

# The Spoken Word at St Monica's School



"Speech has power. Words do not fade. What starts out as a sound ends in a deed." - Abraham Joshua Herschel

"The most fundamental life skill for children is the ability to communicate. It directly impacts on their ability to learn, to develop friendships and on their life chances." - The Rt Hon John Bercow Speaker of the House of Commons in *'Bercow: Ten Years On'*

## Intent

Developing spoken language is crucial for the development of all learners. Children need to access rich, varied vocabulary to learn how to talk and learning *through* talk. Oracy allows children to develop their own voice - giving them the tools to express themselves, socially interact with others and explore the world around them. Our aim is to display, support, provide and strengthen the speaking and listening skills of our pupils, throughout the school day, in a variety of manners.

## Implementation

### During EYFS at St Monica's School

In EYFS, we encourage children in the development of the skills they need; to communicate how they feel; to talk about themselves and their experiences; to hold conversations with adults and other children; to develop their own narratives and form questions and demands to cater to their own needs. There is a strong emphasis on adults modelling speaking clearly, in full sentences using standard English. Children are encouraged to use, join-in with and learn nursery rhymes and short poems. They are given opportunities to take part in role-play scenarios, retell stories, share ideas and narrate their actions. This helps pupils to develop the fluency, confidence and vocabulary they need to be able to access and talk about their learning. Children are also encouraged to read their own writing: speaking it aloud in preparation for mark-making and forming written words. The children all take part in a Christmas Nativity which encourages the development of good Speaking and Listening skills.

### During Key Stage 1 at St Monica's School

Continuing the strong foundations established in EYFS, children in KS1 are also encouraged to develop confidence and fluency in expressing themselves for a range of purposes and audiences. Initially through the RWI programme and later through the Power of Reading, children are encouraged and supported to join in with stories, retell them and paraphrase them orally. This not only helps them with developing their speaking but also supports understanding of text and provides rehearsal for writing their own versions of the narrative. Staff are expected to reinforce and model speaking in full sentences using appropriate tone, volume and timbre so that children begin to understand how the spoken word can impact upon and engage an audience. Children are taught strategies for memorisation and are expected to: learn poems and rhymes off by heart, read aloud, take part in drama and role play in front of an audience as a means of developing public speaking and performance skills. The children all take part in a Christmas Nativity which encourages the development of good Speaking and Listening skills. Each class will perform an assembly to their parents and the whole school each year. There are also opportunities for developing their confidence in Speaking and Listening through Rejoice assemblies and Acts of Worship led by the children. Classroom activities leading to writing often involve the use of discussion, debate, paired talk activities and whole class recital (also evident in the wider curriculum). Through activities across the curriculum, children are encouraged to express their thoughts, opinions and feelings clearly and succinctly.

### During Key Stage 2 at St Monica's School

As children grow and progress through the school, the demand on them to express themselves more volubly for a range of purposes and audiences increases. They are taught about the different and appropriate choices of vocabulary, tone, timbre and register of formality. Pupils are encouraged to read and speak aloud in one-to-one situations, in pairs, in groups and to larger audiences. The school curriculum facilitates opportunities for discussion, debate, persuasive speaking and delivering anecdote and social small talk. In KS2, children are expected to learn poetry and rhymes off-by-heart in order to perform them and to develop their performance skills through drama and reading aloud. They are expected to articulate themselves with confidence and fluency. They are taught about the need for clear diction, received pronunciation and expression. As always, the staff model these expectations and make the most of both formal and informal opportunities to encourage children to be able to explain, persuade and entertain through the power of the spoken word. As in earlier years in the school classroom, activities leading to writing often involve the use of discussion; debate; paired-talk activities and whole class recital (also evident in the wider curriculum). Children take part in class assemblies, Rejoice assemblies and lead Acts of Worship.

### Planning

- Lessons, in all subjects, are planned to incorporate opportunities for children to read aloud.
- Lessons are planned so that pupils can use the spoken word to explore and express their ideas, their learning and their opinions.

### Teaching

- Teachers follow a teaching and learning cycle for all subjects that includes opportunities for exploring ideas through the spoken word in paired and group activities; whole class performance; group work; role-play and drama.
- Staff are expected to model the appropriate register of formality, use Standard English and demonstrate high expectations - when reading aloud and talking for different purposes and audiences in the school context.
- The English curriculum creates close links between speaking and listening skills, the development of vocabulary, reading skills and writing.

### Feedback

Feedback is provided sensitively and courteously, so that children can develop and improve their skills. Feedback focuses on:

- the correct use of received Standard English.
- the appropriate register of formality for purpose and audience.
- fluency, volume, timbre and expression appropriate to purpose and audience.

### Impact

The spoken word at St Monica's allows children to:

- explain, persuade and entertain through the power of speech.
- use effective communication throughout all walks of school life.
- have greater self-confidence and wellbeing, enhancing positive life outcomes.
- deepen their understanding through dialogue with their teachers and peers.

### Assessment

- All children in EYFS undergo a baseline assessment for communication skills. Their progress is assessed and recorded through the documentation linked to the Early Learning Goals. Teachers and key workers make observations regarding the pupils' development in this subject.
- Children are assessed, where necessary, for intervention and support for Speech and Language. Their progress is recorded and assessed through documentation linked to their SEND provision.
- Children's reading is regularly and systematically assessed through one-to-one reading aloud with an adult and through whole class reading.
- Pupils are informally assessed to measure progress against the National Curriculum objectives.
- Children are assessed for participation skills, and presentation and performance skills.

### Resourcing

- There are a wide range of texts available for children to read, which provide opportunities for reading aloud and preparing role-play and drama activities.
- Staff provide opportunities to learn the skills of debate and public speaking through their curriculum provision.
- Extra-curricular activities include competition and performance elements.
- Each class has the opportunity to prepare and perform an assembly for an audience of their peers and parents.
- There are whole year group performances throughout the school year: Christmas performances, A Star is Born, Reception Graduation, music festivals and the Year 6 end-of-year production.

### Monitoring

Monitoring is undertaken by the subject leader and SLT during the school year. This will include:

- learning walks during lessons where speaking and listening activities take place.
- formal and informal conversation with pupils.
- participation in audiences and judging panels for school public speaking, reading and drama events.
- monitoring activities linked to the school focus on cultural capital and personal development.