

RENAISSANCE®

# I AM PART OF THEIR STORY

Lower Fields Primary School,  
Bradford, West Yorkshire

Lower Fields Primary School, with around 460 students on roll, originally implemented Renaissance Accelerated Reader in 2016 and now uses it with Years 4, 5 & 6. Claire Clayton, Assistant Head Teacher, discusses the impact the programme has had so far.



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**Book stock**

**Incentives**

**Pupil premium**

**Reading for pleasure**

**Student engagement**

“I don’t think there’s ever been such an active approach to reading at school.”

## Implementing Accelerated Reader

We initially implemented Accelerated Reader because reading was one of our target areas and we wanted to raise achievement. Our main issue was older children in Key Stage 2 losing interest in reading, and the reading scheme books we were using at the time. We spoke to some other schools using Accelerated Reader and heard some very positive things about it, so, thinking that it would help us bridge this gap, we decided to implement it.

We schedule daily reading sessions of around 20 minutes for Accelerated Reader. There are computers and iPads available before school for children to quiz on, and also a lunchtime IT club every week – so children don’t need to wait until Accelerated Reader lessons to quiz.

The quantity being read by children, and the way they think about reading, has improved drastically.

Since then we’ve seen huge changes in attitudes towards reading: children who weren’t reading at all are now reading. Children talk about books more and even stop me in the corridors to tell me about what books they’ve read and books they want us to stock because they want to read more of a certain style or explore a wider range of books within their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). We’ve seen improvements in reading ages as well, and recently some Head Teachers from local schools visited us and commented on the positivity towards reading and towards books, particularly in the year groups using Accelerated Reader. The quantity being read by children, and the way they think about reading, has improved drastically.

## Celebrating reading achievements

Accelerated Reader has enabled us to celebrate and incentivise reading in a range of new ways. We have a large display in the corridors of the children's names and all the certificates they can achieve, which is very visual. Every term we run a 100% draw: every time a child gets 100% in a quiz their name gets added to the termly raffle, and the prize is a tablet. We also work out which class has quizzed most accurately that week: that class is then named and displayed on the wall, and I write a short report highlighting the names of some children in the class who have done particularly well. The children really enjoy this, and ask me every week when the report is going up and if their names are on the list!

We run other small prizes and competitions and vary the criteria to keep things fresh and make sure that it's not the same children being rewarded every time. Last term for instance we gave a certificate and a book to whoever had the highest word count in each class; the term before we recognised the child who read the most books. These awards are quite low-key overall, but children are really motivated by them. We may need to update them next year to keep children interested, but for the time being they're proving very effective.

## Better understanding in-school reading

I think there is a stronger reading culture in school now, and we are seeing children reading for pleasure more often. We've also had some positive feedback from parents, who have mentioned that they are seeing their children more excited about reading at home, and enjoying their books more. Accelerated Reader has definitely helped to introduce children to new authors, and also enabled us as staff to see what books children want to read. As children are now more likely to develop an interest in specific authors and series', and we can see which of our current books are being read most heavily, it's much clearer which books and styles are most popular and what we need to stock more of.

We've never had this level or regularity of data around children's reading habits before, and it's enabling us to see which children are reading, which children aren't, what's being read and how much is being understood.

We have had an inspection since implementing Accelerated Reader, and alongside Renaissance Star Reading™ it was very easy to demonstrate that we were making progress as a school, but also that we could quickly and easily identify children not making progress and why, using the Star reports. We've also had a Pupil Premium inspection – the inspector was very familiar with Accelerated Reader and Star and believed they were a great source of data, as we have something that's objective and almost external to compare with our own teacher assessments.

We've never had this level or regularity of data around children's reading habits before, and it's enabling us to see which children are reading, which children aren't, what's being read and how much is being understood. I don't think there's ever been such an active approach to reading at school: the children are really enjoying it so we've seen a very positive impact.

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