

# **Great Oracy Exhibition 2025**

---

## **Harkness from EYFS to Y6**

**Karen Smith**

**Christ Church Upper Armley Primary School**



## School dynamics – why oracy is important in our setting

### Demographics

- ❖ 44% FSM
- ❖ 44% EAL
- ❖ 22 Languages spoken



### Coverage and Practice

- ❖ Oracy is a **whole school initiative**
- ❖ No isolated intervention- strategies embedded across all classrooms
- ❖ Specific initiatives
  - 100 word Project:** Exposure to rich, academic and aspirational vocabulary
  - Talk Roles and Talk Tactics** are adapted for inclusivity and accessibility
  - Use of **visual scaffolds, sentence stems,** and structured group roles to support EAL learners

# Harkness – the power of oracy to support vocabulary acquisition

What I have in mind is [a classroom] where [students] could sit around a table with a teacher who would talk with them and instruct them by a sort of tutorial or conference method, where [each student] would feel encouraged to speak up. This would be a real revolution in methods.



Edward Harkness, 1930



## Dylan William, 2014

‘The teacher is required to be more open-minded and less controlling over outcomes, to take the risk of listening more and saying less’

# Implementation

---

## Launching oracy within our setting

**“That's too difficult for our children!”**

CPD – Staff meeting

Staff watched videos (Voice 21) and practised the Harkness model together

Concerns that this model was not suitable for Primary children

Oracy Lead planned how Harkness could be used in our setting and designed a format for staff

Harkness was launched throughout school



# Harkness from EYFS to Y6

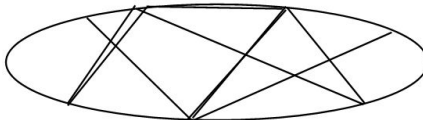
## Adapting Harkness to meet the needs of different year groups throughout school

### How to make Harkness work at CCUA

**KS1**

Small groups of 4/5 Children.  
Initials of each child written round the circle

Recorder joins up initials of group on diagram



**First trial**

- Please video sessions to show progress
- Feed back on positives and areas for improve-

- Observer doesn't join in discussion but feeds back to the group
- **One voice** - Children indicate they want to talk by putting thumbs in
- Next person in clockwise direction speaks. This means it goes round in order to give everyone a chance.
- Children each have a number of counters (I suggest starting with 5 each), which they give in each time they have spoken. Optional in KS1
- Sessions should only last 5/10mins

### How to make Harkness work at CCUA

**KS2**

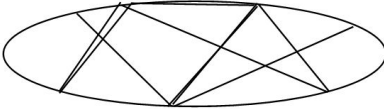
Small groups of 4/5 Children.  
Initials of each child written round the circle

Simple symbols to be used once harkness is becoming established

- ? - question
- X - challenge
- ✓ - agree
- ↑ - building on

**First trial**

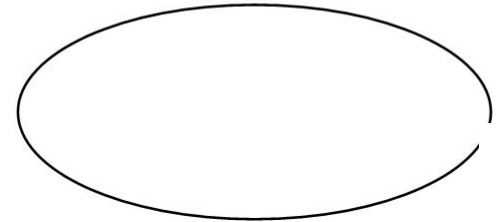
- Please video sessions to show progress
- Feed back on positives and areas for improvement



- Observer doesn't join in discussion but feeds back to the group
- **One voice** - Children indicate they want to talk by putting thumbs in
- Next person in clockwise direction speaks. This means it goes round in order to give everyone a chance.
- Children each have a number of counters (I suggest starting with 5 each), which they give in each time they have spoken.
- Sessions should only last 5/10mins

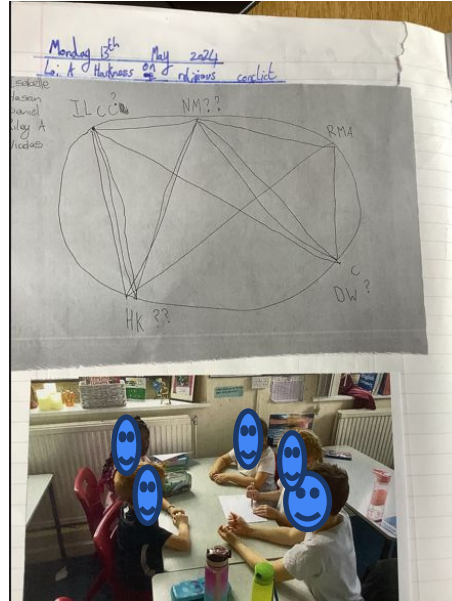
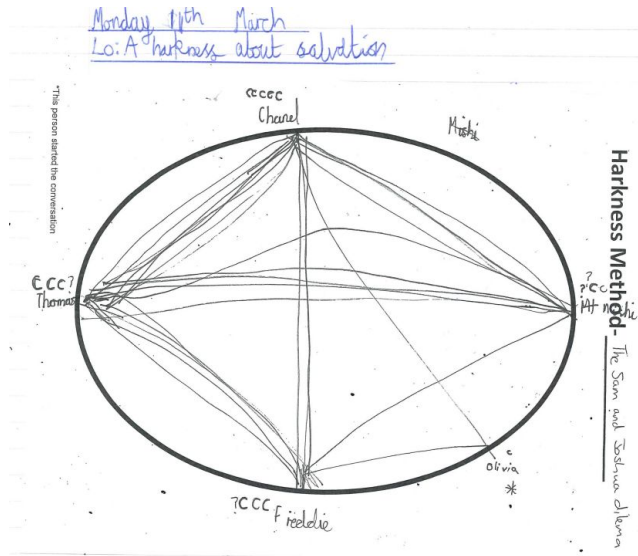
Codes to use when children use a:

- ? - question
- X - challenge
- ✓ - agree
- ↑ - building on



# Harkness from EYFS to Y6

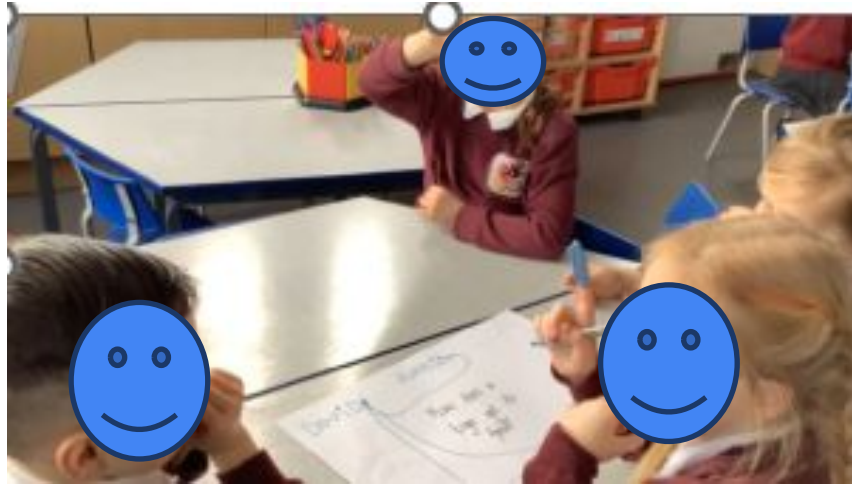
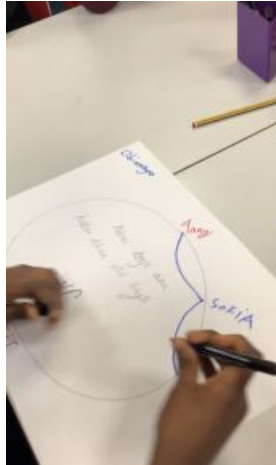
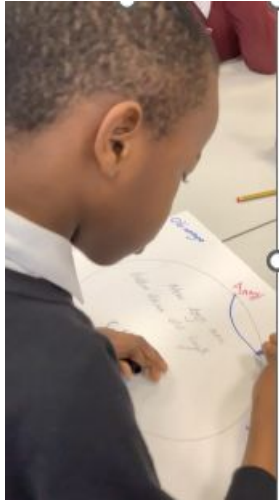
## Adapting Harkness to meet the needs of different year groups throughout school



What is Harkness pedagogy?  
Discussion based teaching (also called the “Harkness method,” after the oval discussion tables designed to facilitate conversation) challenges students to sit at the centre of education, making meaning of new information together, talking, listening, and ultimately thinking.

# Harkness from EYFS to Y6

## Adapting Harkness to meet the needs of different year groups throughout school



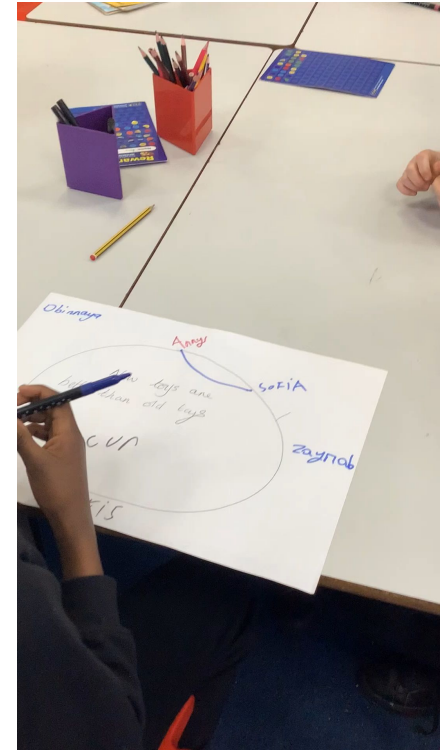
# Harkness from EYFS to Y6

## Harkness supporting learning through talk –throughout the year groups

EYFS using spiders web to track speaking and listening



Year 4 - using Harkness



Year 2 discussing Toys - old and new

## Questions and answer sessions

