



Oracy Policy

May 2026

Intent

The framework for setting out the aims of our programme of education, including the knowledge and understanding to be gained at each stage

Why do we teach what we teach?

At Walnut Tree Walk, we recognise that spoken language underpins the development of reading, writing and thinking. Before children can write confidently, debate ideas or explain their reasoning, they must first be able to articulate their thoughts clearly and listen with understanding.

We believe that oracy is fundamental to identity. When children find their voice, they find agency. They learn that their ideas matter, that their experiences have value and that they have the right to be heard. At WTW, we want every child to see themselves as a communicator – someone who can contribute thoughtfully, question confidently and speak with purpose.

We understand that not all children arrive at school with the same opportunities to develop spoken language. Therefore, we explicitly teach the skills of effective communication to ensure equity. Our classrooms are talk-rich and inclusive, enabling all pupils – regardless of background – to develop the vocabulary, confidence and cultural capital needed to succeed in school and beyond.

Oracy is embedded across our broad and balanced curriculum. From exploratory partner talk in Early Years to structured discussion and debate in Key Stage Two, children are given purposeful opportunities to rehearse ideas, justify their thinking and present to different audiences. Through carefully planned discussion, children deepen their understanding while learning to respectfully challenge and build upon the views of others.

At Walnut Tree Walk, every voice has power – and we are committed to ensuring every child is equipped to use it.

Our Intent

- For all children to become confident and articulate speakers who can communicate clearly across a range of contexts.
- For pupils to develop a rich and ambitious vocabulary that enables them to express increasingly complex ideas.
- For children to develop a strong sense of identity and agency through purposeful opportunities to speak and be heard.
- For pupils to become respectful, reflective listeners who can build on, challenge and respond to others constructively.
- To ensure that oracy strengthens learning across the curriculum and provides equitable opportunities for all pupils, including those with SEND, to make strong progress in spoken communication.

Implementation

The means of translating that framework over time into a structure and narrative within our school

What do we teach and when?

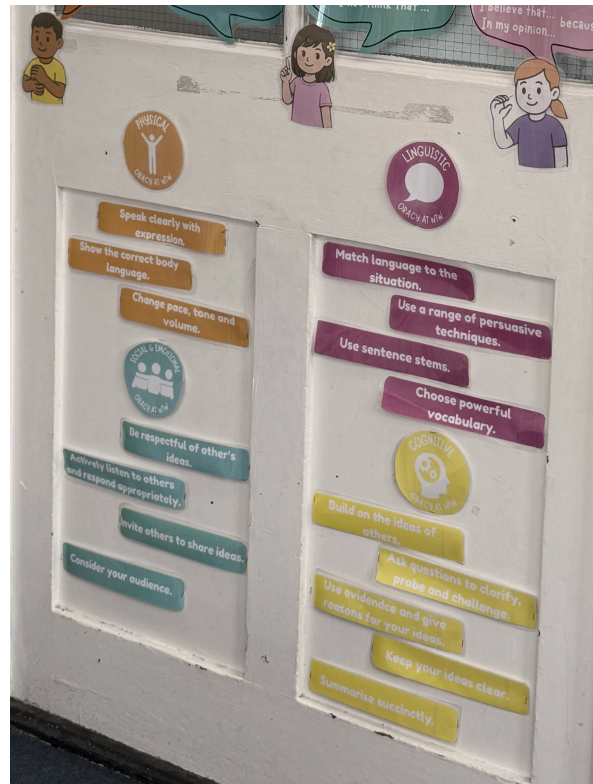
At Walnut Tree Walk, oracy is embedded through a consistent, whole-school approach, rooted in the Voice 21 Oracy Framework. Oracy is both explicitly taught and carefully planned for across the curriculum, ensuring that all pupils develop the skills to speak, listen and think effectively.

The Oracy Framework

All classrooms use the four strands of the Voice 21 Oracy Framework (see Appendix A):

- Physical
- Linguistic
- Cognitive
- Social and Emotional

These are displayed on working walls using key stage appropriate language and are referred to regularly within teaching. Teachers use the framework to set half-termly oracy targets for each strand, supporting pupils to understand how to improve their speaking and listening skills. A shared language around oracy is developing across the school, enabling pupils to talk about talk with increasing confidence and clarity.



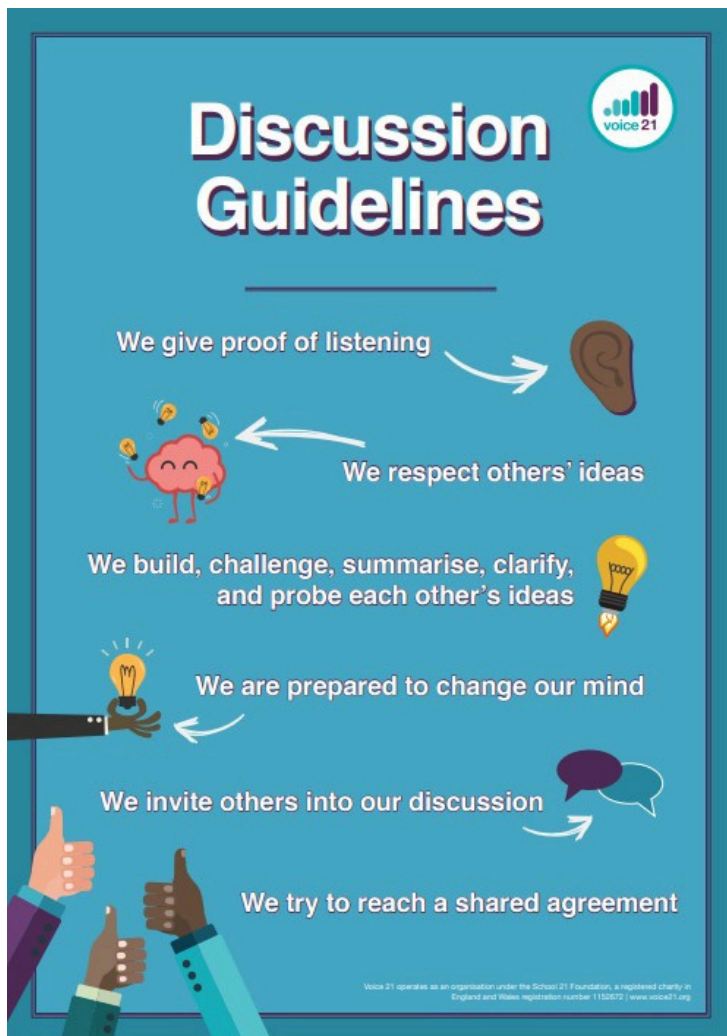
KS1 and KS2 Framework Classroom Displays

Teaching and Learning


Oracy is explicitly taught and embedded within everyday classroom practice. Teachers:


- model high-quality talk
- plan purposeful opportunities for discussion
- use questioning to promote reasoning and explanation
- explicitly teach discussion behaviours such as listening, turn-taking and building on ideas


Discussion is carefully structured to ensure all pupils are able to participate and succeed.





Discussion Guidelines


We give proof of listening 

We respect others' ideas 

We build, challenge, summarise, clarify, and probe each other's ideas 

We are prepared to change our mind 

We invite others into our discussion 

We try to reach a shared agreement 

Voice 21 operates as an organisation under the School 21 Foundation, a registered charity in England and Wales, registration number 1150672 | www.voice21.org



Giving Proof Of Listening Means

Listen carefully
Try to summarise what has been said and ask questions. 

Face the speaker
Make sure you are looking at the speaker so that they know you are listening. 

Body language
Use your body language to show that you are calm and focused. 

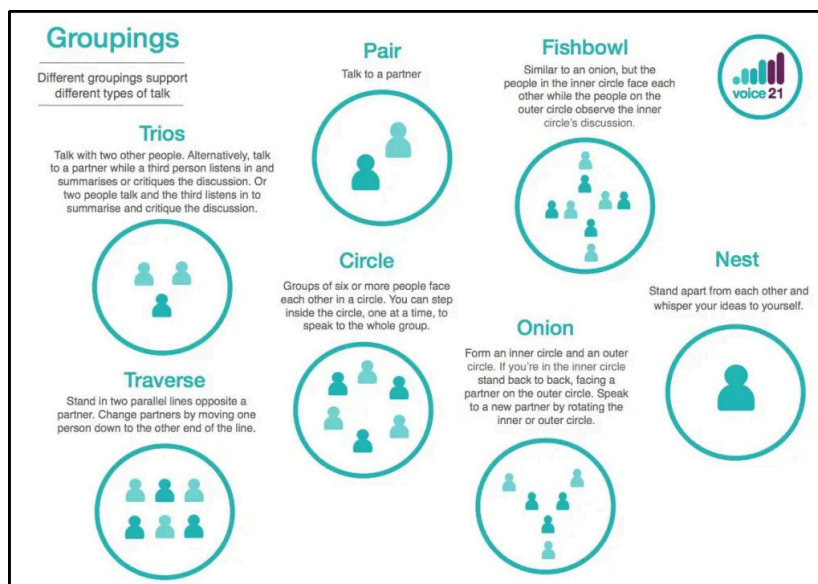
Posters displayed in each class

Structured Talk and Discussion Approaches

Pupils are provided with regular opportunities to engage in structured talk through carefully planned interaction patterns. Teachers make use of a range of groupings, informed by the Voice 21 approach, in order to vary the way pupils interact and to support different types of discussion. These include:

- pairs
- trios
- circles
- fishbowls
- traverse activities
- independent reflection (e.g. 'nest')

As outlined in the Voice 21 groupings framework, these structures allow pupils to experience different roles within discussion, including speaking, listening, observing and summarising. Consistent use of visual icons for each grouping supports pupils in quickly recognising and transitioning between discussion structures, ensuring clarity and consistency across the school.



Voice 21 grouping icons used in lesson resources



Fishbowl being used in Year 6



Nest being used in Year 2

Structured Speaking Tasks

In addition to varied groupings, teachers use a range of structured speaking approaches to support purposeful and high-quality talk. These are carefully selected to match the learning intention and support pupils in developing specific oracy skills.

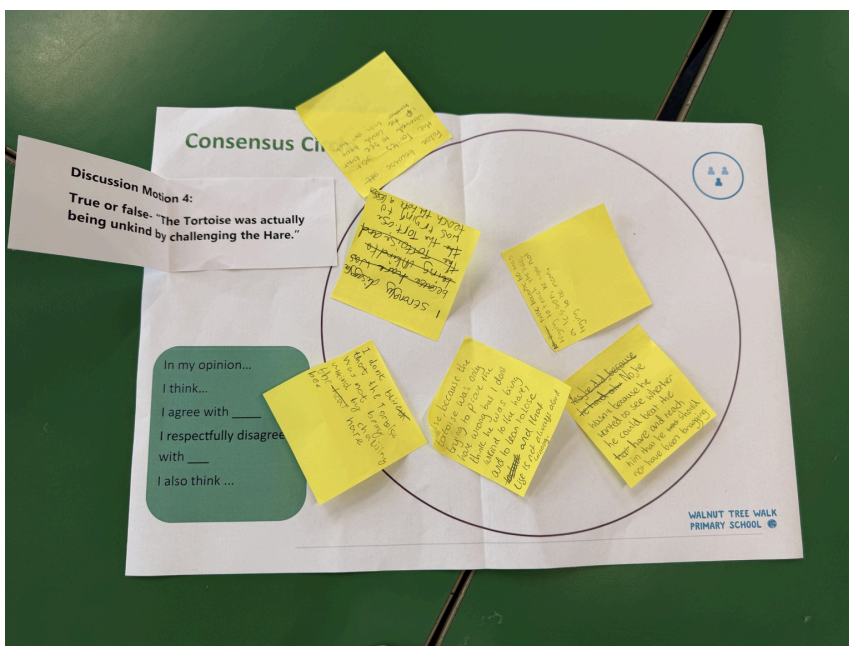
Examples include:

- Consensus circles, where pupils share and justify ideas before reaching a collective decision
- Concept cartoons, used to explore different viewpoints and promote reasoning and discussion
- “I see, I think, I wonder”, used when engaging with primary sources (such as photographs and artefacts) in subjects such as history and geography

These approaches support pupils to:

- articulate and justify their thinking
- consider alternative perspectives
- engage critically with content
- develop confidence in sharing ideas

Structured talk tasks ensure that discussion is purposeful, inclusive and rooted in the curriculum, enabling pupils to deepen their understanding through talk.



Consensus circle activity



Paired story sequencing



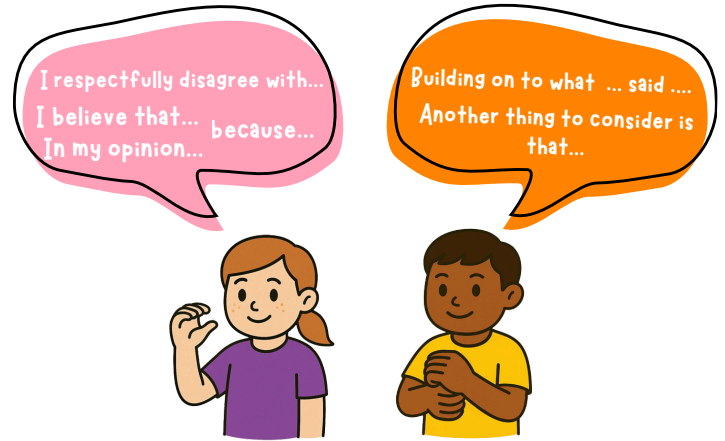
Concept Cartoon activity

Scaffolding and Support

To support high-quality discussion:

- sentence stems are used to scaffold pupil responses
- pupils are supported to explain, justify and extend their ideas
- expectations are adapted to ensure accessibility for all learners

These strategies ensure that all pupils, including those with lower starting points, can access and participate in talk.



Hand signals for challenge and building

Starter

Which sentence uses a **comma** correctly?

Tick one.

Bring a pencil a ruler and, a book to school.

Bring a pencil a ruler, and a book to school.

Bring, a pencil a ruler and a book to school.

Bring a pencil, a ruler and a book to school.

Give reasons for your ideas.

Use sentence stems.

I think it's ...
I know it's ... because ...
I also know it's not ... because ...
I agree / disagree ...

Grammar lesson starter

OFF WE GO! LESSON 2

CHALLENGE 1

How do you think the physical geography of Africa effects daily life?

I know that...
I can see that...
I think ...

Geography challenge activity

Recognition

Oracy is actively promoted and celebrated across the school. This includes:

- oracy stickers linked to each strand of the framework
- recognition of strong oracy through achievement assemblies
- consistent use of oracy-specific praise by teachers

This reinforces expectations and supports pupils in valuing their own voice and the contributions of others.



Oracy stickers



Oracy October Oracy Champion certificates

Oracy Across the Curriculum

Oracy is embedded across all areas of the curriculum to support understanding and deepen learning. Pupils are given opportunities to:

- articulate ideas clearly
- use subject-specific vocabulary
- explain and justify their thinking

Oracy is particularly evident in:

- mathematical reasoning
- scientific enquiry
- discussion within foundation subjects
- oral rehearsal in writing and roleplay

Wider Opportunities

Pupils are given opportunities to develop oracy beyond the classroom through:

- assemblies and performances
- pupil voice opportunities
- whole-school initiatives such as Oracy October, which demonstrated high levels of pupil engagement and participation



Oracy October



Class assemblies



Debate Team finalists



Meeting and asking questions to PM

Staff Development

Staff are supported to develop their practice through ongoing CPD and collaboration. There is increasing consistency in the use of shared language and expectations across the school.

Inclusion

Oracy is inclusive and accessible to all pupils at WTW. Scaffolds such as sentence stems and structured discussion ensure that all pupils can participate. Expectations are adapted to meet the needs of individuals, enabling all pupils to develop confidence and competence in spoken language.

Sequencing

- First ...
- Then ...
- After that ...
- Next ...
- Finally ...

Exploring Pictures / Photos

- I see ...
- I think ...
- I wonder ...

Agreeing / Building

- I agree with _____ because ...
- I also think that ...
- I would like to add ...
- Building on what _____ said ...

Disagreeing respectfully

- I understand your idea, but I think ...
- I have different opinion because ...
- I see your point, however ...

Impact

The means of evaluating what knowledge and understanding pupils have against expectations

How do we know it is successful and having positive impact?

The impact of oracy provision at Walnut Tree Walk Primary School is monitored through both pupil outcomes and ongoing evaluation of whole-school provision.

Pupils will demonstrate increasing confidence, fluency and independence when speaking and listening across a range of contexts. They will be able to articulate their ideas clearly, listen actively to others, build on the contributions of their peers and adapt their communication depending on audience and purpose. Over time, pupils will show clear progression across the four strands of the Voice 21 Oracy Framework: physical, linguistic, cognitive and social and emotional.

Teachers use the Voice 21 framework as an ongoing assessment tool to identify strengths, gaps and next steps in pupils' oracy development. This may include:

- half-termly class oracy targets linked to the four strands
- teacher observation during discussion tasks
- pupil self-reflection and peer feedback
- recordings of pupil talk where appropriate
- outcomes from presentations, assemblies, debates and discussion-based learning

This ensures that oracy progress is monitored in the same way as other curriculum areas – through regular formative assessment that informs future teaching.

At a whole-school level, leaders will evaluate the quality of oracy provision using the Voice 21 Oracy Benchmarks (*see Appendix B*) to ensure provision remains ambitious, consistent and impactful. This may include:

- learning walks focused on classroom talk
- pupil voice interviews
- teacher voice and staff feedback
- review of planning and classroom environments
- monitoring participation in whole-school events such as Oracy October
- celebration of strong practice through assemblies and staff development

Findings from this monitoring will inform future CPD, curriculum refinement and strategic planning to ensure oracy continues to develop as a central feature of teaching and learning at Walnut Tree Walk Primary School.

Ultimately, the impact of this policy will be seen in pupils who leave Walnut Tree Walk as confident communicators, thoughtful listeners and articulate young people who are equipped to succeed both academically and socially.

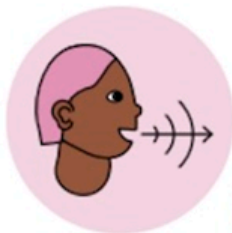
EYFS

Oracy Framework



Physical

Are you speaking loud enough to be heard?



Linguistic

Are you starting to join ideas together with words like and, because and but?



Cognitive

Are you asking questions?



Social & Emotional

Are you taking turns to talk and listen?



KS1

The Oracy Framework



Here are some things to think about when you are using your oracy skills:



Physical

Are you thinking about the **speed** and **volume** of your voice?



Are you using **gestures** and **expression** to help make your point?



Are you **facing** who you are **speaking** or **listening** to?



Linguistic

Are you using **sentence stems** to link others' ideas?



Are you using **new** and **appropriate** vocabulary?



Cognitive

Is what you want to say **clear** and **organised**?



Are you asking **relevant questions** and **responding** to others?



Are you giving **reasons** for what you are saying?



Social & Emotional

Are you **taking turns** to talk and **listen** and **encouraging others** to take part?



Are you talking **confidently** and **thinking** about your **audience**?

KS2

The Oracy Framework



Here are some things to think about when you are using your oracy skills:



Physical

Voice:

- Are you speaking **clearly**, with **expression**?
- Are you adapting the **tone**, **pace** and **volume** of your voice for different situations?



Body:

Do your **body language** and **facial expressions** match the message you are trying to convey?



Linguistic

Vocabulary:

How are you **choosing** what **vocabulary** to use and **tailoring** it to your audience?

Language:

Are you matching your **language** to the **situation**?



Rhetorical techniques:
Are you using a range of **persuasive techniques**?



Cognitive

Content:

Are you being **clear** about your main points as well as **building** on the thoughts of others?



Structure:

How have you **organised** your talk so that it presents a **clear argument** or **narrative**?

Making things clear:

- Are you asking questions to **clarify**, **probe** and **challenge**?
- Are you **summarising** the main points in a succinct way?

Reasons:

Are you **responding** to what is being said and providing **evidence** for the points you are making?



Social & Emotional

Working with others:

Are you aware of the **group dynamics** and actively **inviting** others to share their opinions?

Listening:

Are you **actively listening** and **responding** appropriately?

Confidence:

How are you showing that you're **confident** as well as being **respectful** to others?



Audience:

Are you thinking about your **audience** and **adapting** your speech accordingly?

Teacher Benchmarks

1.

Sets high expectations for oracy

The teacher establishes and models ambitious and challenging norms for talk, ensuring that students understand the expectations for talk in their classroom. Opportunities for oracy are regular, purposeful, appropriately pitched and thoughtfully planned to ensure that students are well prepared to meet expectations.

2.

Values every voice

The teacher supports *all* students to participate in, and benefit from, oracy in the classroom. The teacher listens meaningfully to students, encouraging them to develop their ideas further, and creates a culture in which students do the same.

3.

Teaches oracy explicitly

The teacher has a strong understanding of what constitutes good oracy in different contexts and is intentional in their teaching of oracy. They are deliberate and strategic in their planning for oracy teaching, and tactically exploit opportunities to ensure their students' skills develop over time.

4.

Harnesses oracy to elevate learning

The teacher considers how oracy can deepen and enhance students' knowledge and understanding within a given subject, domain or context. As a result, students are engaged in dialogue, both with the teacher and their peers, which encourages them to articulate, justify and expand their ideas and have opportunities to share, develop and consolidate their understanding through talk.

5.

Appraises progress in oracy

The teacher evaluates their students' progress in oracy and uses this to inform their teaching. Opportunities are created for students to reflect on and receive meaningful feedback on their oracy, from both the teacher and their peers.