

*“Teaching children to read and to love reading is a shared mission: TKAT directors, headteachers, teaching staff and Ruth Miskin trainers work as a team to remove barriers to learning and reach every child in our academies.”* Gianni Bianchi, TKAT Primary Director of Education

We talked to Meg Thompson, trust primary reading lead.

### Trust-wide approach for consistency and success

We decided unanimously as a leadership team that Read Write Inc. Phonics (RWI) was the best programme for the trust. Both the resources and professional development help create a consistent and secure approach to teaching reading.



### Strong, professional communication with trainers

As trust lead, I work closely with our Ruth Miskin Training (RMT) lead. She is a godsend; I reach out to her with queries from schools and we meet half-terminally to discuss progress across the trust. RMT trainers support our reading leaders on in-school development days too. Reading leaders, in turn, support staff to teach with confidence. It's a virtuous circle of support.

We're all teaching the same programme and support one another. Professional relationships and expertise in reading deepen both in and across schools.

### Trust information

The Kemnal Academies Trust (TKAT)  
South & East of England

Number of primary academies: 26

Date started working with RMT: January 2021

Phonics screening check (PSC)

2019: 77%

2022: 84%

PSC 2022 for disadvantaged pupils: 79%  
(national average 62%)

### Children love the decodable books

Teaching RWI is so much more than passing the PSC. Reading is at the heart of the programme and part of daily lessons. Children who were previously anxious about reading, find joy in RWI lessons. They know the activities and routines; can read the words; and talk about and understand the stories.

This is especially true for children who aren't read to at home. RWI opens reading up for them. They don't have to rely on other people; they can read the books themselves. You can see the spark in children's eyes!

### Teaching RWI raises the profile of back and forth talk

The focus on children's talk with RWI is powerful. Using 'my turn, your turn' and 'turn to your partner' reduces the level of teacher talk. In RWI classes, children talk with confidence. It particularly supports children who start Reception with genuine speech and language issues or those who are new to English.

## Reading leaders become confident coaches

After my half-termly data meeting with our RMT lead, reading leaders attend training and practise the key activities we've identified. Practice time gives them the confidence to help colleagues in schools. Our reading leaders don't teach their own RWI group: they establish a culture of practice in their schools and provide live coaching in lessons. Headteachers see the impact of this on the quality of teaching in RWI lessons.

## Practice with the online portal

Access to PD films on the online portal has transformed our teaching. Bite-size training for every activity is at our fingertips. Reading leaders create individual pathways for their team and can say: 'Have a watch, have a practice and we can go through the teaching steps together afterwards.'

Some staff watch a video three or four times. It gives everyone more confidence and independence. As a teaching assistant recently said: 'I watched the video and it helped. I just couldn't get the steps in my head before and now I've seen it, it makes sense.' Teachers are clear of the purpose of each activity.

## New teachers – clear route to success

We run training for new staff using the portal films. Teaching RWI is simple for new teachers: 'This is our programme, here's the online portal. Watch the films, practise and meet your reading leader.' They are supported and confident from day one.

## Next steps for TKAT

RWI is a success in TKAT schools because everyone wholeheartedly wants it to work. If our staff didn't believe in RWI, we wouldn't do it as a trust. We are extending RWI programmes to our secondary academies for pupils not yet reading with accuracy and fluency.

