

“The small, supportive Fresh Start groups build confidence and give pupils the opportunity to thrive.”

We spoke to **Lindy Robertson, Fresh Start Lead at King Edward VI Academy, about the impact of *Read Write Inc. Fresh Start*.**

“Many students start Year 7 with a reading age below age-related expectation and many come from deprived backgrounds. We need to rapidly improve their literacy so they can get more out of lessons. These students will fall further behind if they cannot participate in classes. *Read Write Inc. Fresh Start* gets students reading accurately and fluently so teachers in other subjects can effectively deliver the curriculum.

“**Fresh Start was straightforward to implement.** I initially went on the two-day training – it was fantastic. We have since had more of our staff trained and have regular Development Days with our Consultant Trainer. Her support is so valuable. She is approachable, supportive and more than anything, incredibly enthusiastic – it’s contagious!

“**Our Fresh Start students often start with a negative attitude and believe they will always lack reading skills.** They often close off, refusing to work and saying “I can’t read, I can’t do it”. They are worried, lack confidence, and often misbehave to cover it up. The small, supportive Fresh Start groups build confidence and give pupils the opportunity to thrive. Their whole attitude changes as they see their success

School Name: **King Edward VI Academy**

Location: **Spilsby, Lincolnshire**

Free school meals: **22%**

SEN: **24%**

Pupils on roll: **558**

Age range: **11 - 18**

Number of Year 7 pupils on *Fresh Start*: **34 (28% of the year group)**

and progress. They stop misbehaving and become independent, active learners. They enjoy Fresh Start lessons. Parents are pleased too – they can see their children getting the extra help they need. When teachers of other subjects stop commenting on students’ literacy abilities, and can focus on teaching their own subject, I know Fresh Start is working.

“**I particularly remember the progress of one Year 7 boy.** He started the programme with a reading age of 6 years and 1 month. Within 6 months he had progressed to 8 years and 4 months. He’s still improving rapidly, and thanks to Fresh Start, he’ll get there. His attitude and behaviour improved and he is now a pleasure to teach. Recently, in a mainstream English class test, he couldn’t read “rescue”. He asked me, but of course I couldn’t tell him. A few minutes later he suddenly shouted it out with a massive smile on his face. He had persevered in a way he simply would not have done previously. I’m very proud.”