



Implementation and impact of SRS at The Iffley Academy

The Iffley Academy is a special school for approximately 150 students with complex educational needs ranging from Year 6 to Year 13. Students fall into four categories: Cognition & Learning; Communication and Interaction (ASC/Speech & Language); Social, Emotional & Mental Health; and Physical & Sensory needs.

Our aims are to develop functional literacy skills as appropriate for the stage, as well as fuel the learners' imaginations and immerse them in the world of storytelling. The curriculum is grounded in spoken language and underpinned by the rigorous, consistent phonics programme (SRS).

The Sound Reading System really is the 'key' to a complex English spelling code. This multi-sensory approach suits the majority of our learners. Year 7 is taught this logical code from the start and the SRS framework continues throughout their time at Iffley. Although, Years 7-11 have discrete SRS lessons and the system is used in intervention classes, the accessible spelling code is used each and every day to enable our students to unlock reading and writing with increasing independence. Visitors will recognise it in assemblies, on displays and in the full range of curriculum areas used by teachers, students and TAs alike.

The impact of SRS is remarkable – and rapid for most. As a former mainstream Head of English, I have been enthused by the confidence it can inspire in young learners with SEND. It is a 'can do' approach that sets the learners up for success. Within a few weeks, progress can often be seen and we hope it is a strategy our learners can use for life. For example, student A joined Iffley in Year 10 from mainstream education refusing to read and write. He is diagnosed with ASC and Cognition and Learning. By the second week, he was able to use the code to sound out and blend words. Come the second month, he was writing sentences using his phonic knowledge. Now, a year later, he can apply the code to unfamiliar words, joke about the complexity of English spelling and has just achieved Entry Level 1 reading. Although heart-warming, his story is not incredible here.

Since 2015-16, Iffley has measured its attainment and progress in % of the competencies met for each year of the national curriculum programme of study. The judgement for each year has never been less than outstanding in reading and I am certain SRS contributes to that. Progress has exceeded the 60% benchmark (71%, 63% and 70% respectively). Functional Skills accreditation in English is also high for our learners. Historically, almost 100% of students acquire reading qualifications at Entry Levels 1, 2, 3 or Level 1.

The Sound Reading System, whilst not a quick fix, can really unlock the portal to the world of written word and change lives.

(Dee Taylor: English Manager 2.12.18)