

VOICE 21 IMPACT REPORT 2016-2021



Empowering every child to use their
voice to succeed in school and in life



WELCOME FROM CEO

In 2016, Voice 21 set out on a mission to empower all children and young people to use their voice for success in school and in life.

We knew that spoken language skills were one of the strongest predictors of a child's future life chances yet too many children were not being given the opportunities to develop these crucial skills, opportunities consistently afforded to an advantaged few.

For too long, oracy had been undervalued and overlooked within state education. It was time for a change.

Building on the pioneering practice of School 21, we had an ambitious goal to grow from a programme within a single school into a national movement of schools and teachers committed to providing a high-quality oracy education to all.

We aimed to make the case for oracy by generating and sharing the evidence of the difference oracy education makes to children and young people's outcomes and opportunities. We planned to train and support thousands of oracy teachers to act as the frontline in improving students' speaking and listening skills in state schools. We wanted to create an infrastructure of hubschools to develop good practice and share this with other schools in their localities and dramatically boost the body of resources, materials, guidance and support for oracy teaching.



At the same time, we hoped to influence decision-makers to leverage their power to create the conditions that would encourage all state schools to teach oracy as part of their standard practice and curriculum.

Five years on, this impact report describes the progress we have made on these objectives.

Voice 21 has grown in scale and influence, working with thousands of schools across the UK. We have focused our support in those communities that will most benefit from it, including targeted hubs in areas such as Liverpool, Tyneside, Leicester, Nottingham, Camden, Tower Hamlets, The Black Country, Ipswich and Knowsley, as well as projects serving Pupil Referral Units.

Through this work, we have gained new understanding of how our actions and interventions can support teachers and schools in providing a high-quality oracy education for their students and the barriers and opportunities they face in doing this. Our Oracy Benchmarks encapsulate this insight, acting as a guide to implementing oracy in any setting.

We have also raised the profile of oracy – galvanising educationalists, business leaders,

politicians, parents and children and young people themselves to champion the need for universal access to oracy education.

A lot has changed in five years. What hasn't changed is the central importance of oracy to children and young people's outcomes, both in learning and in their lives beyond school. As Becky Francis, CEO of the Education Endowment Foundation, said recently, the 'evidence of the power of talk is indisputable.'

The effects of the Covid-19 pandemic provide a fresh impetus for Voice 21. Early indications suggest that school closures have contributed to a widening of the language gap. What's more, schools are increasingly recognising the role of oracy in helping students bounce back academically, socially and in their wellbeing.

Over the next five years, we want the oracy education provided by our schools to become the norm, not the exception. We are growing our reach to 1900 schools per annum to achieve this, serving over 800,000 pupils. We will focus this growth in areas of high need,

deliberately targeting high-deprivation areas with low levels of early language development. We have consolidated our range of programmes into one unified approach, Voice 21 Oracy Schools. Through this multi-year model, we will partner with schools to achieve long-term sustained change and build a strong collaborative network of educators committed to oracy education. The engine of our work will be understanding the difference we are making and using that understanding to make more of a difference, putting our impact at the heart of everything we do.

This impact report tells the story of Voice 21's journey to 2021. Behind the numbers are the voices of the thousands of teachers we have had the privilege to work with and the hundreds of thousands of pupils they serve. Their stories of how oracy transforms learning and life chances provide the momentum for our next five years of impact. We hope you will join us for this next chapter.

BECCY EARNSHAW,
CEO, VOICE 21



The evidence of the power of talk is indisputable

Becky Francis, CEO, Education Endowment Foundation

School 21



OUR MISSION

Voice 21 is the UK's oracy education charity. We're on a mission to transform the learning and life chances of young people through talk so that all children can use their voice for success in school and in life.

Despite widespread recognition of the importance of oracy, only a minority of schools have consistent, coherent or adequately resourced provision to develop these skills in their students. So, since 2016, we have been working in partnership with teachers and schools across the UK to ensure every child receives a high-quality oracy education.

ONLY 14%
of classroom teachers
say their school meets the
statutory National Curriculum
requirements for spoken
language "to a great extent"¹

WE HAVE DONE THIS BY:



Codifying what good oracy teaching and learning looks like and setting the standard for a high-quality oracy education through the development of our Oracy Benchmarks.



Providing professional development and specialist school improvement support to empower schools to provide their students with a high-quality oracy education.



Focusing our work on those that need us most by working with schools serving the least advantaged communities.



Convening cross sector support to raise the status of oracy through our position as secretariat of the Oracy All Party Parliamentary Group.

WHAT IS ORACY?

Oracy is the ability to articulate ideas, develop understanding and engage with others through spoken language and listening.

In school, oracy is a powerful tool for learning; by teaching students to become more effective speakers and listeners we empower them to better understand themselves, each other and the world around them. It is also a route to social mobility, empowering all students, not just some, to find their voice to succeed in school and life.



“

[Teachers] are the only second chance for some children to have a rich language experience. If these children are not getting it at school, they are not getting it.

Neil Mercer, Emeritus Professor of Education, University of Cambridge

THE LAST FIVE YEARS

BEYOND THE LAST FIVE YEARS

2012

SCHOOL 21 OPENS ITS DOORS

The founders of School 21, a pioneering free school in Stratford, East London, recognised the importance of oracy, weaving it into the fabric of this new school and providing a blueprint for what an oracy education could look like.

2015

EEF PILOT: ORACY CURRICULUM, CULTURE AND ASSESSMENT TOOLKIT

An EEF pilot, in partnership with School 21 and Cambridge University shaped Voice 21's approach to oracy education in schools. As part of this pilot, the Oracy Framework was developed, demystifying oracy and empowering teachers to teach their students this important skill.

The Oracy Framework is now used worldwide and has been translated into different languages including Welsh, German, Italian and Arabic.



NOVEMBER 2016

THE STATE OF SPEAKING IN OUR SCHOOLS PUBLISHED

The State of Speaking in Our Schools shone a light on oracy practice in schools across the UK, finding that, whilst most teachers felt that oracy was critically important for their students, the majority had not received any training in oracy over the last three years and would not know where to look for more information if they wanted it. We set about changing this.



Including polling from over **1000** teachers and school leaders

“Leading oracy in my school has been a career highlight”

National Oracy Leader, 2018-2019

SEPTEMBER 2017

NATIONAL ORACY LEADERS PROGRAMME LAUNCHED, IN CONJUNCTION WITH UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Our Oracy Leaders Programme was designed to build leadership capacity for oracy in schools, as well as to create a vanguard of educational leaders spearheading a movement to raise the status of oracy in schools across the UK.

95 National Oracy Leaders trained since 2017

JUNE 2018

EEF RELEASES FINDINGS FROM VOICE 21'S 'ORACY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME'

Our second EEF pilot which began in 2015 investigated the feasibility of Voice 21's approach beyond School 21. The EEF's independent evaluator saw promise in our approach, noting that participating teachers felt students' oracy skills had improved as a result of the pilot.

12 secondary schools joined the pilot



SEPTEMBER 2020

VOICE 21 ORACY SCHOOLS LAUNCHED

Voice 21 Oracy Schools is the culmination of everything we have learned over the last five years about how to effectively drive change and improve oracy provision across a school. Through our new model, we work strategically to develop leadership and practice of oracy across a school, empowering schools to provide a high-quality oracy education for their students and secure long-term change.

321 schools in 2020-2021

voice 21 Oracy School

OCTOBER 2019

THE ORACY BENCHMARKS PUBLISHED

The Oracy Benchmarks outline what constitutes a high-quality oracy education, providing a robust and realistic framework for teachers and school leaders looking to develop oracy in their contexts.

Over **1000** downloads



SEPTEMBER 2019

GET TALKING IN PRUS STARTS

With funding from Nesta's Future Ready Fund and The Dulverton Trust, we started this important programme to support students excluded from mainstream education to improve their oracy skills, focusing particularly on developing emotional intelligence as well as perceptions of self.

Get talking in PRUs

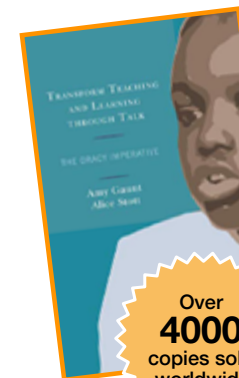
767 young people reached in first year

JANUARY 2019

TRANSFORM TEACHING AND LEARNING THROUGH TALK: THE ORACY IMPERATIVE PUBLISHED

Our book codified Voice 21's approach to oracy teaching and learning, introducing Voice 21's work to a new audience of educators.

Over **4000** copies sold worldwide



SEPTEMBER 2018

VOICE LIVERPOOL GETS UNDERWAY

Voice Liverpool, our first 'Voice Area' is launched with the support of the SHINE Trust. A three year partnership with schools across the city to introduce lasting, locally-led change, improving students' oral language, confidence and wellbeing.

75 schools



“Every child was able to speak in front of the class, even one child who struggled to answer the register at the start of the year”

Sally Flynn, Oracy Pioneer, 2019



SEPTEMBER 2018

ORACY PIONEERS PROGRAMME BEGINS

Recognising the importance of expert oracy classroom practice, we began our Oracy Pioneers Programme to embed high-quality oracy teaching in every classroom.

1225 Oracy Pioneers trained to date

WHY ORACY MATTERS



BENEFITS OF A HIGH-QUALITY ORACY EDUCATION



HIGH-QUALITY ORACY EDUCATION

“

Planned oracy outcomes have allowed children who struggle with printed text to access subject content in a deeper and more meaningful way. I have been thrilled with the level of engagement in lessons. It has been delightful to hear every child's voice and to see their self-confidence soar as they recognised that others valued that voice.

National Oracy Pioneer, Bristol

“

To actually see tangible outcomes in mathematics, particularly in reasoning, which is an area that has traditionally been a challenge for us, has been very exciting and we've now seen those improvements in other areas of the curriculum as well.

Jeremy Pentreath, Headteacher, The Oaks Primary School

INCREASES ENGAGEMENT IN LEARNING

Learning is rich and enjoyable when students bring their own voice and experiences to school life.⁷

IMPROVES ACADEMIC OUTCOMES

Students think critically and reason together.⁸

FOSTERS CONFIDENCE AND WELLBEING

Students build successful relationships and realise their voice has value.⁹

SUPPORTS TRANSITIONS AND ENHANCES EMPLOYABILITY

Oracy helps young people flourish in further/higher education or employment.¹⁰

EQUIPS STUDENTS TO THRIVE IN DEMOCRATIC & CIVIC LIFE

Citizenship requires us to express our views & listen kindly and critically.¹¹

PROMOTES SOCIAL EQUITY

Oracy narrows gaps, enabling less advantaged students to fulfil their potential.¹²

“

They [students] could really see how improved oracy would impact on their lives. They could see the connection with college interviews or going further in the world.

Oracy Lead, PRU, London

“

I think if I could do nothing else for the children I teach, it would be that they leave able to articulate their needs and their opinions in a rational way. So they can be understood and they can engage with the world.

Teacher, PRU, Voice 21 Oracy School



“

What makes me enjoy talking the most is that everybody's listening to you, and you're part of the world, and you feel respected and important.

Milo, Year 3, School 21



WHAT IS A HIGH-QUALITY ORACY EDUCATION?

In 2019, Voice 21 published the Oracy Benchmarks, codifying what good oracy teaching and learning looks like and setting the standard for a high-quality oracy education.

TEACHER BENCHMARKS		SCHOOL BENCHMARKS
SETS HIGH EXPECTATIONS FOR ORACY	1	HAS AN AMBITIOUS VISION FOR ORACY
VALUES EVERY VOICE	2	BUILDS A CULTURE OF ORACY
TEACHES ORACY EXPLICITLY	3	HAS A SUSTAINED & WIDE-RANGING CURRICULUM FOR ORACY
HARNESSES ORACY TO ELEVATE LEARNING	4	RECOGNISES ORACY AS CENTRAL TO LEARNING
APPRAISES PROGRESS IN ORACY	5	IS ACCOUNTABLE FOR THE IMPACT OF ORACY

WHY DID WE DEVELOP THE ORACY BENCHMARKS?

Our 2016 report, *The State of Speaking in Our Schools*, found that teachers and school leaders did not have a good understanding of what constitutes a high-quality oracy education and, as a result, lacked the confidence to provide their students with one. By clearly articulating shared expectations for oracy in schools, we empower teachers and school leaders to provide the oracy education their students both need and deserve.

HOW ARE WE USING THE ORACY BENCHMARKS TO SUPPORT OUR MISSION?

The Oracy Benchmarks are now central to our Theory of Change; our work with schools is designed to support teachers and school leaders to meet the Oracy Benchmarks, providing a high-quality oracy education and, as a result, improving their students' oracy skills.



You can read our full report *The Oracy Benchmarks* here.



Madani Schools Foundation

CASE STUDY:

MADANI SCHOOLS FEDERATION

“At Madani, we use the School Benchmarks as a top-down tool to look at oracy alongside and within our strategic documents and then to share information with all staff.

As a result of this approach, our Strategic Plan now takes the School Benchmarks as a starting point. For example, we knew from our learning walks and internal self-review that pupils did not always have many varied opportunities to talk and discuss in lessons across the curriculum or in assemblies.

When we looked at the benchmarks, we could see Benchmark 3: The school has a sustained and wide-ranging curriculum for oracy and recognises oracy as central to learning.

This enabled us to begin planning key actions and measurable outcomes. This information was then built on with all stakeholders at Student Council, Parent Carer Coffee Mornings, SLT, House meetings, Department meetings and even Governors' meetings.

We were then able to measure our success against the Benchmarks and report this back to stakeholders for their ongoing feedback.”

CHAITAN RAJANIA,
ASSISTANT HEAD,
MADANI SCHOOLS FEDERATION

Find out more about the Madani Schools Federation's oracy journey with our video case study.



OUR WORK

TOWER HAMLETS ORACY HUB

Founded in 2019, with professional development from Voice 21 from 2019-20. We worked with 47 teachers in 26 schools to develop the Hub's oracy expertise, creating a legacy of excellent classroom practice that continues to be built on today.

Find out more about the experience of Tower Hamlets Oracy Hub, including their resource "Keeping Oracy Going", [here](#).

It has been exciting to see the profile of oracy grow in the borough

Nicky Pear, Cubitt Town Junior School, Co-Founder of the Tower Hamlets Oracy Hub



ORACY OCTOBER

As part of Oracy October 2020, we hosted a series of Teacher Masterclasses, enabling teachers to learn from what was happening in each other's classrooms.

I listened to the Teacher Masterclasses on my way to work each day. It was reassuring to see that our vision was supported by other people

Danielle Burns, Voice 21 School Lead, The Halifax Academy



LONG-TERM

We create the conditions for long-term change that continues to thrive beyond our intervention.



IMPACT-LED

We monitor each school's progress and adapt our support accordingly.



COLLABORATIVE

We foster inter-school collaboration through peer learning, practice sharing and network events.



ORACY BENCHMARK REPORTS

This year we have surveyed staff and students in Voice 21 Oracy Schools, providing each school with a comprehensive report about their school's starting point for oracy. At the end of the year, each school will receive a further report detailing their school's progress towards meeting the Oracy Benchmarks.



VOICE LEICESTER

Voice Leicester is a three-year programme to improve oracy provision across the city's primary and secondary schools. The focus of the first year was on building a strong foundation of excellent classroom practice in 30+ schools across the city.

From this, we then built capacity to lead oracy, culminating in specialist support in the final year of the programme for 10 Hub Schools, enabling them to mobilise their successes so far to support other schools in the city to sustain and grow their oracy provision.

299 teachers

49 schools

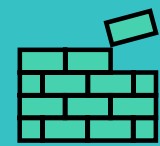
It's something that has re-invigorated my teaching! [...] I'm doing it because I want to hear what students have to say. I've seen the excitement and the passion, and the life that students have

Paul Butler, Voice 21 School Lead, New College Leicester



LAYERED

We engage both teachers and leaders in order to secure whole-school impact.



CUMULATIVE & PROGRESSIVE

Each stage builds on the last with defined milestones to maintain momentum.



EVIDENCE- & CONTEXT-DRIVEN

We support schools to navigate what works and apply this to their context.

EEF: A SCHOOL'S GUIDE TO IMPLEMENTATION

'While dedicated leadership of implementation is key, it is also important to recognise that implementation is a complex process that requires leadership at different levels of the school; that is, dedicated but distributed leadership' (EEF Guidance Report, 2019)



EMPOWERING TEACHERS

Our expert team empowers teachers to apply the body of evidence supporting oracy in schools to their own context.



She [Voice 21 team member] helped us see it isn't just an approach you stick to rigidly; oracy is a concept to be adapted depending on your setting, because it's not going to be 'one size fits all' in a school.

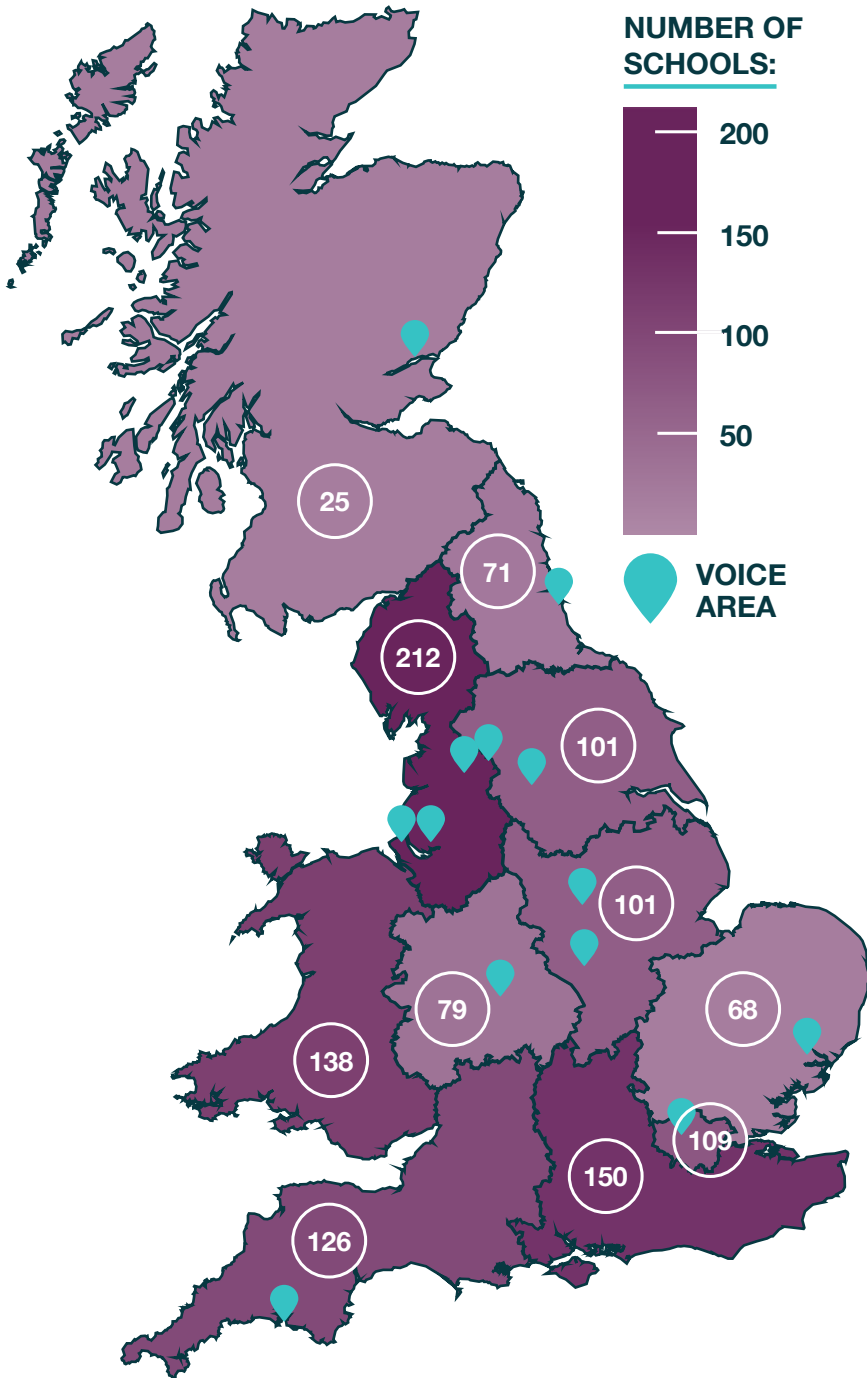
Jonny Townend, Assistant Principal & Maths Lead, Whetley Academy

WHERE ARE OUR SCHOOLS?

This map shows the distribution of schools we work with across the UK, from 2018 to the present day. As the national oracy charity, we have worked across the UK and have not been limited by geographical region. However, we use the percentage of students eligible for free school meals, Index of Multiple Deprivation and the percentage of students reaching ‘at least expected’ Early Learning Goals in the Early Years Foundation Stage to identify in which areas we particularly want to work.

OUR VOICE AREAS:

Voice Bradford	2017-19
Voice Plymouth	2017-19
Voice North of Tyne	2017-20
Voice Camden	2018-19
Voice Ipswich	2018-19
Voice Pendle	2018-19
Voice Dundee	2018-20
Voice Leicester	2018-21
Voice Liverpool	2018-21
Voice Black Country	2019-21
Voice Knowsley	2019-21
Voice Nottingham	2019-21
Voice Blackburn with Darwen	2019-22



VOICE AREAS

Voice Areas are programmes which last between 1-3 years, involving at least 12 schools, but in some cases many more, for example Voice Liverpool included 75 schools. Schools across the area receive professional development to improve oracy classroom practice and leadership, as well as support to create a network of hub schools to sustain and grow oracy excellence beyond the programme.

As not all of the regions of the UK contain the same number of schools, we also pay attention to the proportion of all state schools we work with in each region. This table shows you a comparison of those different rankings.

RANKED BY NUMBER OF SCHOOLS WE WORK WITH (MOST TO LEAST)

1. North West
2. South East
3. Wales
4. South West
5. London
6. East Midlands
7. Yorkshire and The Humber
8. West Midlands
9. North East
10. East of England
11. Scotland

RANKED BY PROPORTION OF ALL SCHOOLS IN THAT REGION THAT WE WORK WITH (MOST TO LEAST)

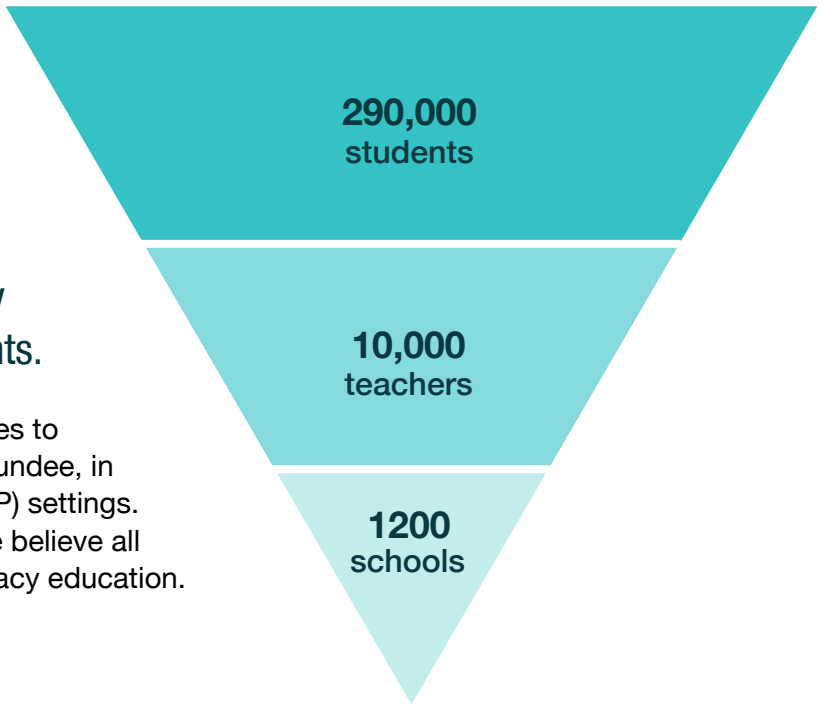
1. Wales
2. North West
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6. Yorkshire and The Humber
7. South East
8. London
9. West Midlands
10. East of England
11. Scotland



HOW MANY STUDENTS HAVE WE REACHED?

Since 2017, when we launched our first national oracy programme, we’ve worked with over 10,000 teachers, 1200 schools and through them, improved the oracy education of over 290,000 students.

We’ve worked with schools from nurseries to sixth-form colleges, from Plymouth to Dundee, in mainstream and Alternative Provision (AP) settings. We’re proud of this breadth, because we believe all students are entitled to a high-quality oracy education.

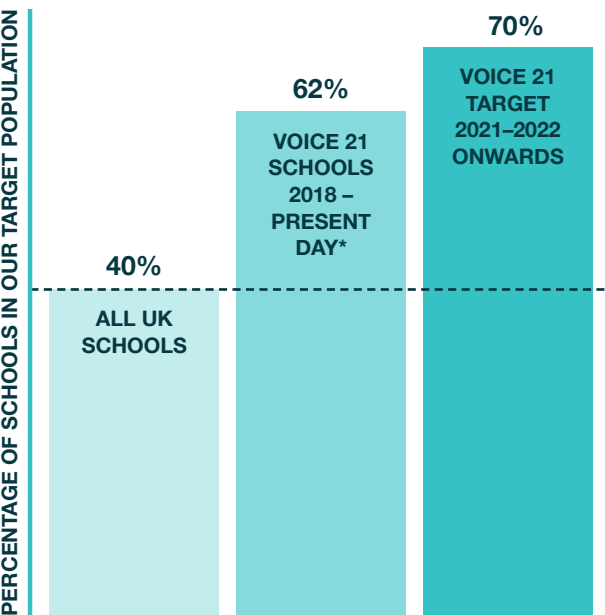


OUR TARGET POPULATION

Voice 21 exists to serve those children and young people who are least likely to develop the oracy skills they need to succeed in school and in life and are least likely to have access to a high-quality oracy education.

As a result, we aim to work with schools with a greater proportion of economically disadvantaged students. Our measure for this is whether schools are in the top 40% of schools with the greatest proportion of students eligible for Free School Meals (N.B. using data from January 2020, this is currently schools with more than 17% of students eligible).

This does not mean we will not work with schools falling outside this range – our programmes are open to all UK state schools. Rather than being a prescriptive requirement, this measure informs planning and prioritising towards meeting our charitable mission.



*This figure shows the proportion of schools meeting the historic threshold of more than 15% of students eligible for free school meals, which represents the top 40% of schools as of 2018-19.

EDUCATION ENDOWMENT FOUNDATION

The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) is dedicated to breaking the link between family income and educational achievement. They do this through commissioning and making accessible the best available research. Voice 21 has worked with them to assess the impact and feasibility of our approach in schools, as part of our drive to ensure we are meeting the needs of our target population in an evidence-informed way.

Our 2015 developmental study (Voice 21 worked with Cambridge University, with independent evaluation from Sheffield Hallam University) led to the creation of the Oracy Framework, and the development of an approach to oracy professional development and school change which was subject to further evaluation in a second EEF-funded study. This study (2018) found evidence of promise for the 'Voice 21 Oracy Improvement Programme', with teachers reporting improvements to students' oracy skills; confidence; relationships between students, and between students and teachers; wellbeing; listening skills and their subsequent impact on learning.

The EEF reports that overall, oral language interventions generate "moderate impacts for very low cost, based on extensive evidence", with additional impact for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. They recommend oracy as an evidence-based approach to improving literacy at both primary and secondary level.



The Oaks Primary School



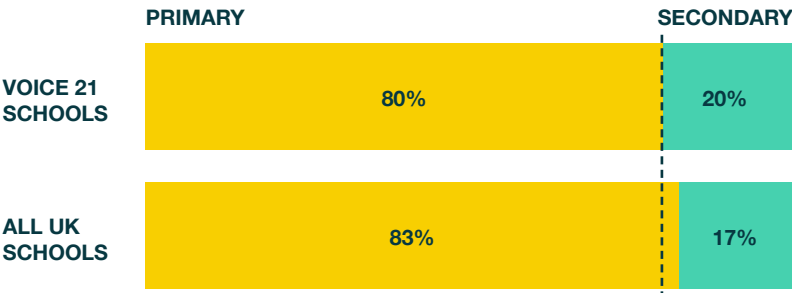
Bishop Young Academy

WHO ARE OUR SCHOOLS?

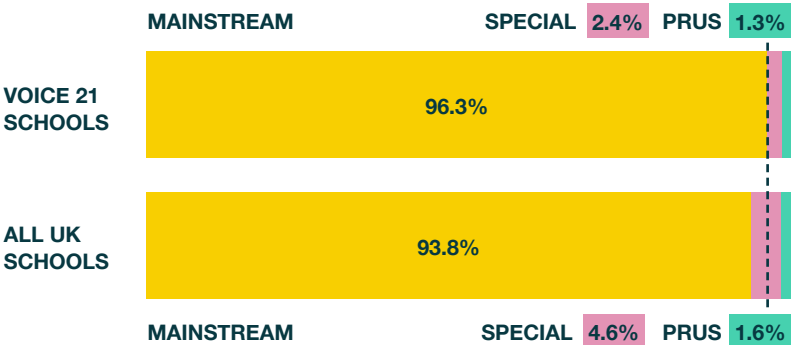
We work across phases and school types, with programmes designed to promote both cross-phase /cross-type collaboration and peer-to-peer learning.

For example, we have run programmes designed to enable secondary schools and their local feeder primary schools to develop a shared approach to oracy to better support students through transition; ‘Get Talking in PRUs’, offered teachers in PRUs and AP settings the opportunity to come together as a single national cohort for a rare opportunity to network and develop their practice together.

WHO ARE OUR SCHOOLS – PHASE



WHO ARE OUR SCHOOLS – TYPE



GET TALKING IN PRUS



We launched ‘Get Talking in PRUs’ in order to improve the representation of Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) amongst the schools we work with. PRUs are a high-need, intensive context for Voice 21, serving a population of students with high rates of behavioural, emotional and mental health needs, and both diagnosed and undiagnosed speech, language and communication needs.

Between 2019-2021, we have worked with 25 PRUs and Alternative Provision (AP) settings, focusing on improving students’ well-being & social/emotional competencies by developing each setting’s capacity to deliver a high-quality oracy education.



[Read the evaluation report for the first year of ‘Get Talking in PRUs’ here.](#)

I’ve been observing a debate between the [primary-age] children and they’ve been able to go, ‘I agree on this point but I disagree on this point’, and things like that might seem little to a lot of people but for children who find it really difficult to self-regulate, being able to voice that they disagree on some things without getting really upset is huge, so that’s been wonderful.

Oracy Lead, small PRU, London

UNDERSTANDING OUR IMPACT

Voice 21 has probably shaped our learning and professional practice more than any other programme in recent years.

Jonathan Rees, Oracy Pioneer 2018-19

Over the past five years, we have combined independent evaluations with an approach which empowered teachers to conduct classroom research as a means of understanding the impact of oracy in their contexts.


As we move into the next five years, we are building on this approach, retaining a focus on teachers as evidence-informed decision-makers, but deepening our mixed-methods evaluation approach to gain a richer understanding of our impact, enabling more reliable year-on-year comparisons.

THE DOUGLAS BARNES PRIZE

In 2020 we launched the Douglas Barnes Prize. Jointly judged with Oracy Cambridge, the prize is awarded annually* to a teacher from our network for the most innovative, reflective and well-designed classroom research into oracy teaching and learning. Inspired by academic and researcher Douglas Barnes, this prize celebrates the achievement of teachers who, following in Barnes' footsteps, use their classroom to carry out small-scale research which furthers understanding of oracy.

The inaugural winner, Rachel Mayes, explored the impact of explicit teaching of discussion skills, using transcripts to show qualitative changes to the nature of her students' talk.

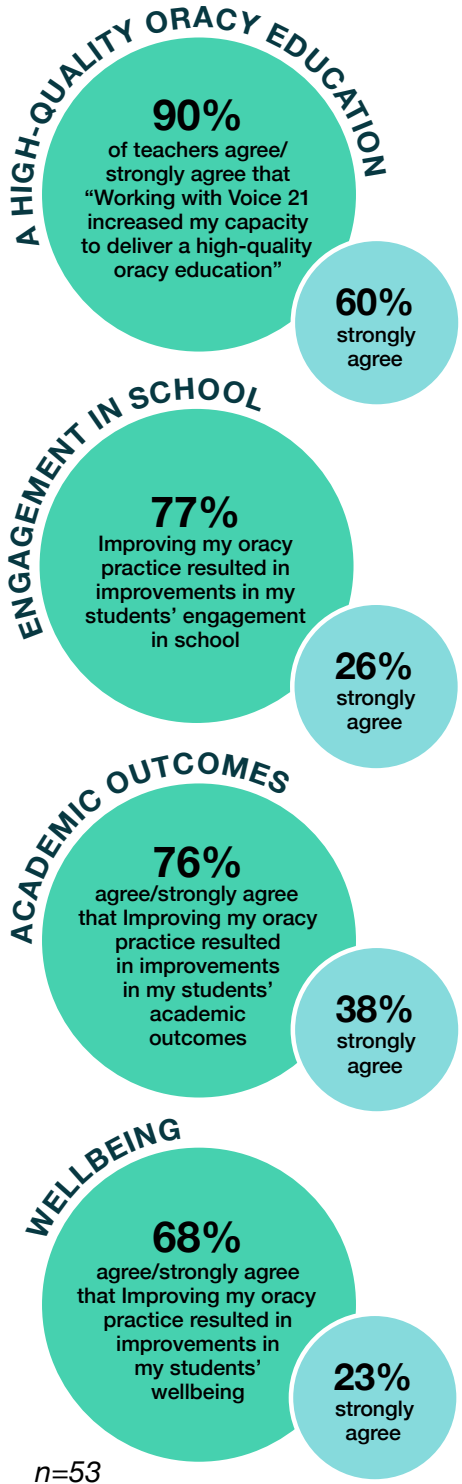
*We suspended the prize in 2021, to reflect the impact of Covid-19 on teachers' capacity to carry out classroom research. It will return in 2022.



You can read the winning and highly commended reports [here](#).

LEGACY SURVEY RESULTS

We surveyed teachers who had completed a programme of professional development with Voice 21 by the end of 2020.




2020 ONWARDS


We're looking forward to being able to report on our first cohorts of Voice 21 Oracy Schools, who began their journey with us in September 2020 and January 2021. Like all schools, both cohorts have faced considerable challenges due to Covid-19. Here's a preview of their journeys so far.

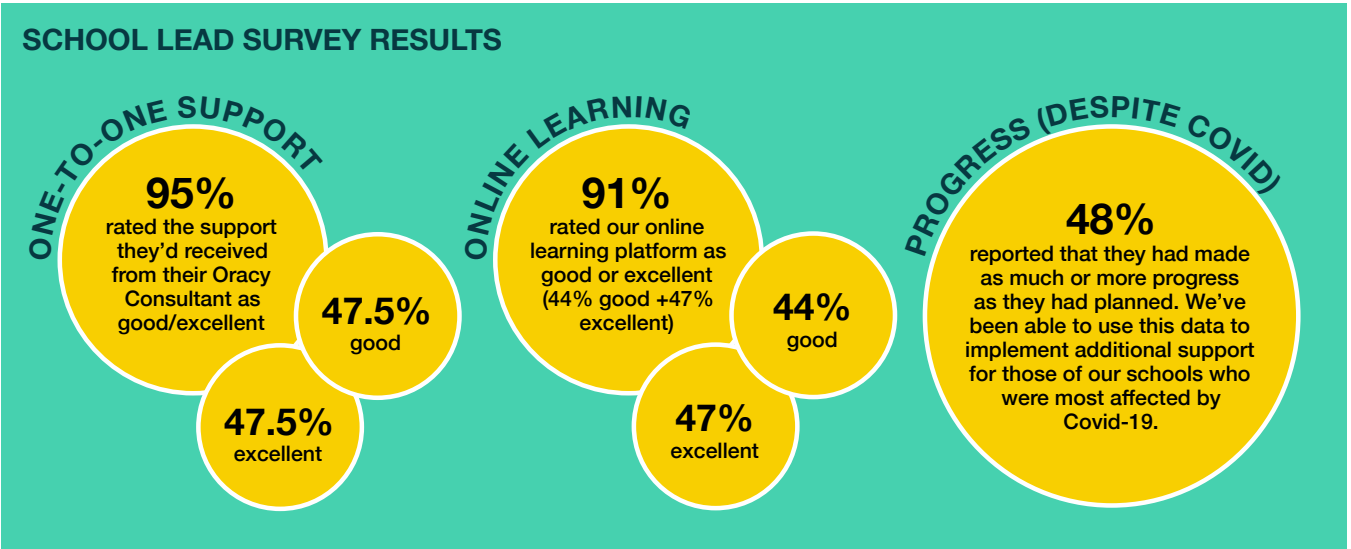
We survey all our Voice 21 School Leads (the teachers we're working with to implement oracy in their schools) termly. Here you can see the responses from 97 School Leads, from their first one or two terms as Voice 21 Schools.

Voice 21 Schools starting from September 2020 onwards also completed oracy surveys with all their staff, and a sample of students. This baseline data will be an essential part of our understanding of impact in the years to come.

So far we've received baseline oracy surveys from:

 **7300+ STAFF**

 **23,600+ STUDENTS**



The Oaks Primary School

OUR INFLUENCE

We want everyone to know that a high-quality oracy education transforms the learning and life chances of young people.

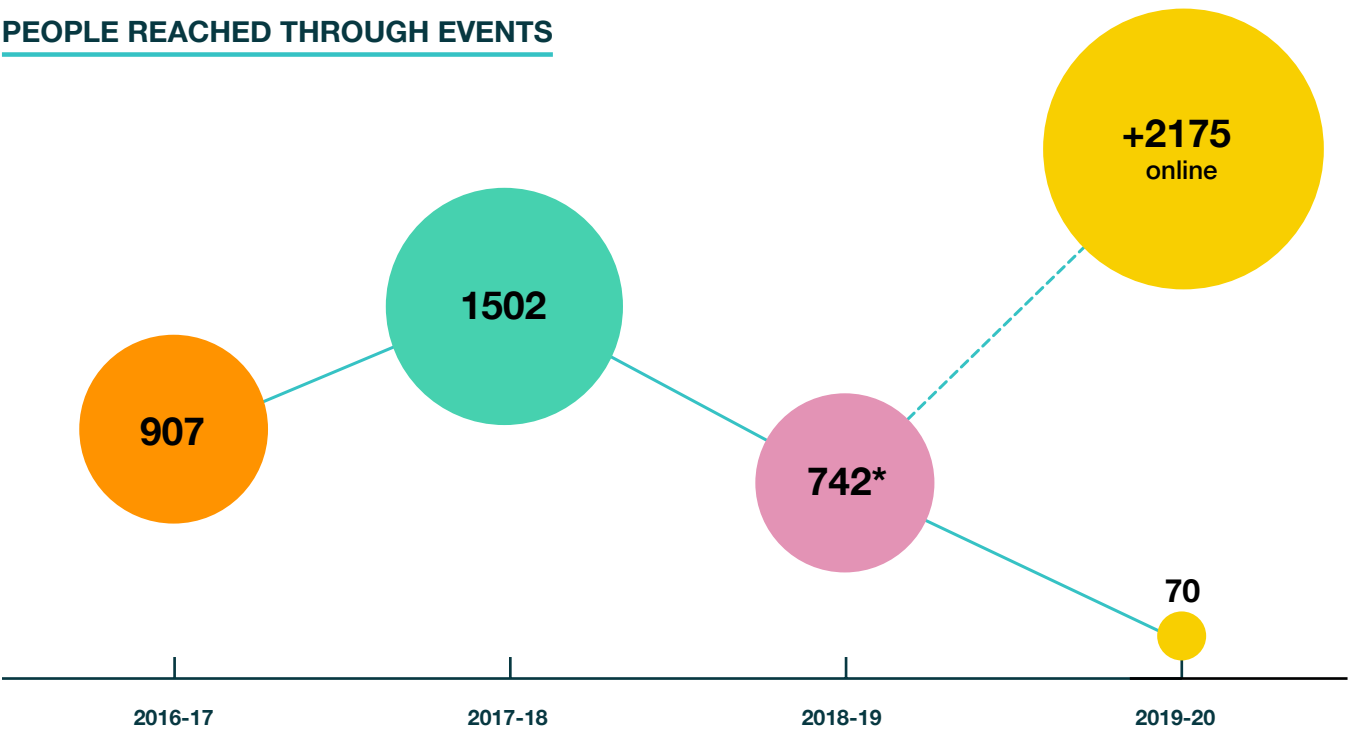
In 2016, we started to spread the word by inviting people into School 21 to see for themselves. Five years later, we're proud to be an independent and leading charity that has built a network of schools across the UK who share their practice far and wide, seizing every opportunity they can to inspire others to join them on their oracy journeys.



Watch our first ever [online Teacher Masterclass here](#), featuring three teachers sharing how they provide their students with a high-quality oracy education.



PEOPLE REACHED THROUGH EVENTS



*2018-19 marks the launch of the National Oracy Pioneers. We ran fewer events as we focused on deepening our impact through the Pioneers programme.

Genuinely inspiring – thank you
Attendee, Great Oracy Exhibition, 2018



Oh my goodness – what amazing speakers [Year 4 ‘spark’ speeches] – gave me shivers to listen to them!
Attendee, Great Oracy Exhibition, 2018

ORACY ALL-PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP



Voice 21 provides the secretariat to the Oracy All-Party Parliamentary Group, which recently published its final report from the Speak for Change Inquiry, summarising evidence submitted by hundreds of contributors from the education sector, businesses and academia, as well as individual teachers, parents, children and young people.

The report highlights the many benefits of oracy education and the detrimental impacts of a lack of provision on those that need it most. We welcome its recommendations, which detail the changes needed in the education system to ensure every child receives their entitlement to a high-quality oracy education, particularly its calls for greater investment in teacher development for oracy and new non-statutory guidance from the Department for Education.



[You can read more about Speak for Change here.](#)

COVID-19 AND SCHOOL CLOSURES

When the country locked down in March 2020, we were unable to continue working with schools in-person.

However, school closures, continued disruption to learning and the associated impact on young people's mental health and wellbeing, attainment and language and communication skills meant that ensuring all students had access to a high-quality oracy education was particularly vital.

OUR RESPONSE

FREE EVENTS SERIES FOR ALL TEACHERS

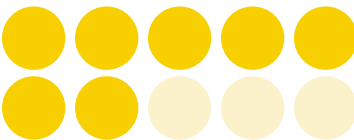
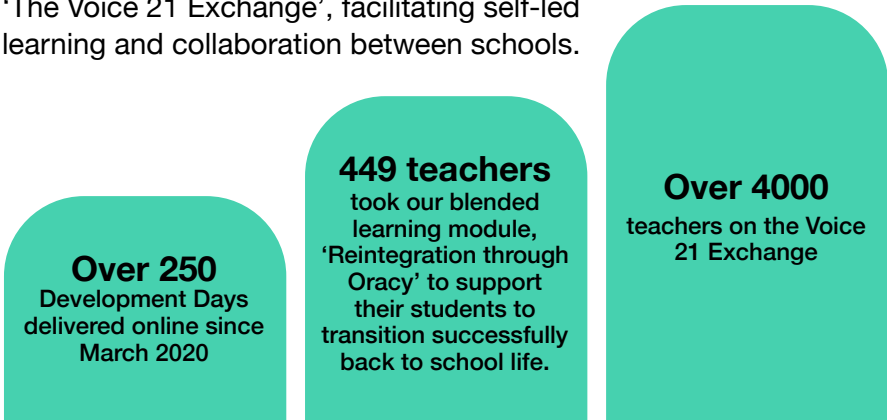
In March 2020 we launched a series of free online events to support teachers and school leaders to prioritise oracy during the period of school closures and beyond.



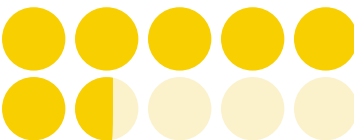
ONLINE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Since March 2020, we have shifted all of our professional development online, ensuring we are able to continue our work with teachers and schools.

As well as live learning sessions led by expert members of our team, schools have had access to our online learning space, 'The Voice 21 Exchange', facilitating self-led learning and collaboration between schools.



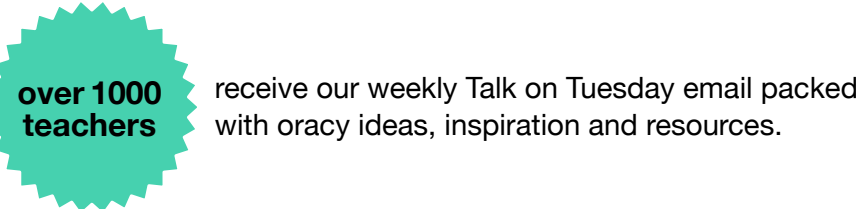
7 in 10 teachers said teaching online had a negative impact on opportunities for developing students' oracy.¹³



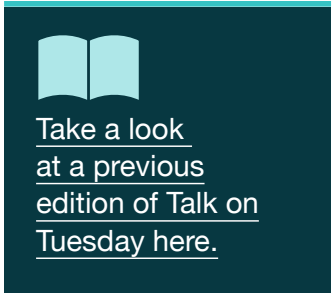
66% of primary teachers said school closures during the pandemic had a negative effect on the spoken language development of students eligible for free school meals.¹⁴

RESOURCES

Throughout the pandemic we have responded to the needs of schools, creating resources to support teachers to continue to prioritise oracy during school closures and despite challenges such as social distancing and mask wearing.

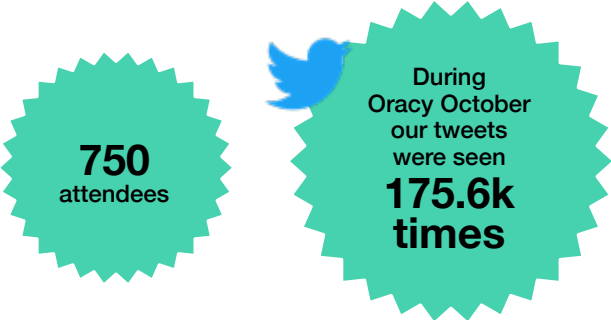
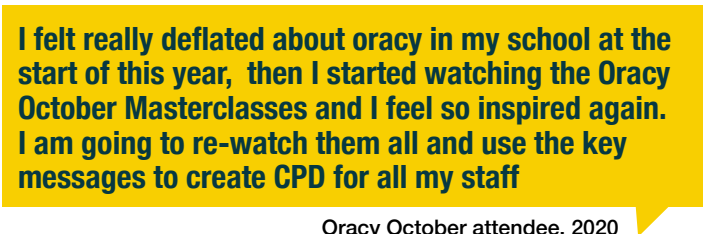


receive our weekly Talk on Tuesday email packed with oracy ideas, inspiration and resources.



ORACY OCTOBER

Since 2018, we've held the Great Oracy Exhibition, gathering in School 21 for a showcase of oracy teaching and learning, panels and debates. In 2019, this event was attended by 500+ teachers from around the UK. In 2020, Covid-19 made it impossible to gather in this way, so we went online. We launched Oracy October, a two-week virtual festival of oracy, with daily live events and an online community space for attendees to access sessions at their own pace.



NEXT STEPS

With the launch of our school-improvement model, 'Voice 21 Oracy Schools' in 2020/21, we are looking forward to ensuring more students than ever have access to a high-quality oracy education.

In 2021/22, we will be working with over **650** schools, reaching more than **280k** students.



By 2025, we will grow our reach to over **800k** students in **1900** schools.



We will continue to focus our work on those that need us most, ensuring that **70%** of schools we work with are in the **top 40%** of state-funded schools in England and Wales based on percentage of students eligible for Free School Meals (FSM).



To expand our work in the areas of greatest need, we have identified **target areas** for growth based on an analysis of economic deprivation and social mobility indicators, as well as early language levels. Our target area for growth in 2021/22 is the **North-West** where **44.05%** of schools are in our target population.



After a successful first year of '**Voice 21 Oracy Schools**', we are further enhancing our support to schools by increasing our provision of resources and events, expanding our online platform and strengthening the Voice 21 Oracy Schools Network to build more **school-to-school connections**.



To help us further refine our model to ensure we are having the greatest possible impact on students in our target population, we will be **using data** gathered each year to better understand which elements of our intervention most effectively **accelerate progress** in schools.



Over the next **three years** we will work towards having a reliable measure of student oracy to ensure our intervention leads to improved oracy outcomes in students within our target population. This will begin with a **pilot student outcomes project** in 2021/22.



THANK YOU

First and foremost, we are so grateful to our incredible network of schools. It is thanks to the dedication, commitment and ambition of their teachers and leaders that we are able to showcase the impact of our work.

We would also like to thank our parent organisation, Big Education, and all of our supporters, past and present, including individuals and organisations who wish to remain anonymous.

- Impetus
 - Education Endowment Foundation
 - Big Change
 - Minton Charitable Trust
 - SHINE
 - Education Endowment Foundation
 - The Dulverton Trust
 - NESTA
- Gwyneth Forrester Trust
 - The Drapers' Charitable Fund
 - Oxford University
 - Fidelity Foundation
 - Allen & Overy Foundation
 - John Horseman Trust
 - Leathersellers' Company Charitable Fund
 - Bain & Company

And last but not least, to our wider network of friends, colleagues and collaborators who champion the case for oracy and work alongside us to achieve even greater impact.



School 21

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FINAL WORD

“It was revolutionary!”

Angela Crawley, National Oracy Leader, 2019-2020

The results have been incredible. We now see children enthused by their learning and willing to take part and volunteer information.

Channelle Owen, Oracy Pioneer, 2018-19

For [...our] more vulnerable pupils, devoting time exclusively to the development of oracy skills has not only supported their academic progress, it has also had a positive impact on wellbeing.

Programme participant, 2019-2020

Oracy has totally rejuvenated my practice and given me a whole new way of looking at and facilitating the learning of all my students.

Lindsay Vaughan, Voice Camden, 2018-19

I have a student who is so self conscious, she often gets very upset when asked to answer questions. During her time with me, she managed to write and present a speech whilst stood in front of her whole class.

Elizabeth Bloor, National Oracy Leader, 2019-20

The group of students that we often see great results in are the children who we had thought to be quiet and reluctant to speak. The fact was, that they needed to be taught these skills and we have empowered them to use their voices.

Voice Camden participant, 2018-19

I love working with Voice 21. The staff are exceptional and so helpful, knowledgeable and supportive.

Bev Knuckey, National Oracy Leader, 2018-19

I like oracy because even [though] people disagree with you they [don't] say it [...in] a fierce way

Year 5 student, Voice 21 Oracy School

I sometimes struggle to get all my ideas written into my work. In oracy, I am able to share my ideas and get ideas from others.

Year 5 student, Voice 21 Oracy School

I am amazed by the quality of dialogue and ambitious vocabulary the children are using. The children are able to listen effectively and respond with meaning. I love that they are talking in class and that this is having a massive impact on their writing.

Leanne Jones, Oracy Pioneer 2018-19

Before we'd have really, really structured play, which helped them with their behaviour because obviously most of them are with us because of their behaviour. What we've been able to do is kind of loosen that – they would never have role-played before but they're now able to.

Oracy Lead, PRU, NE England

If you don't speak, then how are you going to learn? How are you going to teach other people and how are you going to learn yourself?

Student, The Oaks Primary School



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[@voice21oracy](https://www.instagram.com/voice21oracy)