

## Cross-phase literacy project to improve reading ages at KS3

### School/ Context

Secondary schools have identified a need to explore KS2 reading intervention strategies to support them to close the gap between students with a reading age of 10 and below on entry in Year 7 and their actual age.

### Key points

Cross-phase literacy project to improve the reading ages of students in secondary school who have a reading age below 10 in Yr 7. Recruitment of three primary school experts to each support three secondary schools during the course of an academic year as well as to run online CPD for all secondary schools.

### Purpose

- Secondary schools to have a firm understanding of KS2 reading strategies, interventions and assessments and can confidently interpret KS2 reading data of students on entry.
- Via CPD and in-school visits, secondary schools identify impactful strategies in primary schools and embed them into their reading programme with support from primary schools.

### What were your reasons for doing this work?

- Secondary schools have a wide range of strategies and interventions in place to identify and support students who have a reading age of below 10.
- These strategies and interventions may be overseen by the SEN department, the school Literacy Lead or the Head of English.
- Very few secondary school teachers have been trained in how to support students to read (phonological awareness) and there is an identified need for ongoing phonics training at secondary school. Secondary school teachers are trained to teach students how to read to learn.
- Many secondary school teachers do not understand how students are assessed at the end of KS2 so therefore struggle to interpret the data they receive from primary schools. For example, what does a KS2 reading assessment look like / what does a KS2 reading score of 106 actually mean? This understanding is necessary so that secondary schools can meet students' needs more effectively at their starting point.
- Primary school teachers are the experts not just in designing and delivering catch-up programmes but also in teaching students how to read.

### Who were you targeting?

English leads, literacy leads, and intervention leads in secondary schools responsible for creating and implementing reading intervention strategies.

### What were your success criteria?

- Secondary schools have a firm understanding of how phonics is used at KS2 to support reading.
- Secondary schools are supported to embed successful KS2 reading intervention strategies to support struggling readers with a reading age of 10 and below.
- Secondary schools review reading interventions using strategies developed as part of the collaboration.
- Implemented strategies support students to make strong progress with their reading to close the gap between their reading and actual age.
- Increased whole school awareness of strategies in place to support weaker readers.
- Increased stakeholder involvement in intervention strategies.
- Evaluations of online CDP session achieving 85% Good+
- Post meeting and visit evaluations achieving 85% Good+
- Increased student confidence when reading.
- Increase in reading ages of students receiving interventions.
- Increased teacher/support staff confidence in delivering intervention sessions.

### What did you do?

- All secondary schools complete reading intervention audit via the English subject network to provide overview of current reading interventions and to identify CPD needs.
- As a result of the audit, the three primary experts planned and delivered "Teaching phonics to support reading" online CPD as a twilight session.
- Paired development sessions: based on the outcomes of the audit, secondary schools are paired with primary experts to collaborate on strands of reading strategies identified by the secondary schools. Identified strands include phonics intervention, understanding KS2 data, intervention for students with a reading age below 8, reading and writing transition and supporting EAL students.
- Secondary schools visit primary schools to observe successful KS2 programmes in place.
- Post visit, secondary schools identify observed KS2 strategy that they plan to embed in their KS3 programme and outline the steps to achieve this.
- Follow-up meeting between pairings for secondary school to obtain feedback on their revised reading programme from their primary expert, as well as to share their successes thus far.
- Paired session. Primary school expert visit partner secondary school to observe reading programme in action and provide feedback and support on progress thus far. Secondary school plan their next steps with primary expert support.
- Secondary schools to present on their progress throughout the year as part of the English subject network and share their successes and experiences.
- Final session for primary experts to meet with secondary schools. Opportunities to receive additional feedback and support from primary experts. Secondary schools to outline next steps for following academic year.

### What has been the impact on pupils?

- Increased student confidence when reading.
- Increase in reading ages of students receiving interventions.
- Gap narrowed between reading age of students and their actual age.
- Increased ownership of reading materials.
- High engagement when working with peer reading mentors.
- Increase in reading for pleasure at home and with parents.
- Increased academic progress in all subjects.
- Fewer behaviour incidents during lessons.
- Increased attendance.

#### **What has been the impact on teaching/ leadership? Can you capture a few quotes?**

*"Better understanding of how we align our approaches to reading and can support transition".*

*"Increased understanding of how phonics is used at KS2 to support reading and how these strategies can be used at KS3".*

*"Better informed in terms of how reading is taught in primary. I have taken away many useful ideas which I hope to implement".*

*"We have reviewed our teaching of phonics in KS3 Literacy".*

*"We are training our TAs to provide phonics-based lessons".*

*"We are reviewing our KS2 transition and introducing dedicated reading time".*

*"Introduce a Sixth Form Pair Reading Scheme and run parental engagement events".*

#### **How have you shared your learning with others?**

- Discussions and progress updates at English subject network.
- Discussions and progress updates at ETL meetings.
- Presented at Headteachers' meeting, Autumn 2024.

#### **Useful resources, websites, PowerPoints**

- [Outreach leads phonics presentation](#)
- [Reading for pleasure quality mark](#)
- [National Literacy Trust – evidence-based interventions](#)
- [EEF Improving Literacy in KS2](#)
- [The FFT literacy journey](#)
- [Featherstone Primary and Nursery School – Phonics at home](#)
- [Featherstone Primary and Nursery School – Reading a book at home with your child](#)

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