

## Reading Ability Levels Increase in Scottish Schools

### *68% of secondary students made "higher than expected gains" on nferNelson Group Reading Test*

Source: Ken McGowan, Project Director, Fraserburgh-area schools

Research conducted during 2000–2001 school year, report submitted in 2002.

### Introduction

After one year, the implementation of Accelerated Reader® reading management software had a significant impact on 11 primary schools and 1 secondary school in the Fraserburgh area of Scotland.

Reading ability levels and student performance on the nferNelson Group Reading Test (GRT) II increased for both levels of students. In fact, 74% of primary grade students and 68% of secondary students achieved higher than expected gains on the test.

### Study Description

During the 2000–2001 school year, 11 primary schools and 1 secondary school in Scotland piloted Accelerated Reader. An evaluation of the program was commissioned to determine whether using Accelerated Reader to promote quality reading practice would improve reading ability and pupil performance on the nferNelson GRT II.

Teachers implemented many Renaissance™ techniques during the first year of Accelerated Reader implementation. For example, they ensured pupils read books at the correct ability level so that an average of at least 85% correct was maintained on Accelerated Reader Reading Practice Quizzes. The teachers also provided approximately 30 minutes of daily reading practice time<sup>1</sup> and used TOPS Reports<sup>2</sup> to provide pupils with immediate feedback.

### Results

Study results indicate that Accelerated Reader helped educators to significantly improve reading skills and test performance across all 12 schools. Students read more and consequently have demonstrated improved reading performance.

Seventy-four percent of pupils from the 11 primary schools made higher than expected gains in reading on the nferNelson GRT II.

Test results for the secondary school also indicate significantly improved reading ability and performance. After one year, 68% of secondary pupils made higher than expected gains in reading on the nferNelson GRT II. And, nearly 40% of all secondary pupils gained more than 12 months growth in reading on the test. This growth is especially noteworthy because research shows that younger pupils tend to make greater gains in reading than older pupils. However, these test results demonstrate that the secondary pupils responded very positively to Accelerated Reader.

### Conclusion

Ken McGowan, Project Director for the Fraserburgh area schools, is "convinced that having Accelerated Reader in the schools significantly contributed to successful performance on the nferNelson."

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### School Profile

#### Fraserburgh-area Schools

Fraserburgh, Scotland

11 Primary Schools

1 Secondary School

### Educator Background

**Ken McGowan** has taught in Primary Schools since 1979. He has also been a Head Teacher, Senior Education Officer, and is currently Project Director for the Fraserburgh-area schools. **McGowan** commissioned a study of Accelerated Reader in order to examine the effectiveness of the program.

As worldwide research indicates, the dramatic growth in reading ability and test performance experienced by all 12 schools in the Fraserburgh area will continue to improve as the schools become increasingly familiar with Accelerated Reader and Reading Renaissance practices.

Furthermore, strong reading ability has been shown to positively affect math, language arts, science, and social studies achievement across all grades<sup>3</sup>. For this reason, Accelerated Reader has the potential to greatly impact all areas of learning in U.K. schools.

**PRIMARY STUDENTS—nferNelson GRT II Results**

	Overall percent showing learning gain	Percent showing gain of up to 6 months	Percent showing gain from 6 to 12 months	Percent showing gain of more than 12 months
All students	74.0%	11.0%	15.0%	48.0%
Boys	70.0%	13.0%	16.0%	41.0%
Girls	78.0%	9.0%	14.0%	55.0%

**SECONDARY STUDENTS—nferNelson GRT II Results**

	Overall percent showing learning gain	Percent showing gain of up to 6 months	Percent showing gain from 6 to 12 months	Percent showing gain of more than 12 months
All students	68.0%	12.5%	16.0%	39.5%
Boys	67.0%	12.0%	21.0%	34.0%
Girls	69.0%	13.0%	11.0%	45.0%

<sup>1</sup> Reading Renaissance recommends 60 minutes of reading practice time for maximum growth.

<sup>2</sup> The TOPS Report prints out after each Accelerated Reader Reading Practice Quiz. It provides immediate feedback to both the student and teacher, facilitating prompt intervention.

<sup>3</sup> Paul, T.D., S. Swanson, W. Zhang, & L. Hehenberger. *Learning Information System Effects on Reading, Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies*. Madison, WI: The Institute for Academic Excellence, 1997. Reprint, Madison, WI: School Renaissance Institute, 2000.

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