

Springboard for Children Transition Project

Supporting Literacy through
transition from Primary to
Secondary School

Aims: To provide ongoing literacy support and mentoring for Y7 pupils on their transition from primary to secondary school.



Funded by:



Department for Education

Springboard for Children has worked for many years supporting primary aged pupils, delivering a tailored phonics intervention applied to high quality reading, writing, speaking and listening activities. The majority of pupils are referred from Key Stage 1 but we have a core in KS2 who despite having had a range of literacy interventions still have considerable barriers to their learning and work below national expectations in literacy.



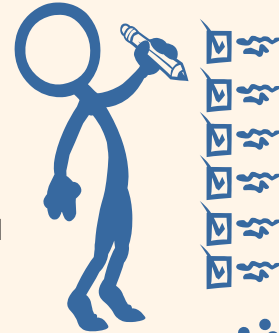
On transition to secondary school these difficulties are magnified when pupils face a wider and more demanding curriculum. This coupled with social and organisational difficulties presented in a school often twice the size of average primaries can present a less than auspicious start to secondary education for some of our most challenged and challenging pupils. Seven of the fifteen students who attend Springboard lessons at the Academy received Springboard tuition at their time at Oliver Goldsmith Primary School; the remainder of new pupils have received intervention in their primary schools at School Action Plus. Eleven pupils are boys; the majority are at School Action Plus, although two have a statement.



The reading ages at baseline ranged from 6yrs to 11yrs and none of the students know the 44 basic phonemes in order to support their blending and segmenting skills for spelling and reading. Additional needs range from a focus on gaining fluency in reading, to understanding the language or context of what is read, to a focus on spelling choices, using capital letters, full stops, and producing coherent descriptive pieces of writing. Some students have additional needs such as developmental, behaviour and emotional, and English as an Additional Language.

The pupils receive twice weekly one hour sessions within our dedicated teaching space at the Academy. The project is staffed by a Springboard tutor who is SpLD qualified, an intern and three part time volunteers all of whom have been intensively trained by us. The tutor, as well as teaching herself, supervises the volunteers and coordinates the timetable ensuring that the pupils don't miss out on the same curriculum subject each week. She works closely with the head of English and the inclusion team ensuring that all relevant information regarding these pupils is shared.

We use a broad base of assessment measures both quantitative and qualitative, in order to measure the impact of the tuition on pupil progress. Early qualitative indicators suggest that there has been most improvement in behavior, attitude to learning and self-esteem. There is no doubt that there is a need for this kind of basic literacy support in secondary schools as this quote from the Head of English testifies;



“I and the rest of the Literacy team are ecstatic at the support Springboard have been providing. It is exactly the sort of thing our students need and is really making a difference. All too often I feel massively frustrated that I am unable, as a classroom teacher, to give my students the 1-1 support that they so desperately need, I’m also aware that with our KS4 students we spend a vast amount of time trying to compensate for the fact that their literacy levels are so low. I can therefore see that this initiative is going to have a massive impact in the future as well as the present.”



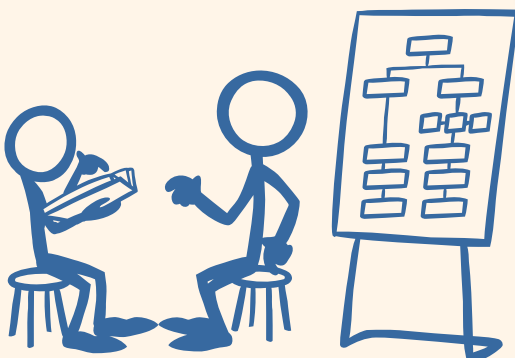
After a term at the Academy we realised that the need for literacy support went beyond our 15 Springboard pupils and beyond Y7. In order to address this, we have set up a literacy buddying project entitled 'Reader Leaders'. We trained a group of Y13 students and a group of more capable students from Y10 who were predicted a GCSE pass in English, to deliver reading support to a further group of Y7/8 students for 2x 15 minute sessions per week. The 'Reader Leaders' who have an additional language are paired up with a pupil who has the same additional language so that some of the learning can be explained in their Mother Tongue.

This part of our work has a dual role – it improves the literacy skills of the Reader Leader and enhances their CV. We have offered the Y13 students the opportunity to go for an Open College Network accreditation for their work. It also offers a unique tutor/mentor relationship with the younger students who not only have a tutor to assist them with their reading, but also a role model/friend who they see around the school and 'looks out for them'.

As this project develops we intend to establish 'outreach' work for our Y10's when they go into Y11 next year. They will be offered the opportunity to go to feeder primary schools to tutor the Y6 students prior to their transition so that they will already have a Reader Leader buddy before they enter the secondary school. This tuition will then continue throughout Y7.

'Peer mentoring may help new students adapt to a new academic environment faster. The relationship between the mentor and mentee gives the mentee a sense of being connected to the larger community where they may otherwise feel lost. Mentors are chosen because they are academically successful and because they possess good communication, social and leadership skills. As a consequence, mentors serve as positive role models for the students, guiding them towards academic and social success. Mentors provide support, advice, encouragement, and even friendship to students. Peer mentoring may improve student retention rates'

Stoltz AD. "The relationship between peer mentoring program participation and successful transition to high school." (Dissertation). University of California, Davis, 2005.

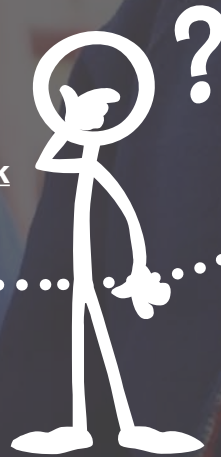


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The individuals represented in these photographs are not models. The photographs were taken during Trust activities but individuals may not be involved in this specific work described and are used only to illustrate the case study.