

**Sion-Manning RC Girls' School**

## **Accelerated Reader**

**Report on first four months with year 7  
October 2006 – January 2007**

**Question asked in the report:**

**Is there evidence to show that Accelerated Reader has had a positive impact on learning?**

**Method. Both qualitative and quantitative data.**

**Data recorded from online Star Reading Tests.  
Data from quizzes taken in Accelerated Reader and  
progression through levels**

**Interviews with pupils.  
Questionnaire for pupils.  
Observation of pupils.**

**Requirement of Secondary National Strategy “Improving Reading”, DFES 2005.**

Accelerated Reader Advantage provides online access to two programs; STAR Reading for tests and Accelerated Reader for book quizzes.

Pupils start by taking a STAR Reading Test. This provides us with information about their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). It also indicates a reading age for the pupil. LRC book stock has been labelled with zonal ranges to match reading ranges. Each pupil can therefore choose books according to their personal ZPD. There are over 2,000 books both fiction and nonfiction in the Accelerated Reader Section. On completion of each book each pupil takes an online quiz, if they pass with 80% or more they can move up their zonal range. Each quiz gives the pupils points. The longer the book the more points. Points accumulated and rising up the zonal range lead to certificates from “Ready Reader” to “Classic Reader” level.

The program can:

1. Allow pupils to read at their own pace and level (Personalised Learning).
2. Challenge pupils reading as they move up their ZPD.
3. Give pupils the responsibility for managing their own reading development.
4. Choice about what they are reading at their level.
5. Develop pupils reading stamina as they progress.
6. Extend pupils range and depth of personal reading.
7. Allow pupils to monitor their own progression.

At the end of September 2006 all Year 7 pupils sat the STAR Reading test. This indicated their reading age at entry and their ZPD for choosing books. From October to the end of January 7I, 7O, 7N and 7N met once a week at morning registration to read, take quizzes and be awarded certificates. With the reading data we were able to chase those not completing books and taking quizzes. 7S visited in small groups from one English lesson per week. Most of 7S were reading with someone rather than independently. Tutor groups have not been able to meet every week with trips, PSHE days etc cancelling out some weeks. At the end of January 2007 pupils took a second STAR Reading Test to see if their reading range had changed since the end of September 2006.

Research shows that reading for enjoyment is “more important for children’s educational success than their family’s socio-economic status”.

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development  
(OECD, 2002).

Reading widely for pleasure is also positively linked with the following literacy related benefits:

- reading attainment and writing ability (OECD, 2000) for reading that is done both in school and out of school (Krashen, 1993; Anderson et al, 1988; but also see Taylor et al., 1990);
- text comprehension and grammar (Cipielewski & Stanovich, 1992; Cox & Guthrie, 2001), even after a variety of health, wealth and school factors were statistically controlled for (Elley, 1994);
- breadth of vocabulary (Angelos & McGriff, 2002), even after other relevant abilities such as IQ or text-decoding skills are controlled for (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1998);

- positive reading attitudes (Guthrie & Alvermann, 1999), which are linked to achievement in reading (McKenna & Kear, 1990);
- greater self-confidence as a reader (Guthrie & Alvermann, 1999);
- Pleasure reading in later life (Aarnoutse & van Leeuwe, 1998).

To answer the question whether the program is having a positive impact on learning it must also be seen to be valuable for the user. Feedback from the pupils was therefore seen as a vital indicator as to the success of the program.

To date, over the whole year range, 518 Accelerated Reader books have been borrowed. Of the quizzes taken on these books 385 have been passed with at least a score of 80% correct. This represents a high pass rate of 74.3%. This provides clear evidence that pupils are reading and understanding the whole book. We know in the past that pupils were borrowing from the LRC for morning reading at registration and then immediately returning the books. They were not reading the whole book. If they were reading outside lessons there was little to indicate how much, how often or at what level.

### **1. Accelerated Reader provides clear evidence of wider reading beyond the classroom at Sion-Manning.**

60% of pupils have improved their reading age by at least half a year in four months. A further 10% have improved by as much as two years. There are problems with some data as a few pupils have not improved or have even slipped back in reading age. It should be remembered that each test is only a snapshot in time. On the day of the test pupils may not be feeling well or concentrating as they should on the test. Nevertheless this group can now be targeted / monitored for improvement over the remainder of the year and the data will help initiatives such as the paired reading scheme setup by English.

**2. There is clear evidence of significant improvements in the reading ages of many pupils in Year 7 although this cannot be attributed to Accelerated Reader. Nevertheless data shows the program makes a significant contribution to this improvement. It is too early to find a correlation between the number of quizzes taken and passed at 80% and improvement in individual pupils reading age. Accelerated Reader Data provides additional support and evidence for teachers to target and support the needs of individual pupils.**

Appendix 1 gives the detail for individuals in each class.

As a side issue, the number of books issued by the LRC has jumped up by over 60% so far this year an indicator of the positive change in reading culture.

Pupil feedback on the reading program is vital to understand the value pupils place upon the scheme.

A questionnaire for all Year 7 was distributed at reading sessions and could be completed anonymously by the pupils.

A copy of the questionnaire is included, appendix 2.

I have reproduced some of the comments pupils have made about the program where they indicated that Accelerated Reader had help them improve their reading, (87%).

*“Because I read much faster and I understand harder words”.*

*“I think I have improved because I’m reading at different levels”.*

*“When I started I had the reading level of a twelve year old, now I have the reading age of a fourteen year old”.*

*“I understand stories more and I have moved up levels”.*

*“Yes, because it’s helping me to focus more on the actual story and not just reading the book. I understand and enjoy the stories”.*

*“Because I know new words and it’s expanded my vocabulary”.*

*“Because I understand the books”.*

*“Because I’m taking tests and reading more often and it’s helping me read higher so I’m getting a better level”.*

*“Because I am more interested in reading and I read faster”.*

*“I think I’m getting better because now I read my books in detail and choose them carefully”.*

*“Because I’ve moved up levels and I understand the stories”.*

*“Because before my reading was a bit edgy and I didn’t read a book everyday, but I do now and it’s because of Accelerated Reader”.*

*“I am constantly reading because of Accelerated Reader and the use of harder and more complicated words have become easy to me. It also helps me relax in my own time while reading”.*

*“Because I am now able to read books at a higher reading level with a wider vocabulary. I have learnt lots of different words and am able to use them in my work and understand them in a book”.*

*“Because we are reading books at our level”.*

*“Because when I get scored (quizzes) if it’s low I want to get higher next time”.*

*“I think my reading has improved because it moves me up to harder books so that I can try new books and harder ones”.*

*“Because I am taking quizzes on them which helps me think about the book”.*

*“Because I can find a book I enjoy spending time in quiet place to read”.*

From the above evidence we know that the Accelerated Reader assists in meeting The National Secondary Strategy for KS3 “Improving Reading” by:

- a. Pupils taking responsibility for their own reading development and being explicit about their progress.**
- b. Pupils monitoring their own comprehension.**
- c. Extending the range and depth of personal reading.**
- d. Dealing with setbacks and difficulties as readers.**
- e. Becoming imaginatively engaged as a reader.**
- f. Developing a love of books.**
- g. Knowing about text types and genres.**
- h. Seeing reading as a life skill.**
- i. Reading for pleasure.**
- j. Developing reading stamina and keep trying.**

**k. Developing positive attitudes to reading.**

**l. Using a range of reading strategies to meet new texts.**

**There is evidence that the Accelerated Reader has:**

**Had a positive impact on learning at Sion-Manning, and specifically the reading development of pupils. It is too early to measure or find any correlation as yet between the number of quizzes taken and improvement in reading age.**

**The program provides data to help and support teachers targeting individual pupils.**

**The program has received a very positive response from pupils.**

**The program has made a significant contribution to developing the reading culture in the school.**

DPE 02/07