

Able to measure and keep track more closely

THE MEADOWS PRIMARY SCHOOL, OSWESTRY

Scale of the challenge

Facing a need for more enthusiasm for reading in her school of 270 pupils Di Rogers, deputy head of The Meadows Primary, was interested to hear about Accelerated Reader.

Implementation

The school introduced the system in 2004, starting with pupils in year 4 before Di introduced it to each class in turn. The Meadows is now using it in every year group from year 2 upwards, with the emphasis on, as Di puts it, "psyching them up."

At any given time up to twelve adults could be working with the children on using the program; six class teachers and six teaching assistants.

"After the first year of using it we had a really good grasp of the levels of the books," said Di. "For example we found that, if pupils were taking too long to read the books there was no time to do the quiz."

In September 2004 Di challenged pupils to notch up an agreed number of points by Christmas, to measure their progress, and subsequently reviewed pupils' target levels.

"The children think it's great to try and score points, and it really helps to keep the momentum going. We now have pupils in year 6 writing their own quizzes for the non-fiction books," she explained.

Another technique the school uses to encourage reading comprehension is that each class holds 'Story Time' where the teacher reads a story then the whole class takes the quiz.

Results

"The girls are generally more motivated by stories whereas with the boys it's a case of concentrating on non-fiction books and quizzes, particularly from year 5 onwards," said Di. "Setting challenges has been very useful for assessment, showing us there's been a real boom in reading in the lower KS2 classes, which have particularly improved. This gave us the confidence to focus later in the year on average comprehension accuracy of 85 per cent across the school," she added.

What teachers say...

"We're able to measure and keep track more closely."

"AR has helped us get a really good atmosphere going when it comes to reading."