

RENAISSANCE®

I AM PART OF THEIR STORY

Oasis Academy Wintringham,
Grimsby, North East Lincolnshire

Oasis Academy Wintringham is a Secondary School with over 800 students on roll. It is part of the Oasis Community Learning Trust. Rachel Revell, Assistant Principal, and Frances Kingston, Accelerated Reader Coordinator, discuss the ways in which Accelerated Reader has enabled them to celebrate the reading accomplishments of their students.



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Pupil Premium

Data Review

Assessment

Progress Monitoring

Reading Culture

Renaissance Accelerated Reader is 'The single most effective literacy strategy we have put in place'

Introducing Accelerated Reader

Oasis Academy Wintringham has been using Accelerated Reader since 2008, with Years 7, 8 and 9. We originally introduced Accelerated Reader to combat low attainment and literacy levels on entry. Previously, most reading took place within English lessons. We had a situation where children would enjoy reading during English, but would never consider taking it upon themselves and reading independently; there was a general lack of interest in reading, talking about it and wanting to do it. The low literacy levels on entry not only affected their access to the curriculum, but also impacted on their general approach to study and other academic subjects. Challenging their perception of reading in the way we have has impacted on their perception of other academic subjects as well. We now dedicate two of our tutor periods to reading each week. We also have regular hour long library lessons, in which students can quiz with Accelerated Reader, and we also schedule 30 minutes of reading time in one of their English lessons, where they can also quiz. We've dramatically

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changed the library, and have introduced a whole team dedicated to reading. We expected a lot of resistance from the students, but that hasn't been there at all, and the adults have all been on board because we've shown them the impact that this is having through the data. As we've just seen, walking down the corridor, students are reading during tutor times and we're not having to compel them to do so, because everyone can see the value in what we're trying to achieve.

The impact of Accelerated Reader

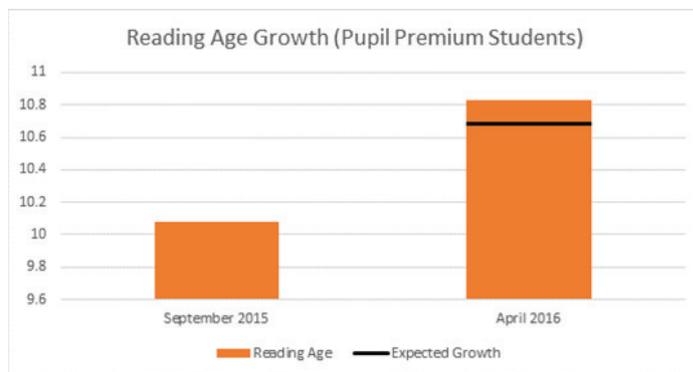
The thrust at the school has always been literacy, and making sure that our English results are as good as they can be, and we always knew that Accelerated Reader would not only enhance literacy, but be the heart of it. In library lessons, if you compare the start of the year to now, they're much quicker at sitting down and opening their books. There's not much time wasted and I think they are more engaged with their reading, more quickly. It has been really easy to access and use data that staff can understand.

In schools we sometimes feel that we are expected to be statisticians, and most of us aren't, but Accelerated Reader data is really easy to understand, and more importantly, is really useful in ensuring student progression. We were in a position where we were putting in a lot of work to get that kind of data, and now it arises quite naturally.

We also make use of Renaissance Star Reading to generate a Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), a reading difficulty range within which students are advised to read to maximise their growth. Our librarian rearranged the whole library by book level, which has changed everything. We never have any issues with students finding a book within their range, and they know exactly where they need to go. It doesn't take much once you know where students are with their book levels. Once you give them space to read, and see the types of books they read, it just snowballs.

Naturally students want to keep up with the rest, so they tend to pick books from the top of their ZPD range, and so sometimes they don't get the quiz results that they should. But because you have a range, rather than a single figure, you can coax them into seeing that there is a choice, they can keep up with the rest, and then they can start to increase their stamina. They don't view Star as a pressurised test, they're quite open to it, and we've really got into their heads that they need to take over 20 minutes to complete it. We don't have them quitting: they're very committed to it. If we don't see the growth we expected, because we know how hard they've worked in between, there's more of an urgency to retest them. We don't see too many students who need to be retested, but when they do we can get on it right away. The students now ask us, 'when's the next test?' They want to be measured, because they're putting the work in.

We're also seeing our Pupil Premium students making progress in line with their peers. When you aim to improve PP students' attainment, there is such a variety of things to try and promote: Accelerated Reader is making a difference with our most vulnerable students, but it's doing so in such a way that they aren't separated from their peers. Obviously they require additional support, but we don't want that heightened awareness of their status because it is important to us to be as inclusive as possible, so it's made a huge difference and it's fantastic to see positive data that is working to close the gap.



Overall, we feel that Accelerated Reader has been a great success. You're empowering them, and making them able to access the curriculum, which is the crux of what our teaching is about. It's marvellous. I think Accelerated Reader is the single most effective literacy strategy we have put in place. It really feels like you are changing student lives every time they pick up a book.

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