

## **Reading solutions set to change the way children think about books**

A computer programme that helps to raise pupils' literacy skills by motivating them to read more, is set to change the way children think about books.

The programme, Accelerated Reader, has been available in the UK since 2000 and is in use in over 1,500 primary and secondary schools. The supplier, Renaissance Learning, is now making a number of support packages available which have been shown to improve the implementation of the programme and increase results dramatically.

Renaissance Learning spokesman, James Bell, says: "The quizzes which form the basis of the software get pupils reading more books. But, by implementing the teaching strategies which have been developed alongside the software, even greater success can be achieved."

A range of support services has been developed including on-site installation to help large schools and LEAs with complex networks, web-based training which teachers can work through at their own pace, on-site training and a brand new concept – Renaissance Coaching.

The Renaissance Coaching package will give schools access to a specially trained coach for a period of a year. There will be a mixture of on-site and telephone progress meetings using a clever device called Webex, which enables the coach to remotely control the computer in the school. In addition to this formal coaching, the Renaissance Coach is available to the school throughout the year for support.

Renaissance Coach, Shirley Charlton, says: "The combination of a proven software system with a year long implementation period really makes a huge difference to the reading ability of the pupils, and the enthusiasm of the teachers."

The Specialist Schools Trust's Chairman, Sir Cyril Taylor, is very interested in the potential of Reading Renaissance solutions to raise achievement. Consequently the SST is co-ordinating a research project into the effectiveness of Reading Renaissance, conducted by NFER in 15 primary and secondary schools in London.

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