

Askwith Primary School

Oracy rationale

'Language and thought are intimately related, and the extent and manner of children's cognitive development depend to a considerable degree on the forms and contexts of language which they have encountered and used.'

Robin Alexander, 2008

Our curriculum offer for oracy and vocabulary begins in Early Years. 'Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances.'

EYFS Statutory Framework, 2021

Intent

At Askwith Primary School, our planning, teaching and assessment from EYFS to Year 6 are informed by the nine principles of cognitive science (Daniel Willingham). We identify the 'must haves'—knowing how to apply the physical, linguistic, cognitive and social-emotional components of oracy to be effective speakers and listeners—and the 'could dos'—structured opportunities to apply this knowledge and skill purposefully. We know that memory and cognition directly inform how we teach oracy and vocabulary. It is vital that we immerse all children, including those with SEND, EAL, PP and vulnerable pupils, in rich language from an early age and enable them to develop their public voice. Our ethos foregrounds character: pupils are nurtured to be responsible, respectful, resilient and robust, and this permeates all aspects of school life and the wider curriculum.

Our oracy curriculum is intentionally sequenced from EYFS to Year 6. Substantive knowledge includes the four strands of oracy (physical, linguistic, cognitive, social-emotional) and a growing repertoire of subject vocabulary. Disciplinary knowledge includes dialogic practices such as attentive listening, turn-taking, building on ideas, reasoning with evidence, questioning and clarifying. Each year builds securely on prior learning with clear endpoints that define what pupils should know and be able to do. The curriculum is ambitious for all pupils and supports equality of access.

Implementation

EYFS provides vocabulary- and language-rich opportunities for Nursery and Reception. Provision recognises that vocabulary knowledge builds cumulatively and is deliberately engineered through continuous and enhanced provision, stories, songs, role-play and adult-guided talk. Across school, we embed a positive dialogic approach: adults model Standard English consistently and reinforce age-related expectations for talk throughout the day in responsive moments and planned sequences.

The long-term plan sets out progression in the four strands of oracy, aligned directly to our EYFS communication and language progression and our whole-school oracy progression document. Purposeful opportunities are planned across the curriculum to develop pupils' public voice, including performances, class assemblies, show-and-tell, debates and presentations. Lessons use explicit instruction, modelling and repetition to support strong use of oracy. For example, revision and discussion of tier-2 vocabulary, use of age-related talk scaffolds and rules. In addition, teachers structure talk using routines such as partner talk, roles in group discussion stem sentences for reasoning, agreeing, challenging and clarifying. Misconceptions - such as overlapping talk, limited eye contact, or unclear phrasing - are addressed immediately through feedback and re-rehearsal.

Vocabulary and language-rich environments are consistent in every classroom. Tier-2 vocabulary arising from classroom dialogue is captured on "What Do Words Mean?" displays; topic displays include key tier-3 vocabulary. Teachers recognise that vocabulary has vertical and horizontal connections and revisit words in varied contexts. Classrooms are literature-rich, with high-quality books available at all times, and in EYFS, decodable labels, storytelling, reading and writing areas further amplify language exposure.

We remain responsive to language gaps that may result from wider factors. Targeted talk opportunities, additional adult-led small-group dialogues and explicit vocabulary teaching are used to remediate and accelerate progress.

Impact

Impact is measured through ongoing observation, questioning, pupil conferencing and an oracy tracker aligned to age-related expectations from the progression document. The tracker identifies purposeful opportunities across the year for pupils to demonstrate oracy in varied contexts. Over time, pupils show clearer articulation, increased vocabulary breadth, active listening, confident turn-taking, and the ability to reason, summarise and build on others' ideas. Audio/video snapshots, performance outcomes and teacher notes inform termly reviews and next steps. The majority of pupils meet age-related expectations; gaps are identified quickly and targeted support is planned.

Inclusion

Oracy is accessible to all pupils, including those with SEND and disadvantaged backgrounds. Adaptive teaching includes visual prompts and icons, pre-teaching of key vocabulary, sentence stems and talk frames, structured roles within groups, chunked instructions and additional adult facilitation. High expectations are consistent and adaptations remove barriers without lowering challenge.

Personal Development & SMSC

Through oracy, pupils learn to listen respectfully, speak with confidence and empathy, and engage in thoughtful dialogue. Discussions linked to class texts, global themes and curriculum content provide safe opportunities to explore diverse cultures, traditions, beliefs and moral issues. Debates and collaborative talk foster social skills, mutual respect and responsibility,

while performances and presentations develop resilience and pride in achievement. Oracy thus strengthens pupils' character and contributes to British Values and citizenship.

Leadership & Professional Development

Subject leadership includes learning walks, lesson drop-ins and pupil voice interviews. Planning scrutiny ensures alignment between the EYFS communication and language progression and the whole-school oracy progression. Staff receive ongoing CPD on dialogic teaching, modelling Standard English, feedback on talk, vocabulary instruction and the use of routines and sentence stems. Coaching and sharing of practice support consistency and impact across year groups.

Enhancements

A rolling programme of enhancements provides authentic contexts for public voice and cultural capital: class assemblies, debates, poetry recitals, storytelling events and participation in the annual Wharfedale Drama Festival to showcase spoken verse and rhyme. These experiences extend pupils' confidence, refine performance skills and celebrate oracy across the school community.

Oracy Priorities for Improvement 2025-2026

Intent	Implementation
<p>Monitor implementation of oral composition in writing, particularly using colourful semantics in KS1 and LKS2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amend grammar and composition progression document to include when colourful semantics will be used to specifically support teaching of grammatical features in year 1, 2, 3 and 4 • Align colourful semantics resources across year 1, 2, 3 and 4 • Monitor oral composition in writing lessons across school • Implement actions from previous term monitoring • Continue to monitor oral composition in writing lessons across school
<p>Monitor implementation of oracy tracker across school</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor teachers' use of oracy trackers termly • Check opportunities for oracy have been added to all EKO's across school in all subjects • All lesson drops in for English, history and music include monitoring of oracy planning and how it is developed across all lessons/subjects

Reviewed September 2025