

“The children are more engaged in the reading process...in school and at home”

Kingsnorth Church of England Primary School Kent

Staff at Kingsnorth Church of England Primary School were concerned when reading comprehension skills began to decline. SATs results in both Year 2 and Year 6 had slipped, but new head teacher Iain Witts had experience of Accelerated Reader (AR) in a previous school and knew that it would help to improve reading standards.

He tasked his Assistant Head and SENCo Amanda Love with implementing AR at the school. Amanda, along with a supportive team including the librarian and two teaching assistants, has overseen the efforts to put reading at the heart of school life and has been impressed with the change in children’s reading habits.

Accelerated Reader, AR, Renaissance Place, STAR, STAR Reading, and Renaissance Learning are trademarks of are trademarks of Renaissance Learning, Inc. and its subsidiaries, registered, common law, or pending registration in the United Kingdom, United States and other countries. All other product and company names should be considered as the property of their respective companies and organisations.

“We have noticed a real change in attitude towards reading in a number of ways”, Amanda comments. “The children are more engaged in the reading process, reading more in school and at home. They are enjoying the books that they are reading and seeing their success through the quizzes they are taking.”

AR, along with the STAR Reading assessment, has helped Amanda’s students to select books at an appropriate level of difficulty. By reading within a Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), they have been able to achieve success with their reading comprehension yet still stretch themselves enough to develop their skills. The effect has been noticed by teachers and parents as well as the children themselves. “We have noticed a significant increase in library circulation and a change in the way that the children choose their reading books. Children who were finding it difficult to read a book they had chosen from the library are now enjoying the texts they are choosing because they are age appropriate and within their ZPD. Before AR, some of the children chose a book because they had to. They are now able to get a book that is appropriate and that they are able to read and comprehend.

“We have had comments from parents saying what a difference AR has made to their child’s reading habits with one parent saying that for the first time their child has wanted to buy a book for themselves with their own pocket money!”

AR’s reports and monitoring tools have enabled staff at Kingsnorth to keep abreast of their students’ progress. This has led to a greater knowledge of students’ reading habits and a deeper involvement in selecting appropriate books. “The reports contained within AR are proving very useful and show the teachers how the children are progressing. The software is easily accessible and intuitive to use. The Renaissance Place Dashboard is easy to use and access, making retrieving reports simple. Through the comprehensive reports, the teachers are able to monitor the children’s reading and comprehension as well as the types of book they choose. We have been advising children on their choice of texts to extend the range of texts the children can enjoy.”

The team at Kingsnorth has made a very successful start to their use of AR, but Amanda is confident that there is still a lot of potential for the future. “Now that we are using AR, the children have seen an improvement in their own comprehension skills and are delighted with their progress and success in the quizzes. This has had great benefits, especially for those who have struggled with their comprehension and those who have appeared to struggle with reading. These children have become more confident and are enjoying their books and reading.

“As we have only begun using AR relatively recently, the impact has not yet been fully seen. What we have seen is a rise in the children’s enjoyment of their reading. We feel that this programme will have a great impact on the children’s comprehension skills that will in turn develop their overall reading ability and levels of attainment. We have received a ‘Good’ in our most recent Ofsted inspection and are working to make this an ‘Outstanding’ by improving students’ overall success and enjoyment in their learning. We hope that the Accelerated Reader programme will go some way in helping us to do this.

Read more stories of success at:
renlearn.co.uk/success