

The Importance of Vocabulary, Speech, and Language Across the Curriculum at St. Francis' Catholic Primary School

The DfE emphasises that the development of spoken and written language underpins all learning, across all ages—from EYFS through Key Stage 2 and beyond. Language-rich environments, robust oracy, and wide reading are essential for pupils to achieve cognitive, social, and academic success. [\[help-for-e...ion.gov.uk\]](#), [\[assets.pub...ice.gov.uk\]](#), [\[gov.uk\]](#), [\[assets.pub...ice.gov.uk\]](#)

Early Years Foundation Stage (Birth–5)

- Prime learning area: Communication & Language is at the core of EYFS, influencing children's development in all other areas. [\[ww3.bright...ove.gov.uk\]](#), [\[assets.pub...ice.gov.uk\]](#)
- Rapid vocabulary growth: Typical development sees children knowing ~50 words at age 1, ~1,000 by age 3, and ~10,000 by age 5. [\[help-for-e...ion.gov.uk\]](#)
- Teaching approaches:
 - Foster back-and-forth interactions—adult-child conversations that model new vocabulary in context. [\[help-for-e...ion.gov.uk\]](#), [\[help-for-e...ion.gov.uk\]](#)
 - Provide storytime, rhymes, and role-play to introduce and reinforce language structures and expressive language. [\[help-for-e...ion.gov.uk\]](#), [\[help-for-e...ion.gov.uk\]](#)
 - Use sensitive questioning and expansion strategies to encourage deeper explanation and vocabulary use. [\[help-for-e...ion.gov.uk\]](#), [\[help-for-e...ion.gov.uk\]](#)

Early Primary (Year 1–Year 2):

- Pupils are supported in preparing spoken ideas before writing and explaining texts to enhance clarity of thinking. [\[gov.uk\]](#), [\[assets.pub...ice.gov.uk\]](#)
- National Curriculum aims include building a wide vocabulary and understanding grammar in spoken and written forms. [\[gov.uk\]](#), [\[assets.pub...ice.gov.uk\]](#)

Later Primary (Years 3–6):

Pupils should be taught to:

- Listen and respond appropriately to peers and adults.
- Ask probing questions to deepen understanding and curiosity.

- Use diverse vocabulary strategies, including explicit teaching to enrich expression.
 - Articulate and justify opinions, with structured arguments and narratives.
 - Engage in collaborative discussions, staying on topic and extending others' ideas.
 - Speculate, hypothesise, and imagine to explore ideas verbally.
 - Speak audibly and fluently in increasingly sophisticated forms of Standard English.
 - Participate in debates, presentations, performances, adapting register to purpose and audience. [\[assets.pub...ice.gov.uk\]](#), [\[gov.uk\]](#), [\[assets.pub...ice.gov.uk\]](#)
 - Listen to, evaluate and build on others' viewpoints during interactions. [\[assets.pub...ice.gov.uk\]](#)
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Holistic Curriculum Integration

Reading, Writing & Vocabulary

- A broad vocabulary supports fluent reading, comprehension, and more precise writing. DfE guidance notes that vocabulary teaching must be explicit but also reinforced through repeated exposure, modelling, and practice. [\[gov.uk\]](#), [\[assets.pub...ice.gov.uk\]](#), [\[educatione...ion.org.uk\]](#)
- Pupils gain grammar awareness through spoken usage, which transitions into sophisticated written expression. [\[assets.pub...ice.gov.uk\]](#), [\[assets.pub...ice.gov.uk\]](#)

Across Subjects

- Every subject—from maths and science to history and art—offers opportunities to teach subject-specific vocabulary (“disciplinary literacy”), helping pupils grasp concepts and articulate ideas precisely. [\[lancashire.gov.uk\]](#), [\[educatione...ion.org.uk\]](#)
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Key Takeaways

- EYFS: Promote vocabulary and speaking skills through ongoing interactions, stories, rhymes, and modeling in a language-rich environment, aiming both for quantity and quality of exposure. [\[help-for-e...ion.gov.uk\]](#), [\[help-for-e...ion.gov.uk\]](#)

- Primary years: Provide structured talk, explicit vocabulary teaching, grammar embedded in speech, and oracy across the whole curriculum.
 - DfE's recent curriculum reforms spotlight stronger emphasis on spoken language, lexical precision, and teacher-led vocabulary instruction beginning in EYFS and continuing through to secondary education.
[\[educationh...log.gov.uk\]](#), [\[assets.pub...ice.gov.uk\]](#), [\[educatione...ion.org.uk\]](#)
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These strategies aim to develop confident communicators: pupils who listen attentively, express thoughtfully, and understand deeply—laying a foundation for lifelong learning and full participation in society.