Case Study 5

Situation:

The focus students is a 13-14 year old female in year 9. She is a looked after child who struggles to maintain friendship issues. As a result this regularly affects her learning due to her bringing these problems into the classroom. She would regularly turn up to Maths lessons in tears due to having fallen out with one of her friends who was then in the same lesson.

She was also quite a dominant and vocal student within the class which can compound friendship issues as she doesn’t listen to the ideas of others.

Target:

The aim was to allow for this student to be able to focus on her learning without being distracted by the ongoing friendship disputes. It was to find a way that allowed her to feel confident enough in the classroom that she could focus on the work rather than distractions. The secondary aim was to give her a voice and allow her to express her ideas in lessons without taking over and causing friction with other students.

Action:

Sitting her at the end of a row of tables next to a wall, to minimise the number of students she would directly interact with during a lesson.

If she was to turn up to a lesson upset for any reason, she would be stopped at the door and if needed she could choose who was to sit next to her or she could also choose to sit alone.

Response:

By allowing her to sit next to a wall at the end of the row it helped to minimise the extent to which friendship issues affected her within the classroom. It also resulted in her becoming more focussed simply as there were less people to cause her distractions.

Previously she had been sat in the middle of the classroom which meant that there were a greater number of students for her to have arguments with. Whereas now there is only a single person in the room with whom her interactions affect her learning. This has allowed her to become more confident about coming to Maths lessons, as she knows that if there is a problem, I will allow her to move somewhere that she is more comfortable and therefore it won’t distract her from her work. It helps to eliminate the fear of confrontation which causes her anxiety that she gets worked up over and in turns creates a barrier to the classroom and hence her education.

The class as a whole now regularly use mini whiteboards, which allows them all to give answers and check their understanding without the need to call out. It helps her to feel that she is being heard and gives instant feedback. At the same time is prevents the confrontation with other students who get frustrated at her for calling out. This is turn improves the atmosphere within the classroom and makes it a much more positive learning environment for the focus student and the whole class.