

“RSP has proved an effective way to embed AR throughout the Academy.”

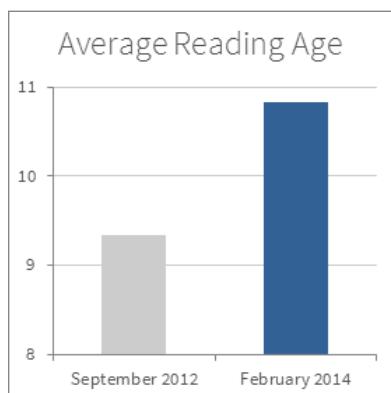
Nightingale Academy

Edmonton,
North London

Nightingale Academy is a medium-sized school for 11-18 year-olds near Edmonton, North London.

Accelerated Reader™ (AR™) was originally implemented at Nightingale as a tool to support the variety of complex needs of the students at the Academy. Nearly three quarters of students speak English as an additional language, while two-thirds are in receipt of Pupil Premium funding.

Professional development Ofsted
 Staff engagement Certification
 Student engagement Library use



Average reading age from September 2012 to February 2014.

Elizabeth Stanford is the Accelerated Reader co-ordinator at Nightingale, with responsibility for implementing the programme effectively. “The programme was not difficult to implement but it was a long process to find how to run the programme effectively in our Academy. Once we determined how it should be run, it did not take long to get established.”

“The initial impact of AR was minimal as we had some issues regarding participation and improvement. However within the last year we have seen great improvements.” Nightingale joined Renaissance School Partnership (RSP) in order to maximise the effectiveness of AR and establish it as an Academy-wide programme. “It has been a great way to gain knowledge about the AR programme and access additional support from Renaissance Learning™.”

“In particular, the data support we receive from the team at Renaissance and the support we receive from our programme manager with regard to Model Class status has been invaluable for motivating both staff and students.” Model class status is a certification standard of recommended best practices with AR. RSP Programme Managers work with the AR core team to put the necessary steps in place to achieve this standard in each class and ultimately across the school.

Elizabeth notes two key factors in the success of the programme: students are now given 20 minutes of dedicated time every day for AR, and the programme has been made a tutor-led subject. This has put AR at the heart of the school, giving staff clear responsibility for how their tutees are progressing with reading. “Staff buy-in has been great: because AR is a form-centric session, one specific teacher is now able to take responsibility for the delivery of AR. Since AR has become a form activity the majority of tutors are now able to access and use reports and give feedback and support to students.”

“Most students enjoy that their work is marked immediately and they can receive instantaneous rewards in the form of AR points. Students are much more enthusiastic about reading and are much more engaged and interested in their academic progress as readers.” The average number of points earned per student rose 90% over the year to the end of the RSP programme, with a 73% increase in the number of books read per student. This enthusiasm has had an effect on the way students are making use of the Learning Resource Centre.

“Students are heavily involved in the LRC at Nightingale,” observes Elizabeth Kerns, the LRC Manager. “We have more than 20 student helpers before and after school, break and lunchtimes with 12 students currently on a waiting list to be trained. There are two class monitors for the issue and return of books for every LRC English lesson in Years 7, 8 and 9. We also have an active Student Advisory Committee, which I introduced when I joined as the LRC Manager in the autumn that RSP started.”

“The LRC collection was already well stocked with AR books following major investment in the AR programme. Gaps in the book level collection were identified at the beginning of the RSP programme to meet the needs of students. We also have introduced a suggestion box in the LRC and prioritise purchasing new books from students’ suggestions.”

“Use of the LRC and book circulation have increased because students are required to have an AR book to read each day. We require every student in Years 7, 8 and 9 to have an AR book to read



each morning and students depend largely on the LRC for books. Students are expected to get their AR books from the LRC either during their regular LRC English Lesson (weekly in Year 7 and once every two weeks in Years 8 and 9) or to come independently before school, after school, at break or at lunchtime. The increased use has become particularly apparent this year with students stopping by the LRC after school to take out and return books."

"RSP has proved an effective way to deliver AR to students and embed it throughout the Academy. It enables the proper role of the LRC to support teaching and learning and the curriculum without relying solely on the LRC to deliver AR."

Staff at Nightingale use the STAR Reading™ assessment to gather data on reading attainment and then target intervention where it is identified as necessary. One weakness identified before joining RSP was that participation in AR was low. Linda Stone, Assistant Vice Principal (literacy), explains how monitoring this measure of engagement in reading has led to improvements with reading skills. "Tracking participation has led to 94% averages for the last two half terms and a significant growth in the average reading age. In September 2012 our average reading age was 9.04. As of February 2014, it is 10.01."

"RSP has supported this by providing our Project Manager with regular updates and lists of students to target. The rise in reading ages – and knowledge of reading ages – has raised awareness amongst staff and students of the literacy demands of the curriculum and the resulting literacy needs of the students. AR, along with other programmes and a wider support from the school and the language for learning team, has made great developments in whole school literacy."

At the end of the RSP programme, the number of students flagged as at risk of not making expected progress had decreased by 19%.

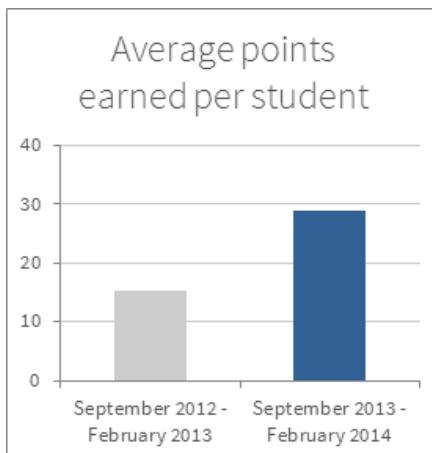
The additional attention to detail of AR data provided by RSP has been particularly useful for demonstrating growth for inspectors. "During our Ofsted visits AR statistics were invaluable in showing progress," Elizabeth Stanford notes. Nightingale has undergone an inspection and received two monitoring visits since joining the programme. Linda remarks that "AR and RSP were seen as an effective and integral part of the overall Literacy strategy." This is reflected in the report from Ofsted, which highlights the reading programme as a particular strength of the school:

"Students in Years 7 and 8 receive intensive daily practice in reading. This is helping to develop their skills, improve their ability and build their confidence."

The successes being seen across the school with AR are particularly strong for students receiving Pupil Premium funding and other additional grants. The gap in attainment between these students and their peers is reducing, particularly in reading.

"In 2012, the average scores gained in examinations by students who are supported by extra funds, including those eligible for free school meals, were below those of students in other schools. Recent data show that the gap is narrowing for current students more quickly in English than in mathematics as a result of extra support to develop literacy, especially reading."

To complement the daily reading and quizzing, Nightingale has a well-developed calendar of reading events and activities in place that runs alongside AR and RSP. Initiatives like World Book Day and the Carnegie Medal are given particular focus in addition to the regular programme of reading activity across the school. The importance of reading is reinforced through staff development days and briefings, while particular successes are highlighted by the Principal. Displays and the awarding of prizes in assemblies further embeds reading as a central part of school life. "There are signs of a culture of reading developing," Elizabeth Kerns remarks. "RSP has supported this by enabling students to access the skills they need to engage as readers."



Renaissance Learning opens the Renaissance School Partnership (RSP) programme to applications each academic year, carefully selecting a small number of schools to work with over the course of the year. Amongst other benefits, RSP schools have a dedicated Programme Manager who works directly with the school's leadership and AR teams, and an extensive training programme tailored specifically to the school's needs, including unlimited access to remote training. Read more at: renlearn.co.uk/rsp

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