

St George's C of E, New Mills

Vocabulary policy

Intent

Research has found strong links between vocabulary size and academic achievement. At St George's, we believe that our students deserve a stimulating environment full of enriching vocabulary. This is achieved through a variety of approaches woven into the whole learning environment. Through this we hope to inspire a love and curiosity of new words. Our students are entitled to this level of quality vocabulary to prevent a vocabulary gap in their learning.

When choosing the right vocabulary to focus on, teachers need to consider: Beck and McKeown (2002)

- How generally useful is the word?
- How does the word relate to other words, to the ideas that students know or have been learning?
- What does the word bring to a text or situation?

A useful model used in many schools is the three tiers of vocabulary: Misselbrook TES article (Jan. 2019)

Tier 1 = Everyday words encountered in daily conversation. Eg. Dog, go, happy, play, sad. These do not, usually, need to be specifically taught.

Tier 2 = Words that provide access to more complex topics outside of the everyday. Eg. Relative, vary, frown, swoop, hesitate.

Tier 3 = Words that are relevant for a specific subject which we often call 'topic words.' Eg. Lava, circumference, aorta, sarcophagus.

There is a need to directly teach Tier 3 words, yet the Tier 2 words are transferable and useful and need direct teaching also. Tier 2 words play an important part in discussion as they often have multiple meanings. They are vital in reading comprehension, so the majority of key vocabulary we teach is chosen from Tier 2.

Implementation

Vocabulary throughout the curriculum:

- All staff add clear and important vocabulary from Tiers 2 and 3 to all displays throughout the school. This is monitored through regular learning walks with a focused non-negotiables chart that looks for high standards of vocabulary on the Talk for Writing working walls and all displays. Findings from learning walks are shared in staff meetings.
- All teaching plans focus on key vocabulary for each lesson. This vocabulary is revisited throughout the unit and interleaved into topics throughout the year. Knowledge organisers support our students' vocabulary learning.

Vocabulary in TFW:

- Featured in each genre unit of work in our Literacy scheme is an introductory reading week. This provides a wonderful opportunity to delve into the vocabulary of the new text. Teachers use a variety of techniques, such as the traffic light method. In this lesson the students create 3 columns, red (word unknown and unused), amber (word known and unused) and green (word known and used). They colour code vocabulary in their text according to their self-assessment. Time is given to discuss word meaning and dictionary research. These lessons also give the teacher an important insight into the tiers of vocabulary known by each student.
- All classrooms now have a wonderful words of the week display on which new words from texts are shared. Students are encouraged to share and use new words from the display throughout the unit of work. Stars are awarded for adventurous new vocabulary.

Vocabulary in reading

- All classes have a daily story time so that students are exposed to quality, age appropriate texts. These texts vary from non-fiction, fiction and poetry. During storytime and whole class reading lessons Tier 2 vocabulary is taught and demonstrated in context.
- Vocabulary is one of the key reading skills taught in whole class reading sessions. The others are: inference, prediction, explanation, retrieval and summary or sequencing.

Impact

Constant, open discussion makes vocabulary learning fun, builds resilience and strips the fear from unknown words. It builds the understanding of pupils who will take this knowledge and skill into all curriculum areas throughout their lives. Effective vocabulary teaching builds confident learners who will achieve their true potential.