

Wolsingham breaks the 10K barrier

In only their second year of using Accelerated Reader, Wolsingham School and Community College in Weardale hit the landmark 10,000 quizzes passed in a school year – and they did it with four weeks to spare. Librarian Bev Stuttard said, *‘We’ve more than doubled our total of 4,581 from the previous year, and we were pleased when we got that.’* With only 396 students in KS3, that averages 25 quizzes passed per student. Assistant Head Chris Goy said, *‘Accelerated Reader has made an incredible difference in our school. Staff are reporting raised standards across the whole curriculum. Ironically, there’s no SATs this year, but we know teacher assessment levels are up 5% in English, and some individual students have made remarkable progress.’* Chris also told Renaissance News that STAR reading tests at the end of term showed that the average reading age progress for Year 7 students was twice the expected rate. He added: *‘Perhaps one of the most pleasing aspects is that the students themselves recognise how the scheme is helping them with all their subjects. Some of them told me they thought it would be weird to go to a school that didn’t use Accelerated Reader.’*

Students at Wolsingham have another incentive to read. Chris is actually a children’s author himself, and is behind the national competition associated with his ***Terry, the Torus and the Tumblestones*** series. Readers of the first book, ***The Seven Stones***, simply write (in 100 words or less) about who their favourite character was in the book, and why they liked them. The first name and description of the winner will be used as the basis for a character in the third book, ***The Guardian of the Past***. A panel of people involved in children’s literature, chaired by Renaissance Learning’s Managing Director, James Bell, will choose the winner from a shortlist of ten. The winner even gets to choose whether they want to play a good role or a bad role in the book. Chris said, *‘Teachers up and down the country are reporting that the competition is a great motivator, not just to get the students reading, but writing as well.’* The competition is open to UK residents under 18, and the closing date is 31st May 2010. Full details are available on the series website www.terry-torus-tumblestones.co.uk.