

Oracy at Ropsley Church of England Primary School

At Ropsley Church of England Primary School, we recognise that **spoken language is fundamental to learning, thinking and social development**. Oracy – the ability to communicate effectively through spoken language – underpins pupils’ success across the curriculum and plays a key role in enabling children to develop confidence, articulate their ideas clearly and engage thoughtfully with the ideas of others.

Our approach to oracy is informed by the work of **Voice 21**, whose research highlights the importance of explicitly teaching speaking and listening skills alongside reading and writing. We recognise that effective communication involves the development of four key strands of oracy: **physical, linguistic, cognitive and social-emotional skills**. These strands underpin the way oracy is developed across the curriculum at Ropsley, supporting pupils to develop the confidence, vocabulary and reasoning skills needed to communicate effectively in a range of contexts. Through carefully planned opportunities for talk, discussion and presentation, pupils learn not only to express themselves clearly but also to listen attentively, respond respectfully and think critically.

Oracy is deliberately planned through whole class reading, Talk for Writing, explicit vocabulary teaching and enquiry-led learning across the wider curriculum. Pupils are regularly taught how to listen attentively, build on the ideas of others, explain their thinking, perform aloud and present to different audiences. As pupils move through the school, opportunities for talk become increasingly sophisticated, progressing from story retelling and structured partner talk in the early years to formal discussion, debate and presentation in upper Key Stage 2.

Oracy is **embedded across our entire curriculum** rather than taught as a standalone subject. Pupils develop spoken language through a wide range of curriculum experiences, including:

- **Whole class reading**, where structured discussion, questioning and debate support comprehension and critical thinking.
- **Talk for Writing**, which enables pupils to rehearse language orally, internalise story structures and develop confidence in storytelling and explanation.
- **Explicit vocabulary teaching**, ensuring pupils learn and use ambitious, subject-specific language across all areas of the curriculum.
- **Collaborative learning and enquiry-based subjects**, where pupils explain their reasoning, justify opinions and engage in purposeful discussion.
- **Performance opportunities**, including poetry recital, drama, music and presentations to an audience.

From the earliest stages in Reception, pupils are encouraged to **ask questions, retell stories, describe their experiences and use new vocabulary in meaningful contexts**. As they move through the school, these skills develop into more sophisticated forms of communication such as **explaining complex ideas, debating viewpoints, presenting information to an audience and responding thoughtfully to the contributions of others**.

Through this progressive approach, pupils at Ropsley develop the confidence and skills to express themselves clearly, think critically and participate actively in discussions. This supports our school vision that *“in God’s image, we strive and shine: with happy hearts and inspired minds,”* as pupils learn to communicate with confidence, respect and understanding within our school community and beyond.

Developing Oracy in the Classroom

Teachers plan regular opportunities for pupils to practise spoken language through structured discussion and purposeful talk. Strategies such as talk partners, think–pair–share, sentence stems and collaborative problem solving enable pupils to rehearse ideas, build on the contributions of others and develop confidence when expressing their views. Across the curriculum, pupils are encouraged to explain their reasoning, justify their opinions using evidence and adapt their language for different audiences and purposes.

The four strands of Oracy

Our approach to oracy is informed by the Voice 21 framework, which identifies four key strands that underpin effective spoken communication. These strands are developed progressively across the curriculum at Ropsley through reading discussions, Talk for Writing, explicit vocabulary teaching and opportunities for presentation and performance.

Voice 21 Strand	What this looks like at Ropsley
Physical	Pupils learn to speak clearly and audibly, projecting their voice and using appropriate pace and expression. Opportunities such as poetry recital, reading aloud, drama, music performance and presentations help pupils develop confidence when speaking to an audience.
Linguistic	Pupils develop a wide and precise vocabulary through explicit teaching across the curriculum. Through reading discussions, Talk for Writing and subject teaching, pupils learn to use ambitious and subject-specific language to explain ideas clearly.
Cognitive	Pupils develop reasoning and thinking through talk. Structured discussion in reading lessons, enquiry-based learning in subjects such as history and geography, and collaborative problem solving in mathematics support pupils to explain their thinking, justify opinions and build on the ideas of others.
Social and Emotional	Pupils learn to listen attentively, respond respectfully and work collaboratively. Discussion routines such as talk partners and group discussion support pupils to value different viewpoints and contribute confidently within a group.

Oracy develops progressively across the school. Pupils move from early storytelling, vocabulary development and structured partner talk in Reception and Key Stage 1 towards increasingly sophisticated discussion, explanation, debate and presentation in Key Stage 2. The table below summarises the key oracy focus within each phase.

Phase	Core oracy emphasis	Main curriculum drivers
Reception	Speaking audibly, retelling, asking questions, using new vocabulary, turn-taking, talk in play	Communication and Language, EYFS Reading, RWI, rhymes and songs, Plan-Do-Review, collective worship
Year 1/2	Sequencing ideas, discussing stories, using sentence stems, asking and answering questions, speaking for an audience	Reading curriculum, Talk for Writing, RWI, PSHE, music, computing presentations
Year 3/4	Explaining with evidence, summarising, discussion roles, performance, subject-specific vocabulary, adapting talk for audience	Whole Class Reading, history/geography-linked texts, music, computing, French, RE
Year 5/6	Debate, justification, presentation, discussion of complex themes, performance, precise vocabulary, audience awareness	Whole Class Reading, RE/philosophical discussion, history, geography, computing, French, leadership roles

Reception / EYFS Oracy Map

Children move from simple one-step listening and short responses in Autumn to detailed retelling, questioning and extended talk by Summer.

Area	Specific oracy development	Evidence from our curriculum
Communication and Language	listening carefully, following instructions, retelling, asking questions, speaking in full sentences	In Spring, children retell the beginning, middle and end of a story, ask questions about things that interest them and extend sentences using <i>and</i> and <i>because</i> . In Summer, children describe events in detail, ask questions about new information and talk with detail about things that interest them.
Vocabulary development	explicit teaching and use of topic vocabulary in play and talk	Children “learn new topic vocabulary and begin to use this in their play” in Spring, then “confidently use new vocabulary when talking about their work and during their play” in Summer.
Reading / story language	retelling stories, using “book talk”, predicting, joining repeated refrains	EYFS reading expects children to join in with popular rhymes and repeated refrains, retell key events, then retell beginning, middle and end, and by Summer confidently retell stories using “book talk” and predict what might happen next.
Core texts	rich oral retelling and discussion through high-quality stories	Core EYFS texts include <i>Six Dinner Sid</i> , <i>Rosie’s Walk</i> , <i>Whatever Next</i> , <i>Owl Babies</i> , <i>The Gruffalo</i> , <i>Farmer Duck</i> , <i>What the Ladybird Heard</i> , <i>Walking Through the Jungle</i> , <i>Mr Gumpy’s Outing</i> and <i>The Night Pirates</i> . These give strong material for retelling, role play and vocabulary.
Talk for Writing	oral imitation, story language, retelling with props	Your EYFS reading curriculum explicitly links class reading to literacy topics and includes repeated retelling of core texts with props, which is highly consistent with Talk for Writing practice.
Role play / imaginative language	speaking in role, narrative language, social phrases	Children recount a simple storyline in small-group play, join in with nursery rhymes and group songs, and use social phrases such as “Stop. I don’t like that” and “Please can we share?” in play.
Plan-Do-Review	purposeful talk, explanation, reflection	Children say “I am going to...”, “I will need...”, “I have been/made...”, “I used...” and “I am really proud of...”, which builds explanatory and reflective talk.
Music / performance	speaking and singing for an audience, experimenting with voice	EYFS music includes <i>Exploring Sound/Musical Movements</i> , <i>Musical Stories</i> and <i>Big Band</i> , with children learning that music and instruments can convey mood and character, and performing a practised song to a small audience.
Collective worship	listening, joining in, responding, vocabulary from values/stories	Collective worship provides regular opportunities to listen, respond and use shared language linked to school values and Bible stories.

Year 1 / 2 Oracy Map

In Year 1/2, oracy becomes more structured. Pupils move from retelling and responding toward **explaining ideas in order, giving reasons, using topic vocabulary, discussing books, performing poetry and presenting to others**. This is supported by RWI, Talk for Writing, mapped reading comprehension, music, PSHE and computing.

Subject / area	Specific oracy development	Evidence from our curriculum
Reading curriculum	discussion, retelling, prediction, inference, answering questions, navigating texts	Year 1 pupils discuss sequence and beginning/middle/end, identify fiction/non-fiction features, explain their understanding, answer literal, inferential and evaluative questions, discuss titles and events, and talk about characters and settings. Year 2 pupils discuss chosen books, express views, discuss poetry patterns, participate in discussion about books they hear and read themselves, and make and explain predictions.
Reading texts / story repertoire	oral retelling, storytelling language, comparing characters and settings	EYFS/KS1 reading includes traditional tales and class texts such as <i>Cinderella</i> , <i>Rapunzel</i> , <i>Jack and the Beanstalk</i> , <i>Hansel and Gretel</i> , <i>Little Red Riding Hood</i> , <i>Beegu</i> , <i>The Owl Who Was Afraid of the Dark</i> , <i>Traction Man</i> , <i>Fantastic Mr Fox</i> , <i>Peace at Last</i> , <i>Elmer</i> , <i>Amazing Grace</i> , <i>Dogger</i> and <i>Gorilla</i> . These support storytelling, oral retelling and discussion.
Talk for Writing	oral imitation, sequencing, sentence patterns, storytelling voice	Your KS1 reading curriculum states that alongside RWI you use Talk for Writing , and class reading is linked to literacy topics, which supports oral retelling, rehearsal and internalising language structures.
Vocabulary teaching	explicit teaching of new words and meanings	Year 1 pupils start to discuss new word meanings; later they discuss vocabulary in texts and link new meanings to known vocabulary through weekly RWI vocabulary checks. Year 2 identifies, discusses and collects favourite words and phrases and explains word choices.
Poetry / performance	recital, rhythm, repeated patterns, audible speaking	Year 1 and 2 perform poetry individually and together, appreciate rhymes and poems, discuss rhyme and repetition and build a repertoire learnt by heart.
PSHE / discussion	expressing feelings, respectful discussion, building social language	Jigsaw units such as <i>Being Me in My World</i> , <i>Celebrating Difference</i> and <i>Relationships</i> support talk about feelings, friendship and behaviour.
Music	singing, rhythm, call-and-response, discussion of musical effect	Year 1/2 music includes <i>Pulse and Rhythm: All About Me</i> , <i>Orchestral Instruments: Traditional Stories</i> , <i>West African Call and Response: Animals</i> , <i>Musical Me</i> , <i>Timbre and Rhythmical Patterns: Fairy Tales</i> and <i>Musical Vocabulary: Under the Sea</i> . These build oral rehearsal, call-and-response and vocabulary.
Computing	presenting ideas and explaining digital choices	Year 1/2 computing includes <i>Presenting Ideas</i> , <i>Pictograms & Data</i> , and digital outcomes such as a digital coast leaflet , giving opportunities to explain information and choices.
Maths	explaining reasoning and solving collaboratively	Your maths curriculum emphasises reasoning and explaining mathematical understanding, giving strong opportunities for partner talk and explanation.
Collective worship / Picture News	speaking to a wider audience, responding to current issues, respectful listening	Weekly assemblies and Picture News discussions support speaking, listening and audience awareness.

Year 3 / 4 Oracy Map

Subject / area	Specific oracy development	Evidence from our curriculum
Whole Class Reading	structured discussion, summarising, inference, explanation, performance, discussion roles	In Year 3/4 Cycle B, pupils orally summarise key events, discuss Marcy's thoughts and feelings, justify inferences using clues, explain ambitious vocabulary, build, challenge and summarise ideas, and in trio discussions ask probing questions and reach shared conclusions.
Named reading texts	subject-linked oral discussion and performance	Texts include <i>Stone Age Boy</i> , <i>Stig of the Dump</i> , <i>The Story of Tutankhamun</i> , <i>Marcy and the Riddle of the Sphinx</i> , <i>A Mummy Ate My Homework</i> , <i>The Children of Swallow Fell</i> , <i>Grace Darling</i> , <i>Shackleton's Journey</i> , <i>The Blue Umbrella</i> , <i>The Wind</i> , <i>From a Railway Carriage</i> , <i>How to Wash a Woolly Mammoth</i> , <i>Just Around the Riverbend</i> and <i>The Invisible String</i> . These are explicitly tied to oral summary, justification, discussion and performance.
Reading fluency as oracy	expressive reading aloud, pace, tone, volume, choral performance	Pupils prepare choral or dramatic performances, read dialogue aloud with appropriate pace and expression, explain performance choices, and discuss why texts work well when read aloud.
Vocabulary teaching	explicit use of ambitious and subject-specific vocabulary	Reading units require pupils to clarify vocabulary linked to history, archaeology, habitats, feelings, weather, mythology and landscape, then explain ideas clearly using precise vocabulary.
History-linked talk	evidence-based explanation and expert talk	Through texts like <i>Stone Age Boy</i> and <i>Tutankhamun</i> , pupils discuss what a story teaches about the Stone Age or Ancient Egypt, retrieve key facts, justify choices and link fiction to historical knowledge.
Geography-linked talk	explanation, comparison, viewpoint	Reading linked to rivers and habitats includes <i>A River's Journey</i> , <i>A River</i> , and <i>The Brilliant Deep</i> , where pupils explain ideas clearly, adapt explanations for a partner and discuss environmental messages.
Music	performance, storytelling through music, group composition	Year 3/4 music includes <i>Changes in Pitch, Tempo and Dynamics: Rivers, Ballads, Traditional Instruments and Improvisation</i> , <i>Adapting and Transposing Motifs: Romans, Samba and Carnival Sounds and Instruments</i> and <i>Body and Tuned Percussion: Rainforests</i> . These clearly support explanation, rehearsal, performance and discussion of effect.
Computing	spoken presentation and explanation of digital work	Year 3/4 computing includes <i>PowerPoint</i> , <i>Volcano Reports</i> , <i>Roman journeys in Scratch</i> and <i>Online Safety + Coding</i> , giving scope for presentation and explanation.
MFL (French)	speaking in another language, pronunciation, everyday dialogue	Year 3/4 French builds from greetings and introductions to countries, likes/dislikes, body parts, clothes, birthdays, animals and school trip contexts. This develops rehearsed oral language and conversational confidence.
RE	discussion of belief, locality and worldview	RE units such as What does pilgrimage mean to individuals and communities? and Which religious communities can we find in our neighbourhood? support questioning, discussion and comparison of belief and practice.

Year 5 / 6 Oracy Map

In Year 5/6, pupils move into **high-level spontaneous talk, debate, performance, evidence-based responses, authorial discussion and formal presentation.**

Subject / area	Specific oracy development	Evidence from our curriculum
Whole Class Reading	debate, formal discussion, evidence-based viewpoints, oral recommendation, sophisticated performance	In Y5/6 reading, pupils discuss authorial choices in <i>Holes</i> , evaluate serious themes, read extracts aloud with controlled tone and pace, discuss authorial intent in Catherine Bruton's text, and choose and perform their own poems. The Year 6 Ropsley Reading Showcase requires pupils to introduce a chosen book or poem, read an extract and recommend it to a specific audience.
Named reading texts	rich opportunities for discussion of ethics, theme and presentation	Texts include <i>Who Let the Gods Out?</i> , <i>Holes</i> , <i>Shackleton's Journey</i> , <i>Grace Darling</i> , <i>The Listeners</i> and poetry performance tasks. These support debate, moral reasoning, presentation and performance.
Reading fluency as oracy	controlled reading aloud, stage presence, deliberate vocal choices	Pupils read extracts aloud with controlled tone, pace, emphasis and emotional sensitivity; they explain how vocal choices shape meaning for an audience.
Vocabulary teaching	precise, ambitious and disciplinary vocabulary	KS2 reading expects pupils to explain vocabulary and ideas clearly, select precise vocabulary to suit audience and purpose, and use evidence and subject-specific language in explanation.
RE / philosophy	discussion of belief, ethics and worldview	RE units such as How do people express their beliefs through worship and caring for others? , What do people believe about caring for the world and others? , How do people choose between right and wrong? , What is my worldview? , What do people believe about peace? and What do people believe about good, evil and suffering? offer strong oral debate and reflective discussion.
History / wider curriculum	formal explanation, comparison, ethical discussion	Topics such as Vikings vs Anglo-Saxons , Battle of Britain , Ancient Greece and Early Islamic Civilisation lend themselves to evidence-based explanation and comparison.
Computing	presentation, blogging, ethical debate	Year 5/6 computing includes <i>Online Safety + Blogging</i> , <i>WWII digital diary</i> , <i>Population models</i> , <i>Networks</i> and Ethical debates , which directly support spoken explanation and debate.
MFL (French)	increasingly complex spoken language and dialogue	Year 5/6 French units include <i>On Holiday</i> , <i>Eating Out</i> , <i>Hobbies</i> , <i>A School Trip</i> , <i>Family</i> , <i>A Weekend with Friends</i> , <i>Food</i> , <i>The Future</i> , <i>At School</i> and <i>Jobs</i> , building towards asking questions, giving reasons and speaking in fuller sentences.
Music	performance, listening response, evaluative talk	Year 5/6 music includes <i>Dynamics</i> , <i>Pitch and Texture (Fingal's Cave)</i> , <i>Composition to represent the festival of colour (Holi)</i> , <i>Theme and Variations (Pop Art)</i> , <i>South and West Africa</i> , <i>Film Music</i> and <i>Songs of WW2</i> . These require discussion, rehearsal and purposeful performance.
Leadership / school life	authentic audience in Church Services including Christingle and formal speaking	Collective worship, school leadership and showcase opportunities align strongly with upper KS2 oracy, especially presenting, leading and speaking to wider audiences.