Oracy is as important as reading and writing, but what is it? Oracy is the way in which your child speaks, communicates and talks. Oracy is the ability to express oneself fluently and grammatically in speech. Research tells us that children who are taught to discuss, share and have dialogue will perform better in science and maths.

At Earlsdon Primary School we are currently focusing on the linguistic skills of oracy, and this primarily encompasses vocabulary and words. It encourages children to understand the meaning of words, use appropriate descriptive and subject specific words, speak fluently in full sentences, and speak without fillers such as ‘like and innit’.
When children have limited oracy skills:

- 77% have difficulty following what is going on in class
- 91% have slower than expected progress in English
- 86% have low self-esteem

“A child who is not at the developmentally expected milestone in oracy by the age of 5 is 11 times less likely to achieve the expected level in maths.” (Department for Education 2017)
How can I help my child?

Read with your child, share books and discuss words. A child who reads for 1 minute a day is exposed to 8000 words a year. A child who reads for 5 minutes a day is exposed to 282,000 words a year and a child who reads for 20 minutes a day is exposed to 1,800,000 words a year.

When reading, comment and describe objects, colours, numbers, sizes, letters, emotions and pictures in books. Ask open ended questions:

“What do you see on this page?”

“What might happen next?”

“How did that happen?”

“Why do you think that?”

Respond and listen attentively, encourage and praise. Expand on what your child has said and add new words or similar words to expand their vocabulary.

For more ideas visit www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk or see handout.

Talk to your child, share and discuss what is happening around them, speak in full sentences and model how to speak in full sentences.

Discuss new words and make sure they know what words mean and how to use them in sentences. When playing games, such as board games, talk about what you’re doing, the rules, whose turn it is, allow them to ask questions, investigate, and clarify what is happening.

A final thought

*Education is the process of preparing us for the big world, and the big world has big words. The more big words I know, the better I will survive in it. Because there are hundreds and thousands of big words in English, I cannot learn them all. But this doesn’t mean I shouldn’t try.*

*(Words, words, words, by David Crystal)*