

RENAISSANCE®

## Accelerated Reader & Star Reading

IN  
**Essex**

Julie Gregory, Assistant Headteacher and Head of Literacy, shares the difference she's seen sweep over her school since they implemented Renaissance Accelerated Reader.



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**Progress measuring**

**Improving results**

**Reading celebrations**

**A reading culture**

# “It has worked for us.”

Milton Hall Primary School is a three-form entry primary and nursery school, with around 680 students, in the seaside town of Westcliff-on-Sea, Essex. The school has a high percentage of pupil premium students, EAL students, and SEN students.

### **We needed improvements – and fast!**

Shortly before I took over as Head of Literacy, five years ago, we had a very poor cohort in Year 6 who barely achieved 50% in their reading SATs test results. We knew we needed a different approach to teaching and assessing reading in our school, and I was determined to make quick, positive improvements.

We got ready to launch Accelerated Reader, and with thanks to our kind volunteers, we labelled our reading books that we had in the classrooms and the school library. Although a little time-consuming, the implementation of Accelerated Reader isn't difficult – especially since help is so readily available from the team at Renaissance on the phone! Renaissance advised that we visit other schools nearby that were already using Accelerated Reader to see it in action, and this was key for us to implement the programme successfully and securely at our school. We'd definitely recommend that other schools do this to get some inspiration!

“We use the data from Star Reading and Accelerated Reader in collaboration with other formative assessments to paint an overall picture of progress for every pupil.”

## Time to celebrate!

Having been inspired by other schools' ideas, we quickly introduced half-termly celebration assemblies, awarding children prizes for the amount of points they'd scored from the Accelerated Reader quizzes. We always do a big end-of-year trip for all our Word Millionaires, which is a great incentive. You'll notice pupils around the school wearing Word Millionaire badges with pride!

We also award time on the adventure playground to the classes who have the highest reading comprehension average: this way, we can encourage every child to try their best, rather than rushing through books to try to gain points. Every pupil carries their points over from year to year, meaning that they can see how far they've come throughout their time in school.

## The progress picture

The Star Reading test is completed by every child each half term – including those children in Year 1 who are ready to move on from phonic books. Half-termly Star Reading growth is presented to staff, and forms part of the pupil progress meetings with senior leaders. We also present individual student records to parents at parents' evenings.

We encourage our teachers to target two children at a time – finding out what they're reading, reasons why they haven't been quizzing, and things like that – and then speak with them one-to-one. We find the reading summary dashboard very useful to identify reading weaknesses for SEN children, and inform teaching.

We use the data from Star Reading and Accelerated Reader in collaboration with the results from teacher in-class assessments, and other formative assessments, to paint an overall picture of progress for every pupil.

“I'm so glad we made the decision to introduce Accelerated Reader. I can confidently say that it's been the single most positive thing in improving the standard of reading across the school.”

## An incredible difference

The difference that we've seen in reading across the school is really incredible. The first year that we implemented Accelerated Reader, our reading SATs results rose from 50% to 72%! And now, five years later, Milton Hall is in the top 5% for reading progress in the country.

Nine pupils in the school became Word Millionaires in the first year of using Accelerated Reader. 48 were Word Millionaires last summer – including three Year 2 pupils!

The Ofsted inspectors in our last two inspections, which were both Good, were impressed by how much the staff and the senior leaders knew about the progress of reading in their classes and across the school. Star Reading definitely played a big part in that.

I'm so glad we made the decision to introduce Accelerated Reader. It is absolutely worth it, because it works for us. I can confidently say that it's been the single most positive thing in improving the standard of reading, and the accurate monitoring of reading, across the school.

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