

# I AM PART OF THEIR STORY

St Paul's CE Primary School,  
North West London

St Paul's is a 1-form entry Church of England primary school near Mill Hill in North West London. Approximately 60 different nationalities are represented, and there is a below-average number of pupil premium students.

Anthony David has been the Head Teacher since 2011, and has recently assumed the role of Executive Head Teacher across both St Paul's and its sister school, Millbrook Park. Anthony has been published widely in the education press and has written books for, and consulted with, several leading educational publishers including Scholastic, OUP and CUP.



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Personalised practice

Progress monitoring

Pupil premium

“With AM the teacher can really focus learning to all children at an individual level.”

## Increasing commitment to independent reading

Students normally join St Paul's at or above national standards in reading, writing and maths. For each of the last five years, students have made significant progress across the curriculum but Anthony realised that there was further opportunity for growth. After seeing Accelerated Reader (AR) in use at another school he decided to adopt the programme.

“As our students became more independent with their reading, we experienced a tailing off of their commitment. We were looking for a programme that would stretch our higher ability readers and also ensure that all readers from year 3 onwards continued reading. I saw AR in use at Sir William Burrough Primary School (in Tower Hamlets, East London) and was delighted to see the progress being made by students there. I could see that the programme would elicit the same enthusiasm at St Paul's.”

Since then, standards have significantly increased year-by-year. In the first year, 89% of students gained a Level 4 in reading, but this year that is expected to be 96%. Over the same time, the number of students gaining a Level 6 has increased from 0% to an expected 16% this year.

*There has been a 66% increase in standards and every child is now making at least 4 points of progress, with many making much more*

## Changing attitudes towards reading

As well as raising standards, AR has transformed students' attitudes towards reading. “Reading is now considered to be cool. The combination of targets, rewards and enjoyment have created a self-fulfilling prophesy, where the momentum of enthusiasm has continued to grow.”

“Engagement with reading has improved hugely. Children are now no longer able to ‘fake’ reading habits as we can track every book read (as one boy found out!) and as a result we can identify action plans to challenge and support reluctant readers.”

One unexpected consequence of adopting AR was that it highlighted shortfalls in the school's existing provision of reading materials. “We thought our library of books provided a good breadth of style, but we found that we did not provide as wide a range of books for high-achieving readers as we had thought. AR forced us to take action and, whilst expensive, we have now addressed the issue.”

## Taking the next step with maths

Having been impressed with the success of AR, Anthony found the next step for the school was to adopt Accelerated Maths (AM). AM uses a similar interface to AR, utilising cloud-based assignments to personalise maths practice for each individual student's needs. "We could see the benefits of AR as an additional programme, but AM looked like it had the power to influence daily learning in a way that AR could not. In many ways, we feel it is the stronger of the two programmes."

"Having established the online environment with AR, AM was a simple next step for the children. It is a very different approach to teaching. The teacher can really focus learning to all children at an individual level, which requires the capacity to 'let go' of the traditional teacher role. The change was easy for the children, but harder for the staff – whereas with AR the change is easier for staff but harder for the children. That said, having used AM the teachers would not return to traditional 'whole-class' approaches of teaching just three levels of differentiation."

Now that the change has been embedded in school life, results are improving. "There has been a 66% increase in standards and every child is now making at least 4 points of progress, with many making much more."

Anthony has made space for AR and AM in the school budget because they have proven to be worthwhile. He has used additional funding to ensure that students are well supported with the resources necessary to make the most of the programmes and make good progress. "One of the biggest impacts for us has been Pupil Premium funding, which we have used to buy specific books and a home tablet so that work can continue outside school. The value for money versus learning gained makes these 'cheap' products."

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