

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'

Sonia Blandford

Full name:

Achievement for All

School or Organisation:

CEO

Role:

Written evidence:

Achievement for All welcomes the opportunity to provide evidence to members of the Oracy APPG.

In summary:

- Developing oracy skills in the earliest years of education is a precursor to success in school and through life.
- Children from less advantaged families are more likely to have less developed oracy skills at age three than their more advantaged peers
- If social mobility is to be realised, it is the creation of opportunities for all families regardless of their background, challenges and needs. This requires a responsive and structured approach from the earliest years of education.
- **Achieving Early** (developed by Achievement for All) provides an effective framework for all maintained early years settings and PVI's to improve children's oracy skills. The framework, implemented and developed collaboratively with settings, provides focused professional development for all staff (qualified from Level 3 through to Level 7) with a continuing focus on better outcomes for children.
- During the **Achieving Early pilot** involving 388 children vulnerable to underachievement, the proportion of children reaching an age-appropriate level in key areas, including communication and language, and personal, social and emotional development, rose by 50% (Esmee Fairbairn, 2016).

1.0 Value and impact

1.1. We believe oracy (speaking and listening) should be a central part of the school curricular and extracurricular offer. As children in England progress through school, oracy tends to be side-lined; debating, if provided by schools, is an extracurricular activity.

1.2 Research has shown that the gap in oracy skills which opens for some children, in the early years of education, never closes. Hart and Risley's (1995) landmark study in America highlighted the big gap in children's vocabulary at age 3; children from disadvantaged homes had far fewer words than their more advantaged peers.

1.3 Developing oracy skills in the earliest years of education is a precursor to success in school and through life. Those with 5 or more good GCSE grades, including English and maths, as their highest qualification are estimated to earn more than £100,000 over their lifetime compared to those with less than a level 2 qualification or no qualification

(Hayward et al., 2014). A good start in early years, supports children in the development of the skills they need for life.

1.4 If social mobility is to be realised, it is the creation of opportunities that lead to choices for all families regardless of their background, challenges and needs. This requires a responsive and structured approach to early years (Blandford. 2019).

1.5 Achievement for All has developed the **Achieving Early** framework. Implemented and developed collaboratively with early years settings ,it enables staff to have a continuing focus on better outcomes for children, whilst at the same time contributes to their professional development. During the **Achieving Early pilot** involving 388 children vulnerable to underachievement, the proportion of children reaching an age-appropriate level in key areas, including communication and language, and personal, social and emotional development, rose by 50% (Esmee Fairbairn, 2016). In view of the shortage of early years teachers, **Achieving Early** provides an effective framework for developing staff skills and understanding the speaking and listening needs of children.

2.0 Provision and access

2.1 CASE STUDY: Achieving Early (Early Years programme of Achievement for All)

The following case study provides an example of how speech, language and communication needs are identified early in an early years setting working collaboratively with Achievement for All through the Achieving Early Programme. The Achieving Early programme works with settings and practitioners to create positive outcomes for disadvantaged children and others vulnerable to underachievement. In this instance, after appropriate interventions and implementation of Taking Time for Talk conversations, alongside the development of a positive key person – child/family relationship- progress was as follows:

Martin

Martin arrived at nursery at the age of 3 (36 months) and assessments made using Development Matters indicated that he was working at the “Within 22-36 months” age band for all aspects of the Areas of Learning. This meant that he was working significantly below expectations – at this age he would have been expected to have reached at least “Secure 22-36 months”, and more likely be “Entering 30-50 months”.

He came through a social care referral because of a number of circumstances leading to significant concerns about developmental delay and the risk to future outcomes. His home life was chaotic, coming from a large family spread across a wide age range. On arrival in the setting he demonstrated delayed language development and very poor social skills; he appeared bewildered and uncomfortable in the outdoor area. His parents were reluctant to agree that he attend nursery. There were a range of issues affecting his parents, although the father and the teenage sister of Martin were very supportive of him.

The key person in the nursery developed a very good relationship with the family over the year. She ensured that Martin experienced many of the “baby activities” that he had missed and she liaised very closely with the numerous other agencies involved in supporting the family. She introduced the Achieving Early “Taking Time for Talk” conversations with Martin’s father and his sister, and they responded positively to these. During these conversations the key person and Martin’s father discussed a wide range of strategies and interventions that would help him catch up. Martin’s sister also became involved with the interventions that were being implemented to support his development, particularly in Speech and Language.

Martin’s home life became more settled after his mother left, and his sister continued to support him fully. The setting worked alongside the Speech and Language service to further support Martin’s language development, and also became the link between Martin’s family and the other agencies involved. This resulted in excellent relationships being built; the family requested and were given significant support and advice. By the end of the year, Martin no longer required support from external SEN advisors or the Speech and Language service and the setting continued to provide support internally in order to maintain his progress.

After appropriate interventions and implementation of “Taking Time for Talk” conversations, alongside the development of a positive key person – child/family relationship, excellent progress was noted. At 45 months Martin’s assessments indicated that he was now working in the age band “Secure 30-50 months” for all aspects of the Areas of Learning, except for Understanding where he was assessed as “Entering 40-60 months”. These assessments indicated that he was now working well within expected levels.

The Achieving Early programme supported the practitioners to identify Martin’s needs and develop the positive relationships with the family through the Taking Time for Talk conversations with a clear focus on Martin’s learning. It helped practitioners develop their skills to use the information they had to plan effectively, and to track and record Martin’s progress. Feedback from practitioners indicated increased confidence in working with parents, and Martin is one of several children where this has had a direct effect on outcomes.

Progress chart

| | |
|---|------------------------|
| Age at start | 36 months |
| Developmental assessment at start | 22-36 months within |
| Comparison to age related expectations | Approx. 4 months below |
| Age at end | 45 months |
| Expected developmental assessment | 30-50 months within |
| Developmental assessment at end | 30-50 months secure |

Comparison to age related expectations

At

Progress

Accelerated (approx. 13 months progress in 9 months)

2.2 Achieving Early (developed by Achievement for All) provides an effective framework for all maintained early years settings and PVI's to engage with. Out of the 33 settings inspected during the two years of the pilot, the number of Outstanding settings rose from two to eight. Two of these settings were previously graded as Satisfactory or Requires Improvement. The number of Good settings increased from 17 to 29, while the number previously rated Inadequate dropped from five to zero.

3.0 Barriers

3.1 A national campaign across key areas, with activity at local level, and supported by businesses and charitable organisations, which needs to include representatives from education, health and social care, would help to raise awareness of the importance of oracy.

3.2 Raise awareness at the national level by-forming a coalition of relevant organisations. Work out key goals and a timeline for goals to be achieved (measurable); discuss and develop a strategy which needs to cover early years settings, primary and secondary school, parents and carers (and developing oracy skills at home), National Health England and social care.

3.3 Raise awareness at the local level- through coalition members (promotion on website and through campaigns at the local level or through their national networks). Local action can also be initiated and sustained through libraries, G.P practices, the local authorities and businesses.

Notes

- Achievement for All is a movement focused on educational change; building a world in which all children are seen as having potential, and where every child is enabled to be the best that they can be regardless of background, challenge or need.
- Achievement for All programmes have worked with staff in over 3000 schools, colleges and early years settings across England and Wales.
- The charity is the leading provider of improved outcomes in reading, writing and maths for the lowest achieving 20% of children and young people.
- Achievement for All uses a unique direct deliver model and a team of highly skilled coaches.
- Each programme is tailored to meet the needs of the individual setting and is delivered in partnership with the leadership team, teachers/staff, parents, pupils and support professionals. It has been developed in collaboration with the sector and is supported by the Department for Education.

- The charity's Impact Report demonstrates that vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils, including those identified with special educational needs and disabilities, in schools working with Achievement for All continue to make faster progress in reading, writing and maths than their counterparts in other schools. Many are making as good or better progress than the national expected levels of progress for all pupils.
- Further information can be found at www.afaeducation.org

To reduce the risk of unmet or unidentified needs, early years settings need a focused approach to early and accurate identification. **Achieving Early** provides an evidence based successful framework (developed by Achievement for All).

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?