

# Bridging the Word Gap at Transition



# A bit about us ...

- Broken Cross Primary Academy and Nursery serves an area with

high unemployment in Macclesfield, once a thriving industrial and silk-manufacturing town.

- Almost all pupils are of white British origin. Over the last 5 years we have grown from 64 pupils (including a part time nursery) to 177 pupils (including a full time nursery with wrap around care). Oh, and Bob the dog.



# Having an oracy lead

- We have a separate Oracy lead as well as leads for Reading, and Writing.
- The lead teacher for oracy has undertaken Voice 21's 3-day course and develops yearly oracy action plans for the school.
- All staff receive training on good classroom oracy practice and have been trained in the 'Word Aware' approach to building vocabulary.



# Nursery – where it all begins



- Our nursery offers places to two-year-olds as well as older children, and developing spoken language skills is a major focus of its work.
- Very generous staffing ratios at the start of the year make it possible for adults to have many **back-and-forth** conversations with children.
- This year the school will also offer the evidence-based NELI (Nuffield Early Language Intervention Programme) to children in Reception who need help with their language.



# Reading for Pleasure



- We place a huge emphasis on reading for pleasure. A few years ago every child received a free gift of a pack of books to create a home library.
- Children are encouraged to borrow lots of books to read at home, and no-one will be worried if they don't return them.
- Parents have become enthusiastic about reading and enjoy challenges and competitions at parents' evenings, in which they record themselves reading aloud.
- <https://researchrichpedagogies.org/research/reading-for-pleasure>

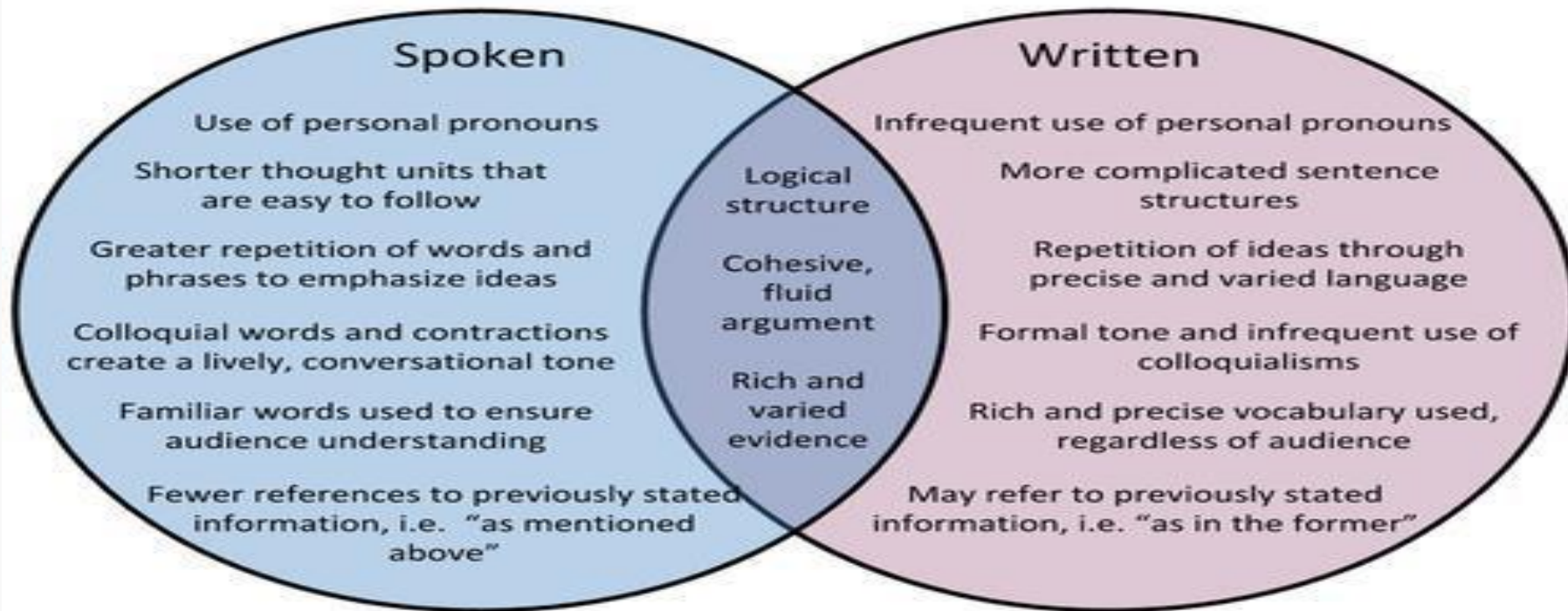
# Speak my language ....

- We put a lot of thought and effort into how we communicate with families.
- Staff take care to ‘speak the language of our parents’; an example is ‘Book and butty time’ when parents get a bacon butty in the school hall when they come in to share a book with their child.
- Feedback Friday

# The Language of Behaviour and Social and Emotional Learning

- When I joined Broken Cross Primary, there had been 43 fixed term exclusions in the past year. In the five years since, there has been only one. Our behaviour policy is tight, but each child is treated as an individual.
- There is a social and emotional learning programme (Zippy's Friends) for all children in Y1 and 2, and in KS2 a programme called Mind Mechanics, an evidence-based wellbeing intervention, which helps children manage big emotions and improve their mental health.
- The programme teaches a set of sustainable skills and strategies to help children understand what is going on in their bodies and heads and self-manage overwhelming feelings. It is delivered in small groups to targeted children but the aim is that by the end of KS2 every child will have taken part.

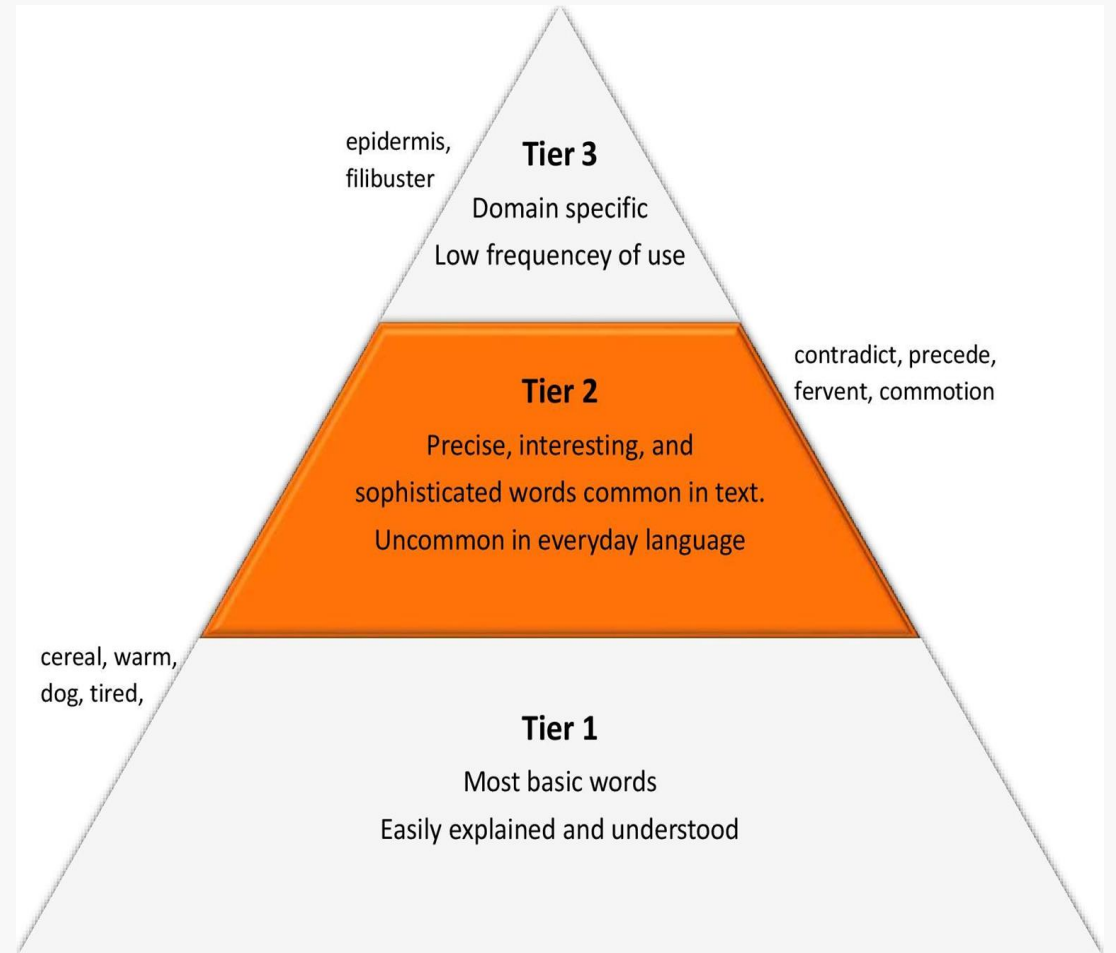
# Spoken Vs Written Language





# Oracy in the curriculum

- Subject specific vocabulary
- Listening ladders
- Vocabulary bullseye
- Sentence stems
- Tiered vocabulary
- Vocabulary wall
- Circular assemblies



# Celebrations are important

We host special sessions which are smaller and more intimate than normal, these include:

- Class assemblies
- Class recitals
- Christmas advent
- Lockdown assemblies and celebration



# Be Brave – it can really pay off

- Four years ago we set up our own specialist provision for children with persistent, significant language difficulties, as a response to the numbers of children coming through from the nursery with significant needs. The provision is led by a specialist teacher, whose expertise has had a huge knock-on effect on all staff.
- Local Authority support is now in place and we are now the only primary, Enhanced Mainstream Provision within our LA and they are looking to roll the model out to other schools.

# 3 Things We Would Recommend

- Prioritise oracy
- Early intervention, early intervention early intervention .....
- Provide cross school training where ever possible to provide a minimum level of knowledge and skills for all staff. Further layers of training can be developed based on particular need.

Level the playing field: please teach oracy skills in the curriculum

# Ongoing project – one to watch

- *The Linguistic Challenges of the Transition, ESRC-funded project*, based at the School of Education at the University of Leeds, aims to identify the differences between the academic language that students encounter at the end of primary school and at the start of secondary school.

*If you are interested in learning more about vocabulary at the transition, then sign-up for our **free twilight, 3.45–5pm** on April 22<sup>nd</sup> here: <https://researchschool.org.uk/...>*



# Thanks for listening

- Thank you for listening to our story. If you have any further questions following this meeting please don't hesitate to contact us;
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