

How Circles for Learning helped a class teacher understand why her class struggled when she was away on PPA time.

"Before I started using Circles for Learning in my classroom, my PPA time or times when I had to be out of class were really challenging. Children struggled and staff put in place to cover my absence struggled to manage them. It was challenging for everyone. When I undertook the training before starting the Circles for Learning programme in the classroom, I started to understand a bit more about attachment and how this could affect the children I was working with. I talked this over with my Circles for Learning coach and we decided to use the baby observations to help children think about how our class baby felt when mum wasn't available to them. We hoped this would help the children start to verbalise how they were feeling when I was out of the classroom. This could then be the first step to helping children think about what we could do when I was out of the classroom to make them feel more safe and supported."



This Year 6 class had high levels of additional needs and challenging behaviour, especially when their teacher was out of the room. Social skills and emotional literacy scores were low and their behaviour showed how difficult they found certain situations. Part of the training before Circles for Learning is brought into the classroom is on attachment and how this effects teaching and learning. After the training the class teacher began reflecting on how her children might be feeling during these moments.

With support from the Circles for Learning coach, the baby observation sessions became a powerful way to explore emotions and how they affected thinking and behaviour. The children quickly and easily connected with the baby, which opened up meaningful conversations about feelings, behaviour and celebrating differences. These amazing sessions were then followed up with a range of activities and lessons which helped children talk about how they felt. The class teacher then worked alongside them to create learning profiles to share with cover staff, giving pupils a voice in what they needed to be able to succeed. The children also decided to have learning buddies when their class teacher was out of the classroom. These learning buddies helped them manage the challenges of the work and of missing their class teacher. The Circles for Learning project created a forum for children to think about, explore and discuss how they felt about different situations with their class teacher and then to work together to think of possible ways to manage these.

"The Circles for Learning Project helped me see my pupils' emotional and social needs alongside their academic ones and gave us the time and space to explore this together."