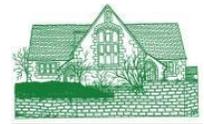


**Buxted Church of England Primary School**

Hurstwood Road  
Buxted  
East Sussex  
TN22 4BB



Inspire and Aspire

**Interim Headteacher:** Mr G Alexander

**Deputy Head:** Mrs K Hart

**Telephone:** 01825 733185

[www.buxtedce.e-sussex.sch.uk](http://www.buxtedce.e-sussex.sch.uk)

27<sup>th</sup> April 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am sure that if you have a child in Key Stage 2 you have now heard more about the Accelerated Reader program that I have introduced here at Buxted.

I was really keen to get the program started and spent much of my Easter holiday here at school sticking labels onto books. Therefore, as soon as could, I introduced it to both teachers and children.

I have used this program in several schools, and even introduced it to my own daughter's school so I am convinced of its efficacy and have seen the impact it can have on reading standards. After introducing the scheme at my previous school, Year 6 Reading SATs results rose from below average to achieving in the top 20% of schools nationally three years in a row (once in the top 10%).

However, I have clearly got things wrong here at Buxted and inadvertently upset some parents and children. For this I unreservedly apologise. It was always my intention to provide information for parents, but I have never experienced such an engaged parent body so was unaware of what was expected of me.

I attach some frequently asked questions that I hope will answer all the main ones that parents have asked me.

Again, I apologise for any upset I have caused.

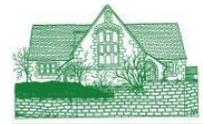
Kind regards

Mr Alexander

Interim Headteacher

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### What is Accelerated Reader?

Accelerated reader (AR) is part library and reading manager, part motivational reading tool, and part reading assessment.

Each book in the scheme is analysed for complexity of syntax, grammar and language and given a decimal score. The higher the decimal score (book level), the more complicated the language in the book and therefore the more challenging the book is to read. Each book in the library is labelled with a decimal number to help children know which books are too difficult or too easy. This is an international system called the ATOS level.

When a child has read a book, they are encouraged to take a short comprehension quiz on the book, which they also complete on a computer. They are encouraged to read the book carefully and in full, in order to score well on the quiz. Children generally love the quizzing part as it leads to points and prizes! There are lots of metrics that schools can use to generate a buzz about reading and I have challenged the children to see if someone can read 1,000,000 words before the end of the year. This is one of the metrics the program tracks after the child has succeeded in a quiz.

The quizzes are completed in school and amongst other things, allow teachers to monitor how often children are reading, and whether they are understanding what they are reading. This is something that is challenging for a teacher to manage these days with so many competing demands on their time.

### Can my child read any book in the library?

In short, yes!

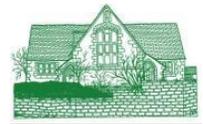
We encourage children to choose books that are mostly in their 'reading range', but children are not banned from reading outside their range if there is a book they really want to read.

Research shows that the best progress occurs when children read within their range at least 60% of the time.

Each child's 'range' is individual to that child and may be different from their peers. A child may have a reading range of 3.5 – 4.5 meaning that choosing books that are mostly in this range of difficulty will be most beneficial to their reading development.

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### How do you know my child's reading range?

The process begins with a reading test called Star Reading. The test is administered on a computer and takes the children through a series of 36 questions, testing all manner of reading skills. The reading test is computer adaptive, meaning that the test will adapt the questions to the answers the child gives. Should a child answer questions correctly, the test will increase in difficulty. Should the child answer questions incorrectly, the test will decrease in difficulty.

The test is standardised to over one million children, meaning it gives a really clear picture of reading ability when compared to age peers. It provides the teacher with lots of information about each child's reading ability and amongst that is a 'reading range' that is most suitable for each child.

### My child is reading books that are too easy for them, why?

There are probably many answers to this, but it may be that simply they didn't do as well on the Star Reading test as they could have done. We all have good and bad days, and it may have simply been a bad day. If this is the case, the teacher can allow the child to re-test at any time.

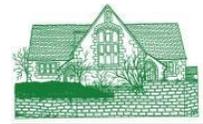
It could also be that their decoding skills are very good, but some other reading skills such as being able to infer from text are less well developed. The test will pick this up and alert the teacher so that they can provide some teaching.

All children in KS2 will sit the Star Reading test again before half term, and the test remembers the child and learns from their previous answers. Therefore, they do not go back to the beginning of the test, and the test becomes more accurate as it gathers more information from the child's answers. Hopefully, the reading ranges will change each time the child is assessed. In time, all children's reading ranges will be very accurate.

The children will sit the test around 4 times a year but should there be an issue with the reading ranges they can test additionally.

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### My child likes to read books from home, are they still allowed?

Of course! The whole purpose of the program is to help encourage children to read more. Not all children love to read, and the program is great at encouraging those who are more reluctant to get into books.

You can actually look up a book level of any books on the website [www.arbookfind.co.uk](http://www.arbookfind.co.uk) . If the book has a quiz written for it, then it will be listed on the website. If there is a quiz, they are welcome to use this book as their 'reading book', or they are welcome to read more than one book at a time if they wish. They can still 'quiz' this book in the same way as those from school.

If there isn't a quiz for the book, we will ask them to have a 'school book' in addition to the home book, purely so the teacher can monitor progress. The vast majority of books have quizzes attached to them, but as they are written by humans, the very newest books take some time to be 'quizzed'.

### Why are you introducing this at Buxted?

I have used the program at my previous schools and supported other schools in introducing it. It has always had a really positive impact on reading standards at the school.

It motivates all children, not just those that are already intrinsically motivated to read, and ensures that children are not demoralized by picking books that are too challenging for them from the library. This happens all the time, unfortunately, as without some form of structure it is very difficult for young readers to pick a book that they can read well. We are all familiar with this more structured approach in the younger year groups with 'colour banding', and this is a more technical version of this.

### Where can I get further information?

The main website for the program is [www.renlearn.co.uk](http://www.renlearn.co.uk)