

I AM PART OF THEIR STORY

Minster in Sheppey Primary School,
Kent

Minster in Sheppey Primary School, is a much larger than average primary school with 520 pupils on roll. It serves a mixed community. The percentage of pupils eligible for FSM is higher than average. The proportion of pupils on the SEN register is much higher than average with the school being in the top 20% nationally for both indicators. Attainment on entry is generally below to well below average. Michelle Jeffery is the school's Literacy Leader



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Library use

Motivation

OFSTED

Progress Monitoring

“Reading levels have been on an upward trend” since implementing AR™

In 2011 our data indicated that pupils were not progressing with their reading as we hoped. In particular there was a gap in our pupils' comprehension skills. In recent years, the percentage of our pupils achieving a Level 4 in reading was below the national average and not good enough: attainment in reading needed to rise. In Key Stage 1 we broadly matched the national picture but felt that with a rigorous drive on improving the teaching of reading, a revised approach to the teaching of phonics and an overhaul of home reading, much more could be achieved.

To address this, our Head Teacher decided to implement Accelerated Reader so we could encourage and monitor their progress. We felt that attainment in reading needed to rise and that a whole school drive was essential to achieve this.

An effective introduction to AR

In order to introduce the AR programme effectively, we took our Teaching Assistants out of class for two weeks to support our Book Development Manager in re-organising the library. We purchased a variety of book cases to display the texts so the children have easy access to them, accommodating for an anticipated growth in the library stock.

During staff meetings all Teachers and Learning assistants were given training on the AR

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programme in order to be able to understand, track and share reports.

To begin with, children were accompanied to the library in groups so we could explain the expectation of choosing and returning books. We also sent letters to parents to give an overview of the programme. When children actually started quizzing parents really became inquisitive and involved, and many parents came into classrooms to see children quiz and quickly became supportive.

An incredibly well resourced library

Our library is the hub of our school and as such is incredibly well resourced. It is busy throughout the day: children are constantly in and out exchanging books after taking their quizzes. There are also six laptops in every classroom so pupils have the opportunity to quiz at appropriate times throughout the school day.

The school governors are committed to ensuring that sufficient funds continue to be allocated to developing our book stock. We encourage children to request books they would like to read, and we then purchase them. Our Book Development Manager also has recommended reads displayed on her desk, which has often led to a 'waiting list' for that book. The school has spent thousands of pounds to buy new texts for the children to read.

They love the variety, the high quality texts and the choice within their ZPD rather than being told which book to read next in a reading scheme.

A range of motivators

We use a large number of rewards and challenges to ensure that motivation remains high. There is a 'league table' display, which shows the number of quizzes taken and passed for each class. Weekly assemblies recognise the success of individual students, while termly assemblies recognise the child in each year group who has achieved the most over the term.

'Champion' readers are awarded with a school polo shirt that has our own design of 'AR Champion' sewn underneath the school emblem. In KS2 the children wear shirts, so they are awarded our school tie with the 'AR Champion' logo on it. If they win for a second time, they are given an AR badge, and they receive a trophy if they win for a third time. We also award a 'Minster Blue' wrist band to the 'Champion' reader who has earned the most 100% quiz scores. The children wear their rewards with pride.

Other initiatives include a termly raffle that students enter when they pass a quiz, and a 'Millionaire' readers club for those who have read 1,000,000 words over the year. 'Millionaires' have their picture displayed on a star and are placed on our 'Millionaires' board. They are awarded a special trophy and their name is engraved on the 'Millionaires' shield displayed in our library.

Upward trend in reading levels

Our Book Development Manager, who oversees the AR admin, collates a weekly update of pupils who are quizzing and those who need to quiz. Using the reports from STAR Reading and AR we are able to identify children who are making accelerated progress, which helps to inform teacher assessment.

Class teachers use AR data alongside termly formative assessment to identify those children who are not reading at age-related expectations, so they can be placed on a daily 1:1 reading support. The focus of this intervention is to help with reading skills. By asking questions about books before children take the quizzes, we have seen them improve their success rate, confidence and progress.

Reading levels have been on an upward trend over the last three years, and children's motivation to read and take quizzes is evident. Attainment in reading at the end of Key Stage Two has risen significantly over the past three years; the percentage of pupils attaining Level 4 and Level 5 in reading is now much higher than the percentage nationally. Similarly, attainment at the end of KS1 has also dramatically improved with it now being significantly higher than the national level.

The 2014 Value Added scores for overall KS2 progress in reading show that progress for this cohort is significantly higher than expectations, based on the cohort's KS1 prior attainment. In reading we are performing in line with the top 15% of schools nationally.

A positive response from inspectors

Visitors to the school, including our Key Stage 1 moderation visitors, have commented that the level of reading across the school is palpable. Other local schools have been coming in to see how we are using AR so well to drive up our standards, and how we inspire a love of reading within our school.

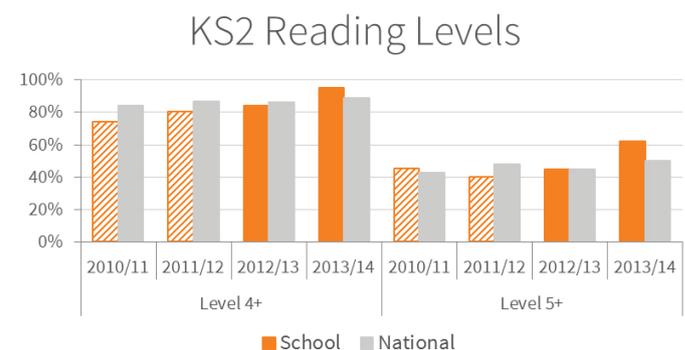
When Ofsted visited in 2012, the inspectors noticed the buzz of reading. Prior to the visit, STAR Reading data was useful for teachers to show that they are monitoring levels and supporting consistency across the school. During their visit, the inspectors commented on the high profile of reading across our school and reported reading as one of the school's strengths:

Pupils' skills in linking letters and sounds (phonics) and their skills in reading and writing are better now than in the past. This is because the school has successfully employed a more structured approach to reading across the school.

The overall impact AR has had on our school has been incredible. Reading is now a visible high priority. Through choice, children stay in at break times and lunchtime to read and quiz. We are a school with a firmly embedded approach to reading, a tangible reading buzz and an established reading culture.



Attainment levels for reading in Key Stage 1 in were close to national averages (grey) before implementing Accelerated Reader (striped orange), and have been much higher since the programme was put in place (solid orange).



Key Stage 2 Reading levels were a cause for concern for staff (striped orange), prompting the introduction of AR. Since then (solid orange), standards have improved and the school is now out-performing national trends (grey).

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