



Hawes Primary School ~ Oracy rationale



‘Language and thought are intimately related, and the extent and manner of children’s cognitive development depend to a considerable degree on the forms and contexts of language which they have encountered and used.’

Robin Alexander, 2008

Our curriculum offer for oracy and vocabulary begins in Early Years. ‘Children develop quickly in the early years and a child’s experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances.’ *EYFS Statutory Framework, 2021*

Our planning, teaching and assessment of the curriculum for Early Years to year 6 is informed by the nine principles of cognitive science (Daniel Willingham). It is vital that we immerse all children (this includes SEND, EAL, PP and vulnerable children) in vocabulary and language from an early age and allow them to develop their public voice. In addition, it is vital that building our pupil’s characters so that they are responsible, respectful, resilient and robust is an embedded part of our ethos which permeates all aspects of our school and wider curriculum.

Our EYFS curriculum provides vocabulary and language rich opportunities for nursery and reception children. We know that vocabulary knowledge builds up cumulatively and we recognise this through the provision and experiences provided.

Our Dialogic Approach

At Hawes Primary School, we pride ourselves on how deeply we embed a positive dialogic approach from nursery to year 6. We believe that when children leave Hawes Primary School, they should leave as robust, responsible, respectful and resilient individuals, able to communicate effectively in a number of ways, including to describe, discuss, challenge, debate and evaluate effectively. Ensuring all our children have strong and secure oracy skills enables them to achieve this.

Dialogic approaches are embedded across the curriculum, using the 20:80 model of teacher: peer, direct teaching: peer conversation and include a variety of well researched models of effective practice. We also ensure that all adults in school use correct Standard English so they provide strong role models to all children.

Progression on Oracy Skills

We have a clear progression demonstrated in our oracy curriculum that starts in early years. This document shows how oracy skills (physical, linguistic, cognitive, social and emotional requirements) are built on from nursery to year 6. These age related expectations are reinforced by adults throughout the school day when appropriate opportunities arise. Oracy is developed every day, inside and outside of the classroom. However, to ensure that purposeful opportunities take place, we plan these into our curriculum. This includes opportunities for children’s development of their public voice. For example, performances, show and tell timetables, debates.

Vocabulary and language-rich environments

All classrooms are language-rich with Tier 2 and 3 vocabulary and support children to develop their bank of language without feeling overwhelm or cognitive overload. Alongside our dialogic approach, each classroom consistently displays tier two vocabulary that comes from classroom dialogue (peer and adult conversations, storytelling etc.) on vocabulary displays. Each topic display board includes subject-specific, tier three vocabulary. This vocabulary is discussed as it arises within the context of the lesson in all years and the vocabulary is also taught/reinforced during weekly vocabulary sessions in years 1-6. Language rich, high-quality books are chosen for different purposes and are accessible to children at all times (see reading rationale). In the Early Years, a language-rich environment is established with the addition of; decodable word labels in provision, literature in provision and provision areas for storytelling, reading and writing (see EYFS rationale).

Assessment of oracy

Oracy is threaded through every aspect of our school day; inside and outside of the classroom. In order to track, monitor and assess our children and their oracy skills, we use an oracy tracker aligned to the progression document.

Reviewed Sept 2026