

Accelerated Reader takes over from Gameboys!

ST MARGARET'S PRIMARY SCHOOL, ROXBURGHSHIRE

Accelerated Reader created by Renaissance Learning UK has helped teachers at St Margaret's Primary School to assess their pupils' reading ability and motivate them to read better and more. When pupils came to use the scheme they found it very easy to work, and soon all but the very young were independent users of the software. The youngest pupils still took part in the program, but they received help with the story and with the question and answer sessions. However, they were responsible for deciding on the answers.

St Margaret's Primary School is one of many schools which have experienced the benefits of Accelerated Reader and have helped improve the reading abilities of pupils.

Accelerated Reader allowed St Margaret's the opportunity to allow time for teacher and pupil discussions to develop, so as to review an individual pupils' progress, their choice of books, address difficulties and to help set new targets. This, combined with immediate feedback on performance and recognition of achievement, has enabled pupils to improve their attitude towards reading.

Mr Boyle, Headteacher from St Margaret's, explains how books started to be companions to pupils, who now walk from class to play and lunchtime with their books tucked underneath their arms. Mr Boyle explains, "After the program had been running for a month or so the 'Read a book time' developed into a far more significant time of the day for the pupils than it had ever been before. Pupils began to 'count down' from other lessons so that could be sure they started their RAB time right on schedule."

Mr Boyle says, "RAB time has become silent, when everyone reads! Reading now rivals computer games and electronic games in terms of excitement and enjoyment. Teachers are being given verbal accounts of where in the book the individual was and what has happened during the previous night's read, and this often meant pupils were staying in for break or coming into class first thing in the morning!"

Another wonderful breakthrough has been 'not to judge a book by its cover' or even by its first few chapters. Often, books used to be discarded because the immediate impact did not register positively with the pupils. Mr Boyle explains that more and more pupils are being persuaded to go along with the book and the author for a little further and see where it goes. Pupils have begun to say, "I'm glad I kept with it because it's really good now."