

Success story

Niddrie Mill Primary School, Edinburgh

School Profile

Number of pupils	250
EAL	6%
Free School Meals	53%

Niddrie Mill primary is a non-demoninational school situated on the edge of the Niddrie/Craigmillar area of Edinburgh, which is recognised as being an area of multiple social deprivations.

Renaissance Learning's web-based Accelerated Reader (AR) program was introduced into the school just over three years ago to encourage the development of a 'Reading Culture' at a time when many pupils lacked interest in reading and saw it as a 'chore'. The goal was to raise attainment in literacy and encourage an enjoyment of reading by providing more access to, and interest in, books. The integrated use of ICT, comprehension quizzes and systemised tracking of progress was seen as a motivating factor in developing interest and personal responsibility in pupils for their learning.

The ICT Coordinator, Miss Borthwick, first tests the children from P3 - P7 (Year 2 - Year 6) using the STAR Reader assessment program, which identifies their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and indicates their book level: *"The children select books at appropriate levels from the Library. They read in class and at home and record their progress in learning logs."* Miss Borthwick and an LA, Mrs Sweeney, then oversee the taking of quizzes and changing of books at an assigned time in the ICT suite each day: *"Children can also take quizzes in their classes or on the laptops set up in the shared area."* If pupils achieve 90% and above in their quiz they move up a book level. If they score 80% they choose a book at the same level, whilst those below 80% are encouraged to re-read the book and re-take the quiz. Miss Borthwick and Mrs Sweeney discuss the children's scores with them and talk about their next steps: *"When children achieve 100% their photo appears on the 'AR Reader' board, and those achieving 10x100% are awarded a £5 book token in assembly."* Miss Borthwick updates the system every night, and provides the teachers with feedback: *"Each term the children are STAR tested to see how much progress*

Continued overleaf

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Success story

Niddrie Mill Primary School, Edinburgh *continued...*

they have made. The results are analysed and fed back to staff and pupils. Parents visit the school to see the process in action and find out how they can support their children's reading. We also did a 'sponsored read' to raise funds for the School Library, and had various visits from the local Library to encourage the children to join. In addition, we have had visits from local Authors in our Book Week and have taken part, with other Scottish Schools, in a video conference with Anthony Horowitz."

Miss Borthwick believes the school now has a "clear and evident culture of reading" in which "pupils talk confidently about their books, Authors, genres and are actively involved in the choice of reading materials". She adds: "Attainment has been significantly raised since the web version of Accelerated Reader was introduced just over three years ago."

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AR-Primary - raising standards

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