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Oasis Academy Hadley

North East London

An all-through academy for over 1400 students aged 2-18, Oasis Academy Hadley is situated in Ponders End, North East London. Over two thirds of students qualify for pupil premium, and the number of students speaking English as an additional language is well above average.

Having implemented Accelerated Reader™ (AR™) a few years ago, Oasis Hadley joined the Renaissance School Partnership (RSP) programme to take further the improvements it has seen in students' attainment.

Progress monitoring

Certification

Professional development

Student engagement

Improving reading attainment is a strategic priority at Oasis Academy Hadley. Students typically join with reading levels well below the national average, and staff are conscious that they will be unable to access the wider curriculum if reading standards don't improve rapidly.

Accelerated Reader was implemented several years ago as part of a literacy strategy designed to address these concerns. AR Co-ordinator Dan Adams was a class teacher at the time. He noticed the immediate impact AR had on school life. “AR put a real focus on students' low levels of literacy. Students had books in their hands, and they were eager to take quizzes on what they had read – especially in Year 7.”

Participation increased in the second year of the programme as it became more fully embedded in school life. More lessons were held in the library, which became a more accessible place for students whom staff normally find challenging to engage. “Teachers were given more opportunities to find out what students were interested in,” Dan comments.

Tailored resources

It was clear that AR had further potential to make a significant impact on students' learning. Oasis Hadley joined the Renaissance School Partnership programme to receive dedicated programme management and support with the aim of implementing AR more effectively throughout the academy.

One important document produced for each individual school in the partnership is the Day-to-Day guide, which outlines policy for the successful implementation of AR. This document is tailored to each school's specific situation and needs, combining research-based best practices with an understanding of how AR fits into school life. Because Oasis Hadley runs AR through the English Department, the support and guidance given through RSP focuses on how the department can be used to make the greatest impact on students' growth with AR.

“One positive feature is that students love to quiz on the books they are using within the English curriculum,” Dan explains. “Teachers have conversations with students about what they are reading. Because we have dedicated reading time that rolls through different slots in the timetable, all of our teachers get involved with reading.”

Dedicated training and support

Since joining the RSP programme, the use of student data for diagnostics has become an increasingly important part of the strategy for making measurable progress with literacy. “Our initial training was very helpful, but we have found the ongoing training for the team extremely useful,” Dan explains. “In addition to the remote sessions and on-site training days, the reports we receive have been a fantastic support for our focus on diagnostics.

“I've also attended special RSP days at Renaissance Learning's office, which have provided me with really important training for my role heading up AR. An extra benefit of these days has been the ability to meet teachers from other schools using the programme, to see how they run things and share ideas that we might want to adopt.”

The academy has also benefitted from specially-crafted literacy days, which have been incorporated into a wider programme of enrichment. One day every fortnight is given over to activities not normally possible in the regular curriculum, which have been the ideal forum for literacy days to take place. These can be cross-curricular, drawing on topical events like Black History Month further to embed reading within daily life at the academy.

A big difference for staff at Oasis Hadley since adopting RSP has been a concerted effort by staff and students to achieve Model and Master Class status. These certification standards are awarded to schools achieving research-based best practice benchmarks for student performance and engagement with the programme. Classes are given badges to mark their success and a certificate for the wall, while teachers are given a mug and have a letter sent to their head teacher explaining the significance of their achievement.

“Model Classes have become a big thing. Lots of students come up to us in the corridors and after class asking how close they are to getting Model Class status. Even Year 9 students, whom we normally struggle to keep engaged, are enthusiastic about getting their badges. All the students wear them, including the more reluctant readers.”

Improvements in engagement

The additional support provided by RSP has meant that Dan’s role in overseeing AR has changed. His role is increasingly advisory, training staff in the effective use of the programme.

“As staff grow in confidence using the programme, they are becoming more independent in their use of it. I am increasingly focusing on analysing student data and speaking to teachers, making sure they are working well with the programme.”

Student engagement with AR has increased significantly, too. The average number of points earned per student has increased by 35%, indicating a growing commitment to reading. “Students are going to the library in their own time,” Dan comments. “It’s all on the students; we have set our expectations for reading as part of the school contract, and students are reading more as a result.”

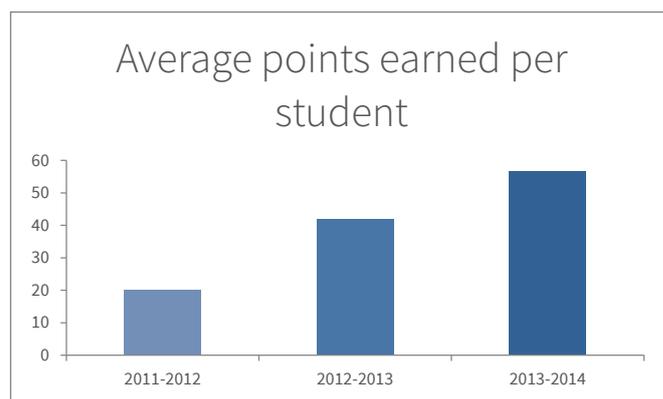


Chart showing the average number of points earned per student, which has tripled under RSP.

Renaissance Learning opens the Renaissance School Partnership (RSP) programme to applications each academic year, carefully selecting a small number of schools to work with over the course of the year. Amongst other benefits, RSP schools have a dedicated Programme Manager who works directly with the school’s leadership and AR teams, and an extensive training programme tailored specifically to the school’s needs, including unlimited access to remote training. Read more at: renlearn.co.uk/rsp

Read more stories of success at: renlearn.co.uk/success