

SIP Area 2: To explore and prepare a progressive whole school oracy curriculum to enhance vocabulary acquisition and improve outcomes in spoken and written language – Year 1 (Kirsty Meehan).



Problem (why?)

What needs to change e.g. teacher behaviour, student behaviour, attainment?

Teachers and Leaders

- Across the school, there is a lack of consistency and modelling of what is expected during pupils' verbal, interactions with staff and their peers, both day-to-day and within the classroom learning environment.
- Some staff feel that we need higher expectations of children's manners and communication that mirrors our school values.
- National Curriculum requirements for spoken language are not always translated into practice, so that pupils learn, and are taught how to become competent speakers (e.g. how to present to an audience and topical debate).
- Pupils are not provided with enough opportunities to plan and consider sentence construction, grammar (e.g. dictation of spellings for practising transcription whilst avoiding working memory overload) and vocabulary orally before being asked to write (Ofsted English Education subject report, 2024).

Pupils

- The day-to-day verbal interactions of some pupils with school staff differ significantly from those that they demonstrate within the classroom (e.g. negative facial expressions and body language, not speaking in full sentences, answering back).
- A lack of confidence in some pupils means that not all pupils are effectively utilising the strategies and scaffolds that have already been implemented to improve verbal responses within the classroom (e.g. stem sentences and sentence stems; choral repetition and echo reading; hand signals to offer, add or challenge; think, pair, share).
- Pupils lack the academic vocabulary (tier 2 vocabulary) needed to be able to structure talk for different purposes. Also, some pupils are unable to distinguish between the language of speech and writing (Standard English); this may lead to lower quality written work being produced.

Attainment

- The percentage of pupils achieving EXS or GDS in writing is lower than targets set in Years 4 and 5. Is this partly due to a lack of practice in oral composition of writing?

Intervention Description (what?)

What are the essential 'active ingredients' of the intervention?

What activities and behaviours will you see when it is working?

Explore

Active ingredient 1: Set an ambitious vision for oracy (1)*

- School Leaders understand the key principles of oracy, why it is necessary to teach oracy in the context of our setting and have a clear focus for implementation.
- There is an ambitious vision for the teaching of oracy at Wirksworth Junior School and a clear intent.

Active ingredient 2: Set high expectations for oracy (1)

- There are ambitious and challenging norms and expectations for talk which have been established and are modelled by all school staff: in the classroom, in assemblies, during break/lunchtimes and when interacting with adults across the school.

Prepare

Active ingredient 3: Teaches oracy explicitly (3)

- Pupils are aware of and understand what is expected of them during verbal interactions both within and beyond the classroom.
- Pupils are being encouraged to develop their spoken language skills within the classroom: oral composition of sentences, use of hand signals (Talk Tactics), stem sentences and talk partners.

Active ingredient 4: Develop a sustained and wide-ranging curriculum for oracy (4)

- Develop an Oracy Policy, informed by best practice research, which sets out expectations for oracy across the school.
- Ensure there is a clear long-term plan in place for whole-school progression in oracy.

Implementation Activities (how?)

How will it be done?

What blend of activities are required?

1. Baseline assessment of pupils' needs

Monitoring of existing practices

- Oracy lead to research best practice in oracy education (Voice 21 Benchmarks, Oracy Cambridge, Gaunt & Stott, 2019).
- Self-evaluate current practices in oracy and spoken language across the school (learning walks, discussion with staff).
- Identify a specific focus for implementation though a baseline assessment of children's current skills using Voice 21's Oracy Framework (lesson observation, pupil discussion).
- Oracy Lead to contact Simon Robinson (Cotmanhay Junior School) to organise an informal collaboration with their Oracy Lead.

2. Collaborative expectation setting

- Teachers and Teaching Assistants to review our 'Guidelines for Speaking and Listening' (staff meeting).
- Develop a clear, agreed set of ground rules and expectations for talk and interactions both within and beyond the classroom – for both staff and pupils.

3. Training

- Oracy Lead to attend training with Derby Research School (19th September).
- All school staff (including Office Staff and Lunchtime Supervisors) to be trained on the ground rules and expectations for talk beyond the classroom (Leadership time).
- Using explanation, sentence stems and role play, introduce pupils to the Guidelines for Speaking and Listening within and beyond the classroom (coaching).

4. Curriculum development

- Develop an Oracy Policy which details: the pedagogical strategies to be used during teaching (e.g. Talk Tactics, Socratic Seminar, Talk Detectives), how it is to be threaded across the school (e.g. everyday interactions, emotional regulation) and disciplinary oracy.
- Develop whole-school progression grids for oracy, in line with the 4 aspects of the Oracy Framework (Voice 21).
- Weave explicit opportunities to develop oracy skills into the Long-Term Plan for English, RE and our bespoke curriculum subjects, ensuring pupils are working towards an oracy-specific outcome once a term (e.g. performance poetry in English, filming a travel show in Geography, taking part in a Socratic Seminar in RE).

Implementation Outcomes (how well?)

How will you know that it is working?
Do staff feel the approach is feasible and useful?

Short term – by December 2024

- School Leaders understand the key principles of oracy and have developed a clear vision and intent for oracy at WJS, based on initial assessment of pupils' spoken language skills and evaluation of current practice.
- School staff understand the importance of high expectations in oracy and are modelling how to respond during day-to-day verbal interactions across the school.

Medium term – by April 2025

- Pupils understand the guidelines for speaking and listening and are beginning to demonstrate these during general day-to-day interactions and to communicate their emotions using appropriate vocabulary (emotional self-regulation).
- Teachers are beginning to explore and utilise suggested pedagogical strategies to improve talk within the classroom (Benchmark 3).

Long term – by July 2025

- The Oracy Lead has developed an effective Oracy Policy, which sets out the expectations for developing a culture of oracy and recognises it as being central to learning.
- There is a long-term plan for curriculum and skills progression in oracy that will be ready to implement in the 2025-26 academic year.

Final Outcomes (and so?)

How will pupils, teachers and the school benefit?

School Leaders

- School leaders value oracy as an integral part of how their school provides an effective education. They can articulate clear aims for oracy which guide decision-making, allocation of resources and planning (Benchmark 1).
- The school's curriculum is intentionally designed to develop students' oracy knowledge and skills. As students move through school, the curriculum provides new challenges and opportunities for oracy which build on previous learning (Benchmark 4).
- They proactively seek information to support their understanding of the effectiveness of oracy provision and its impact on students. This information is used to refine and improve the school's approach to developing oracy (Benchmark 5).

School Staff

- All school staff are role models for spoken language.
- There are clear guidelines in place for speaking and listening across the school, and these high expectations are being communicated consistently.
- Teachers support all students to participate in, and benefit from, oracy in the classroom (Benchmark 2).

Pupil Outcomes

- Pupils are more consistent in their use of the guidelines for speaking and listening across the school, leading to more positive interactions with all staff members.
- With high quality teaching, pupils will be more confident and motivated to make verbal contributions to lessons, leading to an improvement in the quality of classroom talk.
- This will in turn lead to a wider range of opportunities to use ambitious vocabulary and sentence structures that can be applied to pupils' written work.