

ST BERNADETTE'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Diocese of Portsmouth

County of Hampshire

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Dear Parents and Carers,

At St Bernadette's, we are committed to developing the whole child, not only academically, but also socially and emotionally. As part of this, we are excited to share with you our focus on **oracy**, which is the ability to speak and listen effectively. Oracy is just as important as reading and writing, and it plays a vital role in helping children express themselves clearly, build confidence, and engage meaningfully with others. Oracy is developing the skills of talk as well as learning through talk.

To support our oracy development across the school, we are working with **Voice 21**, the UK's leading oracy education charity. Through this partnership, we are embedding a consistent and purposeful approach to speaking and listening across all year groups.

Why is oracy important?

Research shows that strong oracy skills not only improve academic outcomes but also support wellbeing, confidence, and life chances. In class, children use oracy to explain their ideas, ask questions, listen to others respectfully, and participate in group discussions. These are vital skills that extend beyond the classroom into all areas of life.

What is our school vision for oracy?

Our vision for oracy is...

- For our children to understand that their voice is valued.
- For all children to be able to articulate their thoughts, ideas and emotions in order to support learning but also to develop emotional regulation.
- To develop purposeful talk to support learning across the curriculum.
- For children to understand active listening.
- Allowing all students to access and share their learning.
- For our children to know that talk is a life tool

Introducing Talk Tactics

One of the exciting tools we're using to support oracy is **Talk Tactics**. These are simple sentence stems and conversation strategies that help children take part in structured talk. For example, children learn how to:

- **Investigate** – "I would like to start by saying. . ."
- **Build on an idea** – "I agree with you because..."
- **Challenge politely** – "I see it differently because..."
- **Clarify** – "Can you explain what you mean by...?"
- **Summarise** – "So, what we've said is..."

These tactics help children to think critically, communicate clearly, and collaborate respectfully, skills that are essential for learning and for life.

Our talk tactics also include non-verbal signs, so children who are at the early stages of developing oracy can show their thinking.

We are working to thread oracy throughout the curriculum, to provide a wide range of opportunities to discuss ideas and present rehearsed speeches and performances.

How you can help at home

You can support your child's oracy development at home by:

- Encouraging family discussions at mealtimes.
- Asking open-ended questions (e.g. "What was the most interesting part of your day?").
- Giving them opportunities to explain their thinking.
- Playing games that involve speaking and listening, such as "Would You Rather" or "20 Questions."

We are excited about the positive impact that oracy is already having in our classrooms, and we look forward to sharing more with you throughout the year.

Thank you for your continued support.

Warm regards,

Mrs Grier

Oracy lead