

Oracy at Marlborough Road

Oracy is defined as the ability to express yourself fluently and communicate effectively with other people through speaking. The EEF states that oracy is “at the heart of language development” and at Marlborough Road, it underpins all the learning in our school.

Briefly, the EEF makes the following recommendations:

- Design purposeful collaborative learning activities where pupils can share their thought processes.
- Reading books aloud and discuss them including the use of structured questioning.
- Encourage pupils to articulate their ideas verbally before writing.
- Promote high quality dialogue in the classroom, between the teacher and the pupils and between pupils, to support pupils to develop their thinking and use of language.
- Extend pupils’ vocabulary by explicitly teaching new words, providing repeated exposure to new words, and providing opportunities for pupils.

The following details how we ensure that these recommendations are followed in our school and therefore how oracy is embedded within every aspect of our teaching and learning.

Pedagogy

Our children often do not have good models of oracy at home and so, in school, adults model good verbal communication at all times. They use grammatically correct, appropriate language in interactions with children and correct children’s spoken language when necessary. When modelling in curriculum subjects such as writing or science, teachers use a metacognitive approach which means that they articulate their thought process.

We use Kagan structures to ensure that children cannot opt out of the learning and that they are able to communicate their learning and ideas. This often enables them to practice before speaking in front of the whole class. It may involve them asking and answering questions with a partner or small group, coaching another student or explaining their thinking.

Teachers ask lots of questions of children. Many of these are open and probing and children are expected to answer accurately in full sentences and to explain and justify their thinking. We cold call rather than hands up, so that there is an expectation of all children. Sentence starters may be provided to scaffold children if necessary.

We provide a wide range of opportunities for our children to speak and listen, other than the classroom. Learning at lunchtime consists of activities run by adults such as sports games, art and craft, teambuilding, orienteering etc. which require children to communicate effectively. We interview children for the jobs they take on around school (e.g. eco warriors, play leaders, school council) and they again need to communicate as part of these jobs. Our older children will often work with our younger children in order to improve the latter’s oracy and they are given training from EYFS staff on this. These roles include reading buddies and play time assistants.

Specific Approaches

Reading and Writing

Teachers read to children on at least a daily basis, thus modelling fluency which we define as maintaining a good pace, not stumbling over words and reading with expression. Book talk is modelled regularly and children are encouraged to participate in this. Children read out loud on a daily basis through our RWI scheme, and once off this programme, they read a variety of texts to their partners and to adults during reading lessons. Partners give each other feedback in terms of fluency.

When modelling writing, teachers orally rehearse each sentence several times before writing and children are expected to do the same. Children read their work to their partner in order to edit. We build in as many opportunities as possible to perform their written work, and children often visit other classes to read their work to them.

Many of our writing units provide opportunities for discussion and debate.

Vocabulary

We recognise that vocabulary can be a stumbling block for our children and we therefore have a structured approach to it. Vocabulary is explicitly taught. Children are told the meanings of subject specific words in all areas of the curriculum and these are displayed on the walls. Opportunities are designed for them to practise and embed this vocabulary and it is regularly reviewed. In English, words are chosen and collected from focus texts – these often include tier 2 as well as 3 words as we do not assume that they are known to our children. Again, these words are reviewed regularly as part of our teaching reading structure.

EYFS

On entry to nursery, we use the Wellcomm assessment to identify children who need support with speech and language. This means that referrals are made as early as possible. We use the Wellcomm resources to explicitly teach language at an age-related level. In Reception, we use the Neli speech and language program to help children fill gaps and catch up quickly.

Read Write Inc begins as soon as children are ready in nursery and involves lots of repetition and hearing and saying words and initial sounds.

Our staff are all trained in and deliver parallel play. They play alongside the children, modelling and extending language through narration in all areas of the provision.

Language is taught in context – children are involved in activities where they hear and say words whilst seeing an object or carrying out an activity e.g. They hear and see “pinch the dough” whilst doing that action or when talking about a tall tower, they are shown one. We have a rhyme scheme and rhymes and stories involving actions are sung daily.

Our “What’s in the box?” activity encourages language development. Children are given clues in order to discover what the object is and as they progress through EYFS, they ask questions and construct and say sentences relating to it.

EAL

Children who are new to English are taught for an hour a day using the SEEMA scheme. This begins with nouns in order that they can name the things around them and progress to simple sentences. The emphasis in all of this is verbal, and children go back to English lessons when they have reached a basic standard.