



Supporting primary and secondary schools across Essex and East London, BMAT is a growing multi-academy trust with a singular vision: **schools, teachers and pupils freed to succeed.**

# Cooks Spinney Primary Academy

Tackling the Language Gap – June 2021

Schools Partnership Programme



# Areas of Focus

*'Be specific. Focus on the causes, not the symptoms...The key to unlocking educational opportunity is literacy. Pastoral and enrichment approaches matter, but literacy, rooted in oral language must be at the heart of every strategy.'*

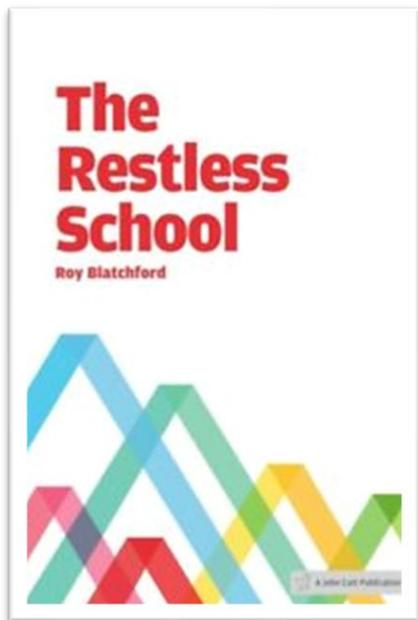
*Marc Rowland, Research School Network*

Cooks Spinney's strategy aims to reduce all aspects of inequality. Our approach is rooted in tackling the literacy gap in the classroom and other significant causes of disadvantage.

We work hard to address:

- **Fluency in reading *and/or* limited vocabulary** – We will help all pupils access the wider school curriculum through reading.
- **Oral communication skills** – We will ensure pupils can demonstrate their understanding, express their feelings and ask questions.
- **Self-esteem and confidence** – Pupils must feel successful in their learning and aware of their value to the school.
- **Improving staff knowledge and skills** – Staff must be aware of, and equipped to tackle, the barriers facing our disadvantaged pupils.
- **Labelling and bias** – All staff must be objective in the pursuit of high expectations for all pupils regardless of background.

*“Whatever else we do for children and young people in classrooms, we must give them the dignity of being able to speak, read and write with fluency.”*



Roy Blatchford

# Our Plan

- 1. Learn from others**
- 2. Improve teacher knowledge and confidence**
- 3. Develop a culture of oracy**
- 4. Improve the quality of texts in the curriculum**





# 1. Learn from others

### **School 21**

Modelling and structure when teaching oracy and vocabulary, for example, the use of sentence stems. They also focus on the amount of time children are encouraged to speak in school. Oracy is built into the school day at every opportunity.

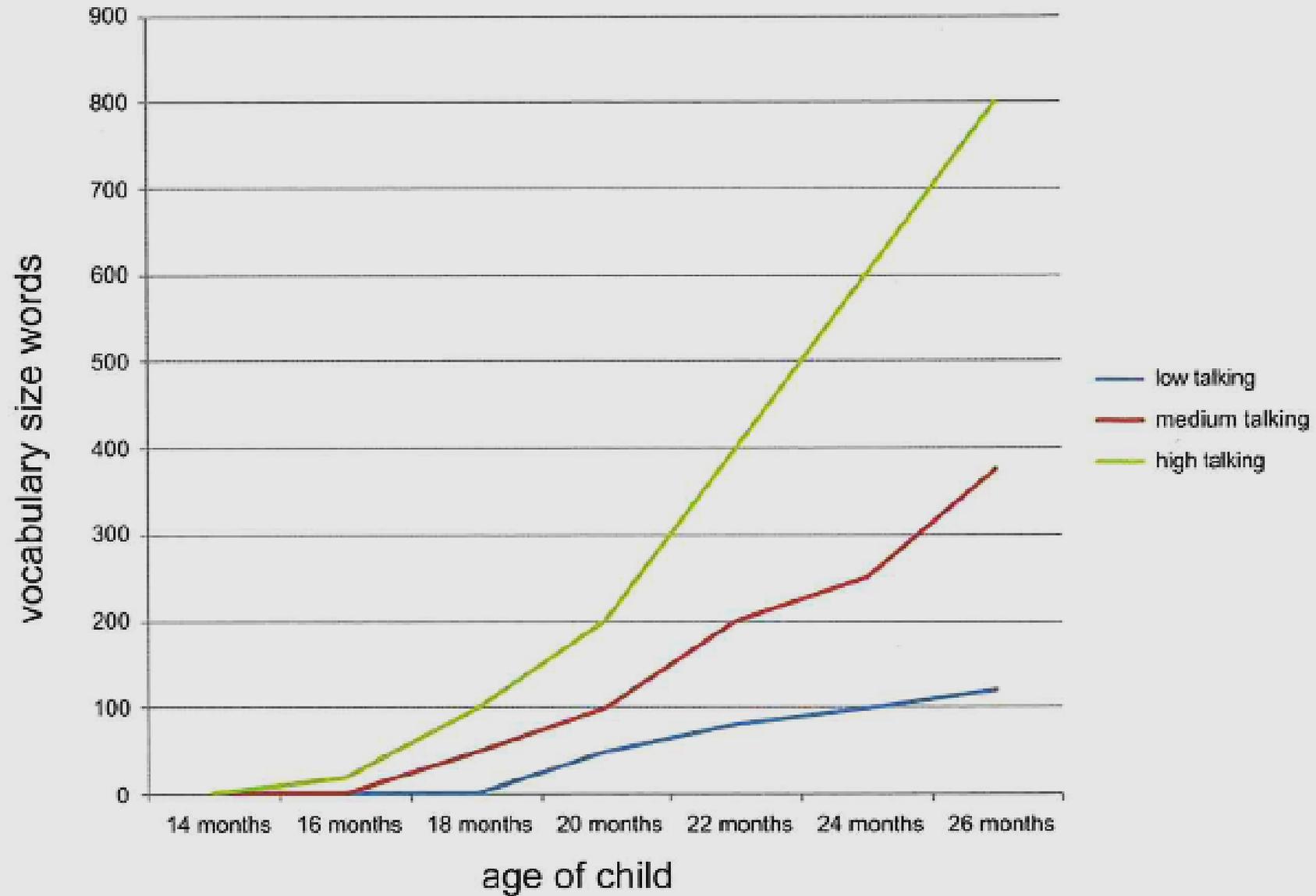
*Sandringham* helped us realise the importance of high-quality texts. Texts need to be carefully curated based on their content, challenge and richness of vocabulary.

*Francis de Salle* helped us understand that oracy and vocabulary must hold a high status in the school. This was coupled with exceptionally high expectations for oracy and vocabulary.

A group of people in a meeting or workshop, with several individuals raising their hands. The scene is dimly lit with a warm, yellowish glow. The text is overlaid in the center.

## **2. Build Teacher Knowledge and Confidence**

## Levels of Mothers Speech to their child – Huttenlocher et al 1991



# The Importance of Vocabulary

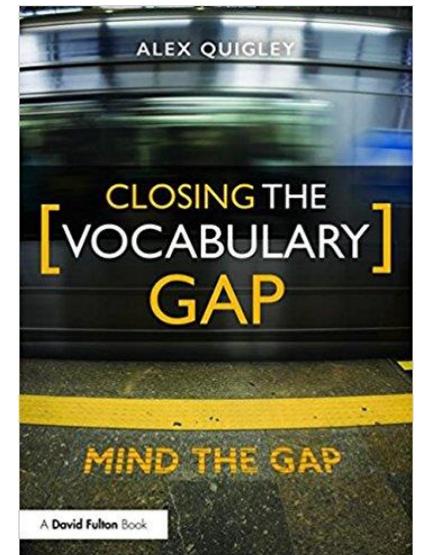
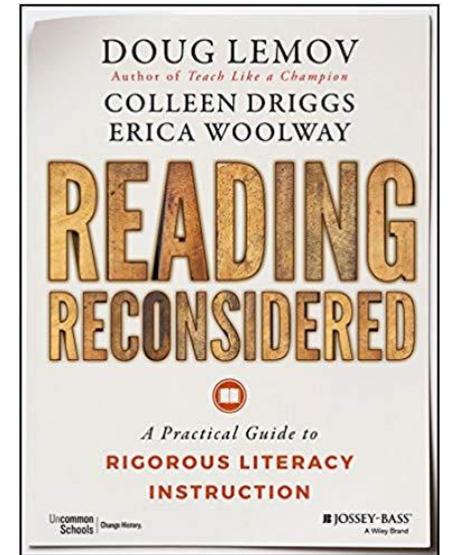
*‘Vocabulary size is a convenient proxy for a whole range of educational attainments and abilities – not just skill in reading, writing, listening, and speaking, but also general knowledge of science, history and the arts.’*

E.D. Hirsch Jr. (2013) *A Wealth of Words: The key to increasing upward mobility is expanding vocabulary.*

<https://www.city-journal.org/html/wealth-words-13523.html>

# Addressing Limited Vocabulary

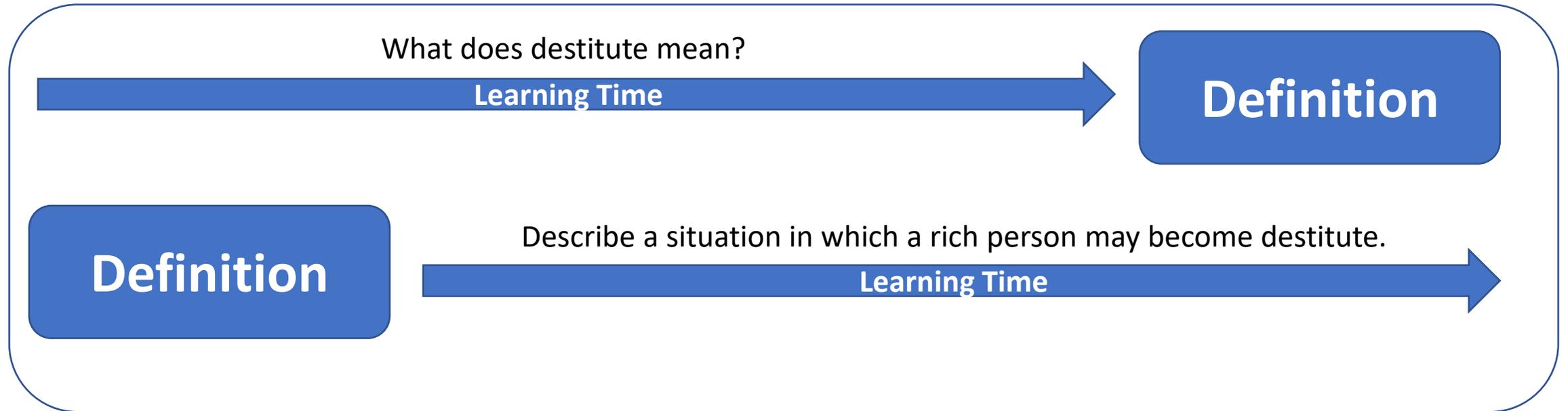
- The vocabulary gap starts at a very young age – by the age of 3, 50% of language is in place. By the age of 5 it's 85%.
- By the age of 4, the brain is 90% of its adult size.
- Explicit teaching of vocabulary in every lesson (tier 2 words) will help all learners, not just the disadvantaged.
- 400 words taught explicitly can equal 4000 words learned independently.
- Teach word depth.
- Develop word consciousness.
- Example teaching practice available.



# Vocabulary Instruction – SEEC Model

**Select** – Tier Two words relevant to lesson.

**Explain** –



**Explore** – Synonyms, antonyms, etymology

**Consolidate** - e.g. write a sentence using the words 'because' and 'destitute'.

# Vocabulary Instruction – Year 3 HISTORY

Word	Definition	Related words	Sentence	Image
<p><b>Astonished</b> Adjective</p>	<p>Greatly surprised or impressed: <i>amazed</i></p>	<p><i>Astonishing</i> (Adjective)</p>	<p>People were <b><i>astonished</i></b> by Henry VIII's actions.</p>	
<p><b>Avaricious</b> Adjective</p>	<p>An extremely strong wish to get or keep money or possessions</p>	<p><i>Greed</i> (Synonym) (noun)</p>	<p>Even though the King had all the riches in the world, this <b><i>avaricious</i></b> leader always wanted more.</p>	
<p><b>Seized</b> Verb</p>	<p>Take hold of something suddenly and forcibly</p>	<p>Seize (Present tense verb)</p>	<p>Henry <b>seized</b> his chance.</p>	

# Teaching of reading – whole class reading

## Before

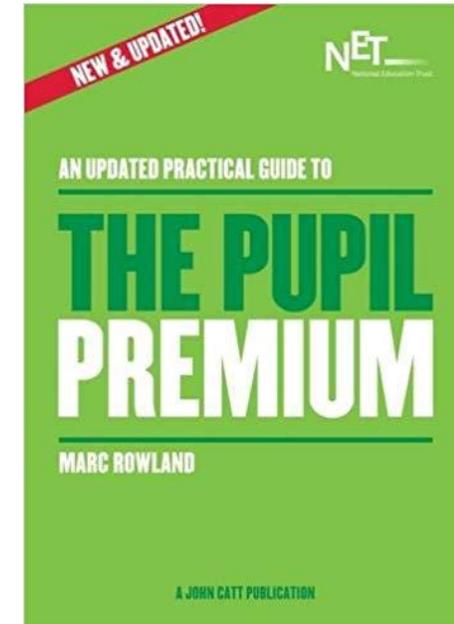
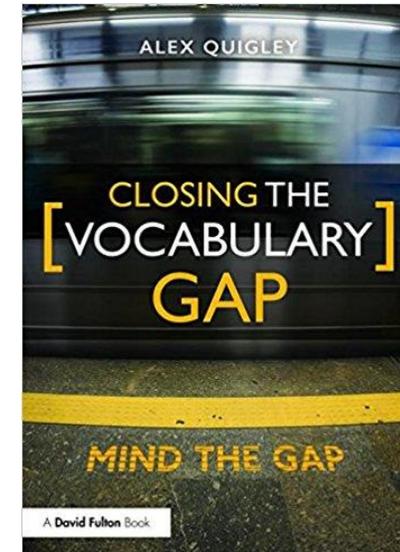
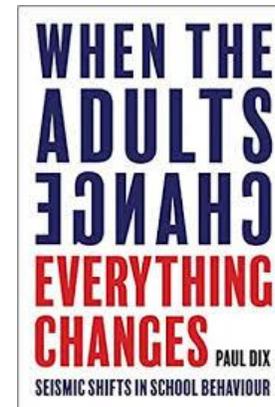
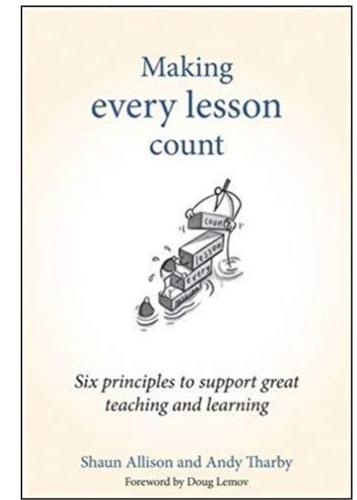
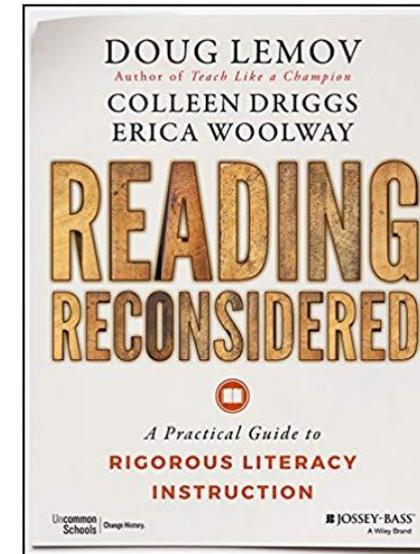
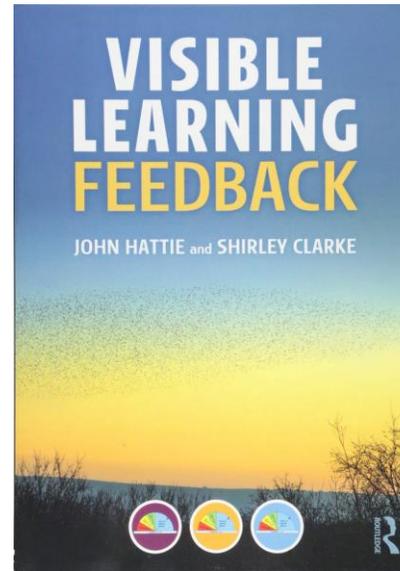
- Carousel reading
- Limited reading time
- No specific teaching of vocabulary
- Low expectations
- Pupils can choose to opt-out
- Limited listening time
- Limited opportunities for pupils to discuss
- Pupils sharing books or photocopies of books
- Variability in quality of texts

## After

- Increase in reading time
- Explicit vocabulary teaching
- One book per pupil
- Whole-class reading
- Book club style lessons
- No option to opt-out of learning
- Higher expectations
- Increase in listening time
- Increase in discussion and academic language
- High quality of texts

# CPD – a modular approach

1. Texts are selected based on school improvement plan.
2. Facilitator ‘pitches’ their text (module) to staff.
3. Staff select their module.
4. 6-8 weeks of book club style sessions (groups of 5-8).
5. Staff present findings to colleagues and propose next steps.
6. Groups follow-up on next steps.



A person is standing in a field, looking at a large screen that displays a collage of various images, including a dog, a person, and a landscape. The scene is dimly lit, suggesting dusk or dawn.

# **3. Develop a culture of oracy**

# The Importance of Oracy

“Understanding is fostered through discussions and collaboration.”

- *Jerome Bruner*

<https://researchschool.org.uk/billesley/news/>

<https://www.oneeducation.co.uk/news-blog/silence-is-not-golden-the-importance-of-improving-oracy>

<https://www.jct.ie/perch/resources/english/classroomtalk-whattheresearchsays.pdf>

# A Culture of Oracy

- Pupils stand to speak. Pupils speak in full sentences
- Spinney Speaks Assemblies
- Spinney Speaks Lessons (PSHE)
- Collaborative learning approach - <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/evidence-summaries/teaching-learning-toolkit/collaborative-learning/>
- Debating Club
- All staff modelling articulatory



## ***We are Adaptable***

- We can find new ways of doing things
- We can work independently or as a team
- We embrace change

## ***We are Articulate***

- We communicate clearly and confidently
- We use our words to explain, entertain and inform
- We consider what we say

## ***We are Ambitious***

- We know what we want to achieve
- We work relentlessly to reach our goals
- Nothing can stop us

## ***We are Adventurous***

- We are not afraid to try new things
- We relish new challenges
- We're not scared to be proven wrong

## ***We are Altruistic***

- We consider the feelings of others
- We help people in need
- We are nurturing to all



# We are *Articulate*

- ❑ We communicate clearly and confidently
- ❑ We use our words to explain, entertain and inform
- ❑ We consider what we say

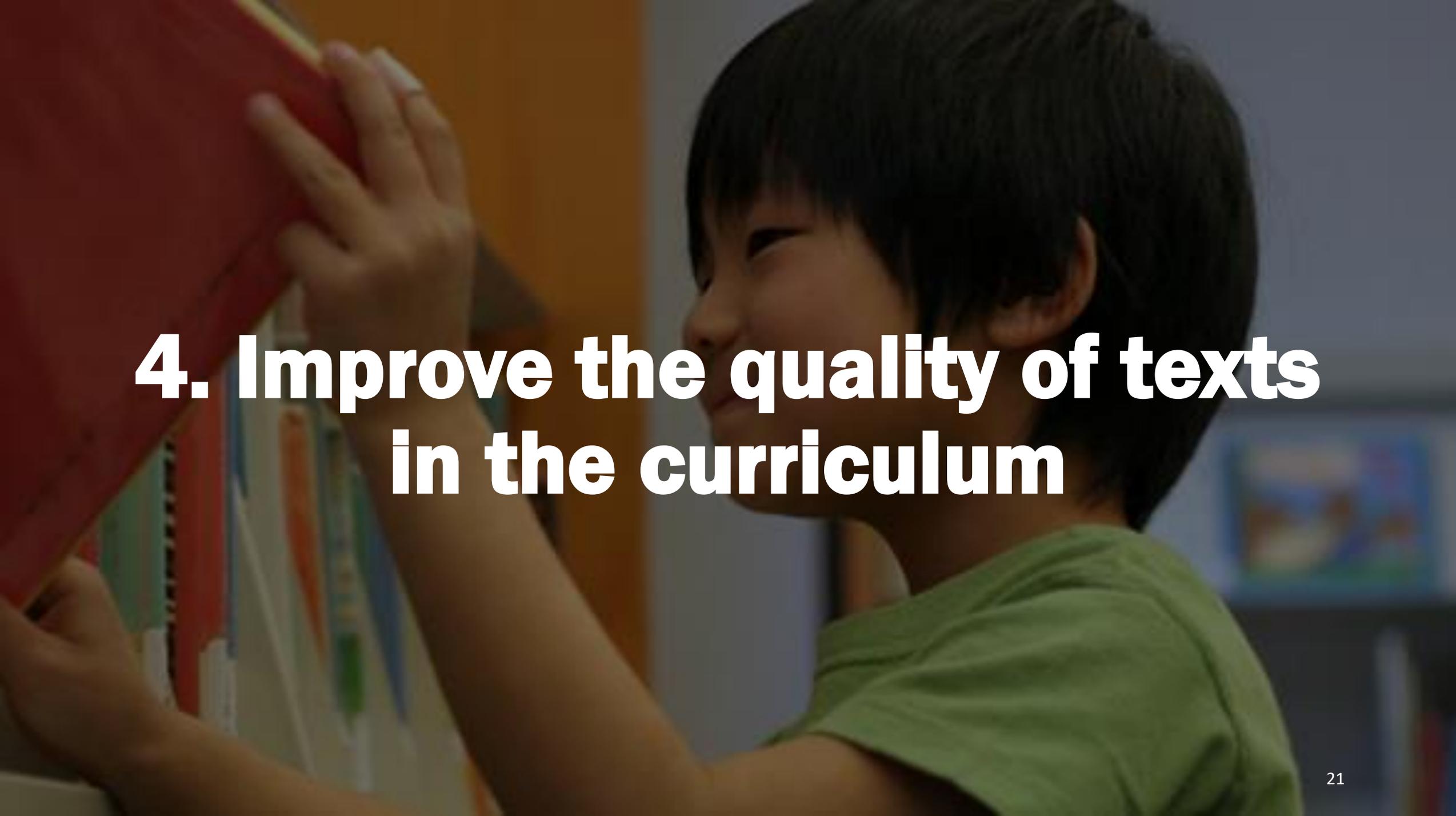




# Oral Communication

Things the school had to consider:

- Do children get the opportunity to speak? How often?
- Are pupils taught to collaborate? Are some pupils dominating?
- Are pupils given the chance to demonstrate their understanding verbally?
- Is discussion planned for?
- What is the provision for pupils with Speech and Language difficulties? 1 in 10 children may struggle
- [ican.org.uk/](http://ican.org.uk/)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NG50fv-B3Uk>

A young child with dark hair, wearing a green t-shirt, is shown in profile, looking intently at a book held up by an adult's hands. The child is in a library or classroom setting, with bookshelves visible in the background. The text "4. Improve the quality of texts in the curriculum" is overlaid in large, bold, white font across the center of the image.

## **4. Improve the quality of texts in the curriculum**

# Literacy Canon

Yr1
Yr2
Yr3
Yr4
Yr5
Yr6





## Expectation of all learners including disadvantaged - desired impact over time

*By the end of year 6:*

### Expectation

Pupils can read fluently.

Pupils are confident in their ability.

Pupils are confident communicating with peers, adults and large groups.

Pupils will leave our school culturally enriched. They will hopefully enjoy conversations about art, literature, politics, music, history, or any other culturally significant topic.

‘Word consciousness’ - Pupils show curiosity and interest in words - their meaning and origin.



**Thank you.**

**Any questions?**

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