



SPOTLIGHT ON ORACY

Oracy continues to be a whole-school priority at Barkisland. Last year, we focused on the physical aspect of oracy, helping children to use their voices clearly and confidently and to develop whole-body listening skills. This year, our focus is on the social and emotional and linguistic strands, supporting pupils to communicate respectfully, listen carefully and choose language effectively. We will complete our oracy journey next year by focusing on the cognitive strand, helping children to think, reason and explain their ideas clearly.

This half term, our 'of the week' is orator of the week, but what does oracy look like at Barkisland?

How are children spotted to receive the award? What different types of speaking and listening activities do the children take part in? This mini newsletter will give you an overview of oracy at Barkisland. Carry on reading to find out more...

Oracy Framework

We base our Oracy Framework on four strands:

- Physical (how we use our bodies and voices)
- Linguistic (using the right vocabulary)
- Cognitive (organising our ideas)
- Social & Emotional (working with others respectfully).



Daily talk and listening time

Every day, our classes include moments where children can share their thoughts and ideas out loud. This might happen during circle time, partner or group discussions, or when sharing ideas with the class. These regular opportunities make talk a natural part of learning.

Through these sessions, children practise speaking in full sentences, listening carefully to others, and taking turns to contribute. They learn that their ideas are valued and that respectful listening helps everyone feel heard. These small, daily moments build strong communication habits that support both learning and positive relationships across school life.

Class discussions & debates:

From Nursery upwards, children are encouraged to take part in structured discussions, learning how to share their ideas, listening to others, and taking turns to speak. These conversations help pupils practise expressing opinions respectfully and building on one another's ideas.

As they move into Key Stage 2, we introduce debates on age-appropriate topics. Children learn how to present a clear argument, consider different viewpoints, and respond thoughtfully to counterpoints. These skills nurture critical thinking, empathy, and confidence – preparing pupils to communicate effectively both in and beyond the classroom. These skills link with our Curriculum Intent that can be found on this page of our website here: <https://www.barkislandcofeschool.org.uk/page/curriculum/126244>



Oracy across the curriculum:

Oracy – the ability to express ourselves clearly through spoken language – is not just for English lessons. We make time for talk in every subject. Children might explain how they solved a maths problem, describe what they observed in a science experiment, or retell an important event from history.

By encouraging pupils to think aloud, reason, and discuss ideas, we help them to deepen their understanding and make stronger connections between subjects. Speaking about their learning also helps children to remember and apply knowledge more effectively.

Regular opportunities for talk in all areas of the curriculum mean that every child can find their voice, grow in confidence, and learn the power of clear communication.

Oracy at home

Performance opportunities:

At Barkisland, we provide a number of opportunities for children to perform and share their learning with others. This includes class assemblies, poetry performances and reading aloud during worship.

These experiences allow children to speak to an audience in a supportive environment, helping them to develop vital skills such as confidence, clarity, and self-expression. Performing in front of their peers, teachers, and families encourages children to take pride in their achievements, listen carefully to others, and communicate their ideas with enthusiasm.

We know that public speaking can feel daunting at first, so these opportunities are designed to be positive and enjoyable, building children's confidence step by step. Over time, they learn that their voices matter – and that sharing their thoughts, creativity, and knowledge can be a joyful experience.



Barkisland Listening Ladder

6		Explain responses
5		Respond appropriately
4		Show understanding with nods and facial expressions
3		Whole body listening
2		Sit appropriately
1		Be calm and quiet

Listening ladder:

At Barkisland, we have created a Listening Ladder. This helps children to see what good listening looks like and how they can climb to become excellent listeners and speakers. Teachers use the ladder in lessons and worship.

Families play an important role in helping children become confident and effective communicators. You can support this development by encouraging your child to take part in family conversations, ask questions, and explain their thinking. Simple moments, like talking about their day, sharing a funny story, or discussing what they've learned at school, all help to build vocabulary, confidence, and curiosity.

Speaking and listening at home are just as important as in school. When children are given time to talk and are listened to with interest, they learn how to express themselves clearly and respectfully. These everyday interactions strengthen their ability to communicate effectively — a skill that benefits every area of learning and life.

Parents as Effective Role Models

Children learn how to communicate by watching and listening to the adults around them. Parents and carers play a vital role in showing what good communication looks and sounds like.

Here are some ways to be an effective communication role model at home:

- Model clear language. Use full sentences and accurate vocabulary when speaking to your child. For example, say "Before we leave, please go to the toilet." rather than "Go to the toilet."
- Demonstrate how to express feelings and needs. Instead of "I want something," model "I'm thirsty — could I have a drink, please?"
- Explain your thinking aloud. Talk through simple decisions like "I'm choosing this coat because it's raining" or "I'm turning off the TV so we can talk properly."
- Show active listening. Make eye contact, nod, and respond to what your child says — this teaches them that listening is just as important as speaking.
- Encourage turn-taking. Take turns speaking in family conversations so children learn to wait, listen, and respond thoughtfully.
- Use precise vocabulary. Introduce new words naturally in conversation (e.g. "That's enormous!" instead of "That's big!") and explain what they mean.
- Build confidence through praise. Notice and comment when your child explains something clearly or uses new vocabulary — it reinforces good habits.

Encouraging Clear Communication at Home

You can help your child develop their oracy skills in everyday situations:

- Ask open questions like "What was your favourite part of today?" or "Why do you think that happened?"
- Encourage them to give reasons using words like because, so, and but.
- Play games that involve describing, explaining, or giving clues (e.g. 20 Questions, Guess Who, or Charades).
- Let your child retell stories, explain how something works, or describe the steps of an activity.

Talk about feelings and opinions respectfully, showing that it's okay to disagree while listening to others' views.

Talking Homework Opportunities

Our talking homework gives families a chance to explore what they have been learning in school through verbal rather than written communication. This helps children organise their thoughts, use new vocabulary, and feel confident expressing themselves. Try to make these conversations part of your weekly routine — for example, while walking, eating together, or on the way to school.

By modelling good communication, listening carefully, and creating regular opportunities for meaningful talk, parents can make a powerful difference in helping children become confident, articulate speakers — both in school and in life.