

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'

Full name:

School or Organisation:

Role:

Written evidence:

The benefits of good quality oracy education are clear. But without explicitly telling young people their voice is important and giving them simple, inclusive structures to make this happen, strides forward with oracy will be confined to formal oracy programmes, those families who support it or schools who adopt a oracy-based curriculum.

The 360 teachers we work with tell us that democratic engagement is not hampered by a lack of focus on speaking and listening.

Rather that speaking and listening is hampered by a poor approach in schools to democratic engagement. In many schools, pupils learn that their voice does not matter:

For pupils with more than 200 books at home, 62% vote in school council elections. Only 30% of pupils with fewer than 10 books at home vote (University of Roehampton). School councils exist in 95% of schools (IoE) but only 2 in 5 young people think their school council listens to them (Children's Commissioner). The same issue happens with debating clubs, voluntary citizenship activities and contributes to the 'worst class divide in Europe in citizenship'.

The pandemic will only worsen the engagement divide among marginalised, low-income voices.

Our charity's 360 member schools tell us that our universal programme of democratic engagement involves every pupil's voice. They say that rather than involving the most able students, they want to create a system where schools say to every pupil 'we want to hear your voice, and here is how you do it'.

Young people from the age of five are encouraged to lead and participate in weekly class meetings which provide a familiar structure that voices can thrive within.

This requires a system change in schools, rather than a reliance on a passionate teacher and/or cohort of pupils.

Alongside good quality oracy education, good quality citizenship activities, there is a need for a structural shift to supports universal active citizenship and better oracy, particularly in marginalised communities.

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?