

- Author visit.
- Books for pupils.
- Display 'I am reading...'

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# Literacy News

AUTUMN TERM, PART 2 007: 11TH DECEMBER 2017

## It's Book Week!

*As part of raising the profile of our literacy work and Northern House School, we are going to be running a series of events towards the end of each term. We are delighted that we can launch these activities by making use of the subsidised books for pupils obtained through The National Literacy Trust's Book-Buzz.*

*This week long event will be marked by three main activities. The first of these is obviously selecting BookBuzz titles for each of the pupils. Through their one-to-one sessions in Access and work in English, we will identify a suitable title for each pupil which they will be given to take home. The idea is to help students build their own libraries and take pride in owning books. It is important to remember that many households do not contain printed texts, now so much of our lives in lived on screens.*

*We have been lucky to afford one book for each pupil across the whole primary and secondary range. These titles are varied between fiction and nonfiction, between easy reading and multi-sensory texts, and some more difficult, longer novels. Taking advice from the Access staff, we were able to identify texts suitable for the reading ages and interests of our students and therefore we hope*

*they will all be very excited about collecting of their gift.*

*The second activity, which is amazingly exciting, is the visit to Northern House School by Alex Wheatle, also known as the Bard of Brixton. He has written a number of adult texts based in Brixton and particularly following the events of the riots which occurred there back in the 1980s. Most recently he has ventured into the Young Adult fiction market, producing a series of stories based on a made up estate run by gangs, where violence and drug use is as common as the difficult home circumstances that govern the lives of the young people in the stories. Alex has been able to create a world which could apply equally to any of our contemporary inner city environments. He has developed his own slang, differentiating between the gangs by evolving slightly different versions of the language.*

*Our third prong this week will involve celebrating the achievements of some of our young people. It is worth bearing in mind that the Access team particularly has been working extremely hard to develop literacy skills on the Secondary side. We also know that the Primary staff have done an awesome job in creating a high quality, literate classroom environment, as is seen through our current year 7s attitude, where*

*reading and celebrating achievement is at the heart of their work.*

*This work has continued into this academic year and the hard toil is now a bearing fruit in the increase we see weekly in the number of books read and the scores achieved on the reading quizzes. While those staff obviously praise of the pupils each time they do well, and we have acknowledged some of those achievements in our assemblies, we also know that extra rewards can reap extra benefits. Therefore we are focusing on some of the most positively engaged young people and giving them additional books, of their own choice, to take home and read over the forthcoming holiday.*

*Our intention is to offer readers and writers the opportunity to become more independent. It is all very well reading each week with one of our staff, but in order to know if this skill is really being embedded we need to give our pupils the chance to demonstrate they can be successful when working independently.*



*A selection of the books we're giving away this week as every pupil takes one home.*

*Every Lesson A Literacy Lesson*

## Accelerated Reader Updates

For *Little Bit and Crongton Knights*, my young adult novels, I had to learn new skillsets. My writing had to become more immediate, engaging and plot-centric. I had to be disciplined – no more wandering off on tangents describing what strange object rested on a minor character's mantelpiece. I also didn't want some smart-ass kid from London SW9 telling me "we don't use those words any more, Alex!"

Alex Wheatle

| 11th December 2017                          |         |            |           |                  |               |
|---|---------|------------|-----------|------------------|---------------|
| Accelerated Reader Quiz League Top 10       |         |            |           |                  |               |
|   |         | Quizzes    | 100.00%   | Accuracy average | Points earned |
| 1 <sup>st</sup>                             | Jay     | 10         | 6         | 95.00%           | 30.9          |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup>                             | Tristan | 26         | 17        | 89.20%           | 15.6          |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup>                             | Deano   | 5          | 3         | 94.00%           | 11.8          |
|   | Theo    | 8          | 1         | 62.50%           | 8.1           |
|   | Reece   | 15         | 11        | 90.00%           | 7.0           |
|   | George  | 3          | 0         | 70.00%           | 6.7           |
|   | Tyler H | 7          | 2         | 88.80%           | 6.6           |
|   | Alex    | 7          | 4         | 90.00%           | 5.6           |
|   | Armani  | 9          | 9         | 100.00%          | 4.5           |
|   | Aaron   | 4          | 2         | 81.30%           | 3.9           |
| <b>Totals</b>                               |         | <b>133</b> | <b>77</b> | <b>83.24%</b>    | <b>120.2</b>  |
|   |         |            | 57.89%    |                  |               |
| <b>Weekly School Pass Rate = 100% WOW!!</b> |         |            |           |                  |               |

| WORD RACE TOP TEN                      |                  |            |                |                  |
|--|------------------|------------|----------------|------------------|
| 08 December 2017                       |                  |            |                |                  |
|  | Quizzes          |            | Word Count     |                  |
|  | Passed           | Taken      | 2017-18        | This week        |
| <b>Jay</b>                             | <b>10</b>        | <b>10</b>  | <b>216,357</b> | <b>^ 19525 ^</b> |
| Deano                                  | 5                | 5          | 77,773         |                  |
| Tristan                                | 23               | 26         | 71,818         |                  |
| Theo                                   | 5                | 8          | 52,657         |                  |
| George                                 | 2                | 3          | 49,068         |                  |
| Alex                                   | 7                | 7          | 45,232         |                  |
| Tyler H                                | 7                | 7          | 44,875         | ^ 8957 ^         |
| Aaron                                  | 3                | 4          | 30,203         |                  |
| Phoenix                                | 3                | 3          | 19,213         | ^ 8606 ^         |
| Jack P                                 | 7                | 7          | 13,150         | ^ 1465 ^         |
| <b>Totals</b>                          | <b>122 (+22)</b> | <b>134</b> | <b>696,966</b> | <b>45,957</b>    |
| Words Read At Northern House This Year |                  |            |                |                  |
| <b>696,966</b>                         |                  |            |                |                  |

# Alex Wheatle: Brixton Bard

Born in 1963 to Jamaican parents, Wheatle spent much of his childhood in a Shirley Oaks children's home.

At 16 he was a founder member of the Crucial Rocker sound system; his DJ name was Yardman Irie. He wrote lyrics about everyday Brixton life.

By 1980 Wheatle was living in a social services hostel in Brixton, South London, and he participated in the 1981 Brixton riots and aftermath.

While serving his resulting sentence he read authors such as Chester Himes, Richard Wright, C. L. R. James and John Steinbeck. He claims that a Rastafarian was his cellmate, and he was the one who encouraged Wheatle to start reading books and

care about his education.

He features bits of his life in his books, such as *East of Acre Lane* characters Yardman Irie and Jah Nelson.

His early books are based on his life in Brixton as a teenager and his time in social services' care.

He received the London Arts Board New Writers Award in 1999 for his debut novel *Brixton Rock*, which was later adapted for the stage and film.

He wrote and performed *Uprising*, a one-man play based on his own life at Tara Arts Studios, Wandsworth, London. In 2011 he took *Uprising* on tour.

Wheatle lives in London. He is a member of English PEN, and he now visits various institutions facilitating creative writing classes and making speeches. He has also narrated an audio guide to the

streets of Brixton.

In the Queen's Birthday Honours 2008, Wheatle was awarded the MBE for services to literature.

His Young-adult novel *Liccle Bit* was longlisted for the Carnegie Medal in 2016.

His 2016 book *Crongton Knights* won the 50th Guardian Children's Fiction Prize. S. F. Said, one of the judging panel, said of the book: "Wheatle's writing is poetic, rhythmic and unique, remaking the English language with tremendous verve. Though *Crongton* is his invention, it resonates with many urban situations, not only in Britain but around the world. *Crongton Knights* is a major novel from a major voice in British children's literature."

From the Wikipedia  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alex\\_Wheatle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alex_Wheatle)

## EVENTS

**This Week**  
*Literacy Audit continues.*

**Pupils take home their free books.**

### Friday options

*Remind pupils they can do book quizzes or borrow texts for the weekend.*

**Friday**  
**15th December**

*Author visit by Alex Wheatle.*

## KEYWORDS

### ZPD

The range of reading to target for the most effective improvement in reading.

### TOPS Report

The Opportunity to Praise Students Report, automatically produced after every quiz, showing the results of the quiz just taken. Students working towards individualised goals will have their progress towards those goals displayed on their TOPS Reports.

*"I would make it compulsory for every school to have a library. We have to give all our children every chance of progression and social mobility. Every student has to be given hope that their time in education is for a purpose and will be rewarded. The foundation of that is to have excellent comprehension and reading skills. With the aforementioned, they can study and research any subject with confidence. That is why I would suggest that I would include in the school curriculum a half hour of every week to be dedicated for reading for pleasure."*  
 Alex Wheatle

## CPD: AR REMINDERS

- Log in at the school portal.
- Star Reading reports provide you with basic reading information. Search my class to find your group.
- Accelerated Reader will provide data on book quiz performance and word count. It also shows progress towards reading targets that have now been set.
- All training and information is in the staff drive, under 1.Northern House 2017 > literacy.

## Apostrophes

Earlier this term a few wild apostrophes escaped their cage in the English rooms. Having now infected the school, they are popping up in the wrong places. If you see one, please catch it carefully and return it, as some pupils still need them.

## Recommended Reads: BookBuzz pick - Wonder

*Wonder* is a children's novel by Raelle Jaramillo, under the pen name of R. J. Palacio, published on February 14, 2012.

Palacio wrote *Wonder* after an incident where she and her three-year-old son were waiting in line to buy ice cream. Her son noticed a girl with facial birth defects and started to cry. Fearing he would react badly, Palacio attempted to remove her son from the situation so as not to upset the girl or her family but ended up worsening the situation.

Natalie Merchant's song "Wonder" made her realize that the incident could teach society a valuable lesson. Palacio was inspired by Merchant's lyrics and she began writing. She named the book directly after the song, and used the song's chorus as the prologue of the first chapter.

The book has a released spin-off, *365 Days of Wonder: Mr. Browne's Book of Precepts*. In August 2015, the book *Auggie and Me* was published. A film adaptation has just been released.

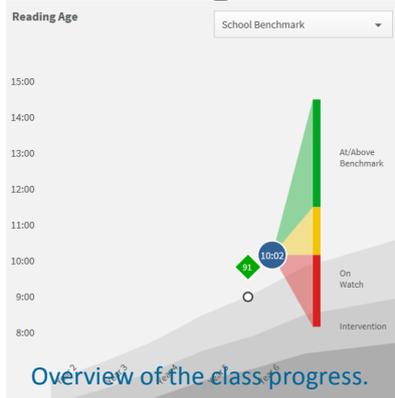
*Text from Wikipedia.*



**Recommended by: Anyone who has read it!**

# Accelerated Reader In Focus

## Reading The Data



For this week's *In Focus*, we look at data AR can generate and how we can find that helpful in terms of assessment for learning.

The above chart shows the overview of one class and their progress in AR. Against the school benchmark, these pupils appear to be doing very well, as they do against chronological age criteria. So we could assume that this group is doing well, and is likely to be in line with their mainstream counterparts, allowing for a student at the extremes from the average.

It is a good general marker for the group progress. However, in order to have useful insights, we need to focus on each pupil.

Figure 1 shows 2 pupils profiles. Initially both appear to be on a good path, at or above the benchmark and certainly presenting us with no immediate concerns about their reading levels.



Fig. 1

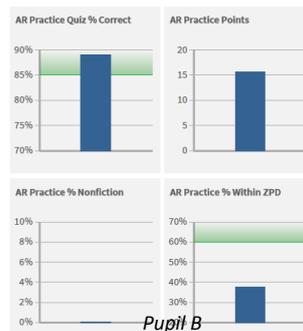
Both pupils are currently in a secure place with their reading, being regularly engaged and successful on their quizzes. What is dangerous though is to make assumptions about their progress from this data. Their forward journey is informed not by what they have achieved, but rather by what they are currently engaged with.

Pupil A's profile demonstrates a respectable, but not perfect, quiz pass rate. It is nicely poised in the 90s, meaning he is being challenged and making some errors, but is generally passing at a high rate and therefore feeling successful. The books chosen all fall within his ZPD,



which again will mean the most effective level of challenge to support progress. Our only concern therefore, with this pupil, is that he is not reading a broad enough range of texts—non-fiction needs a boost.

So we come to Pupil B. He is still passing all his quizzes, and we see from his points earned that he is



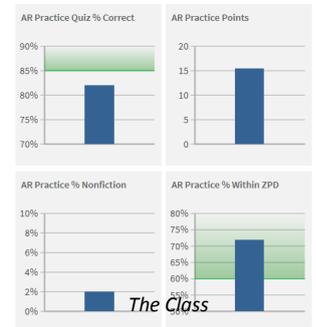
covering plenty of material. Where there is a serious issue in this case is that he is not reading in his ZPD. This means the books he is selecting are either too hard (low pass rate) or too easy. His success rate suggests the latter, and yet he is still not hitting higher averages. We can investigate by looking at his list of titles, their ZPDs and the scores he

achieved. The detailed TOPS report will also possibly reveal patterns in errors.

What this means is that we need to intervene. He needs to be guided to more suitable titles, more challenging texts, to extend his skills, while allowing him to also indulge in those books he obviously loves. This is where the books going home can be most effectively used—easy readers will not need the support of expert colleagues.

Pupil B's progress is going to result from his current reading habits. If we allow him to continue along this path, he may make some progress, but it will not be as great as it could be and oft times it will lead to a decline against his expected pathway. Thus our input is vital to prevent slippage.

This final image shows the group as a whole. We can see there is some evidence of non-fiction



reading, that the class is generally working within the ZPD, but that generally the pass rate is a concern. Having identified the pupil reading below their level, in order to maintain the average, we know some reading above the ZPD is also occurring, which might identify the reason for the failures in the quizzing. Again, this is easy to spot looking at the pupil reading logs.

AR holds a wonderful amount of information to guide our planning for the pupils. Over next term we need to build confidence in the staff team in accessing and using this resource.

The Accelerated Reader portal contains a wealth of information, but it is also a hugely complex site. If you would like to start looking at data in more detail, please contact Richard. We can then provide you with the information for your pupils..