

Developing progression in spoken language and oracy

The current *Primary National Curriculum* (2014) outlines twelve statutory statements relating to Spoken Language in the English curriculum:

Pupils should be taught to:

- listen and respond appropriately to adults and their peers
- ask relevant questions to extend their understanding and knowledge
- use relevant strategies to build their vocabulary
- articulate and justify answers, arguments and opinions
- give well-structured descriptions, explanations and narratives for different purposes, including for expressing feelings
- maintain attention and participate actively in collaborative conversations, staying on topic and initiating and responding to comments
- use spoken language to develop understanding through speculating, hypothesising, imagining and exploring ideas
- speak audibly and fluently with an increasing command of Standard English
- participate in discussions, presentations, performances, role play, improvisations and debates
- gain, maintain and monitor the interest of the listener(s)
- consider and evaluate different viewpoints, attending to and building on the contributions of others
- select and use appropriate registers for effective communication.

These statements apply to all year groups from year 1 to year 6 and the content taught at a level appropriate to the age of the pupils. Schools should ensure that pupils build on the oral language skills that have been taught in preceding years.

However, in April 2021, ‘Speak for Change’ (the Final report and recommendations from the Oracy All-Party Parliamentary Group Inquiry) recognised the difficulty in building an effective progression for individual schools. They recommended that the Government should “Publish non-statutory guidance for how schools can embed the statutory spoken language requirements set out in the National Curriculum. This non-statutory guidance should include ... Clear expectations for oracy teaching and learning accompanied by a learning progression building on existing frameworks such as those developed by The Communication Trust, English Speaking Board, Voice 21 and Oracy Cambridge.”

As no such guidance has been published, at The Literacy Company we have developed our own progression document to support schools in navigating and delivering the statutory spoken language curriculum. This was developed from our professional experience as well as consulting a wide range of documentation, including our own progression documents for reading and writing. Some of the statements are taken directly from ‘*Communicating the Curriculum*’ (The Communication Trust) where expertise in speech and language development are required. These are indicated in the document with a green background.

Progression in spoken language and oracy

Pupils should be taught to:

NC statement 1: Listen and respond appropriately to adults and their peers					
Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
<p>Able to concentrate on the person talking and to ignore background noise and movement which is not relevant to the situation</p> <p>Understand 2-3 part instructions that may include time concepts, for example using 'first', 'before', 'after' or 'when'</p>	<p>Know the key points they need to focus on in order to answer a question</p> <p>Understand complex 2-3 part instructions</p>	<p>Be able to listen to complex information and work out most of the key information (some support may be required to help them to work out the next steps)</p> <p>Recognise the cause and effect element of spoken instructions, that there may be consequences if certain instructions are not followed</p>	<p>Listen to information, work out which elements are key and make relevant, related comments</p> <p>Infer meanings, reasons and make predictions</p>	<p>Listen to complex information and identify key elements and make relevant, related comments</p> <p>Actively use inference, prediction and reasoning skills by looking for the underlying meaning of what has been said</p>	<p>Understand the key points made by a number of speakers and to compare different points of view</p> <p>Appreciate sarcasm when it is obvious</p>

NC statement 2: Ask relevant questions to extend their understanding and knowledge					
Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
<p>Ask questions to find out things using 'how' and 'why' when prompted</p> <p>Be aware when they haven't understood something and be able to say for example 'I don't understand' (with no further elaboration)</p>	<p>Ask a range of different types of questions to find out specific information including 'how' and 'why'</p> <p>Recognise when a message is not clear and be able to provide some information about why</p>	<p>Ask a range of different types of questions to find out specific information including 'how' and 'why'</p> <p>Be aware of when they haven't understood something because of the vocabulary used and ask a general clarification question</p>	<p>Able to use a series of questions to keep a conversation flowing</p> <p>Be aware of when they can't remember and ask for an explanation</p>	<p>Use follow up questions linked to answers that have just been given</p> <p>Ask a clarification question that requires the speaker to elaborate on what they have said</p>	<p>Understand and use different types of questions: open, closed, rhetorical</p> <p>Identify clearly when they haven't understood and be specific about what additional information they need</p>

NC statement 3: Use relevant strategies to build their vocabulary					
Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
<p>Recall and explain meanings of new vocabulary introduced through reading or by adults</p> <p>Begin to use a range of 'Tier 2' language orally</p>	<p>With support, identify unfamiliar vocabulary in reading and discuss it with peers and adults</p> <p>Use a range of 'Tier 2' language orally</p> <p>Make comparisons between meanings of homophones from the Y2 spelling curriculum</p>	<p>Begin to identify new vocabulary from their reading and use it appropriately in their spoken language</p> <p>Begin to make comparisons between meanings of a range of homophones from the Y3/4 spelling curriculum</p> <p>Begin to become familiar with a range of academic vocabulary linked to the curriculum, responding to and using words appropriately</p>	<p>Identify new vocabulary from their reading and use it appropriately in their spoken language</p> <p>Make comparisons between meanings of a range of homophones from the Y3/4 spelling curriculum</p> <p>Become familiar with a range of academic vocabulary linked to the curriculum, responding to and using words appropriately</p> <p>Ask questions to develop their understanding of new vocabulary</p>	<p>Identify increasingly adventurous vocabulary used by authors from their reading and use it appropriately in their spoken language</p> <p>Begin to make comparisons between meanings of a range of homophones from the Y5/6 spelling curriculum</p> <p>Become familiar with a wider range of academic vocabulary linked to the curriculum, responding to and using words appropriately</p> <p>Begin to relate new vocabulary to its etymology and discuss this with others</p>	<p>Identify adventurous vocabulary used by authors from their reading and use it appropriately in their spoken language</p> <p>Make comparisons between meanings of a range of homophones from the Y5/6 spelling curriculum</p> <p>Become familiar with a wide range of academic vocabulary linked to the curriculum, responding to and using words appropriately</p> <p>Relate a wider range of new vocabulary to its etymology and discuss this with others with increasing confidence</p>

NC statement 4: Articulate and justify answers, arguments and opinions					
Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
<p>Express simple opinions</p> <p>Begin to use simple conjunctions orally to justify and explain</p>	<p>Justify choices and viewpoints by giving a logical reason</p> <p>Use subordinating conjunctions to justify and explain</p> <p>Utilise models, diagrams and displays to support simple explanations</p>	<p>Justify choices and viewpoints by developing a series of logical reasons</p> <p>Show awareness of the opinions of others on a given topic and articulate why they may feel like that</p> <p>When presenting arguments, begin to use a range of oral persuasive techniques:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use persuasive language e.g. <i>alliteration, repetition</i> • Use 2nd person or 3rd person to talk directly to the listener 	<p>Use more complex grammar to maintain and clarify their viewpoint, explain their choices and summarise the viewpoints of others</p> <p>Begin to modify own opinions where appropriate based on the views of others</p> <p>Present a logical argument using a range of conjunctions to link ideas</p> <p>When presenting arguments, use a range of oral persuasive techniques:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use persuasive language e.g. <i>alliteration, repetition, rhetorical questions</i> • Use 2nd person or 3rd person to talk directly to the listener • Use short sentences to emphasise 	<p>Modify own opinions where appropriate based on the views of others</p> <p>Present a logically sequenced argument and defend their viewpoint with evidence</p> <p>When presenting arguments, begin to use a wider range of oral persuasive techniques:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use persuasive language e.g. <i>slogans, rhetorical questions</i> • Use emotive language including use of modals and adverbs for possibility e.g. <i>surely, every right-thinking person would</i> • Create deliberate ambiguities e.g. <i>probably the best...in the world</i> • Directly appeal to the listener • Support points using persuasive examples and provide evidence 	<p>Explain a range of viewpoints on an issue</p> <p>Evaluate possible outcomes and negotiate with others to reach a logical answer</p> <p>When presenting arguments, use a wide range of oral persuasive techniques:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use persuasive language e.g. <i>quotes, slogans, rhetorical questions</i> • Use emotive language including use of modals and adverbs for possibility e.g. <i>surely, every right-thinking person would</i> • Create deliberate ambiguities e.g. <i>probably the best...in the world</i> • Directly appeal to the listener • Support points using persuasive examples and provide evidence • Pre-empt reader objections e.g. <i>you may disagree but...</i>

Statement breakdown	NC statement 5: Give well-structured descriptions, explanations and narratives for different purposes, including for expressing feelings					
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Descriptions	Describe familiar people, places, characters and story settings Use images to support with description of more unfamiliar objects Link descriptions using 'and'	Describe people, places, characters and story settings using a range of appropriate vocabulary Extend descriptions using a range of conjunctions e.g. and, but, or, because, when	Describe people, places, characters and story settings including emotional responses to situations Continue to extend descriptions using a range of conjunctions e.g. when, so, before, after, while, because	Describe people, places, characters and story settings in detail including emotional responses to people, places and situations Add further detail to descriptions using adverbials for time, place and manner	When describing people and characters, begin to use 'show not tell' techniques to infer their emotional responses Use relative pronouns to add further detail to oral descriptions	When describing people and characters, use 'show not tell' techniques to infer their emotional responses Continue to use relative pronouns with increasing effectiveness to add further detail to oral descriptions
Explanations	Use appropriate language to explain a logical sequence for solving a problem	Use appropriate language to explain a logical sequence for solving a more complex problem including the use of conjunctions to link ideas within explanations e.g. <i>but, because, so</i>	Use causal conjunctions to link ideas within explanations e.g. <i>but, because, after, before, so, although</i>	Use some technical language accurately Begin to use connecting adverbs to link ideas within explanations using appropriate prompts e.g. <i>however, consequently, in addition, therefore, as a result</i>	Create explanations using language which shows causal relations between ideas or logical connections Begin to select information carefully to ensure that explanations are more succinct Use technical language accurately	Select information carefully to ensure that explanations are succinct Adapt formality of an explanation to suit the purpose and audience e.g. use rhetorical questions to talk directly to the listener Use hypothetical language within explanations
Narratives	Use familiar story-telling language when recounting known narratives or developing their own Recount events logically to create personal narratives Link events using 'and'	Sequence events logically when recounting or developing own narratives orally When narrating stories, begin by using appropriate language to set the scene Sequence narrative events logically	Structure narratives effectively, adding detail through use of prepositional language Begin to use a range of conjunctions to make links between events e.g. <i>when, while, before, after</i> Begin to include an effective ending to a narrative	Structure narratives effectively, adding detail through use of adverbials for time, place and manner Begin to include details about events to engage the listener Use a range of conjunctions to link events e.g. <i>when, while, before, after</i> Include an effective ending to a narrative	Begin to experiment with different ways to open narratives to engage the listener Include details about events to engage the listener Begin to use a wider range of conjunctions link events e.g. <i>meanwhile, since, yet</i> Begin to experiment with different ways to end narratives to engage the listener e.g. <i>rhetorical question, cliff-hanger</i>	Use a range of techniques to begin narratives effectively to engage the listener Elaborate on relevant details about events to engage the listener Use a wider range of conjunctions to link events e.g. <i>meanwhile, since, yet</i> Use a range of techniques to end narratives to effectively engage the listener e.g. <i>rhetorical question, cliff-hanger</i>

NC statement 6: Maintain attention and participate actively in collaborative conversations, staying on topic and initiating and responding to comments					
Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
<p>Take turns to speak, listen to others' suggestions and talk about what they are going to do</p> <p>Ask and answer questions, make relevant contributions, offer suggestions and take turns</p> <p>Share their views with others in a small group, decide how to report the group's views to the class</p>	<p>Ensure that everyone contributes, allocate tasks, and consider alternatives and reach agreement</p> <p>Work effectively in groups by ensuring that each group member takes a turn challenging, supporting and moving on</p> <p>Listen to each other's views and preferences, agree the next steps to take and identify contributions by each group member</p>	<p>Use talk to organise roles and action</p> <p>Actively include and respond to all members of the group</p> <p>Use the language of possibility to investigate and reflect on feelings, behaviour or relationships</p>	<p>Take different roles in groups and use the language appropriate to them, including the roles of leader/chair, reporter, scribe and mentor</p> <p>Use time, resources and group members efficiently by distributing tasks, checking progress and making back-up plans</p> <p>Identify the main points of each speaker, compare their arguments and how they are presented</p>	<p>Plan and manage a group task over time using different levels of planning and their understanding of group roles</p> <p>Understand different ways to take the lead and support others in groups</p> <p>Understand the process of decision making</p>	<p>Consider examples of conflict and resolution, exploring the language used</p> <p>Understand and use a variety of ways to criticise constructively and respond to criticism</p>

NC statement 7: Use spoken language to develop understanding through speculating, hypothesising, imagining and exploring ideas					
Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
<p>To discuss simple problems, how they can be solved</p> <p>Create a plan together to solve a simple problem, repeating back the steps required during the activity</p> <p>Develop more independence in planning the steps required to solve a simple problem and explain to others</p> <p>Express thoughts and ideas linked to topics, themes and texts</p>	<p>Plan the steps required to solve a problem and explain to others</p> <p>Justify reasons for selecting a particular way to solve a problem</p> <p>Imagine possibilities which connect ideas linked to topics, themes and text</p>	<p>To explore a range of ideas for different ways to solve a problem</p> <p>Speculate about what may affect the outcome of a situation</p> <p>Express and begin to explain ideas linked to topics, themes and texts</p>	<p>To hypothesise about what the possible outcomes might be when exploring ways to solve a problem</p> <p>Speculate about why the outcome of a situation may be affected</p> <p>Express and explain ideas linked to topics, themes and texts and justify with reasons</p>	<p>Explore more open-ended problems which have a range of possible solutions, with some guidance</p> <p>Work with others to decide upon an effective plan of action to solve a problem</p> <p>Make a hypothesis on the outcome of a problem and justify with some evidence</p> <p>Use a range of language to connect ideas, persuade and indicate degrees of possibility</p> <p>Express and explain relevant ideas linked to topics, themes and texts with some elaboration</p>	<p>Explore more open-ended problems which have a range of possible solutions</p> <p>Work with others to negotiate an effective plan of action</p> <p>Make a hypothesis on the outcome of a problem and justify with relevant evidence</p> <p>Use a range of language effectively to connect ideas, persuade and indicate degrees of possibility</p> <p>Express and explain relevant ideas linked to topics, themes and texts and elaborate to make their meaning explicit</p>

NC statement 8: Speak audibly and fluently with an increasing command of Standard English					
Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Produce speech that is clear and easy to understand, with only a few immaturities	Produce speech that is consistently clear and easy to understand, with very few immaturities	Produce speech that is consistently clear and easy to understand	Produce speech that is consistently clear and easy to understand	Produce speech that is consistently clear and easy to understand	Produce speech that is consistently clear and easy to understand
Able to say words accurately with 3 syllables or less	Able to say words with 4 or more syllables fairly consistently	Able to say words of any length with accuracy	Able to say words of any length with accuracy	Able to say words of any length with accuracy	Able to say words of any length with accuracy
Able to blend 3 or 4 phonemes to make a word, and segment words into individual sounds	Able to manipulate sounds in words such as deleting sounds from words	Use phonological awareness skills when spelling, although some mistakes may still be made	Secure phonological awareness skills	Secure phonological awareness skills	Secure phonological awareness skills
Able to use appropriate tenses and word order	Know that there are some terms or expressions that are only used amongst friends	Able to signal punctuation and emphasise meaning through the use of intonation	Use formal language when appropriate in some familiar situations	Use appropriately different words and phrases, from how people in that area normally talk, and standard English	Able to re-phrase what they want to say according to the audience

Statement breakdown	NC statement 9: Participate in discussions, presentations, performances, role play/improvisations and debates*					
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Discussions	Take turns to talk and listen and respond	Take turns to talk, listen and respond with an appropriate comment or question where appropriate	Make eye contact with the speaker during a discussion and use others' names e.g. <i>I agree with Noah.</i>	Listen to and build on the contributions of others and avoid repetition during discussions Find appropriate opportunities to contribute meaningfully to a discussion	Manage a discussion with minimum supervision, where pupils take on different roles effectively e.g. <i>chair and note-taker</i> Listen constructively knowing when it is and isn't appropriate to make contributions e.g. <i>knowing when the conversation has moved on</i>	Use language effectively to resolve conflict within a discussion so that it can continue productively
Presentations	Stay on topic when making short informal presentations about personal experiences	Convey simple information on a familiar topic, showing awareness of what the listener needs to know	Make longer informal presentations using visual aids where appropriate	Give a clear, sustained and complete account on a particular topic or theme	Begin to organise and shape a formal presentation, both independently and in groups	Organise and shape a formal presentation, both independently and in groups
Performances	Present parts of familiar and traditional stories to an audience	Present parts of familiar stories or own stories to an audience	Perform dialogue effectively to show differences between characters	Perform dialogue to engage an audience Make constructive comments on performance by others	Perform a scripted scene making use of dramatic conventions to enhance their performance Perform across a range of styles and genres Evaluate performances by others	Devise a performance considering how to adapt the performance for a specific audience Perform across a wider range of styles and genres Evaluate performances by others considering how they convey characters, ideas and build tension

*Continued on next page

NC statement 9 continued

Statement breakdown	NC statement 9: Participate in discussions, presentations, performances, role play/improvisations and debates					
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Role play/improvisations	<p>Engage in imaginative play enacting familiar characters and situations</p> <p>Use props (both real and imagined) where appropriate to create characters</p> <p>Begin to use different voices for characters</p>	<p>Participate in collaborative role play and improvisation which develops characters, settings and plot</p> <p>Use props effectively to create and convey a range of characters</p>	<p>Begin to create engaging dialogue through role play and improvisation</p> <p>Use some drama strategies to explore stories or issues e.g. <i>Freeze Frame and Hot-seating</i></p>	<p>Create engaging role play, combining dialogue and action, and begin to develop scripts from their work</p> <p>Use an increasing range of drama strategies to explore how behaviours can be interpreted from different viewpoints e.g. <i>Mind Parts and Thought Tracking</i></p>	<p>Sustain a role to explore social, cultural or historical issues</p> <p>Use a wide range of drama strategies to explore complex issues e.g. <i>Conscience Alley and Forum Theatre</i></p>	<p>Adapt and build on a role, that explores social, cultural or historical issues, responding to the performance of others in improvisations</p> <p>Improvise using a full range of drama strategies and conventions to explore a range of themes e.g. <i>hopes, fears and desires</i></p>
Debates	<p>Begin to share their viewpoint on a topic</p> <p>Listen respectfully to alternative viewpoints on a topic</p>	<p>Share their viewpoint on a topic</p> <p>Listen respectfully to alternative viewpoints on a topic and share the viewpoints of other individuals in the class</p>	<p>Consider their viewpoint on a topic and share it with others</p> <p>Consider different viewpoints on a topic</p> <p>Respond to the viewpoints of others</p>	<p>Prepare their own extended viewpoint on a topic</p> <p>Begin to provide evidence to support their viewpoint</p> <p>Begin to modify their viewpoint to respond to the viewpoints of others</p>	<p>Participate in formal debates</p> <p>Prepare and present a logically sequenced argument from a particular viewpoint on relevant real-life topics</p> <p>Support their viewpoint with evidence</p> <p>Begin to use persuasive language effectively</p> <p>Modify their viewpoint to respond to the arguments of others</p>	<p>Participate in and evaluate the effectiveness of formal debates</p> <p>Prepare and present a logically sequenced argument with a consistent viewpoint, on relevant real-life topics</p> <p>Back up their viewpoint with convincing evidence</p> <p>Use effective persuasive language</p> <p>Respond effectively to the points of others</p> <p>Handle relevant questions from an audience during a debate</p>

NC statement 10: Gain, maintain and monitor the interest of the listener(s)					
Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
<p>Begin to use non-verbal communication when speaking e.g. <i>facing the listener, maintaining eye-contact with a single listener</i></p> <p>Begin to vary the intonation of their speech</p>	<p>Convey information on a single topic</p> <p>Show awareness of when they need to stop or move on when speaking</p> <p>Speak varying their voice and intonation</p>	<p>Engage a small group of listeners by making eye-contact across the group</p> <p>Begin to use facial expressions and gestures when speaking</p> <p>Initiate conversations outside their familiar social circle in appropriate environments e.g. <i>speaking to hosts on a school trip or pupils from other schools</i></p>	<p>Use a range of facial expressions and gestures when speaking to emphasise points</p> <p>Initiate conversations outside their familiar social circle with increasing confidence in appropriate environments e.g. <i>speaking to hosts on a school trip or pupils from other schools</i></p> <p>Use precise vocabulary and intonation to convey meaning or provide emphasis</p> <p>Consider where it is appropriate to pause for effect when speaking</p>	<p>Engage a larger group of listeners by making eye-contact across the group</p> <p>Use a range of facial expressions and gestures to emphasise points and refer to items, people or places</p> <p>Begin to use spoken language imaginatively to gain and maintain the interest of the listener, including the use of appropriate humour and repetition for impact</p> <p>Monitor the understanding of the listener and repeat or reword points where appropriate</p> <p>Maintain conversation by using questions to engage the listener</p>	<p>Use a range of facial expressions and gestures effectively for a range of purposes</p> <p>Use spoken language imaginatively to gain and maintain the interest of the listener through a range of previously taught techniques</p> <p>Speak to engage the listener over a sustained period of time</p> <p>Maintain conversation by using a range of different questions to engage the listener effectively</p>

NC statement 11: Consider and evaluate different viewpoints, attending to and building on the contributions of others					
Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Respond to points of interest when listening to contributions of others	Ask lots of questions to find out information and respond appropriately to the answers	Able to understand another's point of view and show whether they agree or disagree	Able to identify and reflect on key points of what they have just been told	Actively use inference, prediction and reasoning skills by looking for the underlying meaning of what has been said	Able to reflect on several people's opinions or suggestions and summarise or suggest a compromise

NC statement 12: Select and use appropriate registers for effective communication					
Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
<p>Begin to recognise and use appropriate language for speaking to adults in school</p> <p>Use polite language when communicating with others e.g. <i>use of please, thank you, excuse me</i></p>	Recognise and use appropriate language for speaking to adults in school	Begin to recognise vocabulary that is appropriate/inappropriate for speaking in different contexts	Use standard English with increasing accuracy when required	<p>Use accurate standard English when appropriate</p> <p>Recognise differences between local dialect and standard English</p> <p>Recognise situations where standard English is the most appropriate register for communication</p>	<p>Consider different ways of phrasing what they wish to say depending on the audience and purpose</p> <p>Select appropriate vocabulary depending on the formality of the situation</p>