



Holy Trinity C of E Primary School



A guide to Accelerated Reader

Introduction

In order to support our focus on reading, we researched a number of reading programs that would help develop a culture of 'reading for pleasure', as well as allowing staff, parents and children to monitor progress and attainment. Accelerated Reader allows Holy Trinity to achieve this.

To ensure the children have access to the best fiction books available we made the decision to invest greatly in a wide range of new books which would cater for the needs of all children and a variety of interests and genres. These have proved to be extremely popular with the children and we are committed to continuing to add to these books each year.

What is Accelerated Reader?

Accelerated Reader is a reading program that helps teachers support and monitor children's reading. Your child picks a book at their level and reads it at their own pace. When finished, your child takes a short online quiz to measure how much of the book they understood.

How does Accelerated Reader work?

Primarily, children will take a STAR Reading assessment that uses computer-adaptive technology. Questions continually adjust to your child's responses. If the child's response is correct, the difficulty level is increased. If the child misses a question, the difficulty level is reduced. The test uses multiple-choice questions and takes approximately 20 minutes to complete.

After undertaking this assessment the class teacher is then provided with a range of information related to your child's reading ability. This includes: their reading age, the difficulty range of books that your child should be reading (ZPD) and how children can be supported to improve their reading comprehension.

In independent literature-based reading, ZPD is the range of books that will challenge a child without causing frustration or loss of motivation. Your child will receive a ZPD range after taking a STAR Reading test. It's important for children to read with a high degree of comprehension and within their ZPDs.

After completing the STAR Reading Test, your child picks a book at their own level from the range on offer and reads it at their own pace. When finished, your child is then able to take a short quiz on the computer or iPad based on the book they have just read. Time is available every day for children to complete an Accelerated Reader quiz. (Passing the quiz is an indication that your child understood what was read.) Accelerated Reader gives children and teachers feedback based on the quiz results, which the teacher then uses to help your child set goals and direct on-going reading practice.

Children using Accelerated Reader choose their own books to read, rather than having one assigned to them. This makes reading a much more enjoyable experience as they can choose books that are interesting to them. Teachers help your child choose books at an appropriate readability level that are challenging without being frustrating, ensuring that your child can pass the quiz and experience success.

If your child does not do well on the quiz, the teacher may help your child:

- Choose another book that is more appropriate.
- Ask more probing questions as your child reads and before your child takes a quiz.
- Pair your child with another child, or even have the book read to your child.

In most cases, children really enjoy taking the quizzes. Since they're reading books at their reading and interest levels, they are likely to be successful. This is satisfying for most children. Best of all, they learn and grow at their own pace.

According to research, children who read at least 35 minutes a day with a 90% comprehension rate (average percent correct) on AR quizzes see the greatest gains. Therefore, your child should have at least 35 minutes set aside for reading during each school day. At Holy Trinity we have timetabled a 'Read and Relax' session in school each day for 15 minutes. Each child is then expected to read at home a minimum of three times per week.

As with anything, performance improves with practise; encourage your child to read at home. Create a culture of reading in your household by reading with your child, starting a home library, visiting your local library or bookstore on a regular basis, letting your child see you reading, and discussing books that each of you has read. When reading with your child, stop and ask questions to be sure your child is comprehending what is read. Reading with your child, no matter what the child's age, is an important part of developing a good reader, building a lifelong love of reading and learning, and creating a loving relationship between you and your child. Make learning a family affair!

Parents may be concerned that children are unfairly compared to each other. Accelerated Reader allows us to work with each child individually. Children are encouraged to progress at their own pace and set their own goals with the help of the teacher. The aim of Accelerated Reader is for all children to succeed in achieving their goals.

How is my child's goal / target set?

Accelerated Reader goals are set using a points system. Goals / targets are set using a child's ZPD level and the time provided for reading practice, this ensures each child's target is personalised and relevant to their individual ability in reading. Each child will receive a new personalised goal / target at the start of each term. Children are able to track their progress each time they log in to Accelerated Reader and through their TOPS (The Opportunity to Praise Students) report.

How are book points allocated?

Every book that has an Accelerated Reading Practice Quiz is given a point value. Points are computed based on the difficulty of the book (ATOS readability level) and the length of the book (number of words).

For example, the Horrid Henry books, which are about 5,135 words long and have an average ATOS book level of 3.3, are 1.0-point books. Harry Potter and The Philosopher's Stone is 77,325 words long and has an average ATOS book level of 6.0, is a 12.0-point book.

Children earn points, or a portion of a book's points, depending on how well they do on the Reading Practice Quiz. For example, a child who takes a 5-question quiz on a book worth 1 point will earn 1 point for 5 correct answers (100%), 0.8 point for 4 correct answers (80%), etc. A child who reads a book worth 5 points and takes a 10-question quiz will earn 5 points for 10 correct answers (100%), 4.5 points for 9 correct answers (90%), etc. For quizzes with 3, 5, or 10 questions, a child needs to pass a quiz with a score of 60% or higher to earn points. For quizzes with 20 questions, a child needs to pass with a score of 70% or higher to earn points.

There are over 160,000 Accelerated Reader quizzes available!

Celebrating Achievements

Staff in school will closely monitor children across the term to ensure they are on track to achieve their goal / target by the end of the term.

How can I help my child find a book that interests them?

If you wish to help your child select a reading book then visit arbookfind.co.uk and click on Advanced Search. By conducting an advanced search, you can generate book lists that contain titles based on the criteria you enter such as book level, topic, interest level, fiction/non-fiction, etc. This is a great idea when looking for presents.

How can parents/carers be involved?

At Holy Trinity we strive to ensure parents are an integral part of their child's learning. Please share reading with your child regularly regardless of their age or ability. Use their personalised reading diaries to support you in asking reading comprehension questions to check your child's understanding.

If teaching staff have a particular concern regarding your child's progress they will endeavour to contact parents directly. Parents are always welcome to speak to class teachers to check how well their child is progressing across the term.

My child already does well in school. Why do they need this?

Even if a child is gifted at playing a musical instrument, they have to practise to develop their talent. Gifted children, like all children, need to be challenged. Teachers using Accelerated Reader are able to guide each child to books that give the child both challenge and success, regardless of the child's level.

My child is not a strong reader. Can they still use Accelerated Reader?

Accelerated Reader helps all children become better readers, from children with special needs to those who are gifted and talented. When children read books at an appropriate level, they experience success. Furthermore, teachers work with children to set appropriate goals based on each child's reading level.

How will my child take a quiz?

There are two different ways children can take Accelerated Reader quizzes at school: on the computer or on an iPad. Quizzing from home is not permitted. Time is allocated each school day for children to take quizzes when they have completed a book. Your child needs to take a quiz within 24 hours of completing their book where possible. Children may take quizzes of books they have read at home but should make sure they have read and understood each book before completing a quiz.

Will my child have to read a book I don't want them to read?

No. There are many, many choices of books at your child's level. Your child will never be forced to read a book you find questionable.