

# I AM PART OF THEIR STORY

Wennington Hall School,  
Lancashire

Set in 17 acres of attractive parkland in the Lune Valley near Lancaster, Wennington Hall School is a Grade II Listed Building. It caters, on a residential or day basis, for the needs of 75 boys of secondary age who have difficulties associated with their academic, social, emotional and/or behavioural development, which - at the time of referral - make normal secondary provision unsuitable for them.

To meet the challenges faced by teaching to students that are often up to four years below their chronological learning age, the school has been using Accelerated Reader a software from Renaissance Learning for almost 10 years - as Learning Support Manager Elaine Prendergast explains.



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[renlearn.co.uk/partofthestory](http://renlearn.co.uk/partofthestory)

Motivation

Progress Monitoring

Reading for pleasure

SEN

# “I believe that Accelerated Reader has had a hugely positive impact on the boys’ academic performance.”

We are fortunate at Wennington Hall in that we have a very generous student-teacher ratio. Class sizes vary from four to eight students and each is led by a qualified teacher experienced in working with Special Educational Needs students. Most also have a Teaching Assistant – staff who run a One-to-One programme in which students are given extra help with literacy and numeracy.

One of the biggest challenges we face stems not only from the emotional problems suffered by many of our students, but also from the fact that some have missed so much school over the years they are functioning significantly below their chronological learning age and need to be taken back to basics. We decided that the best way to meet this challenge was to extend our already full reading programme and thus open up a broader learning platform which – hopefully – would also improve behaviour.

In 2003 we took the decision to introduce AR as, ultimately, it allows the students to engage and progress in all areas of the curriculum. I oversaw and still manage the whole process, supervising our team of 12 Teaching Assistants – two of whom work with the implementation of AR on a full-time basis – who devote up to 25 hours a week to AR in the school’s Reading Club.

*As well as using AR in class, many boys spend their break times – in total three hours a day – with their heads buried in books, combing the library shelves or taking quizzes*

As I also have responsibility for the Library, one of my first projects when we first introduced AR was to add an exclusive AR library to the two traditional libraries that already existed. Over the years our library circulation has increased considerably and the boys have become very active readers. STAR Reading tests are completed regularly and consistently show improvements in the boys’ reading ability, which both they and we feel is fantastic. They love quizzing and can see the progress they are making from the instant results and other report data. The boys particularly enjoy seeing how many words and books they’ve read and the number of points they have earned towards their individual targets. Accelerated Reader makes student centred, personalised learning very easy, which is exactly what we were looking for at Wennington Hall.

As well as using AR in class, many boys spend their break times – in total three hours a day – with their heads buried in books, combing the library shelves or taking quizzes.

Vocabulary, spelling and comprehension have notably improved – as has the confidence that comes from encouraging the boys to read aloud in class and take part in open discussion. This has had the knock-on effect of improving behaviour and self-belief.

Overall, I believe that AR has had a hugely positive impact on the boys' academic performance – particularly in terms of both literacy and numeracy – which has also helped them in other areas of the curriculum.

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