

## 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](mailto:inquiry@oracyappg.org.uk) with the subject line of 'Oracy APPG inquiry'

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Full name:

School or Organisation:

Role:

Written evidence:

### Oracy APPG – Parentkind (organisational submission)

- Our research shows that the majority of parents think self-confidence is one of the key attributes children should leave primary (64%) and secondary school (57%) with.
  - Oracy is a crucial life skill for children to learn during their schooling.
  - Parents are a child's primary educator, and their main sphere of influence is in supporting learning at home.
  - Each year, we run a Be School Ready campaign aimed at providing additional support to parents with a child starting primary or secondary school.
  - 89% of parents agree that it's important that the curriculum in their child's school focusses on supporting pupils' personal development by teaching life skills. Worryingly, a third (34%) say the curriculum has too little focus on preparing pupils for the future job market.
  - Oracy helps young people to think through and articulate complex ideas, and is an important life skill.
  - Parents need to be on board when embedding oracy into the curriculum. We have developed a Blueprint for Parent-Friendly Schools, a holistic framework comprised of five hallmarks of good practice in parental engagement.
  - We suggest looking to the German model for more on embedding oracy into the curriculum.
1. Parents are invested in their child's education and want the best outcomes for them, knowing that this will prepare them for the workplace and a career that fulfils their potential beyond the school gates. In our [Annual Parent Survey 2018](#) (sample size 1,500 parents from England [1,200], Wales [200] and Northern Ireland [100]), we found that 55% of parents identified children being happy as one of the top three traits of a successful school; this is followed by children enjoying learning (44%) and children learning positive behaviours such as resilience and self-confidence (41%). The majority of parents think self-confidence is one of the key attributes children should leave primary (64%) and secondary school (57%) with.
  2. A factor in attaining self-confidence is oracy – whether that is the confidence to speak in class and volunteer ideas, or to demonstrate an ability to talk through complex ideas and explain them to others in an understandable and compelling way. Oracy is an essential tool in the ability to communicate and to persuade others. It is a crucial life skill for children to learn during their schooling.

3. **Question 5 under “provisions and access”** asks what factors create unequal access to oracy education. The EPI's [Education in England: Annual Report 2018](#) reported that a vocabulary gap exists by the time children start school. Children eligible for Pupil Premium, they say, "lagged 13.5 months behind their high-income peers in vocabulary scores." Parents, of course, have the pivotal role to play in helping their child start school as prepared as possible, but it's important to stress that parental engagement continues to make a huge impact on a child's learning throughout the course of their school life. Education expert John Hattie's seminal 2008 study, *Visible Learning: A Synthesis of Over 800 Meta-Analyses Relating to Achievement*, found that "the effect of parental engagement over a student's school career is equivalent to adding two or three years to that student's education". Parents are a child's primary educator, and their main sphere of influence is in supporting learning at home. This has an impact on oracy skills too. Even ensuring that families dine together and have conversations at the table helps children to hear different points of view and contribute opinions of their own. This is most effective when parents know and understand the value that they bring in nurturing their child's development from home.
4. There are many ways parents can contribute to their child's learning at home. A popular way is by reading with their child, exposing them to as wide a vocabulary as possible to constantly improve their literacy. Where the parent themselves may lack confidence in reading, initiatives in schools that increase parents and children's reading levels at the same time can help. Each year, we run a [Be School Ready](#) campaign aimed at providing additional support to parents with a child starting primary or secondary school. In 2019, we sent out 120,000 Welcome Pack magazines to member primary school PTAs to distribute to new parents, and 30,000 to secondary school member PTAs. The magazines provide parents with resources to get their child's schooling off to a flying start and help them recognise their own value from the beginning. Parents can help to direct children to the right resources in the home learning environment, either online such as access to current affairs discussions on the radio or podcasts, or through more traditional printed materials. Greater oracy skills enable children to differentiate a well-made argument from propaganda, which in turn aids their understanding of the world they live in. This will help children to separate 'fake news' from factual reportage from an early age, which will have a wider benefit on society, especially when they come to participate in it.
5. **Question 2 under “value and impact”** asks about the consequences if children and young people do not receive oracy education. Our research shows that parents value their children learning life skills beyond the academic, which will prepare them for the realities of life beyond school. In data we have yet to publish online, our Annual Parent Survey 2019 revealed that 75% of parents agree that it's important that the curriculum in their child's school focusses on including subjects that go beyond traditional academic subjects (such as drama and music). 89% say so for supporting pupils' personal development by teaching life skills. Worryingly, a third (34%) say the curriculum has too little focus on preparing pupils for the future job market. In our Annual Parent Survey 2017, 36% agreed that they were

concerned that school is not preparing their child for the modern day job market. 78% report that they ask their child about their future aspirations and give them ideas on how education will help them to reach their potential.

6. Children who naturally have more confidence with language and speaking can develop oracy skills for themselves, though it is beneficial to receive bespoke education, and it is crucial for those with less confidence so that they are not left behind. From delivering presentations to public speaking engagements, oracy skills are essential to master to succeed in many professions. Even securing employment usually depends upon being a preferred candidate, and some level of proficiency at oracy will need to be in evidence at a job interview (or university or college admissions interview). This demonstrates the broad impact of oracy raised in question 8 of “value and impact”. There is the further benefit of oracy education, in that it helps young people to think through and articulate complex ideas. Even if this is not in debate format, being able to verbally convey a story or idea to an audience is a crucial skill. It demands a thorough understanding of a subject on top of an ability to bring it to life for those who may not necessarily know much about it. Being able to address an audience without reading notes requires the use of memory and improvisation (adapting what to say under given circumstances). All of these skills are invaluable, and aid and expand a child’s understanding in many ways, such as improving their memory and analytical skills.
7. **Question 2 under “Barriers”** asks what support teachers need to improve the delivery of oracy education. We would suggest that buy-in from parents, with an understanding how they can contribute to oracy in the home-learning environment, is vital for its successful implementation. It is important to communicate with parents on curriculum content, and make information available to them on the school website, including tips for supporting learning at home. In order to get this right, it is essential that schools maximize the impact of parental engagement. We have developed a [Blueprint for Parent-Friendly Schools](#) that we put out to consultation, and which is currently being tested in a pilot project in participating schools in Doncaster. This holistic framework is comprised of five hallmarks of good practice in parental engagement. Our aim is a national roll-out of the Blueprint, and we would be happy to discuss its benefits further with the Oracy APPG.
8. **Question 8 under “Barriers”** asks for examples of other educational pedagogies where provision has improved and we can draw parallels and learn lessons. We would suggest looking to the German model. There, teachers award marks for participation at the end of each class, which incentivises students to take part in class discussions and improve their oracy skills each day. There is also an oral examination as part of the equivalent of GCSEs and A-levels. We don’t have data on the impact of this approach, but recommend it to the Oracy APPG for further research.

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 do 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?

