



Rethinking Curriculum

Oracy evaluation framework

Delivering an expansive and inspiring curriculum for all

This evaluation framework has been developed by the Chartered College of Teaching as part of the Rethinking Curriculum project, funded by the Helen Hamlyn Trust. It is one of a series of evaluation frameworks that have been shared as part of our Rethinking Curriculum toolkits.

The framework captures some of the key ideas explored in the Rethinking Curriculum **oracy** toolkit and offers some key ideas for you to evaluate your school's curriculum practice on this theme. These ideas are drawn from research and evidence and from our work with schools, and include input from leading experts.

The ideas explored are not intended to provide a definitive approach to curriculum development on this theme. There may be gaps or omissions and this should be viewed as a work in progress, which we will aim to develop further as the evidence base continues to evolve. You are encouraged to consider this framework alongside the [oracy toolkit](#), and to undertake your own reading and research to build your understanding of the key ideas discussed prior to implementing changes in your context.

This evaluation framework has been developed in collaboration with Rachel Higginson, curator for Finding My Voice, and with colleagues from Cragside Primary School.



Chartered College
of Teaching

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Part 1: Building an oracy culture

Evaluation

Reflect on where your school is in your journey and allocate a number against each of the statements below to evaluate the extent to which it reflects current practice in your context (1–2 = low; 3–4 = medium; 5–6 = high).

Key ideas from research, theory and evidence

- ✓ Leaders prioritise the development of oracy skills as part of an integrated, whole-school approach.
- ✓ Staff at all levels are supported to build their expertise in relation to oracy; staff understand that the term 'oracy' encompasses a range of ideas, and a common language around oracy is shared and understood by all.
- ✓ Leaders and teachers strive to establish a conscious culture of *intentional* listening and speaking; this culture is reflected in and supported by the learning environment, through enrichment activities, events and community engagement.
- ✓ The whole school community values language as a means with which to express oneself and to communicate meaning and need; individuals recognise the importance of listening to understand others.
- ✓ Alongside a whole-school culture, every classroom establishes its own dialogic culture and social norms around oracy.

Your
evaluation
(1–6)

Common barriers

What might impede improvement?

There is little or no shared understanding of an oracy-rich culture and oracy is seen as an addition; staff may lack connection with 'why' oracy might be important for their pupils.

The listening culture is superficial and, as a result, pupils, staff and the wider community don't feel 'heard'.

A deficit view of language creates a linguistic hierarchy in the school; individual and cultural differences in language are not valued.

Questions for reflection and discussion

1. What do we as leaders mean when we use the term 'oracy' and to what extent is this understanding shared by all staff?
2. What CPD or other support is in place to build staff expertise in relation to oracy?
3. What does the oracy culture look like in our school? Is oracy valued by all? How do we know?
4. Do we have a good understanding of our strengths and/or barriers and any work to be done in relation to building an oracy culture in our school?



Part 2: Building oracy into the curriculum

Evaluation

Reflect on where your school is in your journey and allocate a number against each of the statements below to evaluate the extent to which it reflects current practice in your context (1–2 = low; 3–4 = medium; 5–6 = high).

Key ideas from research, theory and evidence

- ✓ The development of oracy skills is not a 'stand-alone' activity or otherwise 'left to chance'; oracy skills are taught explicitly to pupils and integrated across the formal curriculum, beginning in the Early Years Foundation Stage and continuing over the entirety of the school journey.
- ✓ Teachers utilise a range of pedagogical skills to support the development of oracy skills. For example:
 - explicit modelling of skills, narrating thinking/thinking out loud
 - using questions and/or prompts to scaffold pupils' thinking and support them in expressing more complex ideas
 - providing talk prompts or sentence stems
 - providing supports and structures to support the development of oracy skills within collaborative learning activities (e.g. group/paired work)
 - providing timely and specific feedback to support their oracy development
 - planning tasks that help to gradually build pupils' confidence and allow them to apply their skills with increasing independence.
- ✓ Teachers plan opportunities for different kinds of talk, including exploratory/messy talk, as well as more formal talk opportunities; collaborative activities give the opportunity to apply individual oracy skills, to develop the ability of 'listening to understand' and 'learning to respond', and to build conversation skills.
- ✓ Although they may be guided by whole-school oracy principles and approaches, teachers have a degree of agency over their pedagogical choices and may adapt their approach to suit a particular subject area and/or respond to the needs of particular pupils.
- ✓ Consideration is given as to how speaking and listening skills may be assessed across the curriculum (see, for example, the Oracy assessment toolkit); early intervention is in place for pupils with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN); and oral language interventions are planned with a holistic view of pupils in mind.

Your evaluation (1–6)

Common barriers

What might impede improvement?

Oracy is seen as an addition/add-on to the curriculum, rather than being part of the curriculum.

Opportunities to teach or practise oracy skills are not always taken.

Staff do not perceive development of oracy skills as being an important driver of academic performance.

Oracy is not valued, as it is not typically recorded in books; a strong culture of accountability means that staff avoid such activities.

Low confidence and/or lack of strategies around classroom management means that teachers prefer to avoid collaborative talk activities.

Staff are not confident in identifying individual starting points and needs around speaking and listening, or do not have access to expert support where required to understand SLCN.

Teachers do not have a good understanding of pupils' prior skills relating to oracy; oracy and/or SLCN are not foci for transition discussions.

Questions for reflection and discussion

1. Do we have a clear picture of how oracy fits into our formal curriculum? How do we build in progression, from when pupils start to when they leave us?
2. How do we (or how do we plan to) build staff understanding and expertise around oracy?
3. Do we have a good understanding of our strengths and/or barriers and any work to be done in relation to building oracy into the curriculum?



Part 3: Key considerations for successful implementation

Evaluation

Reflect on where your school is in your journey and allocate a number against each of the statements below to evaluate the extent to which it reflects current practice in your context (1–2 = low; 3–4 = medium; 5–6 = high).

Key ideas from research, theory and evidence

- ✓ Leaders clearly set out the vision and values that are to inform the school's work around oracy and the wider curriculum, ensuring that these are understood by all.
- ✓ Leaders ensure that sufficient time, resources and supporting structures are in place to enable staff to deliver the oracy (and wider) curriculum effectively.
- ✓ Leaders draw on research and evidence to inform curriculum development work relating to oracy; they gather data from their context to evaluate existing practice and consider how they will evaluate the impact of implementing a new approach.
- ✓ Implementation and development of oracy approaches is a collaborative process, characterised by iterative cycles of development, meaningful professional learning, shared problem-solving and ongoing review.
- ✓ There are dedicated members of staff to champion this work; these champions, along with middle leaders (where appropriate), have clarity around their role and are well positioned to support colleagues and help to drive the curriculum forward.
- ✓ Teachers are supported to build their expertise so that they develop strong subject/pedagogical content knowledge, have a deep understanding of effective pedagogical approaches and are able to combine these with knowledge of the school curriculum, pupils' needs and the wider context, in order to plan and implement the curriculum effectively.

Your
evaluation
(1–6)

Common barriers

What might impede improvement?

Leaders and/or staff find it difficult to articulate vision/goals/values.

Implementation may be rushed or not well thought-through.

There is a lack of resources/time to support development of curriculum.

Curriculum changes are implemented wholesale, without sufficient consideration of context, school needs and/or capacity.

School leaders do not systematically seek staff input into curriculum development and, as a result, there may be a disconnect between the intended and enacted curriculum.

Curriculum changes are seen as a 'quick fix', with new ideas introduced with limited further development or impact evaluation.

Teachers implement new approaches too quickly, without a clear rationale or understanding of how they fit into the school context, ultimately resulting in a lack of impact on pupil learning.

Questions for reflection and discussion

Is your school ready to implement curriculum development activity in this area? Have you already evaluated existing practice using the full Rethinking Curriculum evaluation framework to ensure a strong foundation for this work?

Do you have a clear plan for implementation? How will you involve staff in this process?

Is there existing capacity and/or how will you create capacity for this work? Is there anything that you will need to de-implement to enable this to happen?