

## School Spotlight : St. Iltyd's RC Primary School

“ We first introduced Accelerated Reader in 2014, after a search for new and exciting resources to further develop our pupils' learning experiences. Although reading results in the school had always been very good, we wanted to improve this further and felt that the challenge of the Star test and the stamina required to read such a variety of text types and answer such a range of questions within a time frame would build our children's resilience and thinking skills. We also hoped that the opportunity to read more 'real' books would increase motivation and develop lifelong readers as opposed to pupils who could simply read well.

Since then, as well as helping them to prepare for national assessments, which require our children to read 3 long texts in the space of an hour while answering questions in a range of styles, Accelerated Reader has helped our children develop into more mature and sophisticated readers. They're much more involved in their reading and are more aware of what authors they like and what kinds of books they like to read, which they didn't really know before. Motivation has improved massively: children want to read and quiz and do well, and we notice them checking the blurbs of books before they decide to read them, which is very different from going through a reading scheme and being required to move on to the next book without any input from the child. Our struggling readers have particularly improved because they're reading within their Zone of Proximal Development, so the books are at just the right level for them. They're reading much more than before, and are really enjoying reading. We've seen a big improvement in children's ability to sustain reading for longer periods of time, so that hour of reading required in the test doesn't seem so daunting any more.

We use the programme primarily with Key Stage 2: all of Years 3-6 use the programme, with some more capable readers in Years 1 and 2 using the programme also. All KS2 classes have ipads and computers, so children have a lot of scope to carry out quizzes. Children read

independently for 20-30 minutes during registration in the morning, which is time they wouldn't really be using otherwise, while some of the younger children who aren't yet at a stage to be using the programme independently will need to read in a group, or have someone read to them. Similarly those Year 1 and 2 students will sometimes listen to a story at the end of the day and quiz on it the next morning, or use the voiced quizzes in the programme if they aren't able to access the text. Children select if they have read the book independently or been read to before each quiz, so we are able to track their progress separately.

Accelerated Reader has also helped to inform our book stock – we make sure that we have a good selection of books at every difficulty level, and factor in the children's input by asking them what they would like to read. After every quiz the programme prompts children to rate how much they enjoyed the book, so we use this data to keep track of what is popular and what isn't as well. We also use Accelerated Reader data to ensure the children are reading a variety of books, we could see for instance that a child hasn't read any non-fiction this year, and then encourage them to choose a non-fiction book next. It also helps us flag cases for support, as we can identify if a child is getting a low average percentage correct with their quizzes, or isn't reading as much as they should per day. The instant feedback from quizzes really helps to build confidence, particularly with our struggling readers. If they get 100% in a quiz they can't wait to tell us about it, and it helps give them confidence that they can go on to do it again and again. Accelerated Reader has really changed the perception of reading; for a lot of children it used to be something you were made to do, but now they're actively involved in their own reading development and they love doing it. A lot of them would have known they liked Roald Dahl, but now they talk about how much they love David Walliams, Michael Morpurgo and Jacqueline Wilson as well. Because they're reading books that are at the exact difficulty level for them, they've ended up trying authors and genres that they never would have on their own. ”

**Gemma Delaney, Teacher**

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