

CELT Primary Oracy

Intent, Implementation and Impact



Intent

At CELT, we believe that every child has the right to find, develop and use their voice. Oracy is fundamental to learning, relationships, wellbeing and participation in society. It enables children not only to communicate what they know, but to develop what they know through talk: rehearsing ideas, making connections, questioning, reasoning, challenging, clarifying and refining their thinking.

This sits at the heart of our wider curriculum intent. Our ambition is to develop knowledgeable, articulate, curious and thoughtful young people who have the confidence and foundations to participate fully in society and lead lives of choice and opportunity. For this reason, being vocabulary- and oracy-rich is an explicit CELT curriculum design principle, rather than oracy being viewed as an additional programme or isolated subject.

We recognise that spoken language is both a curriculum entitlement in its own right and a vehicle through which the wider curriculum is learned. Children need opportunities to learn to talk, through talk and about talk. High-quality classroom dialogue supports pupils to articulate developing understanding, encounter alternative perspectives, make meaning collaboratively and use increasingly precise language to communicate increasingly sophisticated ideas.

Our ambition is therefore that every CELT pupil becomes an increasingly ****confident, articulate, attentive and thoughtful communicator****. Pupils learn to listen as carefully as they speak; to contribute appropriately; to build upon and challenge the ideas of others; to ask purposeful questions; to explain and justify their thinking; to adapt their communication to different audiences and contexts; and to recognise that productive disagreement and the respectful exchange of ideas are important parts of learning.

This directly supports our five curriculum aims. Effective communication develops pupils who are **'Happy and Healthy'**, able to express themselves, listen to others and build positive relationships; **'Prepared for the Future'**, possessing the communication skills needed for their next stage of education and later life; **'Global Citizens'**, able to listen respectfully to different perspectives and participate constructively in their communities; **'Inspired to Learn'**, using questioning and dialogue to explore ideas; and **'Creative Thinkers'**, able to question, analyse, reason, connect ideas and communicate their thinking. The wider CELT curriculum explicitly identifies purposeful opportunities for oracy and rich vocabulary as part of developing pupils who are inspired to learn.

Crucially, our approach is rooted in equity. We do not assume that children will acquire effective spoken-language behaviours simply through exposure to classroom talk. The language, behaviours and conventions of effective communication are therefore explicitly taught, modelled, practised and revisited. This ensures that successful participation in classroom dialogue does not depend upon a child's prior experiences or starting point.

Our aim is that every learner develops a genuine sense that their voice matters, alongside an understanding that with that voice comes a responsibility to listen to and value the voices of others.

Implementation

Oracy is implemented through a combination of explicit, carefully sequenced teaching and purposeful application throughout the curriculum. It is both taught deliberately and embedded within everyday classroom practice.

From Year 1 onwards, pupils receive a planned progression of explicit oracy teaching through CELT's 'Thunk curriculum'. The progression systematically develops the physical, linguistic, cognitive, and social and emotional dimensions of talk, alongside a progressive repertoire of 'Talk Tactics'.

The curriculum begins by establishing the foundations of successful communication. In KS1, pupils explicitly learn behaviours such as turning towards a speaker, speaking clearly enough to be heard, using body language and gesture, taking turns and listening carefully. They then progress towards more cognitively and linguistically demanding behaviours, including giving reasons, politely disagreeing, considering other viewpoints, using subject-specific vocabulary, asking questions, building upon others' ideas and summarising discussion. KS1 Thunk Progression KS1 Thunk Progression

This progression continues through KS2 so that expectations become increasingly sophisticated. Pupils continue to develop the physical dimensions of communication alongside increasingly independent discussion, active listening, reasoning, challenge and collaboration. For example, pupils progress from listening to others towards participating independently in group discussion and encouraging others to contribute. KS2 Thunk Progression KS2 Thunk Progression

Talk Tactics provide a shared language for purposeful dialogue across CELT.

Pupils progressively learn to:

Instigate → Build → Challenge → Clarify → Probe → Summarise

Sentence stems provide temporary linguistic scaffolds so that all pupils can participate successfully. Children learn structures such as "In my opinion... because...", "Adding to this...", "I disagree with... because..." and "How do you know that...?". These supports enable pupils to experience successful, increasingly sophisticated dialogue before becoming more fluent and independent in selecting appropriate language for themselves. KS1 Thunk Progression

Weekly 'Thunks' provide deliberately thought-provoking, accessible questions through which pupils can practise these skills without the cognitive demand of simultaneously acquiring new curriculum content. Talk is structured through purposeful groupings and protocols, including paired and small-group discussion, alongside agreed discussion guidelines. The lesson materials explicitly combine an oracy learning objective with a Talk Tactic, allowing pupils to understand both how they communicate and how they develop

a discussion. For example, the KS2 materials combine the physical objective of turning towards a speaker with the Instigate tactic of sharing an idea or starting others thinking.

Explicit teaching is reinforced through approaches such as teacher modelling, Talk Detectives, discussion guidelines, oracy-specific praise and reflection. Pupils are helped to notice effective communication in themselves and others and gradually develop the metacognitive ability to evaluate and improve their own talk. By the end of KS1, for example, pupils are beginning to evaluate their talk using subject-specific language as well as communicating in complete, clear sentences.

Importantly, oracy does not stop when the discrete Think session ends. Teachers deliberately create opportunities for pupils to apply and transfer these behaviours across the curriculum. In English, mathematics, science, humanities, arts and the wider curriculum, pupils rehearse thinking aloud, explain reasoning, ask and answer questions, use disciplinary vocabulary, discuss texts and concepts, build upon others' ideas and articulate increasingly complex understanding. This reflects CELT's wider curriculum expectation that children progressively learn what it means to think, talk and work like historians, scientists, geographers, theologians, artists, mathematicians, writers, programmers and designers.

Implementation is inclusive by design. Teachers use modelling, carefully chosen groupings, visual prompts, sentence stems, vocabulary support, additional rehearsal time and other appropriate scaffolds so that pupils with different starting points, including pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils, can participate successfully in ambitious classroom dialogue. This reflects CELT's wider principle of adjustment rather than reduced ambition: all pupils retain entitlement to the same ambitious curriculum.

Impact

The impact of our oracy curriculum is seen not simply in whether children can remember individual Talk Tactics, but in the quality, independence and purposefulness of their communication over time and in their increasing ability to use talk as a tool for thinking and learning.

As pupils progress through CELT, we expect them to become increasingly confident and independent communicators. They listen actively and respectfully; articulate ideas clearly; use increasingly precise and subject-specific vocabulary; ask purposeful questions; explain and justify their reasoning; build upon, challenge and clarify ideas; consider alternative viewpoints; summarise thinking; and adapt their spoken language appropriately to audience, purpose and context.

We expect pupils increasingly to move from supported talk to independent talk. Sentence stems, protocols and teacher modelling initially make the structures of successful dialogue visible and accessible; over time, pupils internalise these structures and select them independently. The progression therefore develops not simply children who speak confidently, but children who know how to use talk deliberately to learn, reason, collaborate and communicate.

Impact is also evident across the wider curriculum. Pupils should increasingly be able to use talk to retrieve and connect prior knowledge, rehearse new vocabulary, explain

disciplinary thinking, test ideas, resolve misconceptions and communicate what they have learned. In this way, strong oracy contributes directly to the CELT curriculum ambition for children to become knowledgeable, articulate, curious and thoughtful young people.

Teachers assess oracy primarily through ongoing formative assessment: listening to pupils, observing discussion, questioning, dialogue, feedback and opportunities for self- and peer-evaluation. This aligns with CELT's wider approach in which assessment is integral to teaching and used to identify strengths, gaps and misconceptions and inform subsequent teaching, rather than creating unnecessary data.

At classroom, school and Trust level, leaders evaluate whether the intended oracy curriculum is becoming the learned curriculum. Pupil voice, lesson visits, learning walks, professional dialogue and wider curriculum review help leaders evaluate whether pupils can demonstrate the communication behaviours they have been taught and, crucially, whether they can transfer them into authentic learning situations. Findings inform professional development, coaching and refinement of curriculum materials and classroom practice.

Ultimately, the impact we seek extends beyond fluent classroom discussion. We want children to leave CELT knowing that their ideas have value and their voices deserve to be heard, while understanding their responsibility to listen carefully and respectfully to others. They should have the vocabulary, confidence and communication skills to express themselves, learn collaboratively, engage with different perspectives, advocate for themselves and others, and participate fully in education, their communities and wider society.

Oracy therefore contributes directly to our wider curriculum promise: equipping every child with the knowledge, skills, character, curiosity and confidence to lead a life of choice and opportunity.