

Spoken Language Intent

“Words are important. If you cannot say what you mean, you will never mean what you say. And you should always mean what you say.”

— Paraphrased from The Last Emperor

At XII Apostles, we believe that spoken language underpins the development of reading and writing, and is essential for thinking, learning, understanding and emotional well-being. It is central to every aspect of the curriculum and life beyond school.

Our intent is for every child to become a confident, articulate communicator—able to express themselves clearly, listen actively, and engage respectfully in a wide range of spoken language situations. We want pupils to understand that spoken language is a powerful tool for learning, collaboration and influence.

We aim to ensure all children:

- Develop a rich vocabulary and the ability to adapt their language for a range of audiences and purposes.
- Acquire the knowledge and skills to speak fluently, accurately, and with confidence.
- Are able to listen thoughtfully and respond respectfully, building on others’ ideas.
- Use talk to reason, persuade, explain, reflect and evaluate.
- Understand that spoken language is a skill that can be developed, practised and refined over time.

Spoken Language Implementation

Spoken language is both taught explicitly and embedded throughout the curriculum. It is carefully sequenced and planned, ensuring progression in pupils’ substantive knowledge (such as vocabulary and rhetorical devices) and disciplinary knowledge (how to use talk effectively in different contexts).

Spoken language is adapted to meet the needs of individual children taking into account their primary need, making reasonable adjustments and through adaptive teaching.

Our spoken language curriculum is structured around four key dimensions of oracy:

1. **Physical Oracy** – Pupils are taught to speak clearly and audibly, with appropriate tone, pace, and intonation. They learn how non-verbal communication—such as eye contact, facial expressions, and body language—supports effective speaking.
2. **Linguistic Oracy** – We explicitly teach vocabulary, grammar, and register. Pupils explore how to choose words for precision and impact, and how to use rhetorical techniques such as metaphor, humour and irony to enhance meaning.
3. **Cognitive Oracy** – Pupils learn how to structure their ideas, justify opinions, and summarise points effectively. They practise using talk to reason, reflect, question and build on others' contributions. Talk is used as a tool for thinking and deepening understanding.
4. **Social & Emotional Oracy** – Pupils are taught the skills needed for group discussion, turn-taking, listening attentively, and managing disagreement. They learn how to speak with confidence, respond to the needs of different audiences, and contribute sensitively and constructively.

Spoken language is developed through:

- Explicit teaching of oracy objectives within English and across the curriculum.
- Talk-rich classrooms where pupils are encouraged to question, clarify, explain and reflect.
- Structured opportunities for debate, discussion, role-play, drama, presentations, and collaborative learning.
- Oral rehearsal of ideas during the writing process to strengthen composition and coherence.
- Modelled talk by teachers to demonstrate high-quality spoken language and Standard English.
- Targeted support and scaffolding for children with speech, language or communication needs.

Opportunities for high-quality talk are carefully planned across subjects—from partner talk in maths and science, to historical debates, philosophical enquiry, and drama activities in RE and PSHE. This helps embed spoken language as a fundamental, transferable skill.

Poetry plays a vital role in our spoken language curriculum. It is taught in every year group at least once per term, offering pupils regular opportunities to read, study, write, perform, and recite poetry—both within class and for wider audiences. These experiences help children to develop their vocabulary, experiment with expression, and

engage deeply with the sounds and rhythms of language. Performance poetry especially supports their confidence, articulation, and prosody, helping them to become thoughtful, expressive speakers.

At the heart of our approach is the belief that every child is a communicator. We want all children to feel confident in using their voice, to recognise the value of their ideas, and to understand that spoken language is a powerful form of self-expression and connection with others. Through a rich and inspiring curriculum, we aim for children to leave our school with a deep appreciation of the power of talk, the confidence to speak in a range of contexts, and the understanding that strong oracy skills can open doors to many future opportunities—from leadership, performance, and public service to law, broadcasting, education, and beyond.