

I AM PART OF THEIR STORY

Redriff Primary School,
London, Southwark

Redriff Primary School is a primary school with over 460 pupils on roll. It is a part of the City of London Academy Trust.



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Accelerated Reader at the forefront of reading culture at Redriff Primary School

Setting out to establish a reading culture

At the beginning of the 2015/16 school year, Redriff launched a focussed effort to change the reading culture across the whole school. “We always celebrated reading at Redriff,” says Charlotte, Assistant Head and Literacy Lead, as well as the school’s AR Project Manager. “The children realised that books were very important; we celebrated quality book corners and gave out awards for home reading, but we also realised that reading was quite hard to track. We couldn’t really be sure how much home reading was happening, and there were fewer children reading independently and for pleasure than there are now.”

At the beginning of the school year, the school took immediate steps to put Accelerated Reader at the centre of its drive to encourage a reading culture throughout the school. “We started the year with a whole staff INSET, to give an understanding of how the new system would work, and also we had a strong message from the Head Teacher,” Charlotte says. “That really helped teachers buy into the changes. We had to completely reshape our traditional guided reading session, which I think was our biggest challenge initially. We were asking both teachers and children to do something new, and needed their trust and support in doing it. We’re still in a period of reflection, asking teachers if they

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Motivation

Reading Culture

Reading for Pleasure

Staff Engagement

Student Engagement

Whole-School Literacy

need any help implementing the programme and supporting children in using it correctly, and I think the help the teachers have been given has really worked. AR has really raised the profile of reading at the school, and made it a lot more visible and easy to track. We can immediately see who has read what, and what books children are interested in, which then enables us to talk to children about what they’re reading, and what their preferences are.” As well as teachers, the school also took steps to ensure that parents were aware and on board with the changes being made. “We’ve involved the parents by inviting them to a workshop, where they’ve been able to learn more about the programme, and take an AR quiz so they can see what their children are doing,” Charlotte explains. “We showed them Renaissance Home Connect, where they can receive an email every time their child finishes a quiz. We also involve them in the school’s reading almost weekly through the newsletter, which will always have something about reading or Accelerated Reader. One week we might group children together to share books they’ve been reading, another we might talk about word millionaires; children who have read more than a million words throughout the year, so we always vary what we’re reporting to parents.”

Celebrating reading with Accelerated Reader

The school has found that Accelerated Reader has enabled them to celebrate reading in a variety of new ways. "It's allowed us to be more specific with what we're celebrating," says Charlotte. "We started the year by giving books to classes as a reward for when every child has completed an AR quiz with a score over 85%. We also held a 'best book corner' competition, where classes designed their own book corners, and arranged an author visit to work with the winning classes. We had a 100% raffle, rewarding students who have completed AR quizzes with 100% scores, and also celebrate word millionaires in assemblies."

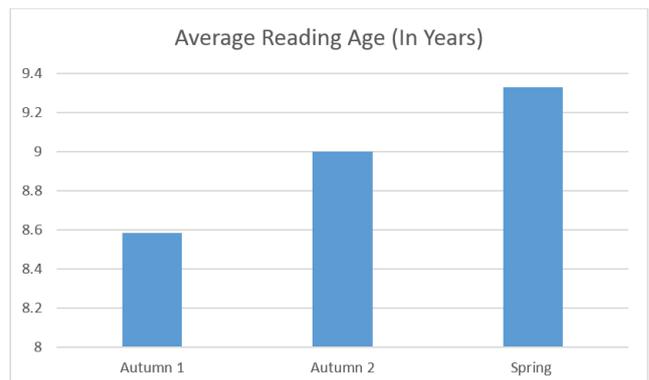
The school uses these competitions and motivators not only to celebrate reading, but also to focus improvement on particular areas of the school's reading. "Throughout the year the children have had different needs, with regard to what they should be focussing on to improve their reading," explains Charlotte. "At the beginning we wanted to encourage everyone to participate, which is why we gave books to every class. We then wanted to focus on ensuring that children were understanding their books and quizzing more accurately, which is why competitions were based around 100% scores. Once quiz scores improved, it was important to ensure children were spending enough time reading, and so we focussed on rewarding engaged reading time per class. The teachers have been really good at thinking carefully about how accessible the targets and information are for particular year groups: in Year 6 their celebrations might be linked to percentages, whereas in Year 2 the celebrations around reading have been kept very simple, for example 100% celebrations, or just looking at engaged time alone. Throughout the year we've always ensured there's something exciting around reading happening, and it's been fabulous to praise children around the school who want to talk about their reading, making sure everyone has time to talk to children about their books if they want to. This year, for the first time ever, reading time isn't something that has gone by the wayside when other special events have come up and school has got busy."

The school has noticed significant changes following on from the framing of reading as a primary focus for the school. "Now, during reading time all children are ready to get their books, there's very little going back and forth to the book corner to pick up new books, and very little starting a book and not finishing it," says Charlotte. "Most children bring a book from home and are ready to start it at the beginning of the lesson, which is a very big change in reading behaviour during the sessions. Children are reading a huge amount more, reading more accurately and reading books start to finish. I've noticed a lot more children coming to me to order specific books, such as a series they may have started that they enjoy, or a favourite author, demonstrating that children are much more aware of their own preferences for reading. We have a large number of boys at the school, particularly in Year 4, and the structure of reading we've implemented suits them incredibly well. This has been particularly noticeable with lower ability boys, who weren't already reading for pleasure and weren't actually completing many books at all, who are now smashing the individual targets they are set each half term."

Being recognised as a Master School

Earlier in 2016, Redriff achieved Master School status, the first primary school in the country to do so. This status is awarded when over half of a school's classes achieve Master Class status, which is awarded based on a class' adherence to research-based best practices around Accelerated Reader. "It's been really exciting," says Charlotte. "Of course we thought what we were doing was having a positive impact on reading, but being a Master School validates it. It is interesting to see that the master classes were making more progress than the other classes. There's been amazing progress in all the classes, but real accelerated progress in the master classes; it was that black and white. We had a celebration in school, and made sure that all adults and children felt part of the success. The children were so excited, and it's been great to share that publicly."

"I would say that Accelerated Reader has had a very positive impact on reading," says Charlotte. "It's been an exciting year for reading at Redriff: children love reading, being able to show what they've read and talking about their achievements. The main thing is that we walk around school during reading sessions and all children are focussed and engaged. It's lovely to see that children are reading so well but also lovely to see it in the data, that yes, they're excited about reading, but are also being impacted as readers. It's gratifying to see the two link up. I'm excited for the Star results at the end of next year, and be in the position to determine the impact of Accelerated Reader over time."



Reading age data across the whole school, from STAR Reading. "The STAR results do show the children are making rapid progress in reading," says Charlotte. "We STAR test the children four times per year, and use the data to inform intervention and teacher focus groups; we also look at data over time, and use it to compare reading practice."

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