

I AM PART OF THEIR STORY

Holly Lodge Foundation High School
College of Science,
West Midlands

There are approximately 1,300 students at Holly Lodge. It is a multicultural school with students predominantly from Asian backgrounds amongst other ethnic groups. The school has an above-average number of students eligible for Free School Meals.

Holly Lodge Science College started using Accelerated Reader at the start of the 2010/11 academic year with all KS3 students and have found that it has not only raised literacy standards, but also enhanced their enjoyment of reading - as English teacher Julie Dunbar reveals.



Find out more
renlearn.co.uk/partofthestory

Motivation

Reading culture

Progress monitoring

Ofsted

“I have 29 years’ teaching experience and can definitely say that Accelerated Reader has improved reading.”

I am an English teacher with responsibility for AR, working closely with the Librarian who implements the programme and makes sure that everything runs smoothly. As a team we ensure that all students are engaged in reading and timetable classes to use the library during English lessons.

Since we started using AR there has definitely been an increase in library usage. All classes in KS3 have designated reading lessons in which they quiz and update their reading books. Students also use the library in their own time on a more regular basis thanks to AR, which has dramatically raised its profile within the school. When we first introduced AR we decided to use it within all classes in KS3, which is already paying dividends as at least 60% of students have increased their reading age.

Using one class as an example, we have four particular students who have shown incredible improvement – with two students increasing their reading age by two years and the other two showing an increase of an amazing three years. This trend is repeated across all classes where reading ages are jumping by two to three years.

Many of the students who arrive at Holly Lodge have a standard of literacy well below the national average, so it is very pleasing to see the results they are achieving after only two terms of using AR. The majority of KS3 students now carry a reading book and have it with them in English classes when they are required to quietly read in private – before they became engaged with AR hardly any students were seen carrying their own book.

It is particularly refreshing to see lower ability boys, formerly our more reticent readers, showing a massive improvement in their attitude to reading. Moreover, they seem to actively enjoy the stories as the books are now at a level they can understand thanks to regular STAR Reading tests.

The certificates are excellent motivators and make a perfect reward for their efforts. The quizzes and instant feedback are very useful for allowing the students to see how well they are doing, whilst the ability to quickly and easily STAR test makes measuring reading age growth very simple.

I have 29 years’ teaching experience and can definitely say that Accelerated Reader has improved reading, but more importantly the students’ perception and enjoyment of reading has also been enhanced.

Ofsted report: *Underpinning the strong progress made in many subjects, and especially in English, is the rapid development of students’ literacy and language skills. Students make particularly impressive gains in their reading skills and in their general interest in and enjoyment of literature. ‘We all read every night’, said one Year 9 boy browsing through the very well-stocked shelves of the school’s large library, before explaining to the inspector why he loved the books of Roald Dahl. A scheme for accelerating reading promotes regular reading among all students, and ensures that their progress in reading is tracked meticulously.*

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