



The Cottenham Primary School Vocabulary Pathway

“The word is the world...”





Rationale

This pathway has been designed by the staff at CPS with the explicit intention of ensuring equity of opportunity and provision for all our children in order for them to acquire a sufficiently rich vocabulary, enabling them to be successful and skilled readers. This will, in turn, drive their academic achievement and their increasing cultural literacy.

Introduction

The *CPS Vocabulary Pathway* is designed in line with the principles contained within *Bringing Words to Life* (Beck, et al., 2013), which uses a system of categorising words according to the frequency and utility.

Consequently, Tier 1 words are the most basic type, which typically appear in oral conversations, so that children are exposed to them at high frequency from a very early age. As they rarely require instruction and attention to their meanings in school, they will not feature in the *CPS Vocabulary Pathway*.

Tier 2 comprises wide-ranging words of high utility for literate language users. They are words that are more characteristic of written language and not so common in conversation. Typically, in the vast majority of cases, Tier 2 words will be introduced during English lessons, and then reinforced throughout the school day. They will also be the focus of the *CPS Vocabulary Pathway*.

Tier 3 words have a frequency of use that is quite low and often limited to specific topics and domains. The instruction around Tier 3 words will, therefore, take place within domain specific lessons. They will also be identified on the relevant Knowledge Organiser.

The research available emphasises the need to ‘seed the environment’ with selected words in order to maximise the children’s ability to truly understand a word’s meaning. Therefore, there is a requirement for adults working with the children at CPS to promote and accurately use rich and sophisticated language across a range of contexts – with the express aim of enabling children to convey and understand ideas and concepts. This will require a whole-school approach, and also the support and involvement of key adults in the children’s lives.





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1. Planning for delivery of Tier 2 words within English sessions

The expectation is that teachers will plan for English in year groups, and that these meetings will identify the following:

- Text to be covered as part of lesson (eg., text to support TfW text type, or guided reading text, links to *CPS Literature Spine*)
- 3-5 Tier 2 words that will be covered across the week (and reference to any agreed word lists)
- Details of the RVI technique used (see *Techniques of RVI*, below), and recommended timings
- Suggestions for how the selected vocabulary can be used outside of the direct instruction

English plans signpost to specific *CPS Vocabulary Instruction Plan*, which will then capture these details, and be stored in-line with *The CPS Framework of Expectations*

Selection of Tier 2 vocabulary

For words to be considered worthy of direct instruction, teachers must ask the following questions:

1. Does the word appear in a text that the children have been exposed to or will be exposed to?
2. Is that text on the English plan?
3. Does the word have importance and utility? (i.e., words that are characteristic of written text, and which appear frequently across a variety of domains)
4. Would the children be able to express the concept of the word by using other words already well known to them?
5. Does the word have 'instructional potential'? (i.e., words that are more than one-dimensional and offer a variety of contexts and uses to explore)





Techniques of Robust Vocabulary Instruction (RVI)

Teachers will continue to plan in year groups, and will be expected to contribute to the planning discussion, identifying Tier 2 vocabulary, its context and the specific technique of RVI that is most appropriate for the effective delivery of chosen words. The RVI technique will come from *Appendix A* from *BWtL*. It will be recorded on the *CPS Vocabulary Instruction Plan (VIP)* (see *Appendix B* for example). Any scaffold that the children will be using, will also be identified and standardised at the planning meeting; along with agreement of how the children will record their responses.

2. Development of word-rich environments

Display

As stated in the introduction, the efficacy of the school's work to significantly improve the breadth and depth of the children's vocabulary, requires us to 'seed' the school environment with rich vocabulary. The consistent use of high-quality display across the school, not least in the classrooms, is of vital importance in driving this (see *Appendix C* for examples).

Therefore, every classroom will be required to have the following display:

- A Word Working Wall. This needs to be a dynamic and reactive display – which is explicit about the current vocabulary studied and any prompts/scaffolds to support the children's true understanding of the word. The words on the Working Wall will be those words that have been identified in the planning phase (see above).
- Tier 3 and Tier 2 words that form part of the subject specific topics that are being covered
- Celebration of the class's *Word Warriors*

Usage in class

Linked to the use of display across the school, the expectation will be that teachers and supporting adults, all demonstrate and model an enthusiasm and curiosity around the development of vocabulary. Therefore, a high profile will be given to the use of





identified vocabulary (see planning section above), and the recognition and celebration of those children who are demonstrating an appetite to experiment with their word choices. This will include the sharing of praise (WAGOLLS), the encouragement of children to stretch themselves through independent use of dictionaries, thesauruses and other resources, as well as EBIs and build-ons.

These will be recognised through the existing channels (House Points, Certificates, Weekly Themes, and CPS Newsletter articles), but can also form the basis of work by the School Council, English Curriculum Coordination Team, SLT and governors. There will also be wider celebration on the CPS Website and any other channels.

In addition, the partnership with parents and carers will be vital. This will take the form of homework tasks, and also the encouragement of parents to feedback to teachers about their child's accurate use of ambitious vocabulary outside of school. The *Word Warrior* initiative will seek to address this, and parents/carers will be informed of its importance at CPS. Year Teams will discuss and agree on the format of school/home communication about the child's vocabulary use away from school.

3. Assessment systems

The assessment methods that are used at CPS are designed to support the overall goal of all children possessing a wide and rich vocabulary. The approach to assessment will sit within the school's emphasis on the primacy of formative assessment, and the manifestation of this at CPS with the *Teach Like a Champion (TLAC)* techniques; which require teachers to design targeted questions to check for understanding.

However, some form of summative assessment will be required to assess the impact of vocabulary instruction, as well as to identify those children who are not making the same progress as their peers, and, crucially, what then needs to happen in order to accelerate their catch up. This will be particularly important for those pupils who are entering the school, including Early Years children and those children joining from other schools.





These methods need to be cognizant of workload – as well as ensuring reliable and valid information is elicited. Therefore, assessment snapshots can be aligned to current methods of measuring understanding at CPS, including:

- High frequency, low stakes quizzes (eg., multiple choice tests, with pupils given the option of 4 definitions for a word; ‘true/false’ choices (which could then involve the children having to give an explanation for their choice); ‘example/non example’ (again, potentially asking children to justify their answer); and for younger children in particular, ‘yes/no’ questions, with the teacher or supporting adult asking multiple questions related to individual Tier 2 words).
- Cold and hot task, with children being provided with a writing prompt, which is then repeated after a period of time, and the frequency and accuracy of Tier 2 words is compared.
- Independent use of Tier 2/Tier3 vocabulary in a child’s writing across the curriculum (including *TfW*).
- *Accelerated Reader* tests (Y3 & Y4).
- End of term tests, with a similar format to the high-frequency, low-stakes quizzes above.

4. Support and Catch up

An emphasis will be placed on ensuring that children entering their Reception year at CPS will be at a certain minimum threshold in their vocabulary development. This will require an intense focus on supporting the accelerated acquisition of certain words. For those pupils with a recognised vulnerability to ‘word poverty’ the response will be governed by the individual level of need of the child, as well as what stage the child is in their primary education.

RVI may be supplemented by a range of tactics, including: pre-teaching of specific words; word banks; Speech and Language Intervention; 1:1 or small group word-work with a supporting adult; specific software which is designed to promote vocabulary acquisition.

Children on the school’s SEND Register, will receive an adapted (and for certain pupils, bespoke) programme of support and intervention, where this is deemed to be appropriate. These will be collaboratively defined by the class teacher and the SENCO, and shared with the key adults supporting the child.





10. Professional Development

Dedicated directed time will be allocated to ensure the successful implementation of the *CPS Vocabulary Pathway*. This will include a focus at Staff Meetings, Team Meetings and TA Meetings, across the year. The *CPS Vocabulary Pathway Working Party* will be heavily involved in the design and delivery of the professional development, and the English Curriculum Coordination Team will carry out monitoring and evaluation of the impact of its implementation, across the year. Outcomes will be shared with SLT and governors.

Staff induction procedures will also be amended to include the *CPS Vocabulary Pathway*, as will the *CPS Framework of Expectations*. School Leaders will be responsible for sourcing high-quality training for colleagues across the school – and this will include the professional development offered by significant strategic partners, including University of South Florida, Inspiration Teaching School Alliance, The Knowledge Schools Trust (who are developing a Word Gap project), and Cambridgeshire Speech and Language Service.

