

Spoken Language at Pitmaston: Intent, Implementation and Impact

Intent

At Pitmaston Primary School, we understand that Spoken Language skills are the roots underpinning children's future successes and are therefore a vital aspect in helping children to develop their cultural capital, ready for their next stage of learning. We recognise that Spoken Language is not an isolated area of the English Curriculum; it is a fundamental part of our pedagogy that shapes the teaching and learning at our school to help children develop cognitively, socially and linguistically. This is also reflected in our learning environments which are designed to inspire and cultivate a respect for oracy. Staff at Pitmaston are dedicated to being role models of correct spoken language, modelling effective Standard English at all times.

In line with the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework and National Curriculum, our ambitious and progressive Spoken Language curriculum, which is embedded from Pre-School to Year 6, will enable children to:

- develop into confident, articulate speakers who are able to express themselves and their ideas clearly and coherently
- increase their awareness and use of vocabulary through the provision of language-rich learning experiences
- share their learning in an engaging, informative way through presentations, performances, poetry recitals, drama, discussions and debates.
- orally rehearse and present their ideas to different audiences before writing.
- listen attentively and respond appropriately to adults and peers through using correct registers for effective communication
- develop their ability to ask a range of questions to build upon and deepen their knowledge and understanding
- give well-structured descriptions, explanations and narratives for different purposes, including for expressing feelings
- maintain attention and participate actively in collaborative conversations, staying on topic and initiating and responding to comments
- use spoken language to develop understanding through speculating, hypothesising, imagining and exploring ideas
- speak audibly and fluently with an increasing command of standard English
- gain, maintain and monitor the interest of the listener(s)
- consider and evaluate different viewpoints, attending to and building on the contributions of others during class debates.

The above statements have been broken down into five sub-categories and then organised progressively from Pre-School to Year 6: Attention, Listening and Questioning; Vocabulary; Speech Sounds, Standard English and Sentence Building; Verbal Storytelling and Performance; and Conversations and Social Interaction (including debates). From Pre-school to Year 6, we assess all children's Spoken Language skills to ensure that 1:1 and small group interventions take place where communication and language needs have been identified by working closely with Speech and Language Therapists. These may include the Nuffield Early Language Intervention scheme (NELI), Step 7 provision, specific language acquisition targets, Thrive sessions, Drawing and Talking Therapy, Building Together Club or in some cases, EAL interventions. Interventions can be based on recommendations from Speech and Language Therapy reports (SALT); these are for pupils who have specific communication and language needs. At Pitmaston, we understand that an unaddressed delay in language skills can lead to underperformance throughout primary school and beyond.

Implementation

First and foremost, our classrooms are rich in dialogic talk which ranges from effective questioning to constructive peer discussions as well as teachers using talk skilfully to develop and encourage critical thinking. As soon as children enter Pitmaston, we place an impetus on developing their oracy skills therefore children are constantly encouraged to articulate their sentences before beginning to write them down.

Throughout school, children make regular use of talking partners in mixed ability pairings to allow them to develop their thinking in a mutually supportive and beneficial partnership. We value the importance of vocabulary by making it a priority in every lesson: teachers encourage and model the use of new vocabulary in spoken and written language in addition to recording new vocabulary on the class working walls to support future use. This also provides opportunities for children to revisit and retrieve new vocabulary so that it becomes embedded in the long term-memory. As well as providing opportunities to explore vocabulary through talk and reading, we plan for the explicit teaching of vocabulary across the curriculum. Subject leaders have selected word lists for every topic; they build in complexity each year so that pupils can build upon their skills and knowledge. To build upon pupils' cultural capital, subject leaders have planned topics that are both locally and nationally relevant; the vocabulary lists chosen, reflect this diversity.

Through our daily reading lessons and Talk for Writing opportunities, provision of role play and drama opportunities enliven and enrich children's understanding of character and relationships. Consequently, we nurture children's speaking and listening skills through a variety of approaches such as exploratory play, daily story time and hot-seating. In the Early Years, through promoting a love of storytelling and books, as well as facilitating high quality adult interactions, we provide children with the opportunities to explore language and vocabulary in a range of contexts. Children are excited and enthusiastic to use their enriched knowledge of words and take this back into their play and learning both within and outside of the classroom environment. Adults are tuned into spotting the teachable moments, to draw out ambitious vocabulary from high-quality, diverse texts.

Not only do we strive to develop Spoken Language skills through the curriculum, but there are many opportunities for children to develop their oracy skills outside of the curriculum. These include performance opportunities, for example: our highly anticipated class assemblies, poetry recitals and performances, role play, Christmas productions and our Year 6 summer term production where children are able to perform to a live audience. Many of our children have additional opportunities to utilise their spoken language skills through attending one of the following groups: Learning Detectives, Cyber Buddies, Anti-bullying Ambassadors, Classroom Ambassadors, Well-being Champions, Gender Champions and Eco-representatives.

Impact

In a safe and supportive environment, children flourish into confident communicators, performers and presenters who can talk successfully in order to express themselves and their opinions with clarity. Children recognise that through speaking and listening, misunderstandings can be addressed and they are able to establish positive relationships inside and outside the school. We aim that by the end of KS2, all of our children have made considerable progress from their starting points in EYFS. Judgments of children's Spoken Language competency is shared with parents on reports and assessed annually using Pitmaston Spoken Language assessment criteria. At Pitmaston, we believe that our Spoken Language provision as part of our English offer, will equip our children with skills that will carry them through life in order to help our pupils know more, remember more and do more.