

New routines lead to reading growth in every group

Ryde Academy

Isle of Wight

Ryde Academy is a large secondary academy serving a mixed catchment on the Isle of Wight. Almost 1 in 3 students receive free school meals. The academy has used Accelerated Reader™ (AR™) since 2011 and joined the Renaissance School Partnership (RSP) in 2013.

Data review

OFSTED

Paired reading

Professional development

“We’ve seen a positive impact by engaging students with something they enjoy or didn’t realise they would enjoy.”

Accelerated Reader has been in use at Ryde Academy since 2011, but when the leadership team sought a renewed focus on literacy standards it became clear that the programme could deliver more than it had been used for previously.

“AR was brought in almost as an electronic guided reading scheme,” explains Becky Savage, the AR Co-ordinator. “It was there, but was not massively at the forefront of what we were doing.” The academy identified a link between weaknesses in students’ achievement across the curriculum and their low levels of literacy. “We found that students needed a mid to high Level 3 in order to engage in their lessons,” Becky says, “so we wanted to bring their reading ages up to their chronological ages.”

The academy joined the Renaissance School Partnership programme to enhance the impact of Accelerated Reader across the academy. The effective use of AR became part of the Teaching and Learning plan, and reading became firmly established as part of daily school life.

Routines for reading

Students now read for 20 minutes every day, with Drop Everything and Read (DEAR) time built into the timetable on a rolling schedule. They record the books they are reading in a log book to account for their time, which helps staff to make sure they are being challenged and gives them opportunities to praise them for good practice.

“The RSP programme has been really useful in sharing frameworks for implementing AR during the school day,” Becky observes. “Our structure has become more prominent as the year has gone on. The routine has embedded itself.” As a result of the new procedures put in place, students are reading for longer each day and taking more quizzes, on average, than they did previously.

Early signs of success were noted by OFSTED inspectors when they visited the academy in October. “We were only just putting into place our routines for reading,” Becky says, “but students were able to tell the inspectors our expectations. The feedback was positive, with the inspectors indicating that we seemed to have something good in place and wanting to see how it progresses.”

The report published after the inspection drew particular attention to the reading programme being put in place at the academy, linking its focus on reading standards to success across the curriculum:

The work of the academy to strengthen students’ literacy skills is good. Students enjoy reading and are provided with daily opportunities to read. In some cases, this is cleverly linked to subject content which helps students to deepen their understanding.

Monitoring progress

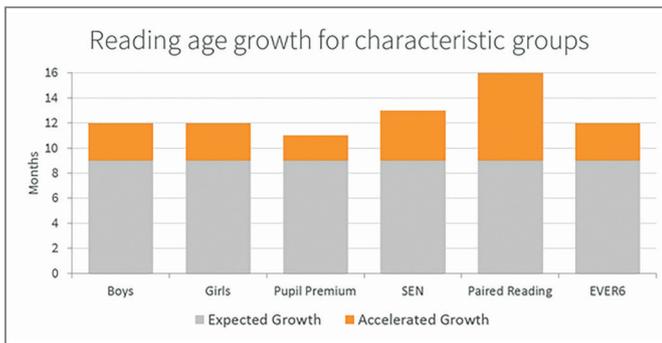
Since then, the programme has been implemented more consistently across the academy and the whole staff team has been given training to monitor students’ progress effectively. “Teachers speak to two or three students every time we have DEAR time,” Becky explains. “We check their reading logs to see how they are progressing and advise them about what they should be reading. Our STAR™ test data shows that the students we are monitoring more closely are the ones making the most progress.”

The STAR Reading™ data the academy uses to monitor student progress has become a valuable resource for Becky and the team. Previously, the computer-adaptive tests were administered under variable conditions so they were producing unreliable results. Training through the RSP programme has helped staff to administer the test with fidelity, which has led to more consistent results.

The RSP programme provides several on-site consultation days through the course of the year, in addition to regular remote training and telephone support. Becky has used her on-site training and half-termly reports to set priorities for the forthcoming half term, gradually embedding and building on best practices over time. “The consultation days and reports have been very useful,” she says. “They give me a day to absorb what I need to do, then five or six weeks to take that forward.”

Motivating success

“I am a big believer in rewards and praise,” Becky says, which is why the academy has put in place a comprehensive set of rewards for students to motivate them to make progress. “We have found that our reluctant readers are just that: not low-level but just reluctant to read. So our challenge has been to keep up with millionaire readers [who have read over 1 million words] while making sure our reluctant readers feel a sense of achievement. We’ve seen a positive impact by engaging students with something they enjoy or didn’t realise they would enjoy.”



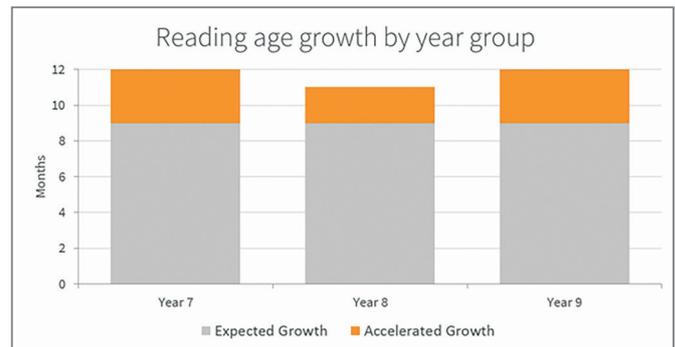
Students’ reading ages have improved by an average of twelve months in the nine months of September 2014 to June 2015. Boys have performed as well as girls. Students on the Duolog paired reading scheme have improved their reading ages by an average of seven months beyond the expected level of growth.

Rewards focused on short-term targets complement longer-term rewards, meaning that there are opportunities to praise students on a weekly, half-termly and termly basis. “We want students to feel that making progress is an easy thing to attain – and to make them want to do it.”

The students who are making the most progress with the programme are those taking part in the Duolog paired reading scheme. This scheme was introduced by the RSP Programme Manager, who delivered training before it was launched for staff and students.

The scheme sees students in Year 7 paired with reading mentors in Years 10 and 11 who have been identified as gifted and talented. Becky believes that both students in each pair benefit from the scheme. “A lot of students ask me if they can be reading partners. It’s a positive atmosphere because it’s engaging and the older students get that leadership quality.”

The training and data analysis the academy has received with the RSP programme has helped Becky to put in place structures that will continue to deliver strong student growth in years to come. “Our expectations and routines are more prominent this year,” she says, “but we will have more chances to improve things further. We have made good progress, but we can still make more!”



Reading age growth has been above the expected level in every year group using the programme, averaging 12 months of reading age growth in nine months.

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

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