



Headteacher: Chris Thomas-Unsworth

Monday 21st September

Dear Parents and Carers,

Accelerated Reader – Building on Our Reading Success at Somerdale

At Somerdale, we are incredibly proud of the strong culture of reading that exists across our school and of the excellent outcomes our children continue to achieve. Our most recent results reflect the hard work of our children, staff and families, with **92% of our Year 1 children achieving the expected standard in the Phonics Screening Check** and **90% of our Year 6 children achieving the expected standard in Reading, with an impressive 41% achieving Greater Depth.**

These outcomes reflect a consistently strong pattern of reading achievement across the school and are something we should all celebrate. We are ambitious for our children and want to continue to build on this success. Our aim is not only for children to achieve highly in reading, but for every child at Somerdale to become a confident, enthusiastic reader who chooses to read and develops a lifelong love of books.

Nationally, research continues to highlight concerns around the amount of reading children are choosing to do in their free time. As a school, we want to continue to strengthen our practice and do everything we can to encourage children to read frequently, both at school and at home.

As part of our commitment to continually improving our reading provision, this term we are excited to introduce **Accelerated Reader (AR)**, for children from the end of Year 2 through to Year 6. Children in EYFS and Year 1 will continue to follow the Little Wandle programme.

Accelerated Reader will enable us to build on the success we are already seeing by giving teachers even greater insight into children's independent reading, helping children to choose books that provide the right level of challenge and motivating them to read more widely and regularly.

Meeting – Monday 21st September at 3:20pm in the School Hall

We would love you to join us for a short introductory meeting to find out more about Accelerated Reader, how it will work at Somerdale and how you can support your child at home.

At the meeting, we will cover:

- how STAR Reading helps us understand your child's reading level;
- how children choose appropriate books;
- how Accelerated Reader quizzes work;
- how we will monitor and celebrate reading progress; and
- practical ways to encourage regular and enjoyable reading at home.

How does Accelerated Reader work?

At the start of each term, children will complete a short **STAR Reading assessment**. This computer-based assessment adapts to each child's responses and helps teachers identify their current

reading level. It consists of multiple-choice questions which become easier or more challenging depending on the child's answers. The assessment produces a recommended reading range known as a **Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)**. This gives children a range of books that should provide the right level of challenge while still allowing them to read successfully and with confidence. For example, a child with a ZPD of **2.2–4.5** is likely to achieve well when reading books with a Book Level between 2.2 and 4.5. Your child's ZPD range will be shared with them and recorded in their Reading Record.

Children will then choose a book from within their recommended reading range, taking into account both their reading level and their interests. They will read their book at their own pace during school reading time and at home.

Once they have finished a book, children will complete a short **Accelerated Reader quiz**. The quiz checks how well they have understood the content of the book and provides teachers with useful information about their comprehension. Children will then choose another book and continue the cycle of reading, quizzing and choosing their next book.

At the start of each term, children will complete another STAR Reading assessment so that teachers can monitor their progress and ensure their reading range continues to provide an appropriate level of challenge.

Over time, Accelerated Reader will allow us to monitor how regularly children are reading, how well they are understanding their books and the progress they are making. Teachers will use this information alongside their own professional judgement to ensure children continue to be appropriately supported and challenged.

Most importantly, we want children to experience success, discover books they enjoy and develop the confidence and motivation to read more widely and more often.

As we introduce Accelerated Reader, **we will no longer use colour book bands** for children following the programme.

Reading at Somerdale

Regular reading makes a significant difference to children's progress, confidence and enjoyment of reading. We want reading to become an enjoyable and established part of every child's daily routine. Alongside our **Guided Reading sessions**, where children develop key reading skills through carefully chosen texts, discussion and teacher-led activities, we will dedicate **15 minutes every day to independent reading** through our **Drop Everything and Read (DEAR)** time.

This protected reading time gives children the opportunity to become absorbed in a book, develop their reading stamina and experience the enjoyment of reading independently. Accelerated Reader will complement our Guided Reading provision by helping children choose books that are appropriately challenging and enabling teachers to monitor their independent reading, comprehension and progress more closely.

It is important that children read with a high level of comprehension as well as choosing books within their recommended ZPD range. Teachers will continually monitor children's progress and use their professional judgement. At times, they may encourage a child to read beyond their original range when they feel they are ready for additional challenge.

Choosing the right books



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Each book on the Accelerated Reader scheme has a **Book Level**, which indicates the difficulty of the text, as well as an **Interest Level**, which provides guidance about the age group for which the book's content and themes may be most appropriate.

Interest Levels are recommendations only, and teachers and parents should continue to use their judgement when supporting children to choose suitable books.

We have purchased a fantastic range of new books for children to choose from and are continuing to add to our shelves thanks to the generous support of **FOSET** and a **Tesco grant**.

We also recognise that many children enjoy reading books they already have at home. You can check whether a particular book has an Accelerated Reader quiz by visiting:

www.arbookfind.co.uk

If a book does not have an Accelerated Reader quiz, this certainly does not mean that your child cannot or should not read it. **Reading for pleasure remains extremely important.** It simply means that there will be no associated quiz and therefore the book will not contribute to the information recorded on your child's Accelerated Reader profile.

All pupils from Years 2 to 6 will have their own username and password to access Accelerated Reader quizzes. Pupils can also access these at home using:

<https://global-zone61.renaissance-go.com/welcomeportal/7258292>

A copy of the official **Accelerated Reader Guide for Parents** will also be available on the Accelerated Reader page of our school website.

How can I support my child at home?

The partnership between home and school is incredibly important in developing successful readers. One of the most valuable things you can do is encourage your child to read regularly and make reading an enjoyable part of family life.

We ask children to:

- read at least **four times each week**;
- record their reading in their **Reading Record**;
- talk about what they have read with an adult at home; and
- enjoy choosing and discovering new books.

Children who read at least four times each week and record this in their Reading Record will receive a **Golden Ticket**, giving them the chance to win a book during Celebration Assembly.

We also want reading success to be highly visible and celebrated across Somerdale. We will celebrate the number of words our classes have read, recognise individual reading milestones and share our reading achievements together in Celebration Assemblies.

Talking about books at home, sharing recommendations, reading together and visiting your local library are all wonderful ways of helping children develop a lifelong love of reading.

We recognise that Accelerated Reader is a new approach for our children and families, and there will naturally be a period of adjustment as everyone becomes familiar with the system. **We greatly appreciate your patience, support and partnership during this transition period.**

Yours sincerely,

Jess Scott
Key Stage 2 and English Lead

Chris Thomas-Unsworth
Head teacher

