

“The majority of students have become actively engaged in reading”

Harris Academy Beckenham Beckenham

Previously an all-boys secondary school, Kelsey Park Sports College, it converted to Academy status and a co-educational intake. It opened as the Harris Academy Beckenham for the start of the 2011-2012 academic year.

Its current intake comes from a wide variety of cultures and backgrounds. Students in years 7, 8 and 9 have reading ages ranging from six to 16.5.

Learning Resource Centre (LRC) Manager **Beverley Davies**, who joined the school seven years ago, has led the implementation of Accelerated Reader.

When I joined the school several years ago, nearly 60% of the boys joining at year 7 had a reading age below their chronological age. The library was used solely for the computers, with only a handful of actual readers.

The low standards of literacy and underuse of the library I found on starting at the school were both shocking and disappointing. Having been able to read prior to starting school, I found it unbelievable that students were going through seven years of primary education and were still unable to read effectively. After taking time to identify the problems, we decided the best way of addressing them was to introduce Accelerated Reader (AR) – and we haven't looked back since.

Now that AR is embedded within Key Stage 3, the majority of students have become actively engaged in reading and the library has been transformed in terms of increased circulation and greater use. Every KS3 class has a reading lesson in the library once a week and the tutors hold a termly reading session in the library – I'm so busy running AR that I hardly have any time to read myself!

There is a 'quiz buzz' before and after school, during break and lunch time: students are excited to take quizzes on the books they have read. The students love the fact that AR combines reading with a computer based quiz and particularly enjoy the instant feedback they receive.

For me, AR is brilliant; it is easy to use and provides a wealth of information. The fact that the data can be easily sorted by tutor group and English class is very useful and the reports are very simple to produce – whether in-depth on one boy or a class overview.

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