Terms of reference

Oracy APPG's 2019-20 Inquiry: *Speak for Change*

About the All Party Parliamentary Group on Oracy

The Oracy All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) is committed to helping every child to be a confident communicator and find their voice, in order to succeed in school and life. The Oracy All Party Parliamentary Group was set up to coordinate research, promote best practice and encourage the overarching principles of Oracy (speaking and listening skills) in education and society at large. Its Chair is Emma Hardy MP, a former primary school teacher, and it has members from across the political spectrum. The secretariat for the APPG is provided by Voice 21 and supported by the Oracy Network which consists of 20 organisations collectively seeking to raise the profile of oracy in schools across the UK.

Introduction

In light of growing concern that children and young people's social mobility, job prospects and democratic engagement are hampered by a lack of focus on speaking and listening skills in education, and increasing evidence of the positive impacts of oracy education on student's academic outcomes and wellbeing, the Oracy APPG launched this inquiry and the first inquiry of its kind to investigate the current status and provision of oracy education in the UK.

The Inquiry is assessing the value and impact of oracy education in supporting learning and providing young people with crucial skills for succeeding in life beyond school, identifying the barriers to children accessing and receiving quality oracy education and will put forward concrete recommendations to change this.

Due to the current coronavirus crisis, the Inquiry is reopening its call for written and video submissions until 30th June 2020. We recognise that the impact of school closures on children and young people will be significant and potentially long-lasting, particularly for disadvantaged children. Life in lockdown has emphasised the crucial importance of talking and social interaction. Yet at a time when they need it most, children are missing out on the opportunities for oracy that drive learning and language development, and underpin their wellbeing.

Background

What is Oracy?

Oracy is to speech what literacy is to writing and numeracy is to maths. The ability to speak eloquently, articulate ideas and thoughts, influence through talking, collaborate with peers and have the confidence to express your views, are fundamental skills that support success in both learning and life beyond school.

Why have we launched this inquiry?

Given the extensive evidence regarding the necessity and impact of oracy skills for young

people, as members of the Oracy APPG we are
concerned that speaking and listening has been undervalued and overlooked in our education system.

Research suggests Oracy could have the unique potential to leverage positive change for all young people, irrespective of their circumstances, age or background. Oracy is a set of processes and outcomes, giving pupils the skills in spoken communication they need to flourish academically and throughout their lives. Building young people's oracy could help us create a happier, fairer and more productive society.

There is a growing consensus across society including government, employers, teachers, and parents, as to the importance of oracy in education. However, there is still much debate as to how this can be effectively achieved and delivered. The Oracy APPG inquiry wants to build on the current momentum and emerging opportunities, to improve the status and provision of, and access to, oracy education.

Purpose of the inquiry

Based on a wide and inclusive process of evidence gathering, the Oracy APPG intends to develop a clear set of practical recommendations for government, policy makers, educational bodies, and school leaders to ensure every child receives quality oracy education

Scope of the inquiry

The inquiry is seeking evidence in the following areas:

i) Value and impact: The impact of oracy education at different life stages from early years through to employment, and how the delivery of effective oracy education contributes to individual and societal outcomes.
ii) Provision and access: The current state of provision of oracy education across the UK, who is missing out and what factors create unequal access to oracy education.
iii) Barriers to improving oracy education: What are the barriers to provision of a quality oracy education for all, and what is the role of government and other bodies in incentivising provision.

We are inviting contributions and incorporate evidence from across the education sector and beyond including the third sector, employers and academics. Most importantly, the inquiry will ensure the views of teachers, parents, children and young people at school and those entering employment are represented.

Submitting evidence

The Oracy APPG welcomes submissions of evidence from as wide a range of organisations and respondents as possible. Submissions should address some or all of the questions set out below. **However, the Oracy APPG also wants to invite your insights and concerns given the current context regarding the importance and value of oracy both now and in the future.**

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 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

9. What should high quality oracy education look like?
10. 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?
11. What are the views of teachers, school leaders and educational bodies regarding the current provision of oracy education?
12. Where can we identify good practice and can you give examples?
13. What factors create unequal access to oracy education (i.e. socio-economic, region, type of school, special needs)? How can these factors be overcome?
14. Relating to region more specifically, how should an oracy-focused approach be altered depending on the context?

Barriers

15. What are the barriers that teachers face to providing quality oracy education, within the education system and beyond?
16. What support do teachers need to improve the delivery of oracy education?
17. What accountability is currently present in the system? How can we further incentivise teachers to deliver more oracy education to children and young people?

18. What is the role of government and other bodies in creating greater incentives and how can this be realised?
19. What is the role of assessment in increasing provision of oracy education? What is the most appropriate form of assessment of oracy skills?
20. Are the speaking and listening elements of the current curriculum sufficient in order to delivery high quality oracy education?
21. What is the best approach – more accountability within the system or a less prescriptive approach?
22. Are there examples of other educational pedagogies where provision has improved and we can draw parallels and learn lessons?

Responding to the call for 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.

Written evidence

The deadline for written evidence is the **30ᵗʰ June 2020.** We would appreciate if the submissions would follow the these 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.

Evidence can be submitted via email inquiry@oracyappg.org.uk with the subject line of 'Oracy APPG inquiry' or via the portal www.oracyappg.org.uk/submit-evidence-here.

Audio- visual evidence

As the Oracy APPG seeks to promote the importance of the spoken word, we would like to invite audio or video evidence submissions. These can be made via the portal at www.oracyappg.org.uk/submit-evidence-here.

All audiovisual submissions must seek to address the Terms of Reference in all or some form. This could be as a recording or video of evidence, or demonstrating a practical aspect that will support the inquiry's findings. Specifically, we would invite submission of audiovisual evidence that:

i)   States the importance of oracy, from a professional or evidence-based position.
ii)   Provides a personal insight on oracy, for example providing practice –based evidence such as a classroom demonstration.
iii) Provides evidence from a student perspective on why they are speaking up for oracy.

Any digital evidence submitted should be no longer than
5 minutes in length (but you can make more than one submission). If someone is speaking to camera, they need to be clearly visible and audible. Context needs to be provided within the audiovisual submission, regarding its purpose and key messages. The deadline for digital submissions is the **30th June 2020.**

Oral evidence

The APPG will be running oral evidence sessions (some online) to engage more deeply with various relevant themes and various groups. Some oral evidence sessions may be closed, for example the session(s) with young people. Please indicate in your written submission whether you or a representative from your organisation is willing to give oral evidence to the inquiry. Witnesses for oral evidence will be invited by the Chair of the APPG at a later date.

In addition, the APPG will host evidence gathering events in other parts of the country and conduct visits. Do let us know if you would be interested in hosting an event or visit.

The evidence that we receive may be made public either as part of the oral evidence sessions or as part of our final written or digital report. If you wish for the whole, or parts of, your submission to remain private, please note this clearly in your submission. Submissions from persons and organisations will be published unless specifically requested. Where a person or organisation has stated that they wish for their written evidence to be anonymous, it will be published under the title anonymous.

Inquiry timeline

Inquiry launch	20th May 2019
Deadline for submission of written evidence (first call for evidence)	20th September 2019
Inquiry on hold for General Election	November – December 2019
Inquiry re-launched following General Election	14th January 2020
Deadline for submission of written and video evidence	30th June 2020
Oral evidence sessions	March 2020 – September 2020
Publication of final report	Autumn 2020

If you have any questions about the inquiry or require further information, please contact Gemma Carroll, Inquiry Coordinator, at inquiry@oracyappg.org.uk or visit www.oracyappg.org.uk for further information.