ReadingWise

Smith's Wood Academy, Fairfax Multi-academy Trust

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When did you first come across ReadingWise?

We had an Ofsted inspection at Smith's Wood Academy where we went into Special Measures. One of the issues was around literacy as the academy was not effectively intervening with the children whose reading age was below their chronological age. Thus, I began research looking for an intervention package/model which could hit high numbers of learners while still being effective. When I had an introductory call with Jamie Fries, I found out that they were working with Star Academies - who were my previous employer - so I contacted the Principal from my old school to get her feedback about the programme, which was incredibly positive.

What made literacy one of your top priorities and when?

I am the English and Literacy Lead for my Trust. I started nearly 2 years ago and I quickly noticed that there was an issue around the robustness of the testing and also the quality of intervention taking place to address gaps in those students who were in the bottom 20% for reading.

Can you outline your plan and time frame?

I submitted a plan to my CEO to roll the programme out across the Trust. I created this in conjunction with Chloe from RW. Our goal was to get all students in Y7-10 tested using NGRT prior to the summer break in 2023 with the Decoding module to begin in September 2023 and the Comprehension module to be rolled out in January 2024 across all academies. The most pressing academy was Smith's Wood due to the areas for development outlined in the Ofsted inspection report.

Who was involved in creating the plan?

I created the plan in conjunction with Chloe from ReadingWise and the literacy leaders and senior leaders from each individual academy. I was entirely responsible for this at Smith's Wood Academy.

Which staff are involved in implementing the plan?

I have led the implementation at Smith's Wood in conjunction with the SENCO, librarian, TAs and latterly the literacy lead who wasn't appointed until January. At other academies, this was done in conjunction with senior leaders and literacy leads.

Why did you decide to use ReadingWise as part of the plan?

RW seemed like the best solution to hit larger numbers of students in line with the cohorts we have at our academies. It was the most cost-effective option and I had impact data from my previous trust to support this.

What was your rationale behind all Fairfax schools using ReadingWise as part of their literacy strategy?

As above really - 3 out of our 4 schools have high numbers of children who would be deemed to be in the bottom 20% nationally. The programmes that were in place previously were not cost-effective - for example, they were often one to one interventions which took place 2-3 times per week. Thus, they were not value for

money or hitting the numbers of children that we have. They were also resource-heavy and required trained TAs/teachers for them to be delivered effectively.

How do you use baseline assessments to target support?

We use NGRT tests to identify those who may need extra support and then follow these up to conduct Burts tests to decide which would be the most appropriate intervention. We then retest using NGRT and Burts to track the progress of the learners who are involved in interventions.

Do you feel better equipped to support struggling readers?

Definitely! Both executives and trustees within our Trust have been pleased with the impact this has had, particularly the Decoding module. We also have evidence to suggest that some students who have engaged in the programme have improved more than just their reading age. For example, 4 students at Smith's Wood have seen a big decline in their truancy rates since starting the programme.

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