



# BEP ORACY PROJECT Report 2023



# CONTENTS

Introduction	03
BEP Oracy Project Overview	04
Oracy Pioneers Student Training Programme	05
Voice 21 Staff Training Programme	08
BEP YouthTalks	09
Concluding Comments	10





# INTRODUCTION

The Bristol Education Partnership (BEP) is a collaboration between 14 secondary schools with the University of Bristol, University of West of England and Bristol City Council. The partnership started in 2019 with the aim of tackling disadvantage, raising aspirations and broadening the experience of education for students in partner schools. A further objective is to support and inspire school staff across the partnership and to encourage teachers to learn with and from each other in working towards BEP's aims.

BEPs' main projects are the BEP Oracy Project, the BEP Climate Challenge, BEP Careers Events and the organisation of Bristol's annual Teacherfest. The focus of this report is the BEP Oracy Project which was set up to improve the communication skills and confidence of children coming from disadvantaged backgrounds.



# BEP ORACY PROJECT OVERVIEW

The work to promote oracy in partner schools currently comprises:

**Oracy Pioneers Programme** – training students to be oracy mentors to support the development of communication skills and confidence in younger students in their schools.

**Voice 21 staff training programme** – supporting staff oracy champions at 4 partner state schools to participate in expert training provided by the charity Voice 21 in order to promote oracy at their own schools.

**BEP Youth Talks** – trialling a BEP version of TEDx by supporting and training BEP students to develop their public speaking skills – culminating in a BEP wide event in Autumn 2023.

**Whole school development of oracy** – building oracy as a whole school priority in partner schools.

**BEP Oracy Day** – bringing together staff and students involved in the Oracy Project to review progress and co-plan next steps.

Alongside this work, oracy features in all BEP projects, for example:

- **The BEP Climate Challenge Project** prioritises student presentations about the work at their own schools. As part of a BEP conference in Autumn 2022 for example, students received training on how to present powerfully to a large audience.
- **BEP Careers Events** promote opportunities for students to prepare and present feedback to others in their own schools, thereby extending the reach of events to a wider cohort of students and foregrounding the role that students can play through making presentations to other students.
- **Bristol Teacherfest 2023** includes a session led by students from the BEP Student Partnership Board to present a project that they have done on learning and teaching. The aim is to share their findings about how students learn most effectively with BEP leaders and staff.
- **The BEP Student Leadership Programme** involves students working in small groups to carry out a social action project in their school communities and presenting their work to staff and other students at the final assessment day for the programme. The programme also includes a dedicated session on Communication and Presentation Skills.



*Oracy is front and centre of the work we do around literacy and skills, identifying and embracing it as the key skill that opens doors to opportunities that meet local, regional and national need, be that academic or employment progression*

**Vicki Haigh, Oracy Lead Teacher, St Brendan's Sixth Form College**

*The Oracy Project has proved to be a great success and has provided many of our pupils with the essential skills, as well as the confidence required, for public speaking. The Project feeds into many areas of school life and the wider curriculum such as our House Debate competition and the delivery of school assemblies. Many of our pupils have gained a great deal from coaching and supporting their peers. This year Clifton College will collaborate with Cotham School in a new initiative to promote and further enhance the delivery of oracy across both schools.*

**Dan Janke, Oracy Lead Teacher, Clifton College**



# ORACY PIONEERS STUDENT TRAINING PROGRAMME

Students from 8 partner schools trained to become Oracy Pioneers during the academic year 2022-23. The programme was led once again by [Unique Voice](#), who ran the training sessions in February and March to help the students develop inspiring and engaging workshops to deliver to younger students

in their own schools, in order to build their confidence and oracy skills. The in-school workshops will be run over the summer term and the Oracy Pioneers will then reconvene at the BEP Oracy Day in June to reflect on their workshops and help plan how to take the project forward.



# FEEDBACK FROM THE ORACY PIONEERS TRAINING PROGRAMME

## What did you find valuable about the training?

### Student Feedback

- I have learned the deeper meaning of empathy
- The only real fear is lack of confidence
- Learning that confidence can come from failure followed by perseverance
- It improved my confidence especially with people I do not know
- Meeting lots of new people who are all passionate about something
- Speaking confidently
- Body awareness when listening and speaking
- I enjoyed the activities and valued the safe space
- Learning the components of being able to speak well and come across in the best way I can
- Talking with people that I didn't know. And people that didn't judge me
- Practising techniques to engage with different people
- Learning that listening is part of the conversation
- I liked how open conversations are able to be and with no judgements passed or held against anyone
- I enjoyed all the different activities
- I will remember the funny moments that happened
- Building trust so that sharing of ideas seemed less daunting
- Cooperation with others; public speaking in front of strangers; coping with pressure and developing confidence

### Staff Feedback

- To see the students working so well together and supporting each other
- Students from different schools interacting: it's really empowering for them
- I have gathered lots of ideas for exercises and activities to develop oracy skills at our school
- Hearing students' views on opportunities to speak in school, particularly what they feel is stopping them (eg not being taught how to speak)
- It was very engaging and well-presented. Even as a member of staff I have learned from today



*From our point of view, the students certainly seem to have enjoyed the sessions and have brought back lots of ideas for how to organise sessions to engage younger students. There was a good balance of presentation and active participation. Our Year 9 Oracy Pioneers have found it really useful being given lots of practical activities to use in developing skills with younger students. They certainly wouldn't have had the skills or confidence to do this before.*

Elizabeth White, English Teacher, Redmaids' High School



# VOICE 21 STAFF TRAINING PROGRAMME

Four state schools were funded to join the Voice 21 Membership and Training Programme for 2022-23 – which means that all the state schools within BEP are now part of this programme. (The other 2 partner state schools were already members). Each school identified staff Oracy

Champions to lead the work in their own schools. They also each identified an area of focus for the year. The feedback from schools to date has been positive with colleagues finding the programme inspiring and valuable.



*Three members of Bristol Free School have attended two training days which were brilliant. As someone new to oracy as a specific teaching concept this was a fantastic introduction and also has practically helped us to introduce it to the wider BFS team. This training was invaluable, and we have subsequently run CPD sessions for the teaching community in school. I have used a variety of V21 resources including creating a speech competition which could lead to students competing in a national competition.*

**Lauren Corrigan, Bristol Free School Oracy Lead**

*We have made some very promising inroads in improving our oracy practice at Cotham. We have customised the oracy framework to create bespoke ones for each subject, for example the History Oracy Framework on which faculty leads collaborated. This really helped with buy-in across the school. Teachers focused on think, pair, share activities and, more recently, talk tactics to ensure students are given the structure and language to express their opinions. Voice 21 membership has provided the support and guidance to ensure that our oracy work is of increasing quality and that the benefits of confident speaking are made explicit to our students.*

**Jo Oxenham, Cotham School Oracy Lead**

# FEEDBACK FROM VOICE 21

The School Relationship Officer at Voice 21 has been impressed with the progress at BEP schools and some of the comments from her report are given below:

## ***Cotham School***

Our Programme Lead observed some brilliant oracy teaching practice from the Oracy Champions in both English and History lessons. Across the school, staff are using oracy resources such as guidelines, oracy framework, sentence stems and proof of listening. Each faculty has created their own Oracy Framework that focuses on specific skills needed to support that subject.

## ***St Brendan's Sixth Form College***

There is an excellent team at the college who are really committed to embedding oracy. They have recently had OFSTED and oracy was an area they used to show how they are promoting independence amongst students. They are still working on getting teaching practice around oracy consistent across staff and have been working on college-wide discussion guidelines that are linked to the school values. They are working towards making sure all classes use the Oracy Framework, new discussion guidelines, talk tactics and sentence stems. They have plans to trial a student forum with the oracy team to ask the pupil voice questions to gain an insight on what more is needed.

## ***Bristol Free School***

The Oracy Team at BFS has got off to a great start. They have been trialling Voice 21 strategies and have already seen impact. One Oracy Champion has written a whole scheme of learning for English to test if oracy can be used to teach exam essay responses. He found that the responses were just as good but that the enjoyment and focus of the students had increased hugely. He is now going to alter how he teaches exam lessons as a result. The School Lead is going to do a CPD session with staff around dialogic talk, with a particular focus on the Oracy Framework and the Talk Tactics. They would also like to implement some kind of oracy assessment in their English and core lessons. The school has really bought into their work with Voice 21 and time has been allotted for the whole school oracy CPD across the coming terms.

## ***Fairfield High School***

Fairfield High School has a strong Oracy Team across RE, Geography and Modern Languages who have attended two Development Days. They will now be focusing on the Oracy Champions developing their practice in the summer term and planning for more sharing of practice next academic year.





# BEP YOUTH TALKS

This year has seen the launch of a new element of the BEP Oracy Project. BEP Youth Talks is the BEP equivalent of TedX and is being trialled this year with 6 of our partner schools.

We are working on this programme with [Ignited Presenting](#) and the programme started with IP Ambassadors, young professionals who have participated in Bristol TedX, going into participating schools to lead assemblies to talk to young people about the value of developing public speaking and communication skills for life and careers, not just for school. Following these assemblies, students applied to be part of the programme.

The next stage, happening over the spring, is for Ignited Presenting to run workshops for selected students to develop their talks and their presentation skills. Each school will then host an in-school event over the summer for all their selected speakers to present to an audience of students/ teachers/ parents/ governors. The culmination of this pilot project will be for outstanding presentations to be selected for a BEP-wide event in Autumn 2023 which will take place at the 1532 Theatre at Bristol Grammar School. The top presenters will be given the opportunity to participate in Bristol TedX.

Following the final event, we will reflect on the pilot as a whole and discuss how to take the programme forward next year, possibly as part of TedX.



# CONCLUDING COMMENTS

The BEP Oracy Project continues to go from strength to strength. There has been a step change this year with the funding generously provided for 4 partner schools to be part of the Voice 21 programme. This is giving impetus to the aspiration for oracy to be a whole school priority across the partnership. We are also excited to be working with Ignited Presenting to raise the profile and practice of public speaking across BEP.

As ever, young people are central to this work, and their voices will be part of the project review and evaluation which will take place at the Oracy Day in June 2023.

BEP is grateful to the Comino Foundation and to Clifton College for their support for this project. We are looking forward to the next academic year and to further embedding oracy across the partnership.

Fiona Carnie, Project Lead  
May 2023

