

RENAISSANCE®

Accelerated Reader & Star Reading

IN
Ipswich

Daniel Jones, Assistant Headteacher, shares how Accelerated Reader has helped him close the attainment gap at his school – with incredible results.



Find out more
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Pupil Premium

**Closing the
attainment gap**

Reading for pleasure

Reading celebrations

A reading culture

The school without an attainment gap

Springfield Junior School in Ipswich has around 350 pupils. The school has an incredible track record with attainment across all their pupils, but particularly with disadvantaged children who meet the eligibility criteria for pupil premium funding.

Their success with these pupils is so strong that in 2017 they won the National Pupil Premium Award for primary schools. Daniel Jones is an Assistant Headteacher at the school, an accredited pupil premium reviewer under the National College for Teaching and Leadership, and the member of staff at Springfield Junior School who wrote the bid winning them the award. Here, he shares the story of the school's success and how Accelerated Reader played a part in it.

Our Pupil Premium achievements

We won this award because our outcomes for disadvantaged pupils are exceptional, and sustained over time. Around 30% of our students are pupil premium-eligible students, which is higher than the national average.

In 2017, 85% of our disadvantaged pupils achieved national government expectations in reading. And in 2018, 87% of our disadvantaged pupils did. This is particularly significant given that the national average for non-disadvantaged pupils is 80% meeting these expectations – our students are achieving very well, and everyone at Springfield is immensely proud of them for it.

“Star Reading tests give us an extra layer of information on reading ages and pupil growth, and they provide this data in a manageable way.”

Celebrating our best readers...

Our pupils achieve so much because we take a rigorous approach to ensuring that all of them are reading regularly. Accelerated Reader is a key factor in enabling us to track that. It's clear that we have a reading culture in the school, but the diagnostics we get from Accelerated Reader and Star Reading allow us to show and measure it using clear, comparable data.

We use Accelerated Reader data to check, on a weekly basis, how many quizzes are being taken and by whom. We can then build this into our whole-school celebration culture – using Accelerated Reader, we calculate the engaged reading time of every class each week. And then in weekly assemblies we hand out a trophy to the class that had the most average engaged reading time. This keeps reading at the top of the agenda for everyone – the children love it, and this competitive element is definitely motivating for them.

We have other ways to recognise our best readers too, like our library displays: a desert island for our Word Multi-Millionaires and a limo for our Word Millionaires!

...and giving others more opportunities

Running weekly reports like this means we can also pick up on children who haven't quizzed recently. We can then find extra opportunities for those children to read. Something that I've learnt from my work here and in other schools previously is the importance of ensuring that disadvantaged pupils are reading regularly. It's inevitable that some students won't have the opportunity to read outside of school, so we never penalise them for not doing so – instead, we find different ways to give them that opportunity during the school day.

Accelerated Reader is a fantastic tool that allows us to quickly and easily identify these pupils, and offer them that help immediately.

An extra layer of information

As well as using Accelerated Reader daily, we also regularly administer Star Reading tests with our children. These tests give us an extra layer of information on reading ages and pupil growth, and they provide this data in a manageable way, making it easy to keep track without giving teachers extra work. We do other types of reading assessment too, and Star Reading works alongside and on top of these to give us a consistent overall picture of reading attainment across the school.

We have a strong reading culture and we don't have an attainment gap. I can confidently say that these two things go hand in hand, and Accelerated Reader has been key in letting us reach these achievements.

Helping other schools

Since winning the National Pupil Premium Award in 2017, I've worked with other schools and trusts across England to help them make a difference to the lives of their disadvantaged children. We've also shown colleagues from local schools how we use Accelerated Reader and the impact its had. Often, our pupils will talk to our visitors about how much they enjoy doing the Accelerated Reader quizzes, which is great!

Here at Springfield Junior School, we have a strong reading culture and we don't have an attainment gap. I can confidently say that these two things go hand in hand, and Accelerated Reader has been key in letting us reach these achievements.

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