

Success story

Yattendon School, Horley

School Profile

Number of pupils	432
EAL	n/a
Free School Meals	n/a

Part of a federation of several Horley schools in Surrey, Yattendon is larger than most primary schools. It is a popular school that is regularly over-subscribed. Children's attainment on entry to the school is considered to be average, an above average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and disabilities - and there are a small number with a statement of special need education.

The majority of pupils are White British, but the remainder are from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. A below average percentage of pupils are at an early stage of learning to speak English.

For several years now the school have been using Renaissance Learning's Accelerated Reader (AR) Advantage program to help consistently raise the pupils' standards of literacy.

Chris Bennett, Head Teacher at the school, has been very pleased with the impact the program has had, commenting: *"Our use of Accelerated Reader across the school has been a fantastic initiative."*

Designed to both accurately identify and raise reading levels through fun, web-based, motivational quizzes - whilst also encouraging reading for pleasure - AR helps make learning 'personal' so that each child can progress at their own rate. This approach has helped bring children together with books that will both interest and challenge them enough to go on reading, as Chris observes: *"I have noticed that several children take their books outside at break time so that they can carry on reading whilst walking around the playground - I have never seen that before."*

One of the key advantages of AR is the way it promotes dialogue between teachers and parents through the use of Home Connect, which can be set up to automatically update parents on key information - such as which books have been read, and how many quizzes have been taken. By keeping parents informed in this way, they take a

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greater interest in the child's reading - as Chris has seen: *"Parents have reported that they now have to make their children stop reading at home instead of trying to persuade them to start!"*

Used by pupils, parents and teachers alike, AR automatically produces a number of key reports that are immediately available as soon as a quiz has been completed, which are also instantly marked. These reports are extremely useful for monitoring progress and identifying any areas of weakness that may require specific intervention, whilst also celebrating success when targets are achieved. *"I monitor AR usage using the reports feature and then in assemblies I update the children on class points and word totals."*

Many schools using the program comment on the importance the role that points and target setting plays in motivating pupils, particularly boys and reluctant readers, to read: *"Our 'leading' class are now aiming to have read 10 million words between them by the end of the year. I also award certificates to children who have become individual 'word millionaires',"* says Chris.

Since the introduction of AR at Yattendon, a 'whole school' approach to reading has been adopted, which helps reinforce the notion that reading is something that is fun and should be encouraged - as Chris explains: *"During World Book Day, children and staff came to school dressed as Accelerated Reader book characters."*

Overall, Chris believes that the *"massive impact"* the use of AR has had on the staff and pupils at Yattendon is *"clearly in evidence on a daily basis."*

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