Voice Leicester Hub School

June 2021

Braunstone Frith

Oracy Report - Exit Audit

Voice 21 Hub School

voice Leicester

Overview:

This report was written following an audit which focused on current oracy provision using Voice 21's School Benchmarks tool.

Visit: Thursday 24th June 2021

Oracy Consultant: Natasha Palladino

SLT Champion: Ed Booth

Oracy Lead: Alice Smith

The exit audit consisted of:

- Meeting with Ed Booth and Alice Smith on updates and developments
- Learning walk through EYFS - Y6
- Curriculum design discussion with Y5 and Y6 teachers
- Showcase of student oracy outcomes (Y5 and Y1)
- Year 4 oracy outcome presentation and discussion
- SLT discussion with Ed Booth and Germaine McKinnon

Braunstone Frith have made considerable progress on their oracy journey to date and it has been a pleasure working alongside such committed leaders of oracy over the past three years.

Walking through the school, it is evident that there is a consistent approach to oracy teaching and learning across all phases and that talk is carefully, and deliberately, planned to drive the curriculum forward.

The following quotes from staff, shared during the audit, speak volumes about the impact that the school's oracy provision has had on its students, and serves as the highest endorsement of the work that has been carried out in this area:

"The children in our school understand the difference between building onto a conversation, or challenging a point. They have become practised in giving their ideas but also in making compromises and coming to shared agreements. I feel like this simply did not easily or often happen just a couple of years ago."

"I feel that they are more empowered, happier children".

This report captures the current state of play, using the School Benchmarks as a frame, to spotlight best practice and recommendations moving forward.

School Benchmark 1:

The school has an ambitious vision for oracy

- The school's vision emphasises the centrality of oracy to effective teaching and learning across the curriculum and is linked closely to its policies and practices. The Oracy Driven Curriculum is a core, named element on the school's Strategic Planning Wheel and has been designed to support students to engage actively with their learning.
- There is a growing structure of designated leadership for oracy across the school consisting of an SLT champion, an Oracy Lead and three Oracy Pioneers. The school has also advertised for new positions internally for the leadership of oracy within the REAL LiFE curriculum and Voicing Vocabulary project. This growing team of oracy leaders across the school will support the development of a sustainable structure for oracy leadership at Braunstone Frith, which will ensure that oracy guides decision making in many areas of school life.

Recommendations

- With a growing team of oracy leads across the school it will be increasingly important to establish a system of collective accountability where planned key actions and priorities for oracy across different areas are regularly revisited and refined to ensure that the school's vision for oracy is realised.
- Further consideration could be given to articulating how oracy drives each pedagogical approach on the Strategic Planning Wheel. For example, how does the school use oracy to support the development of a culture of positive mental health and wellbeing for all? What role does oracy play in supporting the structure of distributed leadership at Braunstone Frith? These discussions will enable leaders to think deeply about the role oracy can play in developing an embedded culture of talk across all areas of the school.

School Benchmark 2:

The school builds a culture of oracy

- Oracy is incorporated into the school's REACH IT behaviour system and celebrated at a whole-school level. Students are awarded certificates explicitly praising their oracy skills, which ensures students recognise the high value placed on oracy.
- Promoting the importance of oracy also extends to parents and carers through the inclusion of an extensive section on oracy in the reporting process. Teachers document each student's strengths and targets for improvement in oracy during each reporting cycle based on the skills outlined in the school's Oracy Progression Map.
- Opportunities for talk extend beyond the classroom and are incorporated into weekly assemblies through the use of talking points.
- There is a strong focus on creating opportunities for students to find and use their voice in a range of contexts in and outside of the classroom. The impact of which has been captured in this staff voice response: *"The children are much better at articulating what they want to say. They sound more professional and more like they know what they are talking about. This means that they are therefore more likely to be listened to as they go through life."*

Recommendations

- The development of the CREW 'Learning to Learn' curriculum will provide a valuable space to maximise opportunities for oracy for all students beyond the classroom. As always, careful consideration must be given in the planning of this curriculum to identify the hallmarks of the language of critique so that it can be explicitly taught and evaluated over time.
- Continue to capitalise on opportunities to develop students' oracy across all routine aspects of school life outside of the classroom. For example, nurturing interactions between students and canteen staff, lunchtime supervisors, librarians etc. Oracy can, and should, be a priority shared by the whole school community.

School Benchmark 3:

The school has a sustained and wide-ranging curriculum for oracy

- The curriculum at Braunstone Frith has been designed to be oracy-driven. Expectations of students' oracy knowledge and skills at different stages is articulated in the school's Oracy Progression Map. Oracy outcomes are planned across the year, and across different curriculum areas. These are chosen to provide a variety of contexts for students to practise targeted oracy skills which build on previous learning.
- Careful consideration has been given to the different types of talk students are given the opportunity to engage in throughout their time at the school. Opportunities for talk which vary in terms of type, context and audience have been mapped out from Reception - Y6. These are closely aligned to the skills that students are developing at that stage, as identified through the Oracy Progression Map.
- The REAL LiFE curriculum provides an exciting opportunity to refine the oracy-driven curriculum, as well as to inject more authenticity into the talk outcomes that students work towards. Each mission is built around a real problem that students work collaboratively to find solutions for and culminates in an authentic talk outcome. The vision behind the REAL LiFE curriculum is to provide students with the opportunity to use their voice in meaningful and purposeful ways, supporting them to become agents of change within their communities.
- Trials of the REAL LiFE curriculum have been successfully implemented in Y1 (creating an Art gallery) and Y4 (Road safety campaign). Students in Y1 will be acting as tour guides for their guests at their gallery later this term and Y4 students recently put together a powerful presentation to their local MP and councillors with their suggestions on improving local traffic conditions.

Recommendations

- Leadership have identified that although there are lots of opportunities for presentational talk across the curriculum, there needs to be a greater focus on developing the oracy skills that are required for presentational talk across the student population. The REAL LiFE curriculum missions are a great opportunity to plan explicitly around the skills that are being targetted.
- Oracy should remain a high priority for professional development for staff moving forward. The re-launch of Lesson Study with oracy as a focus will support staff to develop their expertise and understanding of excellent classroom practice for oracy, and in turn, how this links to achieving desired student outcomes across all areas of the curriculum. It will also provide leaders with a framework to evaluate how teachers implement oracy within the REAL LiFE curriculum.

School Benchmark 4:

The school recognises oracy as central to learning

- The school has prioritised the Social and Emotional strand of the Oracy Framework to ensure children are able to fully access opportunities to learn *through* talk with the use of discussion roles and guidelines. This approach was observed being successfully and consistently incorporated into teaching and learning from EYFS through to Y6.
- All staff have access to an Oracy Toolkit of strategies and ideas to establish shared approaches to oracy teaching and learning across the school. On the learning walk all teachers observed demonstrated a clear understanding of how to support student talk through the use of age appropriate scaffolds and modelling. There were many great examples of good discussion observed across the phases where student talk was on task and purposeful.
- In an EYFS classroom the teacher demonstrated her high expectations for talk through a carefully planned and structured paired discussion task using a picture stimulus. Students were supported to articulate their response to the picture through the 'I can see'/'I can hear' linguistic scaffold and the teacher used praise and repetition to encourage the use of full sentences and targeted vocabulary: "can you **bellow** your sentence?". Students were clearly very familiar with this type of talk and were able to manage their discussion in pairs successfully.
- In a Y1+FS2 classroom the teacher had identified volume as an area of the physical strand of the Oracy Framework that her students needed to work on in their role as tour guides at their Art gallery. She facilitated a class discussion on what talk you might expect to hear at an Art gallery/what volume would a tour guide use? She then provided an opportunity for students to practise their opening line at the appropriate volume. This was a great example of sharing explicit expectations of a type of talk with students in a structured way.
- The focus in a Y5 maths lesson was on visualising students talk to support their ability to build on each other's ideas through the use of building cubes. The teacher presented the students with a number of talking points on the topic of reflection and they used the cubes to build a tower to represent the different contributions from their group. The teacher skillfully facilitated a metacognitive discussion about the quality of their talk to establish a collective understanding of what makes good group talk in this context.

Recommendations

- Moving forward, consideration should also be given to establishing norms for talk across subject disciplines. For example, talk to support reasoning in Maths or sequencing and structuring instructions as part of coaching in PE. Oracy Pioneers could be involved in developing age related guidance on what it means to 'talk like a...' (scientist/historian etc). This in turn will support students in their domain specific learning.

School Benchmark 5:

The school is accountable for the impact of oracy

- The school engages in regular reflection on the impact of oracy policies and practices put in place through staff and student voice. For example, responding to staff feedback, the number of oracy outcomes planned across a year is being reduced from 6 to 3. This will enable greater depth to be achieved with regards to student outcomes.
- Teachers are encouraged to reflect on their students' progress in oracy using the Oracy Progression Map and it is expected that they use this to inform their teaching to address the specific needs of the students in their class.
- Staff are also required to be reflective about the effectiveness of their oracy practice through their Personal Improvement Planners and to identify next steps in their own professional development for oracy.

Recommendations

- As the rollout of curriculum changes within the school takes place, leaders must continue to hold themselves accountable for the effectiveness of the school's oracy provision, and the progress of students' oracy as a result. This will involve leaders at all levels proactively seeking information which enables them to make informed decisions about what is and is not working. This could be through observations of teaching and learning, feedback from staff and students and/or tracking student progress data in oracy or other areas of the curriculum.
- The information gathered should be used to identify and amplify strong oracy practice, making changes where needed to continually improve outcomes for students.