Oracy APPG

Written evidence

Members of the Oracy APPG will consider written, verbal and audio-visual evidence and oversee oral evidence sessions. All evidence will inform the final report.

The extended deadline for submitting written evidence is 20th September 2019. We would appreciate if the submissions would follow the following guidelines:

- Be in a Word format
- No longer than 3000 words
- State clearly who the submission is from, and whether it is sent in a personal capacity or on behalf of an organisation
- Begin with a short summary in bullet point form
- Have numbered paragraphs
- Where appropriate, provide references

Please write your evidence below and email the completed form via email to inquiry@oracyappg.org.uk with the subject line of 'Oracy APPG inquiry'

Clare Reed

Full name:

Education Works Limited, on behalf of Oracy@GwE

School or Organisation:

Oracy Consultant

Role:

Written evidence:

Oracy APPG Inquiry

I am collating this report on behalf of colleagues who are involved with the Oracy@GwE project, developed by Clare Reed, Carol Satterthwaite and Sam Adams. Vicky Lees and Manon Esyllt Davies are the Supporting Improvement Advisers for Primary English and Literacy and Numeracy (respectively) for GwE and have been overseeing and managing the programme. We have been working for 18 months with approximately 40 Primary schools, organised into two cohorts across the North Wales Consortium (GwE) developing Oracy and dialogic learning within Literacy and Numeracy primarily.

In summary, Oracy@GwE showed that:
- Providing six training days with gap tasks to review with colleagues on the following training day was a strong learning model to implement
- It was useful to provide both an assessment tool for staff to monitor individual pupil's Oracy skills and an audit tool to assess classroom Oracy teaching and learning techniques
- Having at least two practitioners from the SLT in each school to cascade Oracy principles gave a certain degree of importance and credence to the programme
- Having a strong lead teacher to initially implement the Oracy principles in their classroom encouraged others to follow their success- 94% of participants have done so.
- Training practitioners in two Oracy-based intervention programmes, (TalkingPartners@Primary and Talking Maths), to implement at a later stage of the programme once whole class Oracy approaches were underway, gave a flexibility and accuracy to targeting pupils that needed extra Speech, Language and Communication support in both Literacy and Mathematics
- It takes time to have an impact across the whole school, yet certain principles can have immediate effect in the classrooms of trained practitioners
- Oracy principles had a positive impact on the attitude of children toward their learning- 94% of participants agreed or strongly agreed with this statement
- These principles had a positive impact on standards in other areas of the curriculum, including mathematical reasoning- 79.5% of participants agreed or strongly agreed with this statement
- Staff attach greater importance to Oracy and spend more of the curriculum teaching and learning delivering Oracy-based sessions. They can see the impact on the academic achievement and social/emotional wellbeing of the pupils
- Pupils understand how Oracy can increase their own learning power and improve ways of working/getting on with others
- Combining the teaching of Oracy skills with Dialogic Learning provided staff with a complimentary framework to build their Oracy provision in school

1) Value and impact

1.1 Many educationalists now recognise the importance of explicitly teaching Oracy skills in the education of children and young people, because of the positive impact on both their cognitive development and preparation for participation in the wider world (The development of Oracy skills in school-aged learners, Cambridge Papers in ELT Series Nov 2018).

1.2 The Oracy@GwE project invested money and time to provide Primary schools across North Wales with the skills and knowledge to make a difference to their children's education potential. The attached Impact Questionnaire provides evidence from both cohorts of schools (bearing in mind that Cohort Two hadn't had quite as much time to implement back in school nor did they have as much initial training input before this document was written)

1.3 The value of teaching Oracy is clearly illustrated in the following document and is exemplified by this quote- "Language is the vehicle by which children communicate their needs and ideas, develop and maintain relationships, and solidify their understanding of essential concepts." Law, J., Charlton, J., Dockrell, J., Gascoigne, M., McKean, C., and Theakston, A. (2017) Early Language Development: Needs, provision and intervention for preschool children from socioeconomically disadvantage backgrounds. Education Endowment Foundation.

1.4 The ability to think, problem solve, work collaboratively, consider opinions of others and possibly change your viewpoint are all valuable skills for pupils to develop. Professor David Reedy describes it as 'Conversations with cognitive challenge.' Robin Alexander's work on dialogic teaching was closely referenced during the Oracy@GwE training. One of his research studies, "Classroom Talk, Social Disadvantage & Educational Attainment: raising standards, closing the gap", supported by the EEF, showed pupils who experienced just 20 weeks of dialogic teaching made, on average, two months more progress on standardised tests than those in the control group. CPRT/UoY Dialogic Teaching Project (July 2017)

1.5 The impact of good Oracy skills on their reading ability and enjoyment of reading is shown in many research papers, but the importance of early intervention is specifically highlighted in the following summary: 'Children with late-emerging LI (Language Impairment) are relatively common and are hard to detect in the preschool years. Our findings show that children whose LIs persist to the point of formal literacy instruction frequently experience reading difficulties. "Language profiles and literacy outcomes of children with resolving, emerging, or persisting language impairments". Margaret J. Snowling, Fiona J. Duff, Hannah M. Nash and Charles Hulme Department of Experimental Psychology and St. John's College, University of Oxford, Oxford; School of Psychology, University of Leeds, Leeds; Division of Psychology and Language Sciences, University College London, London, UK, Dec 2015

1.6 Having good Oracy skills when pupils are looking for employment helps with their initial application (an extensive vocabulary and a developed use of language functions will provide pupils to create a strong written application) and the interview process (where pupils can confidently and articulately share their knowledge and skills). The table below show the top 8 skills that employers are looking for in 2019, collated by NACE (National Association of Colleges and Education, Job Outlook Survey 2019, Figure 40). Interestingly, all the top skills involve effective use of both language and thinking, which links directly to Vygotsky's proposal that children's language learning

and experience was linked to their cognitive development in a continuous process. There is now more recent evidence to substantiate Vygotsky's hypothesis (Mercer, N. (2013). The Social Brain, Language, and Goal-Directed Collective Thinking: A Social Conception of Cognition and Its Implications for Understanding How We Think, Teach, and Learn. Educational Psychologist, 48(3), pp. 148-168).

Attribute	% of Respondents
Communication skills (written)	82.0%
Problem-solving skills	80.9%
Ability to work in a team	78.7%
Initiative	74.2%
Analytical/quantitative skills	71.9%
Strong work ethic	70.8%
Communication skills (verbal)	67.4%
Leadership	67.4%

2) Provision and access

2.1 Neil Mercer stated that a combination of teaching good Oracy skills with the understanding of the strategies behind dialogic teaching creates a strong model for the classroom learning, which was the basis for the Oracy@GwE programme.
2.2 Providing training days with gap tasks ensures both action by the participants putting theory into practice and the follow up evaluation/critical thinking to change practice.
2.3 The application process for the programme which allowed for self -selection of schools meant that we had a range of schools from different geographical and socio-economic areas, of different sizes and English/Welsh as primary language spoken. However, most importantly, all having a desire to make changes to their current teaching and learning to improve the outcomes for their pupils.
2.4 Requesting schools to keep an evaluation training log was useful for the final report from each school and for individuals to respond during feedback sessions following gap tasks. The assessment tool gave evidence of impact on individual pupil's Oracy skills over the year of the programme and the audit tool provided guidance for teachers to monitor their own Oracy journey in the classroom.
Access to high quality resources that teachers could use in the classroom allowed key strategies and activities to be incorporated into to daily routines.
2.5 The programme was designed to support teachers to know what to implement first and where the Oracy journey would go to next, considering what aspect would build on the previous session in the most effective way. Once whole class provision of high quality, Oracy-based teaching and learning sessions were underway, oral language-based

intervention programmes were introduced. These were Literacy and Numeracy based respectively and are called TalkingPartners@Primary (TP@P) and Talking Maths (TM), supporting target pupils whose language acquisition was below age related expectations. Training for these programmes involved one member of the Oracy@GwE programme, i.e. the lead English/Maths person plus one or two TAs to deliver the programmes. The evidence in detail from the TP@P programme is also attached and shows average gains over the 10 weeks of the programme of almost 19 months for information given and over 17 months for the grammar used.

3) Barriers

3.1 Most certainly the main barrier to proceeding with good Oracy provision in classrooms is the lack of funds to release staff from schools for both initial training and to evaluate progress in schools on a regular basis. Funds to pay for high quality training from skilled professionals are an essential aspect of making changes to teaching and learning in schools.

3.2 No matter what Governmental education directives are sent to schools requesting for their implementation, Oracy skills will always be needed to give pupils the best chance to succeed in life both at work and at home. Oracy, after all, can bring us all happiness through building and maintaining strong, long lasting, professional or personal relationships with people that we admire.

Additional guidance:

Value and impact

1. Given many teachers recognise the importance of oracy, why does spoken language not have the same status as reading and writing in our education system? Should it have the same status, and if so why?

2. What are the consequences if children and young people do not receive oracy education?

3. What is the value and impact of quality oracy education at i) different life stages, ii) in different settings, and iii) on different types of pupils (for instance pupils from varied socioeconomic backgrounds or with special educational needs)?

4. How can it help deliver the wider curriculum at school?

5. What is the impact of quality oracy education on future life chances? Specifically, how does it affect employment and what value do businesses give oracy?

6. What do children and young people at school and entering employment want to be able to access, what skills to they want to leave school with?

7. What is the value and impact of oracy education in relation to other key agendas such as social mobility and wellbeing/ mental health?

8. How can the ability to communicate effectively contribute to engaging more young people from all backgrounds to become active citizens, participating fully in social action and public life as adults

Provision and access

1. What should high quality oracy education look like?

2. Can you provide evidence of how oracy education is being provided in different areas/education settings/extra-curricular provision, by teachers but also other practitioners that work with children?

3. What are the views of teachers, school leaders and educational bodies regarding the current provision of oracy education?

4. Where can we identify good practice and can you give examples?

5. What factors create unequal access to oracy education (i.e. socio-economic, region, type of school, special needs)? How can these factors be overcome?

6. Relating to region more specifically, how should an oracy-focused approach be altered depending on the context?

Barriers

1. What are the barriers that teachers face in providing quality oracy education, within the education system and beyond?

2. What support do teachers need to improve the delivery of oracy education?

3. What accountability is currently present in the system? How can we further incentivise teachers to deliver more oracy education to children and young people?

4. What is the role of government and other bodies in creating greater incentives and how can this be realised?

5. What is the role of assessment in increasing provision of oracy education? What is the most appropriate form of assessment of oracy skills?

6. Are the speaking and listening elements of the current curriculum sufficient in order to deliver high quality oracy education?

7. What is the best approach – more accountability within the system or a less prescriptive approach?

8. Are there examples of other educational pedagogies where provision has improved and we can draw parallels and learn lessons?