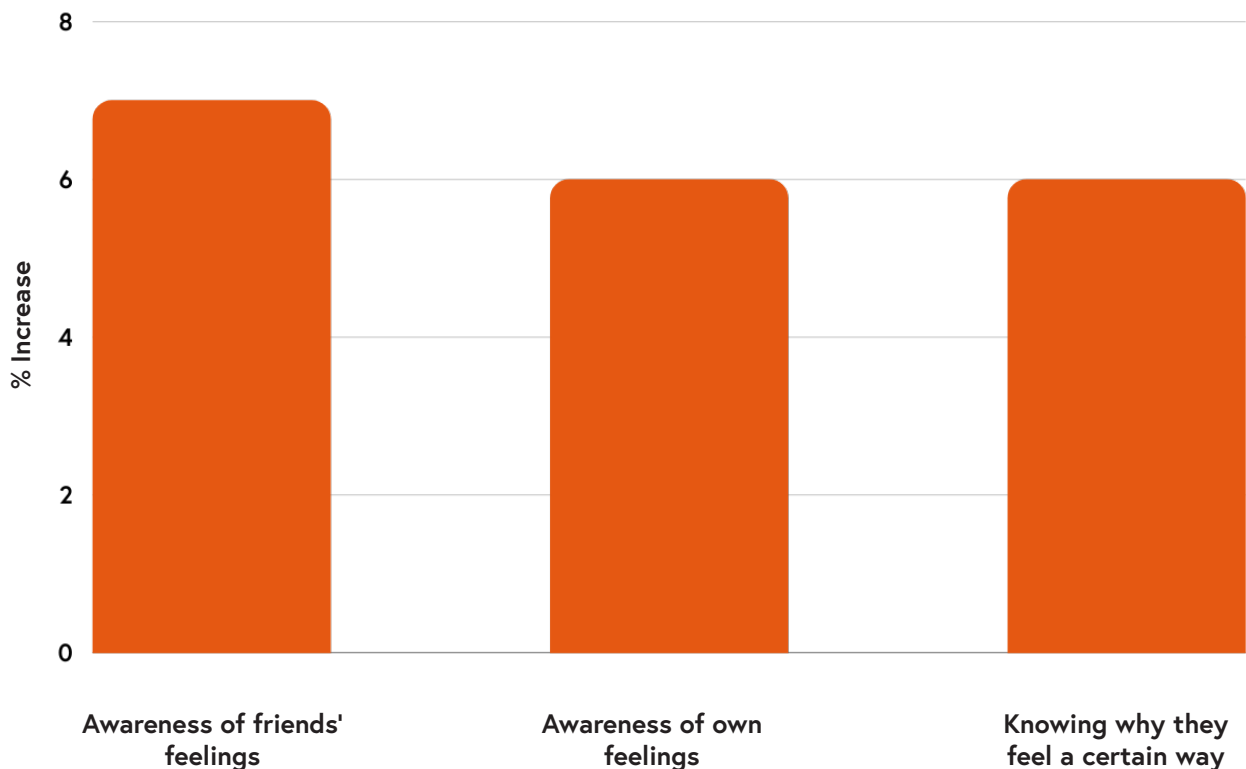
Focus Group:

Qualitative Feedback from Remove Mentees and Y12 Mentors

Oppidan Education's Peer Mentoring Programme has proven to be a valuable initiative that fosters meaningful relationships between mentors and mentees, providing support and guidance throughout important transitions in the students' academic journeys. The following summarises the findings from a final focus group discussion (May 2023) involving mentors and mentees who participated in the program.

General Experience:

The majority of participants expressed positive views about their experience in the Peer Mentoring Programme. Mentees reported enjoying the opportunity to build a close relationship with their mentors and appreciated having someone to talk to. The programme provided a safe space for mentees to open up and share their thoughts and feelings. Mentors also enjoyed the programme, highlighting the chance to get to know their mentees better and engage in meaningful conversations.

"

I really liked it. I think I got to know my mentor very well. And I think I know him much better now than I did before.

Mentee

"

I now always have a person to talk to... and I think it was a great opportunity to meet new people but also have someone to talk to.

Mentee

Relationship Development:

The mentors also expressed positive sentiments about the program, highlighting the development of genuine friendships with their mentees. They emphasised the absence of formality and the relaxed nature of their interactions, which created a supportive environment for open and meaningful conversations. The mentors embraced their role as not only a friend but also as a role model, providing guidance and acting as a positive influence on their mentees' lives.

> " It was quite jovial... outside of the sessions, we would often play like five aside or something... that kind of made the difference between the two-year groups a bit less.
>
> *Mentee*

> " The sort of relationship that I formed with my mentee you could genuinely call it a friendship... it was simply just like a time where he could come to my room and we could have a chat.
>
> *Mentor*

Community Building:

One recurring theme throughout the discussion was the sense of community and interconnectedness fostered by the program. Mentors and mentees mentioned the positive impact on their social skills, as they were encouraged to interact with peers from different year groups. This experience helped break down barriers and encouraged empathy and understanding across different age groups within the school community. Mentees reported increased confidence in approaching and making friends with students from other year groups, contributing to a more connected and inclusive school environment.

> " The Oppidan program really helped create a sense of community within the school. It brought together students from different year groups and allowed us to connect on a personal level. It was like having an extended support system.
>
> *Mentor*

Skills development

The program also proved beneficial in the development of various skills for both mentors and mentees. Mentors mentioned the cultivation of patience and the opportunity to enhance their communication and teaching skills by explaining concepts and introducing new vocabulary to their mentees. Mentees reported an increased level of confidence and an ability to make friends with students outside their own year group. Additionally, participants recognized the development of empathy as they gained a better understanding of the experiences and perspectives of their peers from different year groups.

> Teaching my mentee new vocabulary and ways to express themselves emotionally, I thought that was quite significant.

Mentor

> You learn to be more confident and make friends in other year groups.

Mentee

> It makes you understand more what it's like to be a Harrow boy... learning about other people's personal experiences, which is cool

Mentee

Concluding Thoughts

Oppidan was delighted to work with Harrow School for the third year. It has been powerful to see the programme complete a full cycle, with boys who were mentees in 2020/21 taking on new roles as mentors in 2022/23.

The forging of mentor/mentee relationships aims to provide added support in the hope that year groups will bond and influence each other in positive ways. Looking at the data captured, there is a real strength to the project in terms of enabling greater open and honest conversation between boys, the content of which requires a developing set of skills (empathy – honesty – trust) to play out in the relationship.

The insights reflect the continuing role that mentoring plays in the context of school life and strengthening the sense of school community. The programme aims to better support the pupils through the development of empathetic and honest relationships.

We look forward to the continuing development of the programme in partnership with Harrow and are delighted to be launching with next year's Y12 cohort in the September 2023 Living Together Conference.

Many thanks,

The Oppidan Team

The Oppidan Team