

Success story

The Community School of Auchterarder, Perth & Kinross

School Profile

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|-------------------|------|
| Number of pupils | 812 |
| EAL | n/a |
| Free School Meals | 3.2% |

The Community School of Auchterarder was significantly refurbished in 2003, and now boasts some of the best learning and teaching facilities in Perth and Kinross.

The campus incorporates a Nursery, Primary and Secondary School, together with a dedicated Learning Resource Centre. The school architecture allows for an abundance of natural light to enter the building, which creates a positive and uplifting atmosphere throughout the school.

Each classroom is equipped with an interactive whiteboard, which allows teachers to implement ICT across the curriculum and create dynamic and exciting lessons for over 800 pupils.

For more than two years, the school have been using Renaissance Learning's STAR Reader and Accelerated Reader programs to both raise standards of literacy and encourage reading for pleasure.

Commenting on the impact the introduction of the programs has had at the school, Senior LRC Assistant, Penny Philpott, said:

"It's fantastic to see pupils really progressing with their reading - working with them to develop strategies that work for them as individuals. Pupils seem to really enjoy reaching targets and challenging themselves to harder and longer books."

One of the key features of Accelerated Reader, and particularly STAR Reader, is the ability to help identify and support pupils that are struggling - as Penny and her colleagues observed:

"We have found that having AR in place allows us to devote more time to pupils who are struggling with their reading, whilst allowing the more able readers to take greater responsibility for their own reading progress."

Continued overleaf

For more information on Accelerated Reader and STAR Reader please call FREEphone **0800 917 4447** and quote SS-CSA-09 or visit our website www.renlearn.co.uk

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The Community School of Auchterarder, Perth & Kinross *continued...*

The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which is determined by STAR Reader, provides pupils with a specific 'level' of books that they will find sufficiently challenging for their level of ability, yet interesting enough to ensure they continue reading. This personalised approach allows each pupil to progress at their own pace, whilst the improvements in reading ability have a positive impact on other aspects of the curriculum, as Penny observes:

"It's always exciting to see pupils who are becoming more and more able readers; transferring this to their writing skills."

Overall, however, much of the success achieved at the school since the introduction of Accelerated Reader can be attributed to the personalised, competitive element of the program. Every pupil is set a target number of points each term, based on their individual level of understanding and ability, which they are rewarded for achieving or exceeding.

Penny and her colleagues are particularly pleased with the positive impact the introduction of the '100% Board' has had on the pupils, who are all keen to gain full marks in their quizzes to secure a place on the board:

"By using target setting and other incentives, we have seen a marked improvement in the reading of many of our pupils. The children seem to respond well to having specific targets to work towards each term - and they love to see their name up on the 100% Board!"

When combined with the detailed reports that are automatically produced by the program for pupils, teachers and parents as soon as a quiz has been completed, real progress can be easily measured - as Penny concludes:

"The great thing for teachers is that this is all measured and we can actually see, via the various Accelerated Reader reports, how they are progressing."

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