

Success Story

Holly Lodge Science College

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

Holly Lodge Science College started using **Accelerated Reader™ (AR)¹** software from Renaissance Learning™ 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:

“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.

School Background



Holly Lodge was designated as a Specialist Science College in 2004 and since then has gone from strength to strength, with results at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 steadily rising year on year and well above national floor targets. Situated in Sandwell, the school has undergone significant development and refurbishment as part of the Building Schools for the Future programme and opened a new £25 million campus in 2011 that offers students a truly state-of-the-art learning environment.

There are approximately 1,300 students at Holly Lodge, including those in the Sixth Form. It is a multi-cultural school with students predominantly from Asian backgrounds amongst other ethnic groups. The school has a higher than national average number of students eligible for Free School Meals.

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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**^{TM2} 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.

Renaissance Learning Success Stories

To qualify as a Success Story, a school must be able to demonstrate measurable 'success' with Renaissance Learning products, particularly in terms of the implementation of **Best Classroom Practices**³ to motivate students of all ages and abilities, improved academic achievement, development of a reading culture and other key criteria.

¹ **Accelerated Reader** offers personalised reading practice for pupils of all ages and abilities with over 24,000 fun, motivational quizzes on popular books ranging from *The Hungry Caterpillar* to Roald Dahl, and the *Harry Potter* series to the Classics, which test a pupil's understanding of what they have just read.

² **STAR Reading** is computer-adaptive baseline assessment software that quickly and accurately establishes the actual reading age and National Curriculum Level of individual pupils, so that growth can be easily measured.

³ **AR Best Practices** are research-based guiding principles for using Accelerated Reader to ensure fidelity of implementation.