

VOICE 21 CASE FOR SUPPORT



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



Welcome

“

It's important for us to be taught to have enough confidence in ourselves and in our voices and opinions – that they do have value and that we can express them in a cohesive way.

Batool, Year 10 student

Together, we can make a difference to hundreds of thousands of children and young people like Batool each year, ensuring they are able to access a high-quality oracy education and are empowered to use their voice for success in school and life.

Thank you for your interest in Voice 21.

We would love to continue the conversation with you.

“

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, Teacher

“

The evidence of the power of talk is indisputable

Becky Francis, CEO, Education Endowment Foundation

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.

The Need

WHAT IS ORACY?

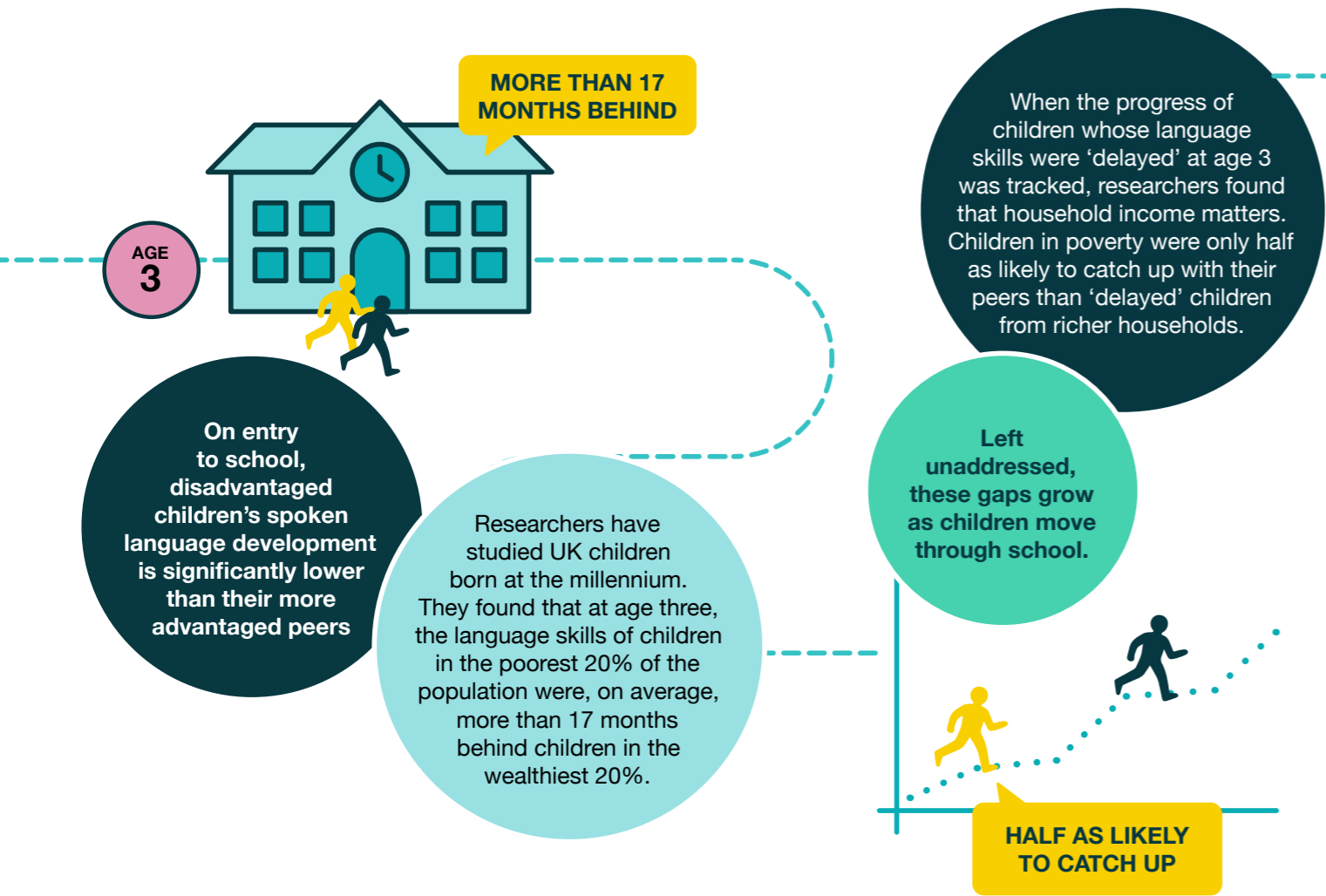
Oracy is the ability to articulate ideas, develop understanding and engage with others through spoken language and listening.

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 to find their voice to succeed in school and life.

Spoken language skills are one of the strongest predictors of a child's future life chances but too many children are not given the opportunity to develop these crucial skills. They start school already behind their more advantaged peers and left unaddressed, the gap grows rather than diminishes. This impacts their learning in school and success in life beyond school.

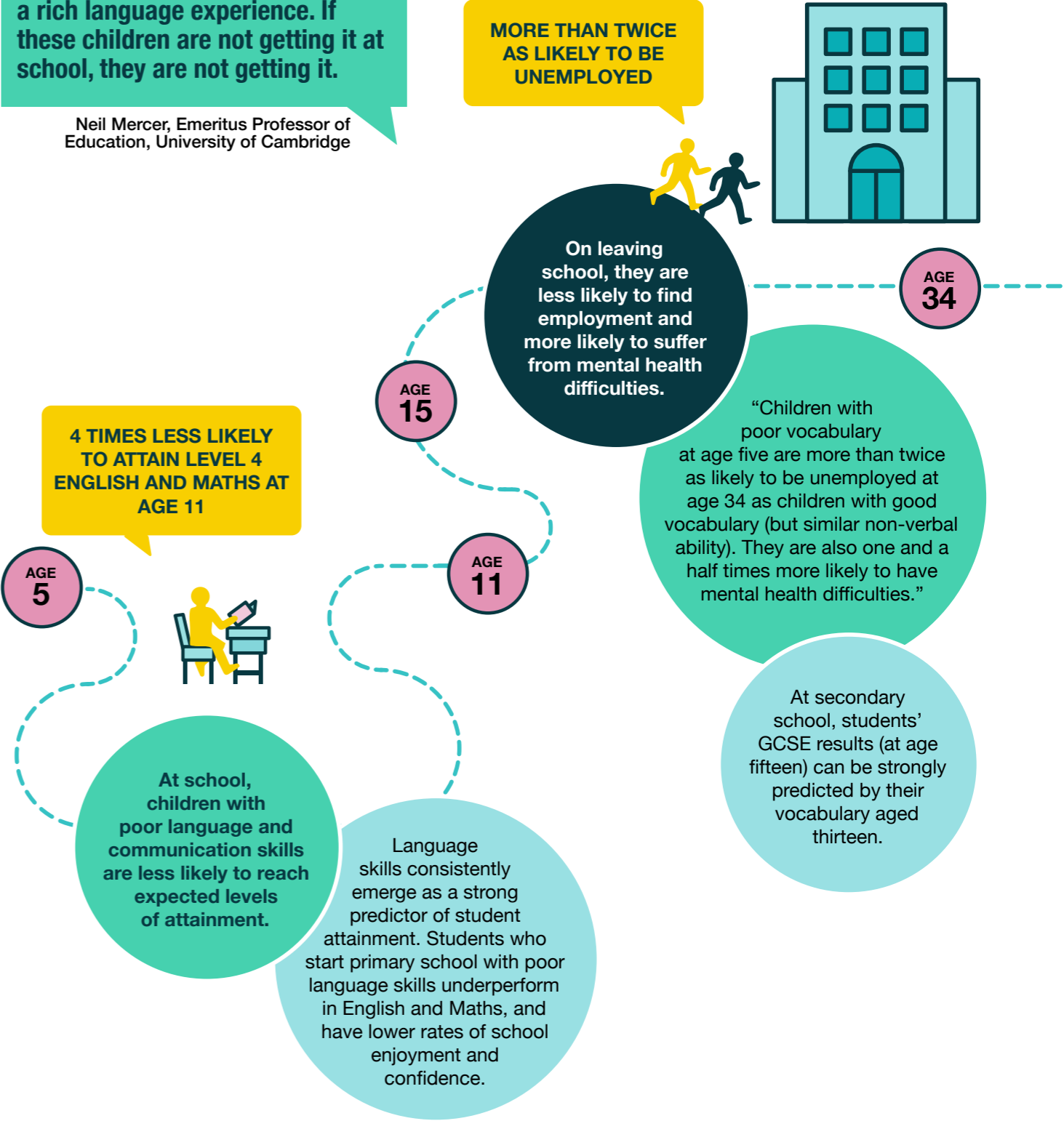
Despite oracy's vital importance, the majority of state schools do not consistently or deliberately teach these vital skills. Despite widespread recognition of the importance of oracy, only a minority of schools have consistent, coherent or adequately resourced provision to develop these skills in their students.

This denies the majority of children and young people opportunities consistently afforded to an advantaged few and perpetuates inequality, underrepresentation and disadvantage within society.



“[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



We can change this. By transforming teaching and learning through talk, schools can develop children's confidence, articulacy and capacity to learn.

BENEFITS OF A HIGH-QUALITY ORACY EDUCATION

OUR VISION:

Voice 21 exists to empower every child to use their voice for success in school and life.

OUR MISSION:

To transform learning and life chances through talk by increasing access to a high-quality oracy education for those that need it most.

High-quality oracy education empowers children and young people to express themselves and communicate clearly.

They become able to explain ideas and emotions to other people, not only in a school setting but in their lives outside the classroom too. They develop the skills to listen effectively, discuss and respond with meaning, and debate and disagree agreeably. They gain the self-belief and courage to speak in public and share their thoughts, intellect and creativity with the world.



HIGH-QUALITY
ORACY
EDUCATION

**INCREASES
ENGAGEMENT IN
LEARNING**

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

**IMPROVES
ACADEMIC
OUTCOMES**

Students think critically and reason together.

**FOSTERS
CONFIDENCE
AND WELLBEING**

Students build successful relationships and realise their voice has value.

**SUPPORTS
TRANSITIONS
AND ENHANCES
EMPLOYABILITY**

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

**EQUIPS STUDENTS
TO THRIVE IN
DEMOCRATIC
& CIVIC LIFE**

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

**PROMOTES
SOCIAL
EQUITY**

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

How we make a difference

Voice 21 works in cities, towns and villages across every region of England and Wales reaching over tens of thousands of students in hundreds of primary and secondary schools every year.

We support and bring together a community of thousands of teachers that share a commitment to providing high-quality oracy education, every day in every classroom. We work in partnership with schools, pupil referral units, local authorities, multi-academy trusts and area-based alliances to deliver our core offer – Voice 21 Oracy Schools.

Voice 21 Oracy Schools is a comprehensive, whole-school improvement programme, which empowers schools to provide a high-quality oracy education.

Through our support, Voice 21 Oracy Schools discover how to teach oracy and use talk to deepen knowledge and understanding across all subjects and phases of education.

Our expert School Leads guide and advise schools, working with teachers and school leaders to embed oracy in every aspect of the school's culture and practice.

Through our professional development courses, Voice 21 Oracy Teachers learn about all facets of speaking and listening and how to take the best evidence and research about oracy and apply it in their classrooms. Every week, they receive new resources and ideas and our network brings schools together to inspire and support each other.

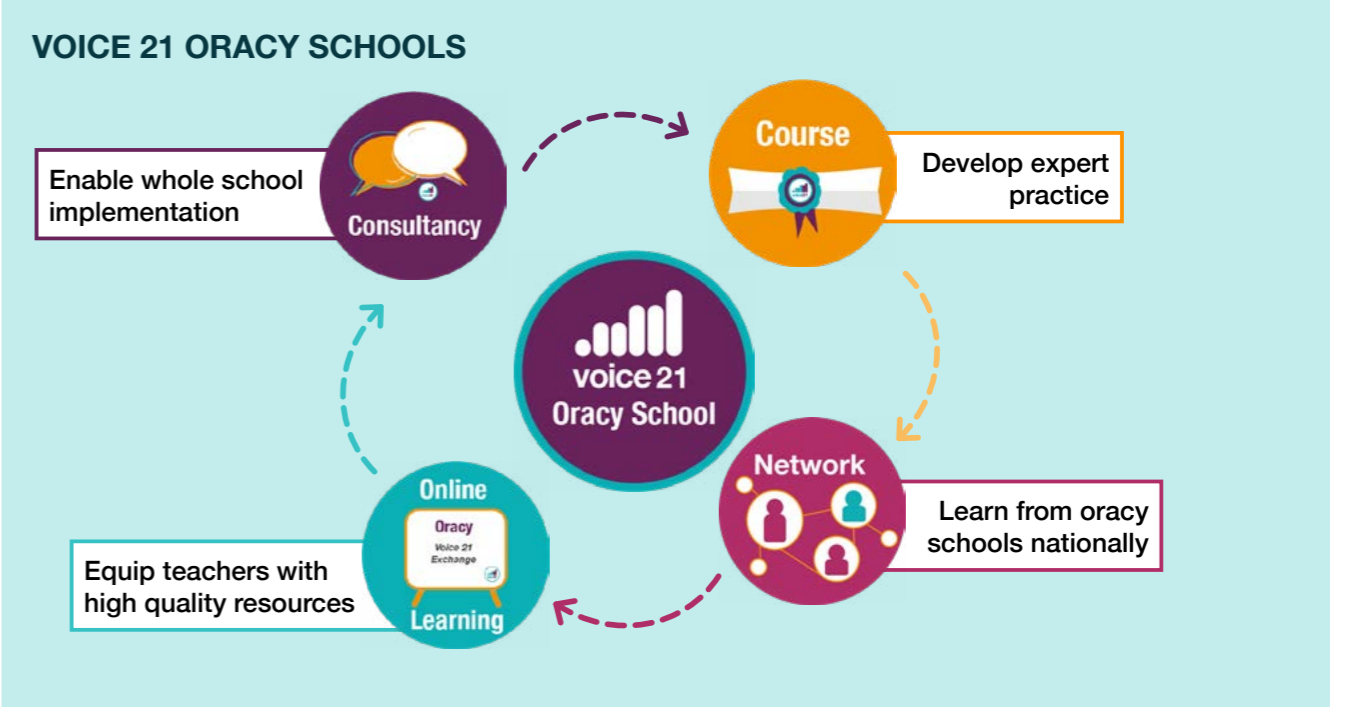
Creating and sustaining a whole-school approach to oracy education takes time and expertise. Our approach is long-term, impact-led and layered, reflecting the complexity and difference in each of our schools.

The four components of our membership offer enable us to adapt our approach to fit schools' contexts while providing everything they need to have an impact on their students.

THE ORACY FRAMEWORK

With Cambridge University we created the Oracy Framework. The Oracy Framework breaks down the skills and knowledge of speaking and listening helping schools to give oracy its rightful place in their curriculum alongside literacy and numeracy.

We use the oracy framework to understand the physical, linguistic, cognitive, and social and emotional skills that enable successful discussion, inspiring speech and effective communication.





School 21

From our research and experience of what it takes, we developed the Oracy Benchmarks. The Benchmarks distill the ten essential ingredients of high quality oracy education and underpin all our work with schools.

TEACHER BENCHMARKS

- 1 SETS HIGH EXPECTATIONS FOR ORACY
- 2 VALUES EVERY VOICE
- 3 TEACHES ORACY EXPLICITLY
- 4 HARNESSES ORACY TO ELEVATE LEARNING
- 5 APPRAISES PROGRESS IN ORACY

SCHOOL BENCHMARKS

- 1 HAS AN AMBITIOUS VISION FOR ORACY
- 2 BUILDS A CULTURE OF ORACY
- 3 HAS A SUSTAINED & WIDE-RANGING CURRICULUM FOR ORACY
- 4 RECOGNISES ORACY AS CENTRAL TO LEARNING
- 5 IS ACCOUNTABLE FOR THE IMPACT OF ORACY

VOICE 21 ORACY SCHOOLS



Voice 21 Oracy Schools are committed to enabling every student to find their voice for success in schools and life. They embrace oracy as part of their ethos, recognising oracy as a central pillar of learning and a core facet of a high-quality, expansive and rounded education that develops the whole child.



VOICE 21 ORACY SCHOOL TEACHERS

Voice 21 Oracy School teachers are confident in teaching oracy and using talk to promote and deepen learning. They value every voice in their classroom and understand the specific oracy needs of their students, shaping their teaching accordingly. They deliberately plan opportunities for students to develop, practice and showcase their oracy skills and weave their knowledge of what makes a high-quality oracy education into their pedagogy and curriculum. They have access to evidence-based resources and training and a network of peers across the country for inspiration, ideas and support.

VOICE 21 ORACY SCHOOL LEADERS



Voice 21 Oracy School leaders have a vision for oracy and strive to create a culture of purposeful talk in every classroom. They give oracy status and value in all aspects of the school and strive to continually improve outcomes through oracy education.



VOICE 21 ORACY SCHOOL STUDENTS



Voice 21 Oracy School students learn how to speak eloquently, articulate ideas, influence through talking, collaborate with peers and express their views and communicate clearly. They become able to explain ideas and emotions to other people, not only in a school setting but in their lives outside the classroom too. They develop the skills to listen effectively, discuss and respond with meaning, and debate and disagree agreeably. They believe their voice has value and gain the confidence, self-belief and courage to speak in public and share their thoughts, intellect and creativity with the world.

In total, we've now worked with over **10,000 teachers**, **1,200 schools** and, through them, improved the oracy education of over **290,000 students**.



Great Oracy Exhibition, 2018

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 2021, 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

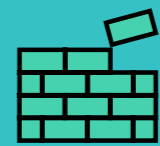
It's something that has re-invigorated my teaching! [...] I'm doing it because I want to hear what students have to say. I've seen the excitement and the passion, and the life that students have

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.

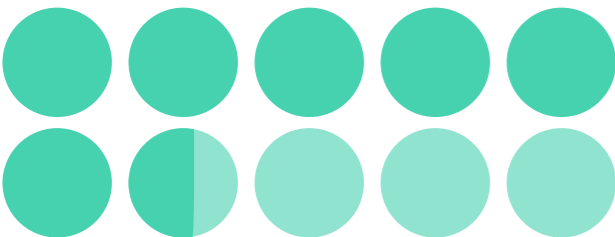
Jonny Townend, Assistant Principal & Maths Lead, Whetley Academy

THE IMPACT OF THE COVID 19 PANDEMIC

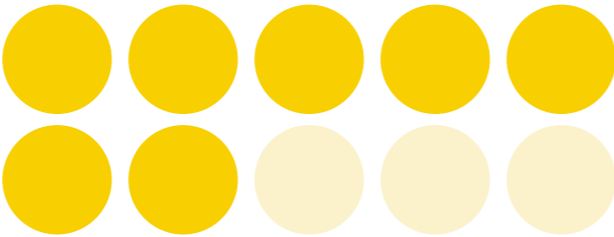
When the country locked down in March 2020, we were unable to continue working with schools in-person.

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.

Voice 21 had to dramatically and speedily rethink how we could continue to support our teachers and the children and young people they serve. We moved much of our programme offer online, developing our Voice 21 Exchange platform into a hub of learning, resources and activities. Speaking to schools, we uncovered the specific challenges they faced in sustaining student interaction and oral language development whilst children were at home and not in the classroom.



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.



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

To address this, we held webinars and masterclass sessions focussed on oracy and online learning. We created special resources and approaches and shared them weekly with over 6000 schools through our ‘Talk on Tuesday’ email. We reimaged our Great Oracy Exhibition (a conference with over 700 attendees) to an online event held over a month rather than one day and supported international oracy teachers through a new online oracy leaders programme.

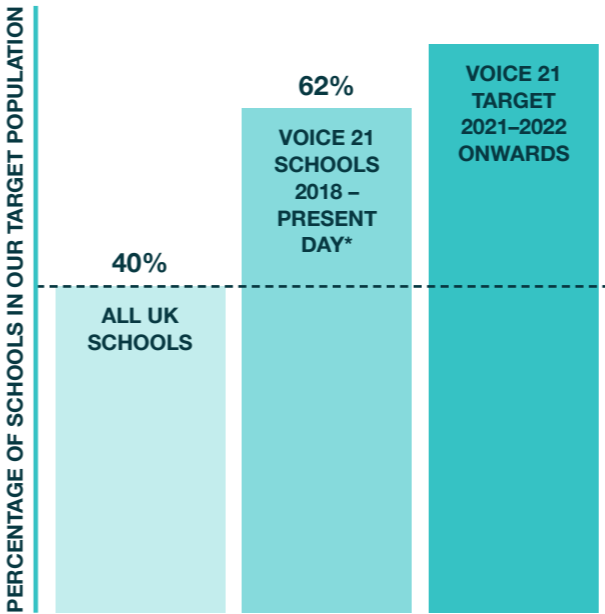
We emerged from the pandemic with a larger network of schools and improved capacity to support our schools. With evidence of the gap in language widening during the lockdown and the long term effects of the pandemic on children and young people’s learning and wellbeing, our work has never been more important.

TARGETING

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.

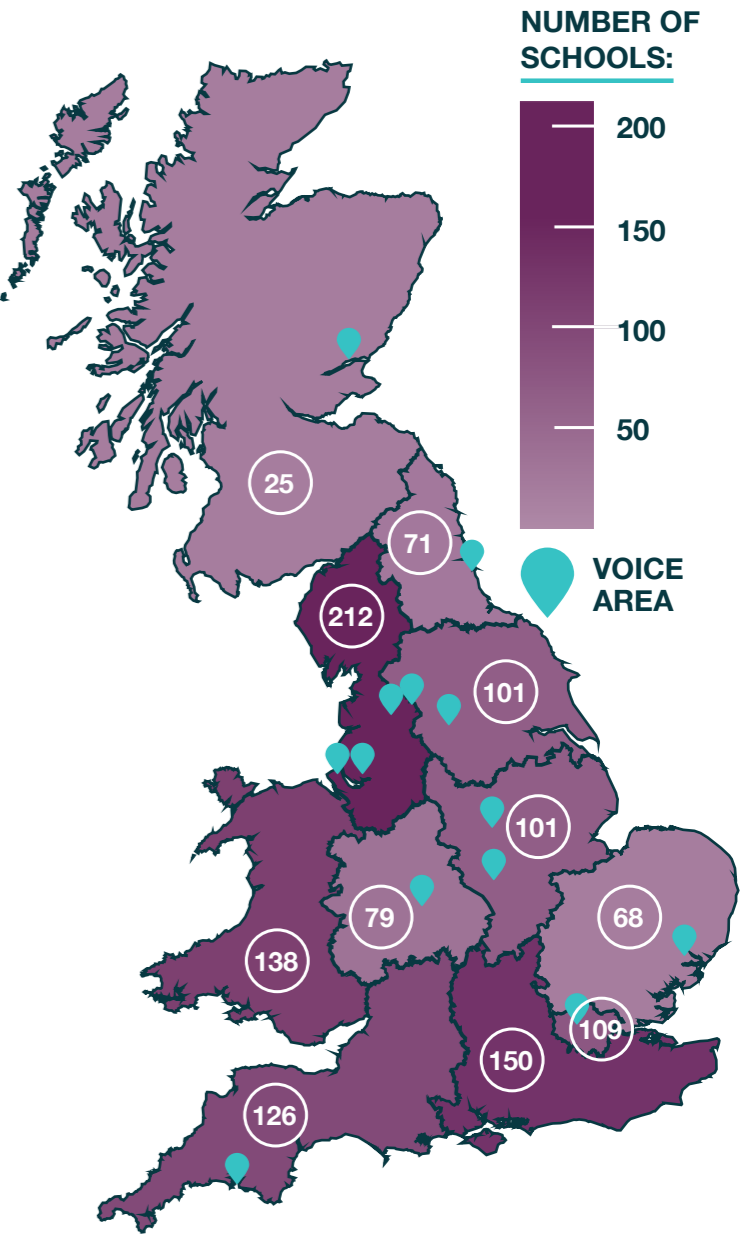
As the national oracy charity, we work across the UK and are not limited by geographical region. However, to focus our resources on the places where we can make most of a difference, we combine Free School Meals data with the Index of Multiple Deprivation and measures of children’s early language development to identify our target areas.



*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.

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 |



OUR IMPACT

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.

SCHOOL LEAD SURVEY RESULTS



The Oaks Primary School

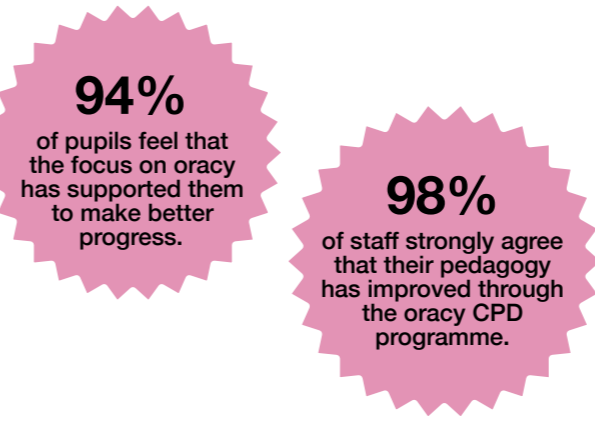
BISHOP YOUNG ACADEMY

Our experience tells us that our unwavering focus on oracy is making a real difference.

Mel Carlin

Bishop Young Academy is based in Seacroft, Leeds, an area of high deprivation, with high crime rates and a life expectancy two years lower than the city centre average, just a fifteen minute drive away. In 2017, the school was found to be inadequate in all areas and they had a number of challenges in terms of student attainment, behaviour and attendance.

Through a commitment to oracy education, and working with Voice 21, the school has transformed the opportunities for students to develop their oracy skills, driving positive outcomes across the school, and improving teaching and learning.



In the classrooms we've noticed that misconceptions are picked up much earlier because of the students' improved ability to articulate themselves, and as a result we can nip them in the bud we can put the relevant intervention into place at that point and that's resulted in a significant improvement in progress as well.

Paul Cooper, Headteacher

THE OAKS

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

Jeremy Pentreath, The Oaks

The Oaks, Ipswich, serve an area of relatively high deprivation and felt they were always at the cusp of better grades at KS2. They wanted to find ways to improve academic outcomes, and won a government Strategic School Improvement Fund with ten other schools across Ipswich to invest in oracy education.

Their whole school approach to oracy enabled improvements in outcomes across the curriculum, and built a culture within the school that fostered their student's confidence and ability to work more effectively independently and as a group.



I've seen a huge impact, not just in maths, in all lessons. It's had the most impact in terms of writing. Some of our students have trouble linking their sentences and making them make sense, so having time to rehearse those sentences has had a huge impact. I'm also the SENCO at the school, and I think it's also had an impact on students with speech and language difficulties, being able to rehearse and talk to a peer is vital to supporting them with their progress.

Vicky Abery-Bone, Key Stage 1 and SENCO Lead

PRUs

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 to allow them to have their own time, and they're now role-playing more... they would never have role-played before but they're now able to.

(Oracy Lead in a participating school in the 'Get Talking in PRUs' project)

The kids were really enthusiastic about it... They could really see the value in it, they could really see how improved oracy would... impact on their lives, they could see the connection with maybe college interviews or going further in the world, and definitely around conflict as well.

(Oracy Lead in a participating school in the 'Get Talking in PRUs' project)



In 2019-20, Voice 21 worked with eleven Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) around the UK to learn more about how we can help support teachers working with young people who have been excluded from mainstream education, or who are at risk of exclusion.

PRUs reported that a focus on oracy improved students' ability to regulate their emotions and equipped students with the tools they needed to discuss issues that concerned them – this, in turn, improved relationships within the settings.

We also heard that improvements in oracy boosted student autonomy. Improved oracy and emotional regulation meant that students were more often able to make positive choices when working or playing with others.



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

Jonathan Rees, Oracy Pioneer 2018-19

NEXT STEPS

With the launch of our new strategy for 2021-25, Voice 21 will be scaling our reach, deepening our impact, strengthening our movement of schools and teachers and amplifying the voice for change.

- 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).
- 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.
- 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 areas for growth over the next three years are the **North West, North East** and **Yorkshire & Humber**
- 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.



SUPPORTING VOICE 21

The need and demand for Voice 21's work is increasing.

As a charity, we have always recognised the importance of financial sustainability so we can maintain and grow our impact year on year. We aim to sustain at least **70%** of our income from contributions from our school partnerships and events. We rely on external funding to support the continual development of our offer to schools, research and innovation, robust impact evaluation and crucially, to keep costs accessible for our schools.

Over the next two years, we need to raise over **£1.2 million** to enable over **735,000 children and young people** to access a high-quality oracy education. This growth will be in our target areas: communities with high deprivation, low social mobility and poor language skills on entry to education.

There are lots of ways for you to join us on our mission...



SUPPORT VOICE 21

Providing core funding to Voice 21 enables us to invest in our capability and capacity to efficiently and effectively support more schools in the areas that need us most.



SUPPORT A SCHOOL

£2000 each year will enable us to support a school within our target population to deliver a comprehensive programme of oracy support to their students.



SUPPORT AN AREA

£50,000 makes Voice 21's area-based approach possible, supporting up to 80 schools in specific geography of high need. We are especially focused on the North West, North East and Yorkshire & Humber regions



SUPPORT OUR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

We are constantly looking to be a pioneer for oracy, to improve our efficacy and explore new ways of achieving our mission.

Your support can help us piloting new approaches and test our work in different contexts.



SUPPORT OUR ADVOCACY EFFORTS

We want the oracy pendulum to swing from being an innovation to an expectation. To do this, Voice 21 believes it is our duty to shape as well as serve the education system so we actively campaign to raise the status of oracy. Your support can help us amplify our voice and the voice of our schools and provoke long-term educational change.

By supporting Voice 21, you will improve outcomes both for the students in classrooms today and for the generations to follow.

With your help, no matter how small, we can transform learning and life chances through talk and ensure that every child, regardless of their background, finds their voice for success in school and in life.

We would love to talk with you.

Contact our External Relations team on hello@voice21.org.



www.voice21.org
hello@voice21.org
[@voice21oracy](https://www.instagram.com/voice21oracy)