

School Spotlight

Building a Blueprint for Reading Culture at Flying High Trust (UK)

The Flying High Trust, a nonprofit organization that oversees 35 primary schools in Nottinghamshire and nearby areas, provides shared leadership, resources, and guidance to help its schools flourish. At the heart of its literacy efforts is Carl Pattison, who serves as the early reading lead for all Flying High schools and leads the English Hub for the Flying High Partnership, a regional support network that extends beyond the trust. In this multifunctional role, Carl brings unique insight into the evolving needs of the school community.

Always on the lookout for innovative solutions, Carl identified Beanstack as a tool to help inspire students to read, while providing meaningful data and insights for educators. With these goals in mind, the trust piloted Beanstack with two schools. Carl's approach was both strategic and collaborative, encouraging reflection, iteration, and knowledge sharing so that future schools could build on lessons learned.



“The real draw was that strong connection with reading for pleasure, which isn't really done by anybody else. It wasn't just another reading tracker.

Carl Pattison

Early Reading Lead and Strategic Leader

Why Beanstack?

Carl and his team were looking for a tool to inspire students and provide structure for schools to track and support reading habits. They chose Beanstack as a way to:

- Replace traditional reading booklets with an online platform
- Provide school leaders and teachers with actionable insights into reading progress
- Help students develop a love of reading through choice, challenge, and celebration

Implementation Approach

Launching Beanstack in the Flying High Partnership was a phased, collaborative effort grounded in real classroom needs. Here's how the rollout took shape:

- **Piloted in Two Schools:** Carl identified Horsendale and Greythorn Primary Schools in Nottingham to test Beanstack for a year, allowing for observation and feedback.
- **Appointed School Leaders:** Carl selected a teacher as “Beanstack Champion” at each school. This person was in charge of implementation, training, supporting the program, reviewing student recommendations, and tracking data.
- **Shared Strategy:** Carl worked with the schools to launch Beanstack and create a prize structure that consistently rewarded students for logging their reading time and effort.

Lessons Learned

While each school had different experiences, a few strong themes emerged.

- **Getting parents involved is key.** Parent involvement proved central to both schools' success. Classes with engaged parents saw higher participation, and parent groups helped fuel momentum across the board.
- **Staff buy-in results in student buy-in.** Getting staff excited about the tool was essential for student adoption. When teachers frequently demoed Beanstack in classrooms, students were most responsive.
- **Make it a team effort.** In both schools, the Beanstack Champions were teachers juggling many responsibilities. Moving forward, Carl recommends creating small teams to share the load and sustain momentum.

By making Beanstack part of their daily routines and reading cultures, these first two schools have laid a meaningful foundation for others across the trust to build on.

LOOKING AHEAD

When the schools were asked if they wanted to continue using Beanstack, they both enthusiastically said yes. As more schools express interest, Carl sees Beanstack becoming a core tool in Flying High's literacy strategy. Next steps include expanding to additional schools, sharing new implementation and best practices strategies, and using Beanstack for established literacy programs like annual readathons.