



Success story

Wolsingham School and Community College, Weardale

School Profile

Number of pupils	780
EAL	tbc
Free School Meals	tbc

Established in 1614, Wolsingham School and Community College is situated in picturesque Weardale. Located on the east side of the Pennines in County Durham, large parts of Weardale fall within the North Pennines 'Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty'. Its 780 pupils are rightly proud of its specialist status as a Performing Arts College (Drama and Dance).

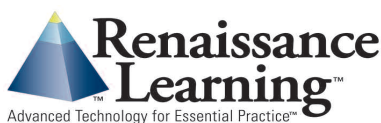
The school have been using Renaissance Learning's Accelerated Reader program for just over a year with pupils from Years 7, 8 and 9 - and early results show that not only has the program been successful in progressing pupils through the levels, but it has also significantly reduced the number reading below age 10.

However, one of the keys to the success of the school's reading programme has been tailoring the application of Accelerated Reader to the specific Year Groups, as Bev Stuttard - the school Librarian - comments: "Year 9 have been the most difficult to motivate and keep on task. They clearly resented the time spent reading, regarding tutor time as their time that was being taken from them. Many of them think they can read sufficiently well and typically confuse accuracy of reading words with comprehension. Their improvement has been a pleasant surprise." She continues: "It is extremely rewarding to listen to pupils who have transformed their literacy skills and improved markedly. These pupils are displaying a change in attitude and a general enthusiasm for their success by wanting to read more. Everybody enjoys success, and for many of them this is the first time they have experienced academic success."

Converting an existing 'Learning to Learn' into an 'Accelerating Reading' session was a watershed moment for the school, and this trial method of running the program proved not only successful, but also popular with staff. Pupils are divided into small groups by reading age, and are allocated to a member of staff who works with them during each session - encouraging and supporting them. Bev comments:

Continued overleaf

For more information on Accelerated Reader please call FREEphone
0800 917 4447 or visit www.renlearn.co.uk



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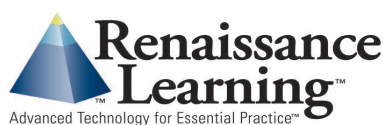
Wolsingham School and Community College, Weardale *continued...*

"The success of the program relies on the careful and personal monitoring and mentoring of individual pupils."

Whilst over 78% of pupils across the key stage have shown improvements, some have been having difficulty, but this is often because they are rushing the tests or not reading the questions properly: *"Having watched them take these tests there are lots of very silly mistakes. As a result, we have developed a system for administering the test to improve the experience for pupils."* Some pupils particularly benefit from working in smaller groups, as Bev observes: *"If they feel they are getting personal input they seem to try harder. They are also allocated extra time by the program. Obviously this does take extra staff time, but has such improved outcomes for results and pupil attitude."*

Since its introduction, a lot of lessons have been learned about the program to ensure it is being used to best effect, as Bev states: *"The first year operation of Accelerated Reader has been a very steep learning curve. While much has been learned, I believe there are still more improvements to be made"*, adding: *"I believe that this is the most effective reading scheme I have been involved in, in over 32 years as a Librarian. The school is very pleased with the program."*

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AR-Reluctant Readers

