



# SAINT MARY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL & NURSERY UNIT

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1<sup>st</sup> October 2021

Dear Parent/ Guardian

A number of parents have contacted us over the last few weeks in relation to the school's Accelerated Reader programme that is run in P4/5/6/7 classes.

Over the last couple of years St. Mary's has invested in the Accelerated Reader programme. It is designed to get children reading and understanding books that are appropriate for and suited to their level.

At the beginning of September all P4/5/6/7 children sat their AR reading assessment known as a STAR test. This is a multiple choice test consisting of twenty-five questions. The system assesses each answer and adjusts the difficulty level accordingly until it finds the appropriate reading level for your child.

The results provided include standardised scores, reading age and importantly for the children a reading range. This **reading range** is given as two numbers for example, 2.4 - 3.6. This is not a reading age! It is within this **range** that children will select and read books. Books that fall towards the lower number would be deemed easier for your child and those towards the higher end would be more challenging. This range will also be used to help place children in a reading group that best suits their ability. Children will sit the STAR test at least three times in the academic year to determine if their range needs adjusted.

AR analyses books using a computer system that rates the difficulty of a book using factors such as vocabulary used and the length of the book. The entire script is scanned and assessed, **font size and pictures within the book play no factor!** The book is then given a numerical value based solely on the words and vocabulary used within the book. If this value falls within your child's reading range it is a suitable book for them to read. This system has taught us to never to judge a book by its cover, especially in regards to supposed difficulty level, many books may appear to look "easier" but are in fact given a much higher rating than your first impressions may lead you to believe.

On completion of a reading book children will sit a computerised comprehension quiz based on that book. Results will be given immediately and will flag up any issues or difficulties the children may have encountered. It will also determine if the book was

too easy or too hard. These results will then influence their future reading ranges. Children need to read the book properly, from cover to cover, before attempting the quiz. Every book they finish that is on the AR system they can complete a quiz. ***Quizzes can only be done in school.*** The pass rate for each book is 85%, if children start falling below this the books they're reading may be too difficult, or they are not reading them properly.

Children will have the added competitive element that their total word count is continually tallied and each book they finish is available to be viewed on their "virtual bookshelf".

Please continue to encourage your child to read at home every night. The more books they read within their range the better their potential development and their results in AR. You can check available books and the range they fall into by using the free AR BookFinder webpage. You can Google this or use the following link, ensure you use the UK version as the ".com" is the American version and books you're looking for may show up as unavailable.

<http://www.arbookfind.co.uk>

This can help your child select appropriate books from a library or, if you wish, to buy. The children are extremely excited to start their quizzes but please help ensure they are taking the time to read books properly at home.

There is also a PowerPoint presentation that seeks to further explain the Accelerated Reader programme on our school web site and this can be found in each class page for P4/5/6/7.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely

Mr S Denvir  
Literacy Co-ordinator.