

Bedrock's impact at Harris Academy Peckham

How have you embedded literacy into your culture at Peckham?

We've established a literacy policy which draws on the EEF guidance on improving literacy in secondary schools. The T&L element of it breaks down anything to do with reading and writing, learning a word and practising oracy. We've embedded this into our culture, bringing T&L practice into tutor time, enrichment activities and our assembly programme.

Bedrock has been fundamental in developing a culture of literacy here. To embed Bedrock into our curriculum, we call Tier 2 words 'Bedrock words' and teach them in lessons across the curriculum. For example, when studying maths, we emphasise how Bedrock words – such as *reflect*, *transform* and *rotate* – can be used in a variety of other subject areas. Similarly, in RS we might teach the religious context of the word *transcendent* while also highlighting how it can be used in other different subjects and contexts.

Recently, in assembly, we used the Bedrock word *abhorrent* when explaining FGM. Embedding words into our culture by applying Bedrock words in a variety of contexts helps engage students as they see how relevant these words are.

What engagement strategies have been successful in encouraging usage of Bedrock?

We consciously set the bar high for Bedrock usage. We tell students to do their Bedrock daily, to make it the first thing they do after they come home from school – to make it a habit. This approach has definitely increased usage.

We've found sending messages home has had a big impact. Texts seem more effective than email, especially when it comes to encouraging families to make Bedrock the first thing students do when they get home.

Sharing Bedrock usage figures with staff, including the principal, means every staff briefing has been transformative.

In our weekly newsletter, the Peckham Post, which we publish on our website and on screens around the school, we list the students who have completed at least two Bedrock lessons that week and award them a small prize. This really helps motivate students to take pride in their usage.

One particular event that helped to embed Bedrock into our culture, and encourage usage, was the Bedrockathon we used to mark World Book Day. It was a cheesy telethon-like infomercial that we broadcast across the academy for 80 minutes, and we challenged every single Peckham student to do Bedrock during that session.

Students completed tasks such as creating a story using a range of specific Bedrock words, like *arrange*, *harsh* and *process*, or *attract*, *digest* and *resident*. We shared real-time usage figures – e.g. ‘in the last 20 mins over 200 students have been using Bedrock!’ – and turned slang into Bedrock words – for example, *leng* means elegant.

Inspired by our Bedrockathon’s success, other academies in our Federation have since run similar events themselves. We’re currently in discussion with some of them about doing an inter-school competition – maybe a spelling competition using Bedrock words.

What impact has Bedrock made on your students?

We notice them applying their Bedrock knowledge in other contexts. In a recent RS lesson, for example, I asked the class for synonyms for love. One said altruism – a Bedrock word. So we clearly see students using Bedrock words in their everyday language.

We’ve also noticed, in our NGRT diagnostic data [read more on diagnostic tools in general], a strong correlation between reading age and consistent Bedrock usage. Our students who earn on average at least 20 Bedrock points a week (or complete two 20-minute lessons) have made, on average, two years’ progress in their reading age in just eight months.

One particular statistic illustrates the progress students make on Bedrock: in January, four of our students had a reading age of 17, but just five months later that number was 15.

Our biggest challenge can be enabling students with the lowest reading age to make progress. Even that cohort, though, made on average two years’ progress with that five month period on Bedrock.

We've taken on board the EEF's guidance on teaching self-regulated learning and metacognition in our approach to students reviewing their work after we've explicitly taught a Bedrock word in class (something the Bedrock knowledge organiser feature also supports). We've definitely seen the benefits of this, especially in our pupil premium students.

Finally, our Customer Success team has noticed your brilliant levels of parent engagement – what's your strategy?

Having sent out letters with the access codes parents need to log in for the first time, we've placed the responsibility for getting parents logged into their linked accounts [which come free with every school student account] onto tutors.

We've told tutors to offer parents help if they notice they aren't logging on, and to offer any help we can, for example, for EAL parents or those who don't have strong digital literacy, with their agreement we sign them up ourselves.

We plan to use the next parents' evening as another opportunity to get parents logged into their Bedrock accounts.

Thank you for your insights and creative ideas to drive engagement and progress on Bedrock – you are tangibly improving literacy at Harris Academy Peckham!