



Oracy and Spoken Language Policy

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1. Introduction

Oracy can be described as learning to talk and learning through talk. At Willow Bank, we focus mainly on the latter, and we use active discussions to help form the foundation for pupils understanding of curriculum content.

In its simplest form, oracy is to be able to express oneself well. It relates to having a broad range of vocabulary to say what one needs to say and the proficiency to structure thoughts so that the person makes sense to others.

As well as being a tool of communication, effective oracy skills enable pupils to participate in deep learning activities where they can exchange ideas, explore new areas and challenge assumptions.

We recognise that this area of pedagogy has particular significance for disadvantaged or low-attaining pupils.

Speaking is one of the most basic skills that humans possess. We learn to talk early in life, and our ability to communicate continues to develop throughout adulthood. Regardless of whether someone speaks fluently or struggles to express themselves, learning to speak is the foundational building block of literacy. Learning to read and write is much easier when you understand the basics of spoken communication.

For example, knowing how to pronounce certain letters and sounds allows children to recognise letter patterns and build vocabulary. When children grow into adults, they continue to rely on their knowledge of pronunciation to decode written text. It's no surprise, then, that mastering the art of speech is a critical part of developing literacy. Children who lack proficiency in speaking tend to fall behind academically, especially when it comes to reading comprehension. Effective oracy skills provide children with the tool of communication which sets them up for a lifetime of success.

2. Implementation

Across Key Stages 2 – 4, pupils will use:

- Partner talk
- Group discussion
- Collaborative work and problem solving
- Debate
- Role play
- Drama
- Presentations to a group

At Key Stage 2, pupils engage in guided discussions as part of their book or film studies as part of the English curriculum. They also access the 'Talkabout for Children 1: Developing Self-Awareness and Self-Esteem' and 'Talkabout for Children 2: Developing Social Skills' as a weekly small group intervention.

At Y8 – 11, pupils will engage with '*Talkabout for Teenagers*' during their CSS lessons as an intervention which develops social and emotional communication skills using talk for different purposes such as conversation skills, discussion, questioning, understanding non-verbal communication, turn taking and listening skills.

Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils will engage in 'Teen Talk' during form time. This uses questions to initiate icebreakers and discussions.

There are also opportunities for pupils to develop their oracy skills outside of the curriculum. This is achieved through pupil voice groups, assemblies, visiting speakers, topic events, Outdoor Education and Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme.

3. Additional Needs

Some pupils may have communication and interaction difficulties and/or SEMH difficulties which create barriers to oracy and thus require additional support. These needs will be clearly documented within Section B of a pupils EHCP and provision detailed within Section F.

For those pupils who have recommendations from SALT in their EHCP, those recommendations will be shared with teachers and will be embedded across the curriculum.

Some pupils, for example, may require adaptations to direct questioning, may benefit from the accessibility of vocabulary banks when speaking and listening, may require visual reminders re social expectations during interactions (e.g. listening, turn taking etc).

In terms of specific support in school, social communication and interaction skills are developed across the curriculum with particular focus within sessions such as CSS (which is to be offered from September 2023 as a curriculum lesson for those pupils up to Year 8 and as an intervention for those pupils requiring additional support from Y9 onwards), forest school, outdoor education and PSD. Additional interventions may be offered as required for those requiring specific support including via the Speech Link or Language Link Programmes and/or referral to SALT. Any referral would only be made following discussions with the SENDCO and with consent from parents/carers.

4. Impact

Our pupils leave Willow Bank School as fluent speakers, who are confident to communicate, debate and present in a wide range of situations