

RENAISSANCE®

I AM PART OF THEIR STORY

**The Michaelston and Glyn Derw
High School Federation,
Cardiff**

Before federating with Michaelston Community College in 2015, Glyn Derw High School implemented Renaissance Accelerated Reader™ in 2014 with years 7, 8 and 9, having seen another school in Cardiff achieve impressive results with the programme. The school was recognised as one of the highest achieving schools using Accelerated Reader™ at the 2016 Renaissance Awards: Maria Dell, Librarian, describes the impact on reading in school that the programme has brought about.



Find out more
renlearn.co.uk/partofthestory

Comprehension

Gender

Library use

Motivation

Reading for pleasure

Student Engagement

Engaging reluctant readers and encouraging reading for pleasure

Implementing Accelerated Reader™ and engaging students with the library

When we initially implemented Accelerated Reader™ we found the system generally easy to set up, and we've continued to find it straightforward to keep running. The students also engage well with the programme – they mainly take quizzes using iPads and, as they all know their Zone of Proximal Development after taking their Renaissance Star Reading™ test, they know exactly where to go in the library to find books at the right level for them as we reorganised library stock by book level after we brought in the programme. This way students are very clear on what they need to do and everything runs very smoothly – if they aren't sure what book to select I can advise them, and we have a 'wish box' which students can use to request books that we don't currently have, which works well as the majority of their selections tend to already have Accelerated Reader™ quizzes available.

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Before 2014, very few students were using the library, but now we are seeing all students reading, using the library every day and engaging with Accelerated Reader™. A lot of the boys in particular do get into a competitive spirit with the quizzing, which has helped to engage them – initially many students were very reluctant to read, but now we are pushing literacy more they are realising that reading isn't optional, and when they're quizzing together they ask each other how they perform on quizzes and are determined to pass them and perform well. They're always so proud when they do, and come over with their iPad open to share their scores with us – they're so pleased and we are then able to praise them and encourage them further.

Encouraging reading for pleasure by celebrating accomplishment

We're also seeing students reading for pleasure, which is something we never would have seen before! Without the programme, many students wouldn't be attempting to read and, as with anything, without trying it they never know if they enjoy it or not. Once they get started with Accelerated Reader™, they often find that they do enjoy reading – they're selecting their own books, so even if they don't love a book they can identify what aspects they did enjoy, and we can move on from there.

We also make sure to celebrate reading achievements as much as we can to encourage them further. We recognise Word Millionaires and give them certificates in assemblies so they are congratulated in front of the whole school. Occasionally, particularly with some of our SEN students, we will invite parents in to special certificate giving days and present students with certificates in front of their parents. There will be refreshments, and the parents will be in for about an hour, which we find is a really nice way to celebrate that achievement.

Establishing reading ages on entry with Star Reading™

As well as in Years 7, 8 and 9, we also administer the Star Reading™ test with any students who join the school in Year 10 to establish a baseline of their reading ability, even though they do not use Accelerated Reader™. We don't just use it to identify ZPDs for the purpose of selecting books for Accelerated Reader, we use it as an independent method for tracking reading age. No matter when they join us, every student takes a Star test on entry so we can identify where they are, and overall we've found it to be a very strong indicator of ability. It gives you everything you need on one page – if a pupil is under review then their Star results are one of the first things we look at, and results are used to identify any need for intervention and to determine lesson groups more widely.

Celebrating success at the Renaissance Awards™

We were so proud to be recognised at the Renaissance Awards – we mentioned it in our governors' report and have framed our certificate for all to see. I attended the awards ceremony, and it was great to be able to talk to other schools about our usage of the programme – we've put in a lot of work to improve literacy and implement Accelerated Reader™ as well as we can, and it's wonderful to have something to show for it. We get a lot of visitors to our school, including the Minister for Education recently, and we always make sure to bring them to the library. They always want to talk about Accelerated Reader™ and they're always able to see the positive impact that it's having here. Our pupils are reading, a lot of these students would not be reading otherwise, and it's really boosting their confidence.

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