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THE GREAT ORACY EXHIBITION 2026

Foxford's Oracy Journey

When the learning drives the oracy

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SESSION MAP

Where we're going

1 **Why we started**

Our journey, our context and the problem we kept seeing

2 **The Big 3**

Our shared teaching routines

3 **Teaching quality**

Monitoring, QA and how we use Steplab

4 **Disciplinary oracy**

Maths, Science and MFL in practice

5 **Honest lessons**

What we're still working on, and our progression plan

6 **Close**

Takeaways and your questions

PART 1

Why we started

Our journey, our pupils and the problem we kept seeing

1

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ORACY CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE voice 21 2026

WHY WE STARTED

Our pupils

35%

of our students are eligible for Pupil Premium.

EAL

Many pupils speak English as an additional language.

SEND

A significant SEND cohort.

Mobility

High in-year admissions: pupils join us all year round.

11–18

A Coventry secondary in Castle Phoenix Trust.

We can't assume every pupil arrives confident putting their ideas into words.

WHY WE STARTED

Why oracy, for our pupils

"For some of our pupils, the issue is not a lack of ideas, but a lack of confidence, vocabulary or experience in putting those ideas into words."

FOXFORD ORACY VISION

IT CONNECTS TO WHAT WE ALREADY VALUE

- **Inclusive Classroom**

  Structured talk removes barriers to participation and opens up the curriculum.

- **CODE values**

  Challenge, Ownership, Dialogue, Engagement.

- **Trust vision**

  Confident communicators, with the aim of improving social mobility.

OUR WHOLE-SCHOOL VISION

What is oracy?

Our shared definition, used by every teacher in every subject.

Learning to talk	Learning through talk	Learning to listen
Oracy Framework	Springboards for Talk	Proof of Listening
Talk Tactics	Discussion Guidelines	The Listening Wheel

At the heart of our vision: every pupil a confident communicator.

WHY WE STARTED

Our journey so far

BEFORE 2024–25

Fragmented

Springboards in pockets; led below SLT.

2024–25

SLT-led

Whole-school plan, the Big 3 launched, CPD for all.

2025–26

Consistency

Sharper Big 3, weekly tutor time, Year 7 curriculum, Steplab.

SUMMER 2026

Centre of Excellence

Recognised by Voice 21.

2026–27

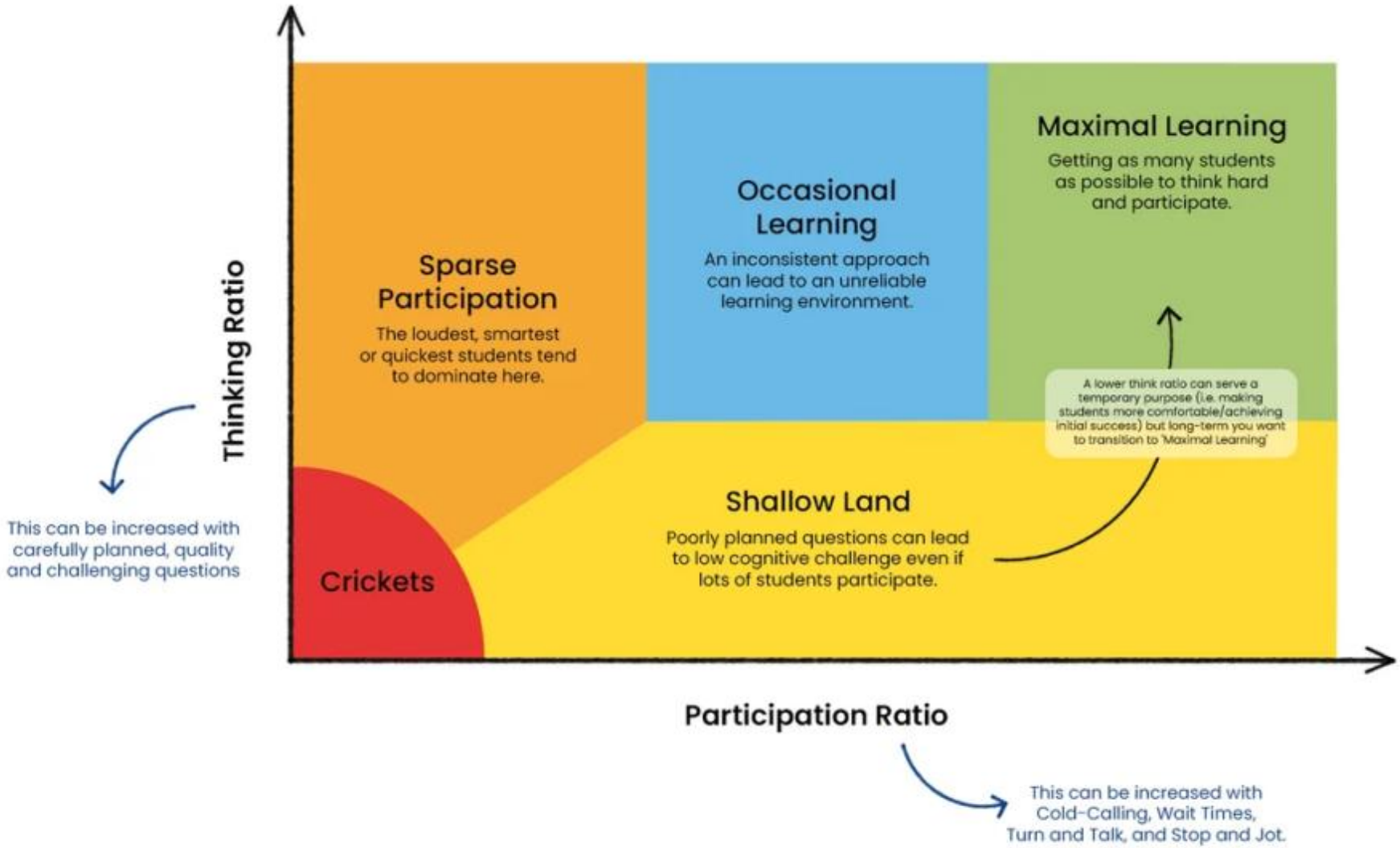
Progression

Disciplinary oracy and tracking, Years 7 to 13.

A Voice 21 Oracy Centre of Excellence, 2026.

Maximising Cognitive Engagement

A joint InnerDrive & Doug Lemov creation | @Inner_Drive | innerdrive.co.uk



WHY WE STARTED

Participation ratio × think ratio

WHERE WE STARTED

Sparse participation

Talk belonged to a confident few. Fewer pupils were thinking, misconceptions stayed hidden and first answers went unimproved.

RAISE THE PARTICIPATION RATIO

Think-Pair-Share · Cold/Warm Call · Means of Participation

RAISE THE THINK RATIO

Say It Again Better · disciplinary talk tasks

The goal: maximal learning, with every pupil thinking hard and taking part.

WHY WE STARTED

Leadership: what changed in 2024–25

BEFORE 2024–25

- Springboards for Talk were used, but in fragmented pockets.
- Oracy leadership sat below SLT level.
- Practice depended on individual teachers.

FROM 2024–25

- **Oracy leadership moved to SLT level.**
- **A whole-school action plan and shared tools for every teacher.**
- **Springboards CPD for all staff, and oracy in QA.**

Moving oracy to SLT let us raise its profile, turning pockets of good practice into a whole-school approach.

WHY WE STARTED

Raising the profile of oracy

Oracy only becomes culture when everyone can see it matters: in lessons, in training, in QA and beyond the classroom.

YEAR 7 PODCAST

The Foxford Files

Made by students, for students. Year 7 pupils present and edit each episode, and every tutor group discusses its "Would You Rather?" debate.

YEARS 7, 8 AND 9

Say Yes to Learning

Annual conference days built around an enquiry question, using Springboards for Talk and ending in presentations to a real audience.

Classrooms

Oracy Orange, Talk Tactics and key vocabulary visible in every room.

CPDL

Every session models a Springboard for Talk; induction starts with our oracy vision.

QA

Oracy in observation descriptors, faculty reviews and Steplab shoutouts that celebrate practice.

PART 2

The Big 3

Three routines, every classroom

2





THE BIG 3

Our shared teaching routines

1

SPRINGBOARD

Think-Pair-Share

Everyone thinks before anyone speaks.

LOOK FOR

A clear question · silent think time · A/B partners · a planned share

2

Cold / Warm Call

Everyone is ready to answer.

LOOK FOR

Question, pause, then name. Warm call to prepare pupils first.

3

Say It Again Better

Every answer can be improved.

LOOK FOR

A precise prompt: "Say it again better by using…"

SPRINGBOARD Voice 21 Springboard for Talk

Visible in every room: Talk Tactics · Oracy Orange · purple and tricky words

The BIG Three

TERM 1 - CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

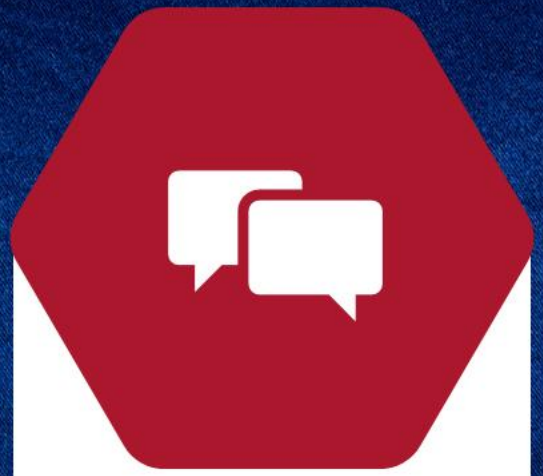
Visible Consistencies

- Learning Plans
- STAR Marking
- Key Vocabulary
- Tricky Words
- Oracy Orange



Think, Pair, Share

We increase participation and improve the think ratio to enable students to engage in richer, more collaborative Exploratory Talk.



Cold (Warm) Call

We call on students to contribute to discussions, knowing that they are prepared to share their thoughts, often based on prior assignments or reflections.



Say it Again Better By

We explore key vocabulary and build understanding to enable students to 'say it again better' within their talk or written expression.

EQ: “Should healthy eating be a human right?”

THINK

It is unfair that unhealthy food is often the cheapest and easiest option for many families

- Do you agree or disagree with this statement?
- TIF: What might be the long-term consequences for society if only wealthier families can afford healthy food?

PAIR

A and B.

A - “I would like to start by saying…

B - “I agree/disagree and would like to say…”

SHARE

Warm calling.

Student 1 (instigate) - “I think that…”

Student 2 (build) - “I agree/disagree and would like to add that…”

Student 3 (build/ challenge) - “X’s idea made me think that…” / “I disagree with this because….”

THE BIG 3

Built in, not bolted on

Observation descriptors	Purposeful, scaffolded talk is part of what good teaching means here.
CPD	Every session models at least one Springboard for Talk.
Induction	New staff learn the vision, language and routines from day one.
Tutor time	Tutors use the same routines, so pupils meet one model all day.

The aim: talk as a normal part of learning, not left to individual preference or confidence.

THE BIG 3

Sharpen, don't add

AUTUMN 2024

Big 3 launched

Three routines, a shared TPS template and CPD for all staff.

WHAT QA SHOWED

Used more, but uneven

Set-up and roles in talk were weak. Quality depended on the teacher.

SEPTEMBER 2025

Means of Participation

Partner labels and roles in talk added to the Big 3.

SEPTEMBER 2025

Oracy steps in Steplab

Specialist steps to coach precise practice.

We didn't replace Think-Pair-Share.
We got precise about what good looks like.

PART 3

Teaching quality

What we look for, and how we know

3





TEACHING QUALITY

What we look for, and how we check

IN EVERY LESSON (FROM OUR OBSERVATION DESCRIPTORS)

Purposeful

Talk has a clear learning job.

Scaffolded

Think time, roles, stems and Talk Tactics.

Embedded

A routine, not an event.

HOW OUR QA CHANGED

Deeper, not wider

Faculty reviews replaced frequent whole-school learning walks.

Triangulated

The oracy lead joins every review, checking lessons against student voice.

Shared

Leaders across subjects now carry QA. Oracy is part of teaching and learning.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Four lenses on classroom talk

FREQUENT

Steplab drop-ins

What ordinary lessons really look like.

TERMLY

Learning walks

Cross-subject patterns, with the Trust Oracy Lead.

BY FACULTY

Faculty explorations

Lessons, plus staff and student voice.

YEARLY

Voice 21 surveys

Staff confidence and pupil views over time.

Every lens feeds a decision

Findings set the next Big 3 focus, the CPD programme and coaching steps. When QA showed roles in talk were weak, Means of Participation joined the Big 3.

How we use Steplab

1 Tag every drop-in

Each drop-in or shoutout is tagged to the current Big 3 strategy and to Oracy.

2 Share one feedback language

Strengths first, and specific: "It was effective when… This meant that…"

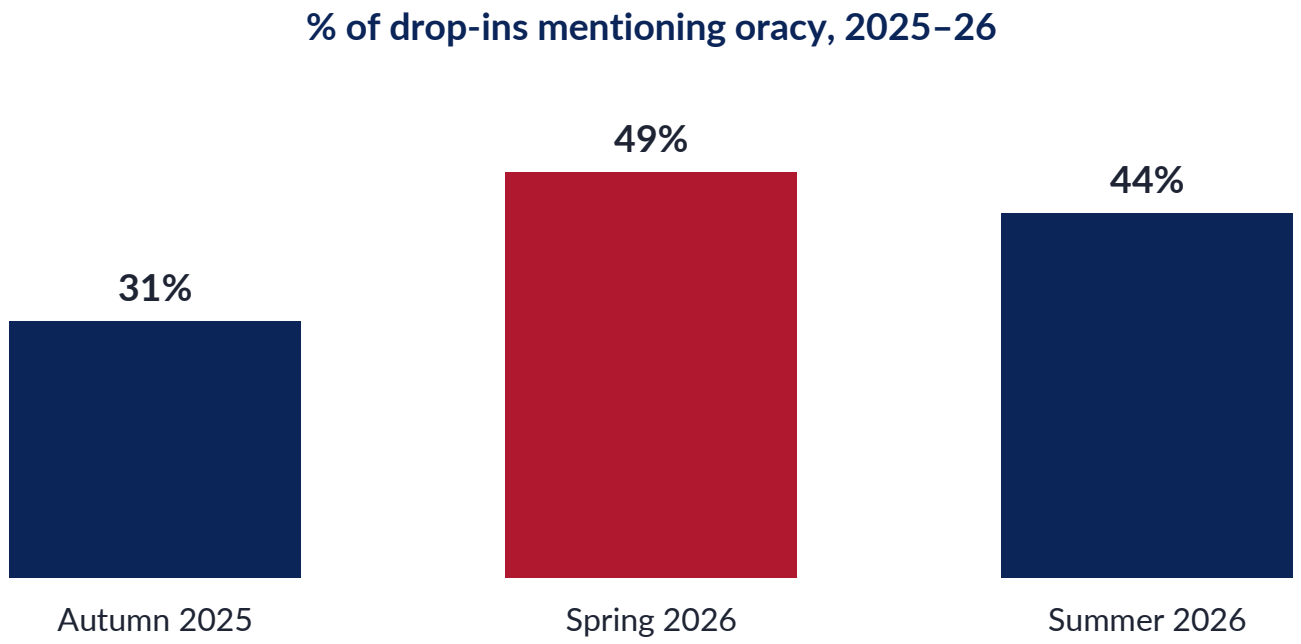
3 Read the pattern

Tags roll up into a report showing which routines are embedding.

4 Coach with oracy steps

In Steplab, a "step" is a short, specific coaching action. Our specialist oracy steps turn a pattern into one precise focus.

What Steplab shows us



468

Steplab drop-ins carried out in 2025–26

38%

of all drop-ins mentioned oracy (31% in autumn, 49% in spring)

"Excellent use of Say It Again Better, prompting students to include the keywords theoretical and experimental… fantastic to see them begin to use the mathematical language confidently."

STEPLAB SHOUTOUT · MATHS

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

What the evidence told us

67% → 76%

of staff are oracy-confident (Voice 21 staff survey, 2024–25 to 2025–26).

85%

of staff say oracy is central to our teaching and learning (2025–26).

ORACY LEARNING WALKS WITH THE TRUST ORACY LEAD, 2025

WE FOUND	Cold Call often came before thinking time.
WE CHANGED	**Think time first, then the name, written into the Big 3.**
WE FOUND	Talk was under-scaffolded; stems were used inconsistently.
WE CHANGED	**A shared Think-Pair-Share template with A/B stems and instigate, build, challenge.**
WE FOUND	Pupils weren't clear on their role in talk.
WE CHANGED	**Means of Participation added to the Big 3 in September 2025.**

STUDENT VOICE

What our pupils say

How does oracy help you take part more confidently in lessons?

"We feel comfortable sharing responses with the class after teachers give us time to think."

YEAR 11

"You get the opportunity to talk while others listen and you feel included."

YEAR 7

"It gives structure to your ideas and lets you hear other people's opinions."

YEAR 11

"It gives me a space to voice my opinions and be heard and be active in lessons."

YEAR 10

"It helps to communicate with your peers and makes it easier to engage with the learning."

YEAR 9

"I feel like I can share my ideas and that others will listen."

YEAR 8

PART 4

Disciplinary oracy

Maths, Science and MFL in practice

4

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The learning drives the oracy.

We don't add talk to lessons. We start with what pupils need to learn, then choose the talk that gets them there.

DISCIPLINARY ORACY

One shared language, different disciplines

The Big 3 are the floor. Each department then asks: what does good talk sound like here?

Maths

Reason and justify

No right answer, only a right justification.

Science

Explain, don't just identify

Real understanding shows itself in explanation.

MFL

Hear it, rehearse it, own it

If pupils can say it with control, they remember it.

Maths: reason and justify

ROUTINES WE USE

Which One Doesn't Belong?

SPRINGBOARD

Defend a choice. There's more than one right answer.

Concept Cartoons

SPRINGBOARD

Agree with, challenge or fix a misconception.

Examples and Non-Examples

Justify where a concept starts and stops.

Say It Again Better

Upgrade answers with precise terms.

CONCEPT CARTOON

SPRINGBOARD

Why does multiplying by a fraction less than 1 make the number smaller?

- Multiplying always makes numbers bigger.
- It gets smaller because you're finding a fraction of it.
- It depends on the value of the fraction.

I agree with… because… · I can identify the misconception that…

Impact: pupils explain why, not just what. One pupil self-corrected "3 x 10 the power of 4" to "3 multiplied by 10 to the power of 4".

YOUR TURN · 90 SECONDS

Think-Pair-Share

Why does multiplying by a fraction less than 1 make the number smaller?

THINK · 20 SECONDS

On your own: which character from the cartoon do you agree with, and why?

PAIR · 40 SECONDS

A: "I would like to start by saying…" B: "I agree / disagree and would like to add…"

SHARE · 30 SECONDS

Warm call: one pair instigates, the next builds, the next challenges.

Notice what the structure does: everyone thinks, everyone talks, anyone can be asked.

DISCIPLINARY ORACY · SCIENCE

Science: explain, don't just identify

ROUTINES WE USE

Oracy Bullseye

SPRINGBOARD

Key words used in context, not just spotted.

Concept Cartoons

SPRINGBOARD

Surface misconceptions early.

Examples and Non-Examples

Slow down and justify why it counts.

Concept Maps

Talk through how ideas connect.

SAY IT AGAIN BETTER

FIRST ANSWER

"Plants make food from sunlight."

TEACHER PROMPT

"Can you say it again better using the correct scientific terms?"

IMPROVED ANSWER

"Plants produce glucose through photosynthesis, using sunlight, carbon dioxide and water."

Impact: pupils explain, not just identify, and teachers hear the gaps while they can still fix them.

MFL: hear it, rehearse it, own it

ROUTINES WE USE

Sentence builders

Structure that cuts cognitive overload.

Listening routines

Sentence bingo, delayed and faulty dictation.

Numbered Heads

SPRINGBOARD

Rehearse as a group; anyone can be asked.

Rehearsal games

3 in a Row, No Snakes No Ladders: repeat and retrieve.

TRAPDOOR

Pairs work from a modelled answer. One reads it in full; the other rebuilds it from memory. Then they swap.

WHY IT WORKS

Structured rehearsal from a clear scaffold builds confidence and control before pupils speak independently.

Impact: fewer one-word answers, and writing improves because the language was rehearsed aloud first.

DISCIPLINARY ORACY

Each faculty owns its oracy direction

Each faculty owns its own direction for oracy. Springboards for Talk are the starting point; the school vision is at its heart.

Maths

"High-quality mathematical talk helps students explain why an answer is correct, not just what the answer is."

STRANDS

Cognitive · Linguistic

Science

"Pupils could often tell you an answer, but that was not always the same as understanding it."

STRANDS

Linguistic · Cognitive

MFL

"Talk is not something separate from the subject. It is how pupils begin to learn the language."

STRANDS

Physical · Linguistic

The learning drives the oracy: each faculty decides what good talk sounds like in its subject.

PART 5

Honest lessons

What we're still getting wrong

5

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HONEST LESSONS

Three things we're still working on

1

Consistency

In places it still depends too much on the individual teacher.

2

Year 7 first

In 2025–26 we kept the explicit curriculum to Year 7, to get the quality right first.

3

Showing progression

We can see good talk. We can't yet show pupils getting better over time.

Our progression plan, Years 7 to 10

YEAR 7

Collaborative talk

Talking well together: listening, building on ideas and reasoning as a group.

Fortnightly explicit oracy lessons in English.

YEAR 8

Presentational talk

Speaking to an audience with structure, clarity, confidence and subject vocabulary.

English in Autumn 1, then five other subjects take a half-term each.

YEAR 9

Debating and formal talk

Adapting talk for audience and purpose: taking a position in debate and responding to others.

English in Autumn 1, with a unit linked to Pigeon English.

YEAR 10

Careers and interviews

Using oracy in real life: interviews and the world of work.

Tutor time and PSHCE.

Talk together → speak to an audience → adapt and debate → use it beyond school

Every subject owns its progression

Each subject chooses the 2–3 Oracy Framework strands where talk matters most in its discipline, and maps progression from Year 7.

History

Cognitive · Linguistic

From description to chains of reasoning: "this suggests… because… therefore…". Assessed against four criteria.

MFL

Physical · Linguistic

From rehearsed phrases to spontaneous interaction. Speaking assessed across four levels.

Science

Linguistic · Cognitive

From everyday description to causal explanation: "The evidence for this is…"

Maths

Cognitive · Linguistic

From unclear statements to justified methods in precise mathematical vocabulary.

CLOSE

Three things to take away

1

Choose a few routines.

Then sharpen them relentlessly. For us: Think-Pair-Share, Cold/Warm Call, Say It Again Better.

2

Let the learning drive the oracy.

Ask each subject what good talk sounds like there, then teach it.

3

Build it in, and raise its profile.

Descriptors, Steplab and CPD, plus the podcast and Say Yes to Learning.

Turn and talk: which one idea will you take back to your school first?

The learning drives the oracy.

Questions?

Darren Dhesi · Foxford School

