

CSC Voice 21 Case Study: Rumney Primary School

1. Introduction

Rumney Primary School is situated near Cardiff city centre. The school has a two-form entry with currently 470 pupils including an 80 place Nursery unit. The school has 18% of pupils eligible for free school meals. 24 pupils are 'looked after' by the local authority including 6 under 'Special Guardianship' Language Literacy & Communication is led by two members of staff (one in each phase). Our school improvement priority this year is improving standards in writing. It was felt that the 'Voice 21 Oracy Pioneers Programme' would support our pupils in developing strong oracy skills in preparation for writing.

2. Description of strategy/activity

Having undertaken a staff questionnaire in relation to teaching and learning in Oracy, we identified a need to work with our new Year 3 cohort. The ability to talk and confidence in sharing ideas is a strength for these children. However, 'listening and responding' and 'working with others' were highlighted as areas to develop.

Therefore, we chose to focus on the Social & Emotional strand of Oracy from the Voice 21 Oracy Framework. We are aware that the children will need to develop the other 3 strands but we decided to start where the need was most significant.

The Year 3 topic is 'Rotten Romans' and we were aware that the children had very little prior knowledge of this period in history. Building up their knowledge bank of historic facts would be key to engaging them in this topic. Therefore, we chose to develop effective 'Talk Groupings' and use the 'Fed in facts' strategy.

Over a period of six weeks, I worked with my year group colleague and 60 children. The children agreed 'discussion guidelines' and were able to verbalise what makes a good listener and what makes a good discussion. We taught the children to use the different 'talk groupings' and added 'fact cards' and 'information mats' to scaffold and broaden their discussions.

The most popular 'talk groupings' were 'Trios', 'Traverse', 'Circle' and 'Onion'. (We even listened to 'The Onion Song' by Marvin Gaye as we moved into position!) The children really enjoy it and are enthusiastic and engaged. As the 'onion' rotates, they refer to the 'fed in fact' mats to extend their conversation. We also provided them with reporter's notepads to capture any new facts they heard during the discussion. We then allowed the 'onion' to segment into smaller 'onion rings' and they could use this 'talk grouping' to feedback information to their peers.

3. Impact of strategy/activity on provision

The 'Voice 21 Oracy Framework' is vast and there are so many effective strategies and techniques we could employ. However, we are at the start of our Oracy journey and plan to focus on one small part of the framework at a time, embedding strategies and building upon them each year.

My year group partner and I are pleased that the talk lessons we have delivered are well organised, purposeful and productive without the need for excessive planning or recording of evidence. The lessons are simple to resource and, in this case, resulted in the desired outcome - a wider subject knowledge for our Rotten Romans topic. We will be delivering INSET training for other year groups to adopt this strategy.

In Year 3, we will continue to move forward developing this Oracy strand and focus on 'Confidence in speaking' and 'Audience Awareness'. This will be especially useful as we move towards Class Assemblies, Pupil Voice groups, Listening to Learner sessions and Topic Showcase events.

4. Impact of strategy/activity on pupil standards /engagement

The impact of this strategy was seen in the children's social interactions with each other. The children recognise how to show good listening and are able to articulate what makes a good listener. They recognise the importance of making sure everyone gets a turn to speak and that everyone deserves to be heard. They know that there should be a balance of contributions from the members of the talk group and this was achieved by introducing 'observers' into our talk groups.

Most notably, all children, regardless of ability, were engaged in the talk lessons. These are strategies that we are keen to continue with across other areas of the curriculum. In Year 3, we are considering timetabling a regular talk session into our weekly planning.

5. Any other information

We are very keen to continue the 'Voice 21' project in our school and would be keen to get involved in any Early Years based projects that Voice 21 may be considering.