

# School Spotlight : Heartlands High School

“ Heartlands High School opened in 2010 as part of the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme and is situated close to Alexandra Palace in Haringey, North London. Accelerated Reader (AR) was introduced at Heartlands High School as part of a whole-school strategy to improve standards in literacy. We joined the Renaissance School Partnership in 2014 in to support the implementation of AR across all five year groups. Before the programme, reading was a strong feature of the English department – we had DEAR (Drop Everything and Read) time – but we found that some students seemed to be reading the same books for ages. Our ability to track progress in reading needed to improve, and it was seen as solely an English department issue.

In a short space of time, we started to yield strong results and there is now a deeply embedded reading culture across the school. Students are increasingly engaged with reading, reading for longer each day and completing more books than previously. In the first year, library borrowing figures more than doubled! Last year we had over 80 word millionaires and our students quizzed on 19,980 books, 17% more than the year before.

We are delighted to report that the our first Year 11 group that was enrolled into the programme in Year 9 have just achieved outstanding English GCSE results. Progress of all our students was in the 4th centile nationally and the progress of our high attainers (including some of our very first word millionaires) was in the 1st centile nationally! These incredible achievements have confirmed just how crucial the impact of AR and the creation of a culture of reading has been for our students’ futures.

To create this reading culture, students needed to see the benefits of reading for all subject areas and hear the same message from teachers across the school. The programme is delivered primarily by English teachers, with one hour of dedicated AR time per week to analyse reading data, but students also read for 60 minutes in form time spread out across the week, so tutors also play a fundamental role in motivating students to read and tracking quizzing progress. Students are encouraged to quiz outside of these times and as a consequence the library is really busy throughout the school day.

We create teacher-made quizzes on non-fiction articles too, which are really popular with students, and these are great for other curriculum areas too.

Although our aim is to improve students’ reading ages, we also want our students to love reading and so our programme offers lots of rewards based on competitions. We hand out certificates every half term for students who have met their points target, have had theatre trips, cinema visits and an end of year trip to Harry Potter studio tour, as well as tutor group pizza parties, lunch passes and the top prize of a Kindle for a student in each house. Our new form competition is called the Literacy Champions League where we create different leagues based on participation, engaged time and points earned. These are shared each week and it’s wonderful to see tutors motivating their students to read and climb up the leagues!

A significant feature of the reading programme at Heartlands High School is a paired reading programme that uses the house system to pair up struggling readers with peers in higher year-groups. This has become one of the school’s most successful interventions! Our programme manager gave some training for our younger intervention students with their vertical tutor pairs. Each house is allocated a day in the week where pairs of reading partners can come to the library or restaurant to read together. We’ve seen excellent results with these intervention students, who made nine months of progress in six months.

We’ve got to a place where the systems are understood and we understand the data. RSP has supported us in achieving aspirational goals that the school sets generally, and has allowed us to align our aspirations to those of the school. We are looking forward to seeing more progress in the future, especially encouraging students to read longer texts and 19th Century novels to prepare them for the new curriculum requirements. ”

**Andrew Lloyd, Literacy and EAL Coordinator**

**Favourite Books Report**

Rank	Book Title	AR Score	Genre
1	10000	1000	1000
2	10001	1000	1000
3	10002	1000	1000

**Quiz Usage Report**

Rank	Quiz No.	Title	Times Taken	Passes	% Correct
1	1000	Vikings Quiz	208	208	100
2	1001	Library Quiz 2015	208	208	100
3	1002	General Reading Quiz	146	146	100

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