

English Speaking Board (International) Ltd. 

## Oracy Assessment Impact Report

**Academic Year 2021 – 2022**



This page is intentionally left  
blank.

## **Contents**

Introduction .....	5
Executive Summary.....	7
Chapter 1: Primary Level.....	12
1.1 Centre Profiles.....	13
1.2 Context and literature review.....	14
1.3 Data collection and analysis.....	16
1.4 Findings and Discussion .....	17
1.4.1 Teacher Voice.....	17
1.4.2 Learner Voice .....	22
1.4.3 Qualification Results .....	28
1.5 Limitations, conclusions, and future directions.....	29
Chapter 2: Secondary Level .....	30
2.1 Centre Profiles.....	31
2.2 Context and literature review.....	32
2.3 Data collection and analysis.....	34
2.4 Findings and Discussion .....	35
2.4.1 Teacher Voice.....	35
2.4.2 Learner Voice .....	40
2.4.3 Qualification Results .....	48
2.5 Limitations, conclusions, and future directions.....	49
References .....	50
Appendix .....	52
i) Qualification Information – Primary Level.....	52
ESB Early Steps 1 – Speaking Together .....	52
ESB Entry Level Award in Group Speaking (Entry 3) .....	53
ESB Pre-Entry Level Award in Speech .....	54
ESB Entry Level Award in Speech (Entry 1) .....	55
ESB Entry Level Award in Speech (Entry 2) .....	56
ESB Entry Level Award in Speech (Entry 3) .....	57
ESB Level 1 Award in Speech (Grade 1) .....	58
ESB Level 1 Award in Debating .....	59
ii) Qualification Information – Secondary Level.....	60

ESB Level 1 Award in Group Speaking .....	60
ESB Level 1 Award in Using Oral Skills for Interviews .....	61
ESB Level 1 Award in Speech (Grade 2) Speech to Connect .....	62
ESB Level 1 Award in Speech (Grade 2) Speech to Inform.....	63
ESB Level 1 Award in Speech (Grade 2) Speech for Employability .....	64
ESB Level 1 Award in Speech (Grade 3) .....	65
ESB Level 2 Certificate in Speech (Grade 4) Speech for Employability .....	66
ESB Level 3 Certificate in Speech (Grade 8) .....	67
iii) Secondary learners making progress, remaining the same, or decreasing in competence .....	68
iv) Teacher judgements at KS3, KS5, and for Employability Focus Assessments .....	72

## ***Introduction***

This is the English Speaking Board (International) Ltd. (ESB International) Oracy Impact Report for Primary (Early Years Foundation Stage and Key stages 1 and 2) and Secondary level centres (Key stages 3, 4 and 5) in the academic year 2021 – 2022.

ESB International has been successfully offering oracy qualifications to learners for 70 years and is confident of its impact promoting oracy in schools and empowering all learners – especially those individuals who need it the most – to develop the key speaking and listening skills they need to achieve their aspirations. ESB International qualifications give learners the tools to thrive in education, training and employment.

Schools have chosen to invest in additional opportunities for their learners to develop deep knowledge and skills in speaking and listening – oracy. Financial provision from the Christabel Burniston Fund, established in honour of ESB International’s founder, Christabel Burniston MBE, supports these schools with their level of investment. The fund seeks to ensure oracy opportunities for disadvantaged learners. Our aim is to reach as many organisations as possible where learners face disadvantage due to socio-economic factors, special educational needs and disabilities, and/or migration status, enabling access to ESB International qualifications and high-quality English language and oracy education.

ESB International assessments take place in groups, usually of six learners, and each learner is assessed individually whilst interacting with the group, teacher and the assessor. Face-to-face assessments are held in person, with a trained, standardised and moderated assessor coming to the centre. The qualifications used for this study can be found in [Appendix \(i\)](#).

Research from the Sutton Trust in February 2019, for the APPG on Social Mobility<sup>1</sup>, found that from the age of five, the UK’s most disadvantaged children can be 19 months behind their more affluent peers in vocabulary development and this deficit can have life-long consequences. Furthermore, ICAN’s 2021 report states that, ‘Children who have difficulties with speaking and listening... are four times less likely to gain a qualification in English and Maths.’<sup>2</sup> ESB International believes that learners who prepare for and undertake our assessments develop their comprehension skills as well as the ability to express opinions, explain, discuss, and analyse ideas and conduct research. By developing these skills in preparing for assessments, and then showing what they can do to an external assessor who comes to the learner’s centre, learners gain in confidence and also show improvements in their social and cognitive development.

---

<sup>1</sup> APPG on Social Mobility and the Sutton Trust (2019). Closing the Regional Attainment Gap. <https://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/APPG-2019.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> I CAN (2021). Speaking Up for the Covid Generation. <speaking-up-for-the-covid-generation-i-can-report.pdf> ([speechandlanguage.org.uk](http://speechandlanguage.org.uk))

The removal of National Curriculum levels and GCSE Speaking and Listening in 2014 has meant a removal of a national, standardised framework for assessing oracy. One of the benefits of preparing learners for our qualifications, and then having them assessed by rigorously trained and standardised external assessors, is that teachers are able to focus on developing their learners' oracy skills against a set of clear criteria, whilst raising the value and understanding of these skills in the classroom and beyond.

This report uses the data collected from learners and teachers or tutors to measure the impact of preparing for the oracy assessments supported by the Christabel Burniston Fund. Quantitative and qualitative data was collected before starting to prepare for the assessment and after the assessment day, collated and analysed for publication in this report. Through participation in our data collection exercises, it is our aim to demonstrate ESB International's impact in closing the disadvantage gap and to exemplify the value, validity, and benefits of externally assessed summative oracy assessments.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tina Renshaw', written in a cursive style.

Tina Renshaw BA Hons (Oxon), MA (Oxon), PGCE, PGCHRM,  
Chief Executive

## ***Executive Summary***

### ***Introduction***

English Speaking Board (International) Ltd. (ESB International) is an Ofqual-regulated awarding organisation offering oracy and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) qualifications to learners of all ages, in the UK and abroad. This report investigates the impact on primary level (Key stages 1 and 2) and secondary level (Key stages 3-5) learners of preparing for and completing an ESB International speech qualification. The report is based on data collected from learners and teachers or tutors supported by the Christabel Burniston Fund, which was established in honour of the founder of ESB International to provide access to oracy education for learners who would otherwise not have the opportunity. Quantitative and qualitative data was collected before starting to prepare for the assessment and after the assessment day, collated and analysed for publication in this report. Through participation in our data collection exercises, it is our aim to demonstrate ESB's impact in closing the disadvantage gap and to exemplify the value of externally assessed summative oracy assessments.

### ***Key Questions and Findings – Primary Level***

***1. Are there commonalities between elements of the disadvantage gap as identified by the EEF<sup>3</sup> and teachers' and learners' experiences of completing oracy qualifications with ESB International?***

- a. When asked, on a scale of 1-10, how much completing the ESB International qualification had helped to develop their learners' speaking and listening skills in the wake of the pandemic, teachers returned a mean average score of 8.7 and a median score of 9.
- b. Learners were judged to be more competent after preparing for and completing the assessment in their ability to speak using Standard English, and in their ability to articulate and justify themselves. This suggests an improvement in learners' knowledge of vocabulary and their ability to apply it appropriately to express themselves.
- c. Where 24.2% of learners strongly agreed that they felt happy to read aloud to the class in pre-assessment, this increased by 21.4% in the post-assessment questionnaire to 45.6%.
- d. Similarly, 20% more learners felt they could 'Strongly Agree' that they could ask questions to improve their knowledge and understanding.
- e. The proportion of learners who 'Strongly Agree' that they 'can use a range of vocabulary when speaking' increased by 13%.
- f. 10% more learners also 'Strongly Agree' that they could join in a discussion.

---

<sup>3</sup> EEF (2022). Impact of Covid-19-related school closures in Key Stage 1 on attainment and social skills of pupils in Year 2 and Year 3 in academic year 2021/2022. [https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/documents/projects/Impact-of-school-closure-in-KS1-on-Y2-and-3-pupils\\_publication-update.pdf?v=1676551951](https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/documents/projects/Impact-of-school-closure-in-KS1-on-Y2-and-3-pupils_publication-update.pdf?v=1676551951)

**2. How does completing an ESB International oracy qualification impact learner agency, and how can this aid in closing the disadvantage gap?**

a. Learners were most likely to make progress from their starting point in the following statements:

- Speaks audibly and fluently (42%)
- Speaks with an increasing command of Standard English (43%)

They have improved their ability and confidence to speak in front of others i.e., their interpersonal agency. They have also developed their wider spoken language skills, which I CAN<sup>4</sup> and CFEY<sup>5</sup> indicate have been negatively impacted by the lack of communication-rich experiences throughout the Covid pandemic.

b. Teachers are clear that the process of preparing for their ESB International qualification has provided new, vital communicative opportunities for their learners which resulted in a positive and purposeful experience for all, thus improving learners' interpersonal and intrapersonal agency, and developing their spoken language skills.

c. Learners were judged to be more competent with their ability to 'gain and maintain the interest of listeners' and to 'stay on topic, initiate and respond' indicating their improved interpersonal agency and ability to lead their peers and cope with minor conflicts to stay on track.

d. Learners no longer felt as concerned with elements of interpersonal agency (working with others, speaking in front of groups, fear of ridicule and failure), but felt more reflective about their learning, and gained the vocabulary and subject knowledge to better articulate what they need to do to improve in future oracy tasks.

---

<sup>4</sup> I CAN (2021). Speaking Up for the Covid Generation.

[speaking-up-for-the-covid-generation-i-can-report.pdf](https://speaking-up-for-the-covid-generation-i-can-report.pdf) ([speechandlanguage.org.uk](https://speechandlanguage.org.uk))

<sup>5</sup> Centre for Education and Youth (2021). Oracy after the pandemic: what Ofsted, teachers and young people think about oracy. <https://cfey.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Cfey-and-University-of-Oxford-Oracy-after-the-pandemic-FINAL-slides-v2.pdf>



### Key Questions and Findings – Secondary Level

#### 1. What is the impact of the communication-rich experience provided by completing an ESB International qualification?

Learners made significant progress in knowledge and skills through the communication-rich experience of completing an ESB International qualification:

- a. Where an average of 30% of learners were judged as ‘Not Competent’ in a skill/knowledge statement at the beginning of the preparation period, **this had reduced to 3.9%** after the assessment had taken place.
- b. **44% of learners made progress from their starting points in at least 6 different statements**, as assessed by their teachers.
- c. **60% of learners improved their ability to ‘Speak confidently, audibly, and fluently’.**
- d. **62% of learners improved their ability to ‘Work well in a group, staying focused and collaborating with others.’**
- e. **Learners’ progress in the post-pandemic setting is further corroborated by feedback given in teacher questionnaires.** When asked: ‘On a scale of 0-10, how much do you think completing the ESB International qualification has helped to develop your learners’ speaking and listening skills in the wake of the pandemic?’, the average was 8.6.
- f. Learners’ qualitative responses indicated that learners have not only gained skills and knowledge, but also **the vocabulary to better articulate their own abilities and targets.**

#### 2. How does completing an ESB International oracy qualification impact learner agency?

Learner agency was positively impacted through completion of ESB International qualifications:

- a. Learners not only improved their ability and confidence to speak in front of others i.e., their intrapersonal agency, but they also developed their interpersonal agency through the completion of ESB international qualifications, i.e., working and communicating with and in front of others. **By exercising personal choice, learners were empowered to have some control over intrapersonal agency, and co-constructing spoken interaction provided an opportunity to exercise interpersonal agency.**
- b. Learners’ temporal agency was positively impacted: **we can see that where teachers identified an improvement in self-confidence, this was expressed in terms of the learners’ future agentic self-image.** The fact that learners ‘valued the wider context such an experience gave them’ and ‘...being proud about their achievements’ also speaks to the learners’ temporal agency.

3. *How are learners' perceptions of speaking and listening affected?*

Learners' perceptions, overall, of speaking and listening improved through the course of their qualification preparation and assessment:

- a. **Learners expressed that their confidence had increased**, and that they valued the opportunity to prove themselves.
- b. **Learners valued the real-life value of completing the qualifications.**
- c. **Learners felt that the external assessment experience itself was a positive one.**

4. *To what extent are lifelong learning and employability developed by completing ESB International oracy qualifications?*

- a. Progress made by learners shows that the completion of external ESB International oracy qualifications **has given learners 'skills' and 'knowledge' which are vital to their 'character' and employability, the three pillars of work-readiness as described by the CBI<sup>6</sup>.**

***Limitations, conclusions, and future directions***

ESB International is continuing to research the impact of their externally assessed qualifications on the development of learners' oracy and personal development. The data collection tools are being refined and simplified, to capture a more complete picture of teacher and learner voices.

At primary level, this study has shown that preparing for and participating in externally assessed oracy qualifications in peer groups can play a valuable role in rebuilding learners' communication skills, knowledge and confidence, which have suffered due to the pandemic. In particular, learners have had access to new communication-rich experiences, and through these have developed their interpersonal and intrapersonal agency. Their fears of speaking in front of others have significantly reduced and their social skills, such as collaborative working, asking questions and turn-taking have improved.

At secondary level, this study shows that external oracy assessment taken in peer groups can play a valuable part in developing young people's speaking and listening skills by creating communication-rich situations. In particular, preparing for and experiencing an ESB International qualification fosters learner agency, reduces public-speaking fears and empowers young people to find their place in the world. Learners developed elements of the knowledge, skills and character that contribute to their readiness for work such as speaking, listening, contributing to a group, persevering with challenges, and envisioning their own future success.

The responses from both learners and teachers indicate that the overall experience of external assessment was positive for learners, with many stating their overall enjoyment, and their surprise that the experience was less intimidating than they had imagined.

<sup>6</sup> CBI (2019). Getting Young People 'Work Ready'. [https://www.cbi.org.uk/media/2960/cbi\\_work-readiness.pdf](https://www.cbi.org.uk/media/2960/cbi_work-readiness.pdf)

ESB International welcomes interest from other schools that would like their learners to participate in these qualifications and in the further study of the impact of this learning through external assessment.

## ***Chapter 1: Primary Level***

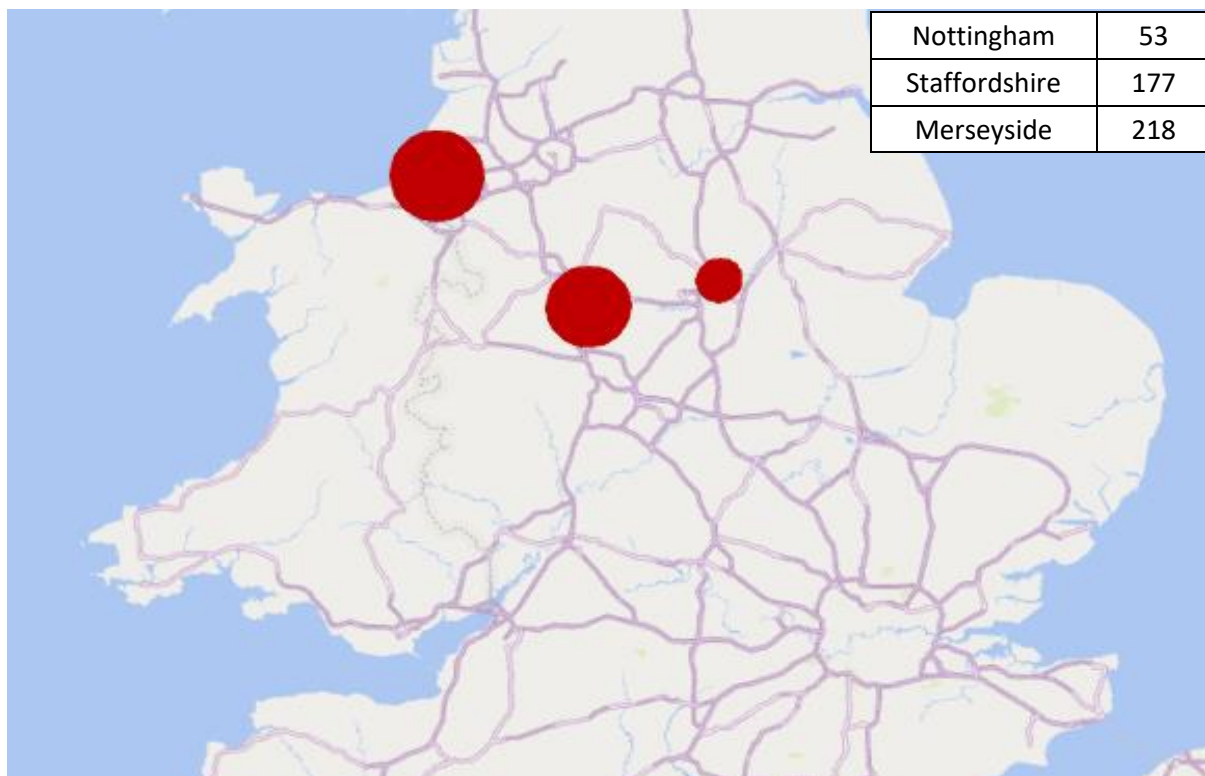
### 1.1 Centre Profiles

This impact study is possible thanks to the investment and cooperation of 11 centres from the primary sector who worked with ESB International to provide data on the progress and opinions of learners and the experiences of teachers.

These centres completed a range of qualifications, entering a total of 448 learners. Details of these qualifications can be found in [the appendix](#).

Participating centres met the criteria for financial support by our Christabel Burniston fund based on a range of factors and were spread throughout the north of England.

#### **Number of learners entered from different geographic locations:**



The proportion of learners eligible for pupil premium was from 15% to 59.5%, with an average of 35%. Centres also averaged an IDACI decile of 3.4.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> GOV.UK (2019). English indices of deprivation 2019. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2019>

## 1.2 Context and literature review

It was recognised that the closure of schools in the lockdowns of 2020-21 would have had a profound impact on learners' education, health and well-being<sup>8</sup> and this was born out in the I CAN report, *Speaking Up for the Covid Generation of 2021*, which found that 1.5 million children in the UK are at risk of not speaking and understanding at an age-appropriate level, and teachers of both primary and secondary-age learners are concerned that children may not catch up. The Centre for Education and Youth (CFEY) report of 2021 also supports this, finding that primary school teachers in particular feel that school closures have 'had a negative impact on the spoken development of children eligible for the pupil premium.'<sup>9</sup> The causes of learners' struggles with speaking and understanding are identified in the I CAN report as a lack of 'communication-rich experiences', fewer things to talk about, gaps in speech and language therapy during school closures, and vast lags in support for learners with special educational needs and disabilities.<sup>10</sup> The National Literacy Trust highlights the negative impact of home learning and the pandemic on those from the most socio-economically deprived backgrounds. For these learners, the pandemic and ensuing lockdowns may have reduced their access to high-quality, supportive early-learning and communicative opportunities.<sup>11</sup>

We also know, through the work of the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Oracy and the Fischer Family Trust (FFT) education data lab, that disadvantage negatively impacts outcomes. The APPG for Oracy states that evidence shows 'young people from less well-off backgrounds are less likely to have access to the benefits that enrichment activities outside the classroom can bring, such as debating, volunteering and the performing arts.'<sup>12</sup> The FFT recently reported that 'Outcomes for learners worsen with severity of disadvantage - those who spend the most time eligible for FSM also experience the worst outcomes.'<sup>13</sup> We can infer that many state schools and those with catchment areas with high rates of economic deprivation have fewer resources with which to offer their learners the opportunities for extra-curricular communication-rich experiences, especially in comparison to their more affluent peers.

For Primary learners, this disadvantage and resource-constraint has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) reported that the 'socio-economic

---

<sup>8</sup> Unicef UK (2020). Children in lockdown: what coronavirus means for UK children. [Unicef-UK-Children-In-Lockdown-Coronavirus-Impacts-Snapshot.pdf](#)

<sup>9</sup> Centre for Education and Youth (2021). Oracy after the pandemic: what Ofsted, teachers and young people think about oracy. <https://cfey.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Cfey-and-University-of-Oxford-Oracy-after-the-pandemic-FINAL-slides-v2.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> I CAN (2021). *Speaking Up for the Covid Generation*. [speaking-up-for-the-covid-generation-i-can-report.pdf \(speechandlanguage.org.uk\)](#)

<sup>11</sup> Crewe, M. (2021). Literature review on the impact of Covid-19 on families, and implications for the home learning environment. The National Literacy Trust.

[https://cdn.literacytrust.org.uk/media/documents/Literature\\_review\\_on\\_the\\_impact\\_of\\_COVID-19\\_on\\_families.pdf](https://cdn.literacytrust.org.uk/media/documents/Literature_review_on_the_impact_of_COVID-19_on_families.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> APPG for Oracy (2021). *Speak for Change*, [https://oracy.inparliament.uk/sites/oracy.inparliament.uk/files/2021-04/Oracy\\_APPG\\_FinalReport\\_28\\_04%20%284%29.pdf](https://oracy.inparliament.uk/sites/oracy.inparliament.uk/files/2021-04/Oracy_APPG_FinalReport_28_04%20%284%29.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> Benyon, K. FFT education data lab (2022). The long(er)-term impact of long-term disadvantage at school. <https://ffteducationdatalab.org.uk/2023/01/the-longer-term-impact-of-long-term-disadvantage-at-school/>

attainment gap remains stubbornly wide after the pandemic,<sup>14</sup> with schools facing the combined impact of a higher proportion of very low attaining learners, the financial constraints of additional resources required for catch-up, lower social skills for learners eligible for free school meals and teacher absence.

ESB International wanted to investigate the impact on learners facing disadvantage following the COVID pandemic. Firstly, we want to investigate the commonalities between elements of the disadvantage gap as identified by the EEF and teachers' and learners' experiences of completing oracy qualifications with ESB International. We are particularly interested in the following areas of academic and social/personal development identified by the report:

1. Understanding of vocabulary.
2. Leadership skills with peers and coping with peers who frustrate or interfere with the group's goal and activities.
3. The ability to deal with minor conflict and disappointment, and the willingness to persist with a task after a setback.<sup>15</sup>

Secondly, we are interested in how completing ESB International qualifications, through an emphasis on personal choice, provides an authentic opportunity for the exercise of learner agency, where the individual can actively direct the learning process. We seek to explore how learners' experiences of this address the issues created by the pandemic, as outlined by I CAN, the CFEY, National Literacy Trust and the EEF. Mayukhina and Wyse (2019)<sup>16</sup> identify four types of agencies, of which two are most relevant to this cohort of learners:

1. Intrapersonal agency: individuals' personal beliefs, motivations, attitudes, abilities, experiences, and past achievements.
2. Interpersonal agency: in relation to teachers, peers, and parents.

---

<sup>14</sup> EEF (2022). Impact of Covid-19-related school closures in Key Stage 1 on attainment and social skills of pupils in Year 2 and Year 3 in academic year 2021/2022. [https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/documents/projects/Impact-of-school-closure-in-KS1-on-Y2-and-3-pupils\\_publication-update.pdf?v=1676551951](https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/documents/projects/Impact-of-school-closure-in-KS1-on-Y2-and-3-pupils_publication-update.pdf?v=1676551951)

<sup>15</sup> EEF (2022). Impact of Covid-19-related school closures in Key Stage 1 on attainment and social skills of pupils in Year 2 and Year 3 in academic year 2021/2022. [https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/documents/projects/Impact-of-school-closure-in-KS1-on-Y2-and-3-pupils\\_publication-update.pdf?v=1676551951](https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/documents/projects/Impact-of-school-closure-in-KS1-on-Y2-and-3-pupils_publication-update.pdf?v=1676551951)

<sup>16</sup> Manyukhina, Y. and Wyse, D. (2019). Learner agency and the curriculum: a critical realist perspective. *The Curriculum Journal* 30:3, 223–243.

### **1.3 Data collection and analysis**

Eleven centres participated in a data collection activity, with a total of 425 learners entered for ESB International qualifications.

Teachers were asked to complete two internal assessments of learners, before beginning the qualification and again after it had taken place. Teachers could assess learners' competencies as 'Not Competent (NC)', 'Competent (C)', or 'Highly Competent (HC)' in statements drawn from the National Curriculum for spoken language and reading for the relevant key stage. 348 responses were received.

Learners were given the option of completing an online questionnaire both before they started preparing for their qualification, and afterwards. These questionnaires measured how learners felt about their communication skills and personal development. Learners rated the extent to which they agreed/disagreed, on a Likert scale, to a number of statements, and answered two open questions in each questionnaire which were analysed thematically. 185 learners responded to the pre-assessment questionnaires, and 165 to the post-assessment questionnaires.

Teachers were also given the opportunity to respond to a questionnaire.



**1.4 Findings and Discussion**

**1.4.1 Teacher Voice**

Teacher quantitative responses:

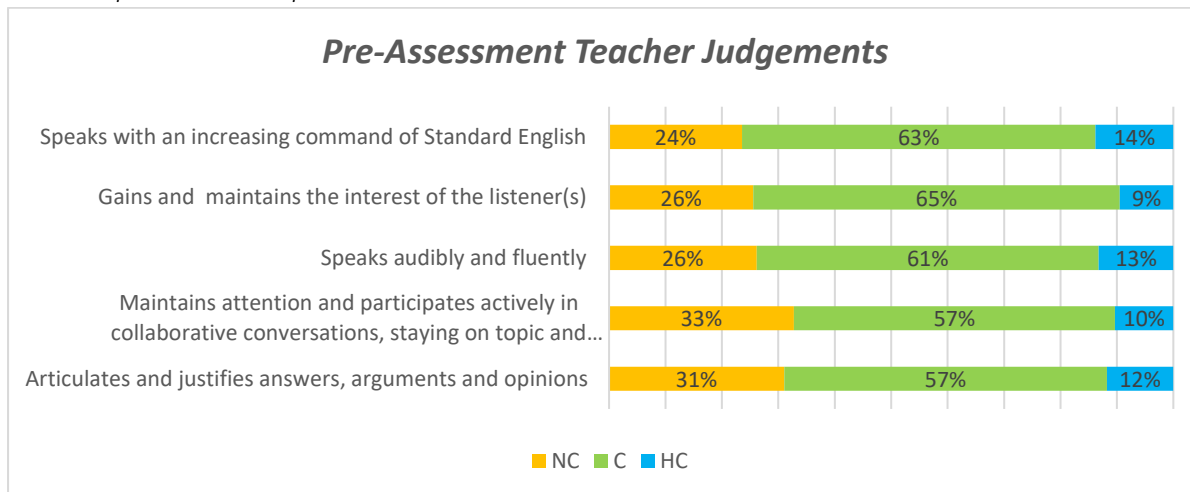


Figure 1

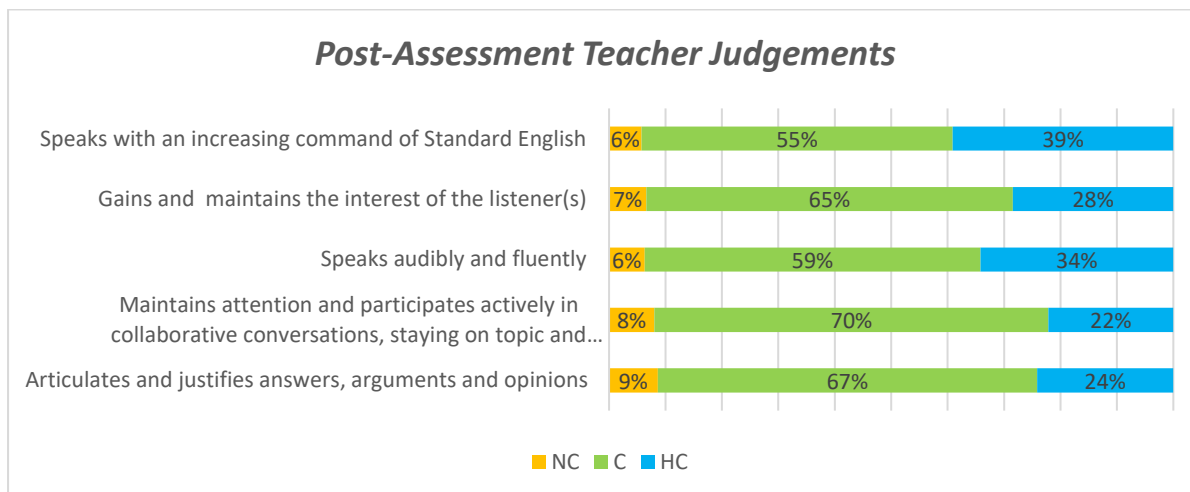


Figure 2

Competency	NC	C	HC
Speaks with an increasing command of Standard English	-18%	-7%	25%
Gains and maintains the interest of the listener(s)	-18%	-1%	19%
Speaks audibly and fluently	-20%	-1%	21%
Maintains attention and participates actively in collaborative conversations, staying on topic and initiating and responding to comments	-24%	12%	12%
Articulates and justifies answers, arguments and opinions	-22%	10%	12%

Figure 3

Judgements made by teachers show a positive impact on learners' communication skills, as shown in Figures 1 and 2. Where an average of 35% of learners were judged as 'Not Competent' at the beginning of the preparation period, this had reduced to 7% after the assessment had taken place.

In pre-assessment, learners were most likely to be judged as 'Not Competent' in their ability to 'Maintain attention and participate actively in collaborative conversations, staying on topic and initiating and responding to comments (33%). This is reflective of I CAN's findings that Covid 'massively reduced the amount of social interaction' that children have had, and that 75% of teachers felt that learners had suffered from 'not being able to talk face-to-face with their friends'.<sup>17</sup> This is further substantiated by [teachers' qualitative statements](#). In post-assessment, the percentage of learners still assessed as 'Not Competent' for this statement was reduced to 8%.

Learners were judged to be more competent after preparing for and completing the assessment in their ability to speak using Standard English, and in their ability to articulate and justify their ideas. This suggests an improvement in learners' knowledge of vocabulary and their ability to apply it appropriately to express themselves.

Learners were also judged to be more competent with their ability to 'gain and maintain the interest of listeners' and to 'stay on topic, initiate and respond' indicating their improved interpersonal agency and ability to lead their peers and cope with minor conflicts to stay on track.

**Percentage of learners who improved in number of the statements (up to 8) as judged by their teachers:**

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
<b># of Learners</b>	87	40	61	41	29	30	27	29	4
<b>% of Learners</b>	25%	11%	18%	12%	8%	9%	8%	8%	1%

Figure 4

<sup>17</sup> I CAN (2021). Speaking Up for the Covid Generation.

[speaking-up-for-the-covid-generation-i-can-report.pdf \(speechandlanguage.org.uk\)](#)

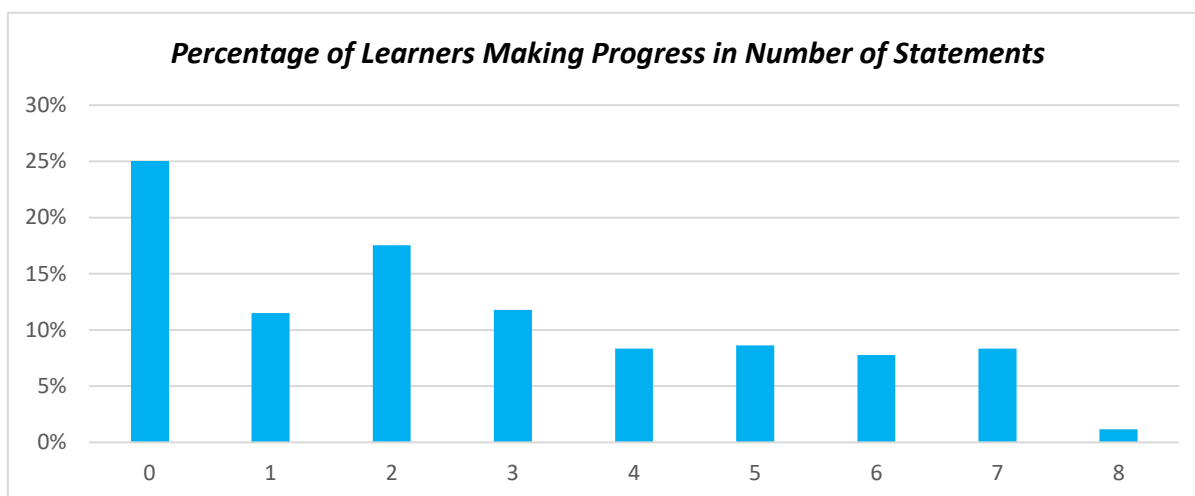


Figure 5

On average, 43% of learners made progress from their starting points, and 34% of learners made progress in at least 4 statements. It is also worth noting that 11% of learners were initially judged as 'Highly Competent' and maintained this standard throughout, and therefore were not able to show further progress. Appendix (ii) shows the percentage of learners making progress, remaining at the same competency level, or decreasing in each of the statements.

These results show that learners were most likely to make progress from their starting point in the following statements:

- Speaks audibly and fluently (42%)
- Speaks with an increasing command of Standard English (43%)

This is consistent with the data shown in Figures 1 and 2. We can infer from learners' progress that they have improved their ability and confidence to speak in front of others i.e., their interpersonal agency. They have also developed their wider spoken language skills, which I CAN<sup>18</sup> and CFey<sup>19</sup> indicate were negatively impacted by the lack of communication-rich experiences throughout the Covid pandemic.

<sup>18</sup> I CAN (2021). Speaking Up for the Covid Generation.  
[speaking-up-for-the-covid-generation-i-can-report.pdf](https://speaking-up-for-the-covid-generation-i-can-report.pdf) ([speechandlanguage.org.uk](https://speechandlanguage.org.uk))

<sup>19</sup> Centre for Education and Youth (2021). Oracy after the pandemic: what Ofsted, teachers and young people think about oracy.  
<https://cfey.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/CfEY-and-University-of-Oxford-Oracy-after-the-pandemic-FINAL-slides-v2.pdf>

*Teacher qualitative responses:*

Teachers were asked in their pre-assessment questionnaire, on a scale of 0-10, how much they felt their learners' oracy skills had been negatively impacted by the pandemic. This resulted in a mean value of 5.8, and a median of 6.5, suggesting that teachers did feel that their learners' speaking and listening, and therefore social skills, had been negatively affected.

Teachers identified what they felt the greatest areas of impact were:

- Confidence and social skills: teachers felt that their learners had lost confidence in their ability to speak in front of others, and in their ability to follow social cues:
  - 'Confidence.'
  - 'Communicating confidently with others in larger groups.'
  - 'Listening skills.'
  - 'Taking turns in conversation.'
- Oracy knowledge and skills: teachers also felt that their learners were lacking oracy skills as a result of the pandemic, particularly their ability to articulate responses, as a result of lost communicative opportunities:
  - 'Formulating full sentences as an answer.'
  - 'Reduction in English lessons have resulted in children's oracy skills not progressing as much as they should have.'
  - 'Giving a justification [for] their answers.'
  - 'Children have not had as much of an opportunity to speak to their peers due to the pandemic.'
  - '...isolation from socialising with peers/other adults, children no longer playing out socially and socialising through online communication.'
  - 'Being immersed into a rich and varied language culture, with lots of discussions.'

They also shared their hopes for what their learners would achieve through the completion of an ESB International qualification, which followed similar themes:

- Confidence and social skills: teachers hoped that learners would develop their interpersonal agency in their ability to work with and be confident to speak in front of peers or groups:
  - 'Confidence.'
  - 'Builds their confidence.'
  - 'An increase in confidence with speaking to new people / in groups.'
  - 'Working together as a collective.'
- Oracy knowledge and skills
  - 'Clear speaking.'
  - 'An understanding of how to use expression when reading and speaking.'
  - 'Pronouncing words correctly and fully.'
  - 'Improving their memory for reciting information.'
  - 'Develops their oracy skills [and] drama skills.'
  - 'That they have also learnt two pieces of spoken work.'

- Intrapersonal agency
  - 'We hope children find a love of performing and a love of literature.'
  - 'Children can take ownership of their own performance that they have chosen to complete.'
  - 'Taking part in something that enriches their school experience.'
  - 'That they take pride in their performance.'

Teachers were then asked in their post-assessment questionnaire, on a scale of 0-10, how much they felt completing the ESB International qualification had helped to develop their learners' speaking and listening skills in the wake of the pandemic.

This returned a much higher mean average score of 8.7 and a median score of 9. Therefore, although teachers generally felt that learners' oracy had been negatively impacted by the pandemic, they felt very strongly that taking part in the ESB International qualification had an extremely positive impact on their speaking and listening skills.

When asked to elaborate in open, qualitative questions, teachers' responses were specific in their description of the progress made by their learners:

- Teachers discussed how the qualifications gave learners the opportunities to have new communicative experiences which directly impacted their oracy knowledge and skills:
  - 'Children were able to read a poem and an extract from a text...'
  - '...to use drama skills that were not a focus in remote learning.'
  - 'Children's speaking skills really came on by having to go through the process of learning texts and being able to speak them aloud as a group. It was lovely to see.'
  - '...we could change the dynamics, pace, tone, emphasis of the narrative.'
  - '...their learning in both speaking and [listening] was developed.'
  - 'Really brought the curriculum alive.'
  - '...the opportunity to carry out performances.'
  - 'Due to it being a group performance, the children could lean on each other, take on roles that they felt more comfortable with and carry out a choral piece that developed speaking and listening skills, without feeling overwhelmed as a result of performing alone.'
  - 'They really loved how we could break up poems and stories...'
  - 'The fact that they were given a qualification, enjoyed the experience and learnt a range of new skills was excellent.'
  - 'They did a fantastic group performance and the whole group were engaged in the whole process.'

We can see through all of these teacher responses the lasting impact of lost opportunities for communication-rich experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic and the nature of remote learning. Teachers are clear that the process of preparing for their ESB International qualification has provided new, vital communicative opportunities for their learners which resulted in a positive and purposeful experience for all, thus improving learners' interpersonal and intrapersonal agency, and developing their spoken language skills.

### 1.4.2 Learner Voice

<b>% Change from pre- to post-assessment</b>	Strongly agree
I am happy to read out loud to the class	21%
I can use a range of vocabulary when I am speaking	13%
I can ask questions to improve my knowledge and understanding	20%
I can join in a discussion, answering and asking questions in detail	10%

Figure 6

Learners showed a positive change in their feelings towards some oracy skills:

- Where 24.2% of learners strongly agreed that they felt happy to read aloud to the class in pre-assessment, this increased by 21.4% in the post-assessment questionnaire to 45.6%.
- Similarly, 20% more learners felt they could ‘Strongly Agree’ that they could ask questions to improve their knowledge and understanding.
- The proportion of learners who ‘Strongly Agree’ that they ‘can use a range of vocabulary when speaking’ increased by 13%.
- 10% more learners also ‘Strongly Agree’ that they could join in a discussion.

These positive shifts in opinion suggest that having the opportunity to participate in communication-rich experiences as part of their preparation for and participation in an ESB qualification resulted in learners’ higher levels of confidence in their abilities. Asking questions and joining in discussions are both indicative of learners’ developing social skills, which combined with an increased confidence in their range of vocabulary show an opportunity to close the disadvantage gap as identified by the EEF report<sup>20</sup>.

This data should be considered together with the learners’ qualitative responses to four open questions, two in pre-assessment, and another two in post-assessment:

1. Which part of doing the ESB International qualification are you most looking forward to and why?
2. Which part of doing the ESB International qualification are you least looking forward to and why?
3. What was the best part of doing the ESB International qualification?
4. What part of doing the ESB International qualification could have been better?

<sup>20</sup> EEF (2022). Impact of Covid-19-related school closures in Key Stage 1 on attainment and social skills of pupils in Year 2 and Year 3 in academic year 2021/2022. [https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/documents/projects/Impact-of-school-closure-in-KS1-on-Y2-and-3-pupils\\_publication-update.pdf?v=1676551951](https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/documents/projects/Impact-of-school-closure-in-KS1-on-Y2-and-3-pupils_publication-update.pdf?v=1676551951)

When analysed thematically, learners' responses fit into the framework set out by Mayukhina and Wyse (2019)<sup>21</sup> regarding interpersonal and intrapersonal agency.

***Pre-assessment: Which part of doing the ESB International qualification are you most looking forward to and why?***

*Intrapersonal agency:* learners were most likely to say they were looking forward to elements of the qualification which allowed them to draw on personal choices and the knowledge and skills they already felt were personal strengths, or that they enjoyed:

- Personal choice:
  - 'I am looking forward to my talk about Athletics because I have a passion and interest about my chosen topic.'
  - 'My talk because I love what I am talking about, and it is interesting.'
  - 'To show my object because my object is special to me.'
  - 'It's a topic I love.'
  
- Personal strengths and enjoyment:
  - 'I am most looking forward to the reading because I like reading at home.'
  - 'Poem because it's fun and easy.'
  - 'Reading a book because I like to read and the book that I am going to read is my favourite book.'
  - 'My favourite subject is the reading of my book because I can read very confidently, and I really enjoy it.'

*Interpersonal agency:* many learners also expressed how much they were looking forward to the assessment experience itself, and having a chance to perform in front of and with others:

- Taking part in the assessment and performing to an audience:
  - 'I am most looking forward to being able to express my opinion and listening to my teammates' opinions.'
  - 'Debate – looking forward to speaking to my audience.'
  - 'Looking forward to performing my part.'
  - 'Looking forward to my siblings coming to watch.'
  - 'Excited for parents to watch performance.'
  - 'Excited for my family to watch me.'
  
- Working as a group:
  - 'Performing with my friends because it will be fun.'
  - 'I am looking forward to working together because I would feel more confident.'
  - 'Working with people I haven't before.'
  - 'Working as a team.'

---

<sup>21</sup> Manyukhina, Y. and Wyse, D. (2019). Learner agency and the curriculum: a critical realist perspective. *The Curriculum Journal* 30:3, 223–243.

- 'I am looking forward to working and communicating with my team to get our point across to the audience.'

The learners' focus on choice and enjoyment speaks to their desire for autonomy in their learning and communicative experiences, which in turn tells us that they aspire to have higher levels of intrapersonal agency. That their second focus is on interpersonal agency could be indicative of the impact of the pandemic on young learners' social skills<sup>22</sup> and their opportunities for communication-rich experience – learners are keen to work with their friends, but also with new people. Learners tended to frame their wish to work with their peers in the context of increasing their confidence and having more fun, which may be something that was missing in remote learning.

***Pre-assessment: Which part of doing the ESB International qualification are you least looking forward to and why?***

Learners' responses to the pre-assessment question about what they were least looking forward to can also be seen in the light of Manyukhina and Wyse (2019)<sup>23</sup>. Half of relevant learner responses expressed concerns relating to their intrapersonal agency, and a further quarter of learners expressed their worries as relating to their interpersonal agency.

*Intrapersonal agency:* learners were most likely to say that they were worried about forgetting what they were supposed to say; learners also expressed worries around specific aspects of learning that they found difficult, or neuro-diverse traits, which make tasks more challenging to accomplish successfully.

- Worries around memorisation, remembering important information, or making mistakes:
  - 'The presentation because I feel like I am going to forget the words.'
  - 'My presentation as it is longest and I [am worried] I might get nervous and will forget what to say.'
  - 'Poem, I find it difficult to memorise stuff.'
  - 'I am least looking forward to reading a line of my book because I may forget the line I am reading.'
  - 'Nervous about messing up my lines.'
  - 'I am least looking forward to if I make mistakes, I [will] get embarrassed.'
  - 'Failing because I've worked so hard.'
- Specific anticipated difficulties:
  - 'Reading out loud because I am dyslexic and sometimes I get mixed up.'
  - 'I am least looking forward to my reading, I am least looking forward to it because I have a stutter and it might affect me in my reading.'

---

<sup>22</sup> EEF (2022). Impact of Covid-19-related school closures in Key Stage 1 on attainment and social skills of pupils in Year 2 and Year 3 in academic year 2021/2022. [https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/documents/projects/Impact-of-school-closure-in-KS1-on-Y2-and-3-pupils\\_publication-update.pdf?v=1676551951](https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/documents/projects/Impact-of-school-closure-in-KS1-on-Y2-and-3-pupils_publication-update.pdf?v=1676551951)

<sup>23</sup> Manyukhina, Y. and Wyse, D. (2019). Learner agency and the curriculum: a critical realist perspective. *The Curriculum Journal* 30:3, 223–243.



*Interpersonal agency:* learners were particularly worried about speaking in front of others, with some also indicating their fear of judgement or ridicule from their peers:

- Fear of public speaking:
  - 'Talking in front of the class because I have never done it before.'
  - 'Being in front of lots of people.'
  - 'When I give my talk because I get stage fright.'
  - 'Talking out loud I hate talking in front of people because it makes me feel uncomfortable.'
  - 'I am least looking forward to speaking in front of everyone as I am very shy and quiet in class. Although this is going to have a good benefit [for] me, I am not a very good public speaker, and I might stammer with anxiousness.'
  - 'Speaking in front of other people.'
- Fear of judgement, ridicule, or failure:
  - 'Other people challenging my argument and proving my evidence wrong.'
  - '...people might laugh at me.'
  - 'Someone being nasty to someone about their performance.'

Learners' responses reveal their lack of experience speaking in front of others as a result of the disruption caused by the pandemic, with the vast majority of learners expressing fear of public speaking, worries about their uncertainty of the topic, and to some extent the physical symptoms of their fear – embarrassment, stumbling over words, stuttering, and in one case, losing sleep. Similar results were seen in our research with secondary level learners, indicating that learners experience broadly the same fears and worries about public speaking throughout their whole educational career, and suggesting that early intervention and work on oracy knowledge and skills could provide vital opportunities to remove these fears before they become fixed.

The themes identified in learners' qualitative responses in pre-assessment questionnaires resurface in the post-assessment questionnaires.

***Post-assessment: What was the best part of doing the ESB International qualification?***

*Intrapersonal and interpersonal agency:* learners are now more likely to state elements of personal interest (and therefore intrapersonal agency) as the best part of the qualification experience, and as likely to say that the assessment experience itself was a positive one. Learners also felt that working with their peers was positive, and particularly that they enjoyed learning more about one another and watching each other's performances (interpersonal agency).

- Personal interest:
  - 'I liked talking about Roblox. I could talk about it for hours.'
  - 'Telling people what I love.'
  - 'The best part was my speech as I got to say my point of view.'
  - 'I enjoyed doing my talk as I liked talking about what I wanted.'
  - 'I could express my point to other people.'

- Positive assessment experiences:
  - ‘The best part of doing the ESB was about me putting all my expression into at least one line. I also enjoyed performing in front of [the assessor].’
  - ‘The best part was reading my book to the assessor.’
  - ‘Getting to perform in front of someone who judges lots of people.’
- Working with and listening to peers:
  - ‘I really enjoyed working together with my friends.’
  - ‘I liked it when we all worked together.’
  - ‘I really enjoyed... how we did teamwork which made me happy.’
  - ‘Getting to listen to each other and know their personality and also know what is special to them and what they are like.’
  - ‘Communicating with others, asking questions, and most definitely my speech. To be honest I enjoyed listening to others seeing as my friends were in my group.’
  - ‘I really enjoyed the practising before the actual exam. It was really fun to practise and share my poem talk and reading with my friends.’
  - ‘The best part was listening to other people’s opinions and stories.’

Some learners reflected on their achievements, but they were less likely than their secondary level counterparts to make comments in terms of their future agentive selves, i.e., in terms of their *temporal agency*. They view their achievements as something in the ‘now’, rather than as something which might benefit them in the future.

- Achievements and self-improvement:
  - ‘Becoming more confident in speaking.’
  - ‘Growing my confidence.’
  - ‘Getting my Merit.’
  - ‘Because it is a national award.’
  - ‘Being able to speak out loud to people.’

### ***Which part of doing the ESB International qualification could have been better and why?***

Finally, learners’ post-assessment responses about what they thought could have been better showed an interesting shift in thematic responses. Where nearly a quarter of pre-assessment responses were expressing concerns related to interpersonal agency, this was almost eliminated in the post-assessment questionnaire.

*Intrapersonal agency*: Over three quarters of relevant responses were now focused on intrapersonal agency. Furthermore, the language of these responses had shifted from a focus on their fears, to now encompass the oracy knowledge and skills that learners would like to improve:

- ‘I think I could have been louder and had more expression.’
- ‘I could have done my reading better as I very rarely looked up when reading...’
- ‘I could have done more expression in my reading.’
- ‘I think we could have been better at projecting our voices.’
- ‘I think that it could have been better if we slowed down to speak clearly.’
- ‘I used my notes a lot.’

- 'My talk because I didn't use enough action and pauses.'
- 'Maybe look up more.'
- 'I could have been more fluent and had questions.'

That learners no longer felt as concerned with elements of interpersonal agency (working with others, speaking in front of groups, fear of ridicule and failure) suggests that through the process of preparing for and completing their ESB International qualifications, they have gained valuable experience in communicating with peers and others, thus allowing for these worries to be almost entirely reduced.

We can also conclude from the heightened focus on intrapersonal agency, particularly on specific oracy knowledge and skills, that learners felt more reflective about their learning, and gained the vocabulary and subject knowledge to better articulate what they need to do to improve in future oracy tasks.

### 1.4.3 Qualification Results

Of the 425 learners due to be assessed, 16 were absent. The remaining learners received results ranging from Unsuccessful through to Distinction.

#### **Distribution of grades awarded:**

	Unsuccessful (U)	Pass (P)	Good Pass (GP)	Merit (M)	Merit Plus (M+)	Distinction (D)
# Of Learners	0	4	4	142	188	71
% Of Learners	0%	1%	1%	35%	46%	17%

Figure 7

#### **Final grades awarded:**

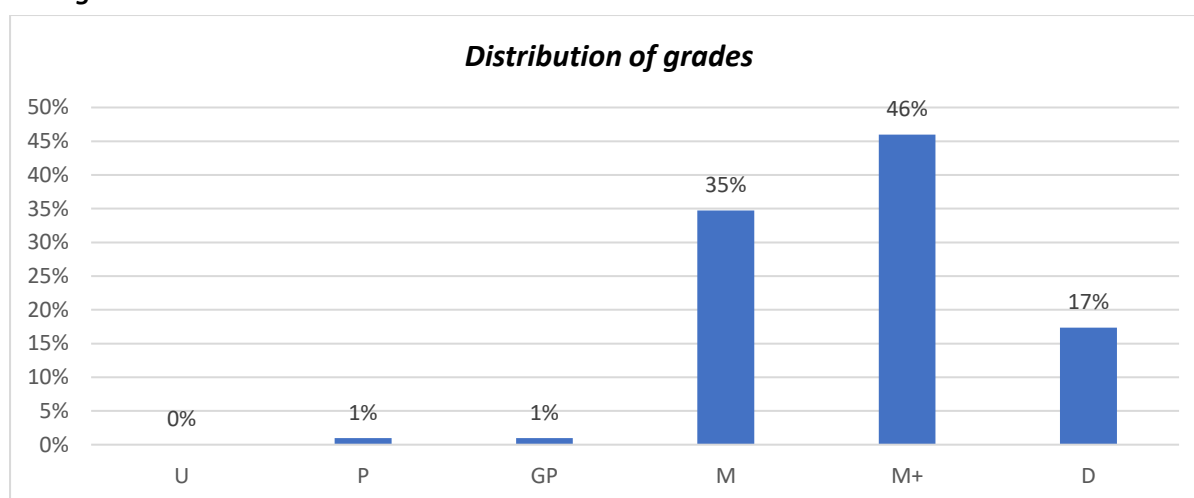


Figure 8

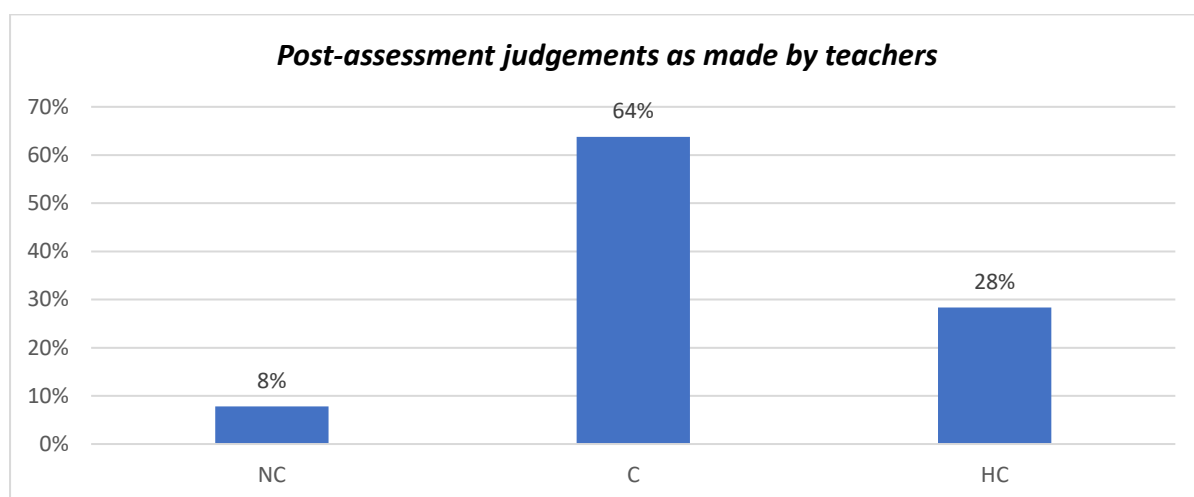


Figure 9

Data collected indicates that teacher judgements are broadly in line with the final grades awarded by ESB's assessors.

### **1.5 Limitations, conclusions, and future directions**

ESB International is continuing to research the impact of externally assessed qualifications on the development of learners' oracy and personal development. The collection of learner data was inconsistent and affected by attrition, with an average attrition rate of 11% across all centres, but as high as 39% in individual centres, which may have created attrition bias in learner data. The data collection tools are being refined and simplified, in the aim of capturing a more complete picture of teacher and learner voices.

This study has shown that preparing for and participating in externally assessed oracy qualifications in peer groups can play a valuable role in rebuilding learners' communication skills, knowledge and confidence, which have suffered due to the pandemic. In particular, learners have had access to new communication-rich experiences, and through these have developed their interpersonal and intrapersonal agency. Their fears of speaking in front of others have been significantly reduced and their social skills, such as collaborative working, asking questions, and turn-taking have been improved.

In future data collection, we hope to capture more evidence of the value of external assessment, and of the positive assessment experience learners have, by asking learners what advice they would give to future learners taking ESB International qualifications and asking their teachers about the benefits of external assessment on their learners.

The centres participating in this data collection exercise were all state schools who received a discount on assessment and administration fees through the Christabel Burniston Fund<sup>24</sup>. To qualify for this fund, centres must meet certain deprivation criteria. This investment made by schools, and the support given by the fund, has provided an opportunity for learners facing disadvantage to access opportunities that are more often accessed by independent schools<sup>25</sup>. The positive impact of preparation for and participation in ESB International externally assessed oracy qualifications as outlined in this report suggests that it can be an effective tool, contributing to narrowing the disadvantage gap.

ESB International welcomes interest from other schools that would like their learners to participate in these qualifications and in the further study of the impact of this learning through external assessment.

---

<sup>24</sup> English Speaking Board (International) Ltd. © The Christabel Burniston Fund. <https://esbuk.org/web/funding/the-christabel-burniston-fund/>

<sup>25</sup> Siebeta, L., (2021). The growing gap between state school spending and private school spending. <https://ifs.org.uk/articles/growing-gap-between-state-school-and-private-school-spending>

## *Chapter 2: Secondary Level*

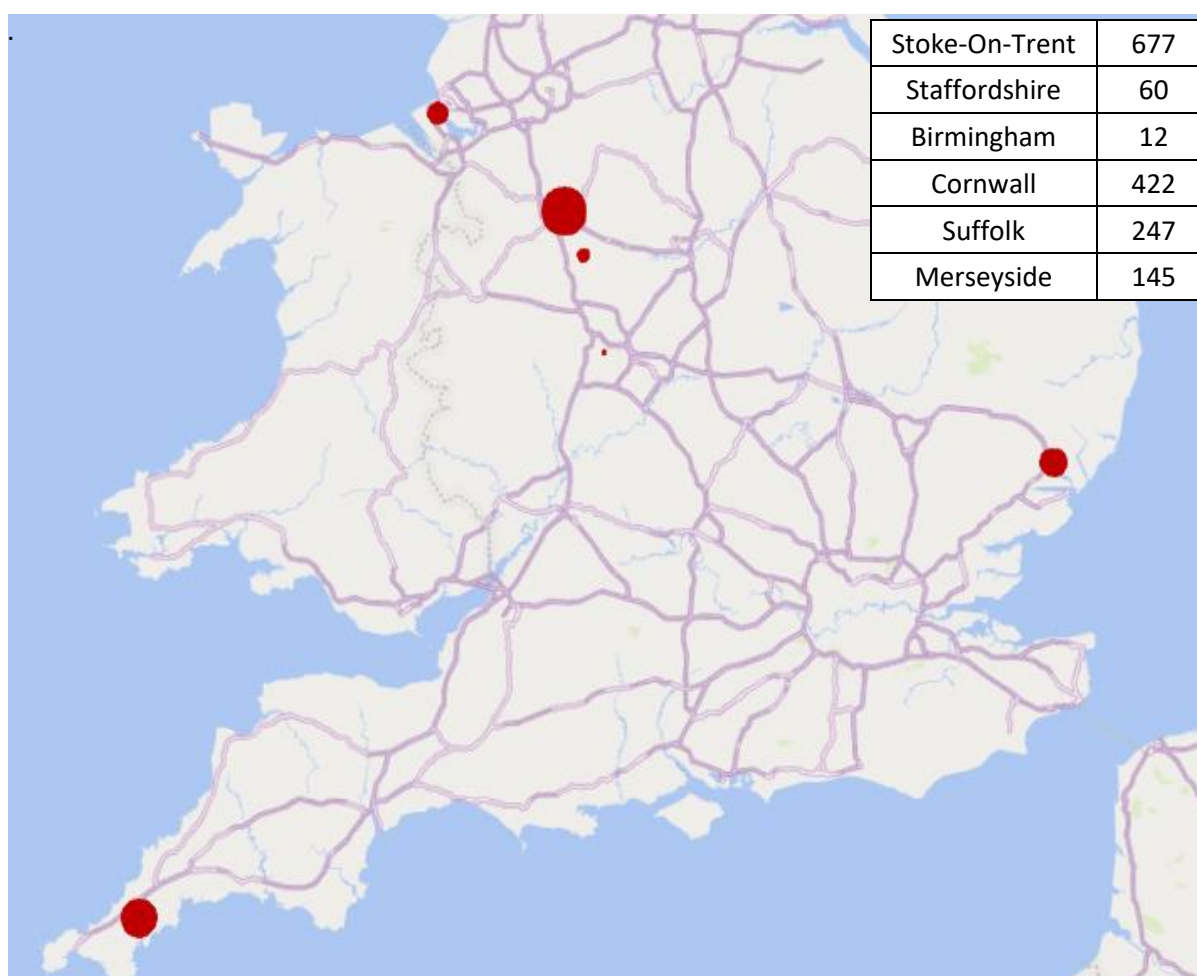
## 2.1 Centre Profiles

This impact study is possible thanks to the investment and cooperation of 8 centres who worked with ESB International to provide data on the progress and opinions of learners and the experiences of teachers.

These centres completed a range of qualifications, entering a total of 1563 learners. Details of these qualifications can be found in [the appendix](#).

Participating centres met the criteria for financial support by our Christabel Burniston fund based on a range of factors and were spread throughout England.

### **Number of learners entered from different geographic locations:**



The proportion of learners eligible for pupil premium ranged from 20.50% to 44.20%, with an average of 34.03%. Centres also averaged an IDACI decile of 3.75.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>26</sup> GOV.UK (2019). English indices of deprivation 2019. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2019>

## 2.2 Context and literature review

It was recognised that the closure of schools in the lockdowns of 2020-21 would have had a profound impact on learners' education, health and well-being<sup>27</sup> and this was born out in the I CAN report, *Speaking Up for the Covid Generation* of 2021, which found that 1.5 million children in the UK are at risk of not speaking and understanding at an age-appropriate level, and teachers of both primary and secondary-age learners are concerned that children may not catch up. The causes of learners' struggles with speaking and understanding are identified in the report as a lack of 'communication-rich experiences', fewer things to talk about, gaps in speech and language therapy during school closures, and vast lags in support for learners with special educational needs and disabilities.<sup>28</sup>

We also know, through the work of the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Oracy, the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS), and the Fischer Family Trust (FFT) education data lab, that disadvantage negatively impacts outcomes. The APPG for Oracy states that evidence shows 'young people from less well-off backgrounds are less likely to have access to the benefits that enrichment activities outside the classroom can bring, such as debating, volunteering and the performing arts.'<sup>29</sup> This is further compounded by the IFS's finding that '...funding for the most deprived state-funded secondary schools (about £7,000 in 2019–20) is only half the value of average fee levels in private schools.'<sup>30</sup> We can infer that state schools, particularly those which are most deprived, have fewer resources with which to offer their learners the opportunities for extra-curricular communication-rich experiences, especially in comparison to their more affluent peers. The FFT recently reported that 'Outcomes for learners worsen with severity of disadvantage - those who spend the most time eligible for FSM also experience the worst outcomes.'<sup>31</sup>

ESB International qualifications have four features that we wanted to look at more closely. Firstly, learners can choose what they want to research and talk about and preparing for and completing an assessment therefore provides an opportunity for a 'communication-rich experience.'

Secondly, the emphasis on personal choice provides an authentic opportunity for the exercise of learner agency, where the individual can actively direct the learning process. We follow Manyukhina and Wyse (2019)<sup>32</sup> in distinguishing four types of agency:

1. contextual: including wider socio-cultural and immediate educational and physical settings
2. intrapersonal: individuals' personal beliefs, motivations, attitudes, abilities, experiences and past achievements

<sup>27</sup> Unicef UK (2020). Children in lockdown: what coronavirus means for UK children. [Unicef-UK-Children-In-Lockdown-Coronavirus-Impacts-Snapshot.pdf](#)

<sup>28</sup> I CAN (2021). *Speaking Up for the Covid Generation*. [speaking-up-for-the-covid-generation-i-can-report.pdf](#) ([speechandlanguage.org.uk](#))

<sup>29</sup> APPG for Oracy (2021). *Speak for Change*. [https://oracy.inparliament.uk/sites/oracy.inparliament.uk/files/2021-04/Oracy\\_APPG\\_FinalReport\\_28\\_04%20%284%29.pdf](https://oracy.inparliament.uk/sites/oracy.inparliament.uk/files/2021-04/Oracy_APPG_FinalReport_28_04%20%284%29.pdf)

<sup>30</sup> Siebeta, L. (2021). The growing gap between state school spending and private school spending. <https://ifs.org.uk/articles/growing-gap-between-state-school-and-private-school-spending>

<sup>31</sup> Benyon, K., FFT education data lab (2022). The long(er)-term impact of long-term disadvantage at school. <https://ffteducationdatalab.org.uk/2023/01/the-longer-term-impact-of-long-term-disadvantage-at-school/>

<sup>32</sup> Manyukhina, Y. and Wyse, D. (2019). Learner agency and the curriculum: a critical realist perspective. *The Curriculum Journal* 30:3, 223–243.



3. interpersonal: in relation to teachers, peers, and parents
4. temporal: based on past experiences which inform their expectations, goals, and their future agentic self-image.

Thirdly, ESB International qualifications are externally assessed and are designed to build learner confidence of speaking and listening in front of an audience of peers, teachers and an assessor who is not known to the learner. We are therefore also interested in how learners' perceive public speaking before and after the qualifications. Grieve, Woodley, Hunt and McKay (2021) discuss learners' fears of public speaking in higher education. They found that learners' fears came from both internal (intrapersonal, temporal) and external (contextual, interpersonal) sources. They conclude that, amongst other factors, learners are likely to fear being judged (an external fear), making mistakes or forgetting material (an internal fear).<sup>33</sup> We are interested to see if these same themes appear in secondary level learners and in primary school learners. If this is the case, we hope to shed light on how preparing for and taking part in an external oracy assessment can ameliorate or address these fears.

Finally, we are interested in the lifelong and employment value of acquiring these skills and knowledge. The CBI outlines the importance of communication-rich experiences, stating that 'knowledge is not maximised if you cannot apply it in the real world, nor are equipped with the character necessary to use your knowledge.'<sup>34</sup> They also highlight the importance of communication skills to employers in their 2018 report, finding that 60% of respondents rated 'broader skills such as resilience, communication skills...' as being in their top 3 priorities.<sup>35</sup> This focus on 'character' is further emphasised in OFSTED's Education Inspection Framework, which now includes learners' 'Personal Development', with the expectation that they are given opportunities leading to the skills and knowledge to be able to 'reflect wisely, learn eagerly, behave with integrity and cooperate consistently well with others.'<sup>36</sup> The CBI goes on to recommend that the 'SkillsBuilder Framework'<sup>37</sup> be used to form a 'shared understanding of what 'character' really means'.<sup>38</sup> Elements of this framework are useful in measuring the impact of ESB International qualifications and their value in lifelong learning and employability, such as:

1. Listening - the receiving, retaining and processing of information or ideas
2. Speaking - the oral transmission of information or ideas
3. Staying positive - the ability to use tactics and strategies to overcome setbacks and achieve goals
4. Teamwork - working cooperatively with others towards achieving a shared goal.

<sup>33</sup> Grieve, R., Woodley, J., Hunt S. E. & McKay A. (2021). Student fears of oral presentations and public speaking in higher education: a qualitative survey. *Journal of Further and Higher Education* 45:9, 1281-1293.

<sup>34</sup> CBI (2019). Getting Young People 'Work-Ready'. [https://www.cbi.org.uk/media/2960/cbi\\_work-readiness.pdf](https://www.cbi.org.uk/media/2960/cbi_work-readiness.pdf)

<sup>35</sup> CBI, Pearson Education and Skills Annual Report (2018). Educating for the Modern World. <https://www.cbi.org.uk/media/1171/cbi-educating-for-the-modern-world.pdf>

<sup>36</sup> OFSTED (2022). Education Inspection Framework. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-inspection-framework/education-inspection-framework#what-inspectors-will-consider-when-making-judgements>

<sup>37</sup> Ravenscroft, T.M. (2020). Skills Builder Universal Framework of Essential Skills, London: Skills Builder Partnership [www.skillsbuilder.org/framework](http://www.skillsbuilder.org/framework)

<sup>38</sup> CBI (2019). Getting Young People 'Work-Ready'. [https://www.cbi.org.uk/media/2960/cbi\\_work-readiness.pdf](https://www.cbi.org.uk/media/2960/cbi_work-readiness.pdf)

### ***2.3 Data collection and analysis***

Eight centres participated in a data collection activity, with a total of 1563 learners entered for ESB International qualifications.

Teachers were asked to complete two internal assessments of learners, before beginning the qualification and again after it had taken place. Teachers could assess learners' competencies as 'Not Competent (NC)', 'Competent (C)', or 'Highly Competent (HC)' in statements drawn from the National Curriculum for spoken language and reading for the relevant key stage. For post-16 learners, these statements were extrapolated upwards to suit the level 3 qualification they sat. 1121 responses were received.

Learners completed an online questionnaire both before they started preparing for their qualification, and afterwards. These questionnaires measured how learners felt about their communication skills and personal development. Learners rated the extent to which they agreed/disagreed, on a Likert scale, to a number of statements, and answered two open questions in each questionnaire which were analysed thematically. 699 learners responded to the pre-assessment questionnaires, and 608 to the post-assessment questionnaires.

Teachers were also given the opportunity to respond to a questionnaire.

## 2.4 Findings and Discussion

### 2.4.1 Teacher Voice

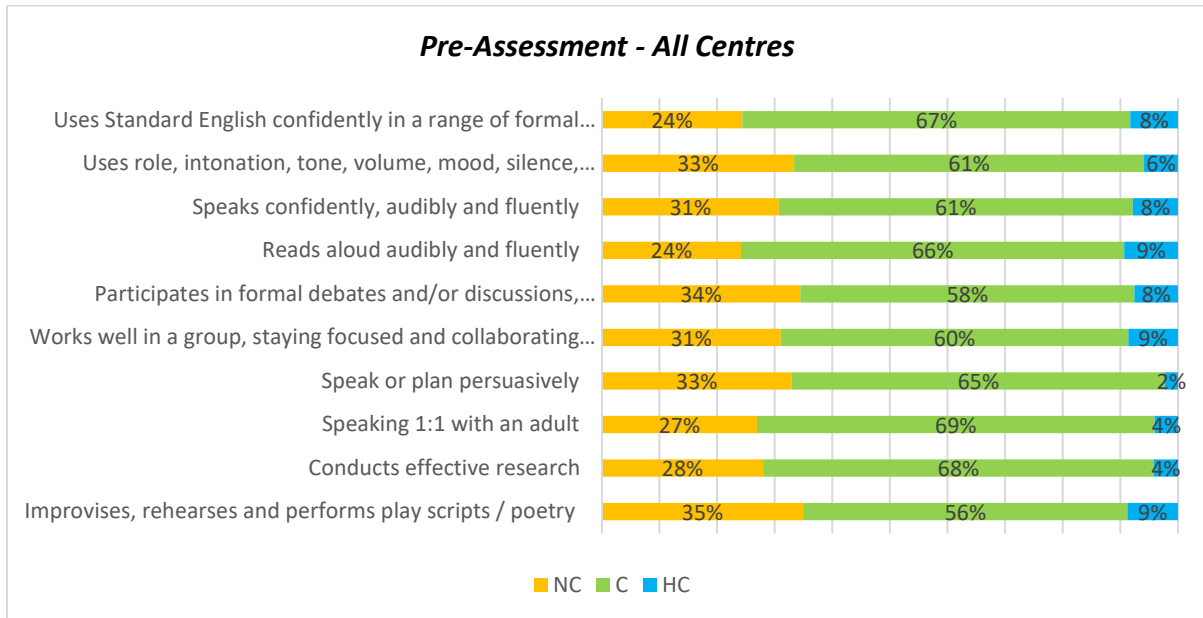


Figure 10

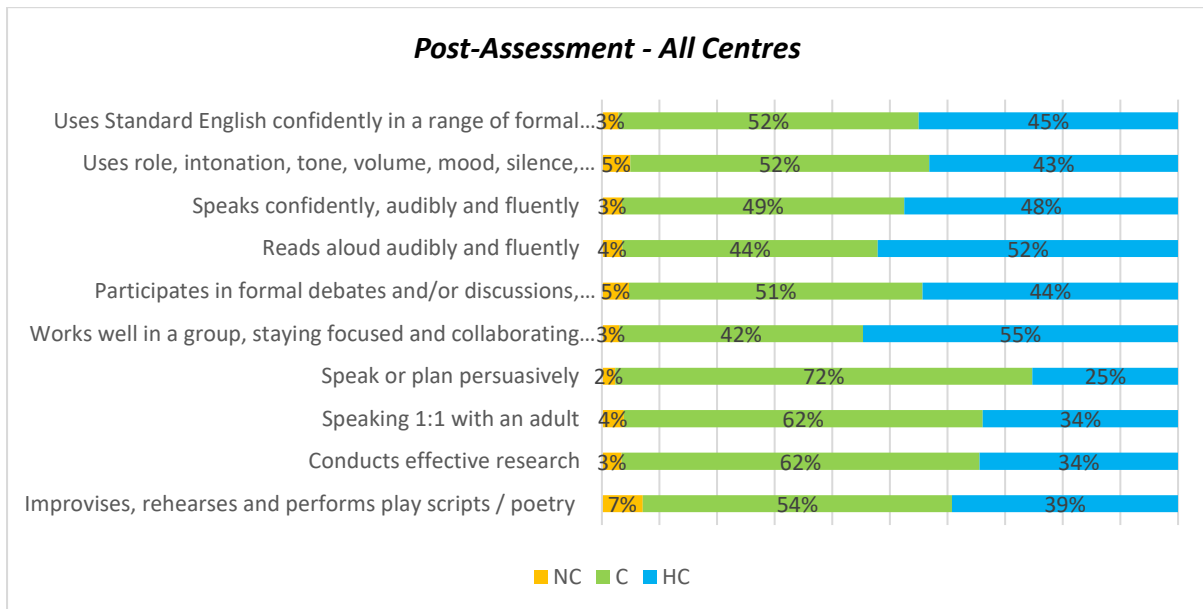


Figure 11

*Changes in teachers' judgements*

Competency	NC	C	HC
Uses Standard English confidently in a range of formal and informal contexts	-22%	-15%	+37%
Uses role, intonation, tone, volume, mood, silence, stillness and action to add impact	-28%	-9%	+37%
Speaks confidently, audibly and fluently	-27%	-12%	+40%
Reads aloud audibly and fluently	-21%	-22%	+43%
Participates in formal debates and/or discussions, summarising and/or building on what has been said	-30%	-7%	+37%
Works well in a group, staying focused and collaborating with others	-28%	-18%	+46%
Speak or plan persuasively	-31%	+8%	+23%
Speaking 1:1 with an adult	-23%	-7%	+30%
Conducts effective research	-25%	-6%	+30%
Improvises, rehearses and performs play scripts/poetry	-28%	-3%	+30%

Figure 12

Judgements made by teachers show a highly positive impact on learners' communication skills. Where an average of 30% of learners were judged as 'Not Competent' at the beginning of the preparation period, this had reduced to 3.9% after the assessment had taken place.

Learners were most likely, in the beginning, to be judged as 'Not Competent' in their ability to 'Use role, intonation, tone, volume, mood, silence, stillness and action to add impact (33%)'; to 'Participate in formal debates and/or discussions, summarising and/or building on what has been said (34%)'; and to 'Improvise, rehearse and perform play scripts/poetry' (35%). These areas, which are outlined in the National Curriculum for Spoken Language, saw a 28%, 30%, and 28% reduction in 'Not Competent' judgements, respectively.

Correspondingly, learners were much more likely to be judged as 'Highly Competent' in post-assessment judgements. Where the average in pre-assessment was 6.9% of learners being 'Highly Competent', this had improved to 41.9% in post-assessment. Specifically, learners were most likely judged to be 'Highly Competent' in their ability to 'Speak confidently, audibly and fluently' (48%); to 'read aloud audibly and fluently' (52%); and to 'Work well in a group, staying focused and collaborating with others' (55%).

These data suggest that, through this opportunity to have ‘communication-rich experiences’, we can begin to address the concerns raised by the ICAN ‘Speaking up for the Covid Generation’ report and can also build the oracy skills and knowledge highlighted by the CBI and OFSTED which add to learners’ ‘character’, with learners being more adept at elements of speaking, listening and teamwork.

**Percentage of learners who improved in number of the statements (up to 8) as judged by their teachers:**

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
<b># of Learners</b>	292	57	73	58	79	66	269	214	13
<b>% of Learners</b>	26%	5%	7%	5%	7%	6%	24%	19%	1%

Figure 13

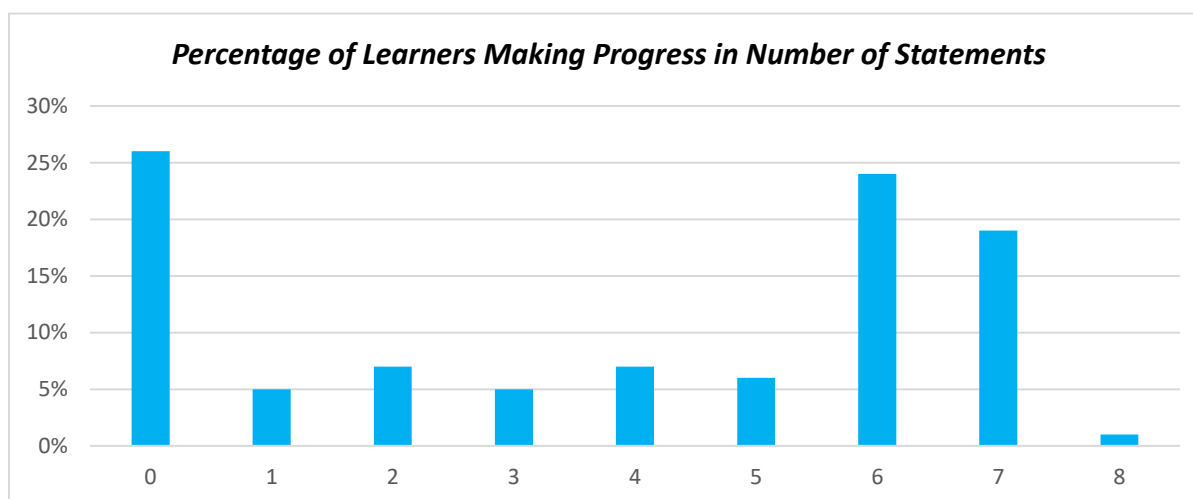


Figure 14

44% of learners made progress from their starting points in at least 6 different statements, as assessed by their teachers. [Appendix \(ii\)](#) shows the percentage of learners making progress, remaining at the same competency level or decreasing in level, in each of the available statements.

These results show that learners were most likely to make progress from their starting point in the following statements:

- Speaks confidently, audibly and fluently (60%)
- Works well in a group, staying focused and collaborating with others (62%)

This is consistent with the data shown in Figures 1 and 2. Furthermore, learners were most likely to increase two levels, from NC to HC in their ability to work well in groups and collaborate with others (39% of progress made was NC to HC in this statement). We can infer from this that learners not only improve their ability and confidence to speak in front of others i.e., their intrapersonal agency, but they also develop their interpersonal agency through the completion of ESB International qualifications.

Furthermore, this progress again shows that the completion of external ESB International oracy qualifications has given learners skills and knowledge which are vital to their 'character' and employability, as described by the CBI<sup>39</sup>. The 'SkillsBuilder Universal Framework'<sup>40</sup> includes 'Speaking', 'Listening' and 'Teamwork' areas, which are shown to have been improved through completion of these qualifications. Specifically, through Level 1, 2 and 3 qualifications taken by this cohort of learners, all levels of this framework are addressed, from 'Getting Started' at Level 1 and below, to 'Mastery' at Level 3.

For example, 'I can speak clearly to small groups of people I know' and 'I speak influentially by articulating a compelling vision that persuades the listeners' are comparable to outcomes in ESB International qualifications, e.g., 'Present a talk using notes if necessary; Use clear or audible voice to communicate information in Standard English; Show an awareness of the audience' at Level 1 (Grade 2) and 'Perform with a sense of ownership of the material, indicating evidence of research; demonstrate authority and control thorough relevant preparation; Consciously integrate knowledge, understanding and skills in a secure and sustained performance' at Level 3 (Grade 8).

Learners' progress in the post-pandemic setting is further corroborated by feedback given in teacher questionnaires. When asked: 'On a scale of 0-10, how much do you think completing the ESB International qualification has helped to develop your learners' speaking and listening skills in the wake of the pandemic?', the average was 8.6.

Teachers also gave qualitative responses, which were thematically analysed. The most common themes were:

1. Confidence:
  - '...came out of the assessments brimming with confidence.'
  - '...drove them to speak and act confidently...'
  - 'The ESB qualification has helped to develop students' confidence...'
  - 'Students grew in confidence!'
  - 'Students have come out far more confident...'
  - 'Students who are usually quiet or reluctant to speak gained so much confidence...'
  - 'The award has developed... confidence in themselves.'
2. The value of personal choice:
  - 'A unique opportunity in the curriculum for students to have genuine agency over their choices and outcome... Students rose to the challenge, enjoyed having choice and ownership.'
  - 'By giving the students a chance to practise their speaking and listening in an assessment that was not run by school staff, students learned to step up, overcome their fears about presenting, and talk about something they chose.'

---

<sup>39</sup> CBI (2019). Getting Young People 'Work-Ready'. [https://www.cbi.org.uk/media/2960/cbi\\_work-readiness.pdf](https://www.cbi.org.uk/media/2960/cbi_work-readiness.pdf)

<sup>40</sup> Ravenscroft, T.M. (2020). Skills Builder Universal Framework of Essential Skills, London: Skills Builder Partnership [www.skillsbuilder.org/framework](http://www.skillsbuilder.org/framework)

3. The impact on attitudes to learning:
  - ‘...they were proud of their achievement.’
  - ‘The benefit came from how serious[ly] they all took this award.’
  - ‘...The students valued the wider context such an experience gave them.’
  - ‘The attitude they had towards the award was excellent.’
  - ‘They really...demonstrated their enthusiasm.’
  - ‘Students were...extremely proud of what they achieved.’
  - ‘...being proud about their achievements.’
  - ‘...students worked with greater independence than usual.’
4. The impact on learner behaviour:
  - ‘I noticed students genuinely supporting each other’s spoken language.’
  - ‘Many completed more work outside of school than they had done throughout the year.’

This reflects the framework established by Manyukhina and Wyse (2019)<sup>41</sup>. We can see that where teachers identified an improvement in self-confidence, this was expressed in terms of the learners’ future agentic self-image, i.e., temporal agency. By exercising personal choice, learners were empowered to have some control over intrapersonal agency, and co-constructing spoken interaction provided an opportunity to exercise interpersonal agency. This, in turn, echoes the areas of most progress, with learners feeling more confident as speakers, and more able to work together and collaborate.

Further to this, the impact on attitudes to learning and learner behaviour speak to the positive impact on ‘character’, as identified as one of the ‘three pillars’ of ‘work-readiness’ as set out by the CBI, ‘reflect on personal strengths and areas for improvement during performance reviews and show an inclusive and compassionate outlook on themselves and others.’ The fact that learners ‘valued the wider context such an experience gave them’ and ‘...being proud about their achievements’ also speaks to the learners’ temporal agency, or (as described by the Secretary of State for Education at the time) ‘Seeing a link between effort today and payback in the future.’<sup>42</sup>

---

<sup>41</sup> Manyukhina, Y. and Wyse, D. (2019). Learner agency and the curriculum: a critical realist perspective. *The Curriculum Journal* 30:3, 223–243.

<sup>42</sup> CBI (2019). Getting Young People ‘Work-Ready’. [https://www.cbi.org.uk/media/2960/cbi\\_work-readiness.pdf](https://www.cbi.org.uk/media/2960/cbi_work-readiness.pdf)

### 2.4.2 Learner Voice

#### Percentage of learners selecting each option:

<b>Pre-Assessment</b>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I can give a short talk on a job or course I am interested in	4%	7%	35%	38%	15%
I can use body language, facial expression and vocal control to keep the listener interested	7%	22%	39%	23%	9%
I can use a wide range of vocabulary when I talk	4%	15%	38%	32%	10%
I can ask questions to improve my knowledge and understanding	4%	9%	29%	43%	16%
I can join in a discussion, answering questions in detail and building on others' ideas	6%	12%	33%	38%	12%
I am a confident speaker	17%	21%	29%	22%	11%
I feel like my voice matters	7%	14%	38%	26%	14%
I get to explore my own interests at school	5%	14%	35%	34%	12%
I have some ideas about what I want to do in the future/ I have a range of opportunities for my future (KS5)	6%	9%	17%	37%	31%
I can learn a lot from my peers	4%	8%	36%	39%	12%
I can read aloud clearly and confidently to an audience	17%	21%	30%	23%	10%

Figure 15



**Percentage of learners selecting each option:**

<b>Post-Assessment</b>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I can give a short talk on a job or course I am interested in	3%	5%	30%	44%	18%
I can use body language, facial expression and vocal control to keep the listener interested	5%	18%	39%	27%	11%
I can use a wide range of vocabulary when I talk	4%	13%	38%	34%	12%
I can ask questions to improve my knowledge and understanding	3%	8%	26%	43%	20%
I can join in a discussion, answering questions in detail and building on others' ideas	3%	10%	32%	40%	16%
I am a confident speaker	12%	16%	33%	24%	15%
I feel like my voice matters	5%	13%	36%	28%	17%
I get to explore my own interests at school	5%	12%	38%	32%	13%
I have some ideas about what I want to do in the future/ I have a range of opportunities for my future (KS5)	4%	7%	19%	36%	34%
I can learn a lot from my peers	4%	6%	35%	42%	14%
I can read aloud clearly and confidently to an audience	8%	18%	30%	28%	16%

Figure 16

<i>% Change from pre- to post-assessment</i>	Strongly disagree/ Disagree	Strongly agree/Agree
I can give a short talk on a job or course I am interested in	-3%	+8%
I can use body language, facial expression and vocal control to keep the listener interested	-6%	+7%
I can use a wide range of vocabulary when I talk	-3%	+3%
I can ask questions to improve my knowledge and understanding	-2%	+5%
I can join in a discussion, answering questions in detail and building on others' ideas	-5%	+6%
I am a confident speaker	-10%	+6%
I feel like my voice matters	-4%	+5%
I get to explore my own interests at school	-3%	-1%
I have some ideas about what I want to do in the future/ I have a range of opportunities for my future (KS5)	-4%	+2%
I can learn a lot from my peers	-2%	4%
I can read aloud clearly and confidently to an audience	-11%	11%

Figure 17

Although teachers had a highly positive view of the value and impact of the experience of preparing for the qualification, learners' responses to the questionnaires were less definite. Table 2 shows the percentage change in learners choosing to 'Strongly Disagree/Disagree' and 'Strongly Agree/Agree' before and after they completed their qualification.

The percentage of learners choosing to 'Strongly Agree/Agree' increased in all statements, except for 'I get to explore my own interests at school', which decreased by 1%. However, it should be noted that for learners completing individual assessments, this figure was an average 15% increase. Learners who completed a group speaking qualification, on average, decreased in their agreement by 10%. This suggests that the nature of group speaking assessments affected this outcome – learners did not have the same opportunity to exercise their intrapersonal and temporal agency.

The statements showing most improvement were, 'I can use body language, facial expression, and vocal control to keep the listener interested' (7%); 'I can give a short talk on a job or course I am interested in' (8%); and 'I can read aloud clearly and confidently to an audience' (11%). Learners' responses to the statements showing the most improvement are those related to intrapersonal agency (their own skills, abilities, and interest) and interpersonal agency (performing to an audience).

This data should be considered in conjunction with the learners' qualitative responses to four open questions, two in pre-assessment, and another two in post-assessment:

5. Which part of doing the ESB International qualification are you most looking forward to and why?
6. Which part of doing the ESB International qualification are you least looking forward to and why?
7. What was the best part of doing the ESB International qualification?
8. What part of doing the ESB International qualification could have been better?

When analysed thematically, learners' responses fit into the framework set out by Mayukhina and Wyse (2019)<sup>43</sup>, particularly to those questions which were framed around their positive experiences:

***Pre-assessment: Which part of doing the ESB International qualification are you most looking forward to and why?***

Intrapersonal agency: learners were most likely to say they were looking forward to those elements of the qualification allowing personal choice, and those which tapped into the skills and knowledge that learners felt they already had or enjoyed:

- Personal interest:
  - 'The personal interest talk because I can talk about what I love most'.
  - 'Pitching my product because I feel confident in doing it because it has something to do with my health'.
  - 'The talk on a figure who inspires, because finally someone will actually have to listen to me and what I have to say.'

---

<sup>43</sup> Manyukhina, Y. and Wyse, D. (2019). Learner agency and the curriculum: a critical realist perspective. *The Curriculum Journal* 30:3, 223–243.

- 'Being able to deliver a talk about something I enjoy and am interested in.'
- Something 'good' or 'fun' or 'easy':
  - 'Reading because I am a very good reader.'
  - 'Reading because I like changing my tone of voice.'
  - 'I am looking forward to reading the poem because I have already memorised it all and it is a really nice poem.'

Temporal agency: in the same way that their teachers spoke in terms of their learners' future agentic self-image, so did the learners themselves. They expressed their desire to achieve, to prove themselves, and to have a qualification that would be helpful in their future.

- 'I am looking forward to getting my qualification as I think it will help me in the future.'
- '...learning my lines because I don't get many responsibilities.'
- 'My presentation with the poster and speaking to them and letting them know that I am good enough. I really want to prove myself to the school.'

Learners' responses to the pre-assessment question about what they were least looking forward to also follow the framework set out by Mayukhina and Wyse (2019)<sup>44</sup>, but also with the framework set out by Grieve et al. (2021)<sup>45</sup>. Learners were most concerned about aspects of interpersonal and intrapersonal agency, but their worries and concerns were also expressed in terms of internal and external fears.

These comments from learners are also, again, reflective of the CBI's statements<sup>46</sup> on 'character, skills and knowledge'. Learners show their 'character' by 'Believing that you can achieve' and 'Seeing a link between effort today and payback in the future'. They also very clearly show an awareness of the knowledge that they need to succeed, and the opportunity to use this knowledge in a 'real-world' setting of an external assessment.

***Pre-assessment: Which part of doing the ESB International qualification are you least looking forward to and why?***

External fear/element of interpersonal agency: learners were worried about speaking in front of others, of being judged, and of failing. These fears accounted for over a quarter of learners' responses:

- 'I might mess up and in front of someone I don't know.'
- 'Reading out loud to the class and to people.'
- 'I get nervous speaking to new people mostly adults because I feel they are going to judge me.'

---

<sup>44</sup> Manyukhina, Y. and Wyse, D. (2019). Learner agency and the curriculum: a critical realist perspective. *The Curriculum Journal* 30:3, 223–243.

<sup>45</sup> Grieve, R., Woodley, J., Hunt S. E. & McKay A. (2021). Student fears of oral presentations and public speaking in higher education: a qualitative survey. *Journal of Further and Higher Education* 45:9, 1281-1293  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/0309877X.2021.1948509>

<sup>46</sup>CBI (2019). Getting Young People 'Work-Ready'. [https://www.cbi.org.uk/media/2960/cbi\\_work-readiness.pdf](https://www.cbi.org.uk/media/2960/cbi_work-readiness.pdf)

- ‘Speaking in front of other students in the school because I am afraid they will not take it seriously.’
- ‘Talking because I don't like speaking especially in front of people.’

Internal fear/element of intrapersonal agency: roughly the same number of learners expressed fears that they would make mistakes or underachieve as a result of their own abilities and experiences. As suggested by Grieve et al (2021)<sup>47</sup>, many of these internal fears manifested as ‘uncertainty about the topic’:

- ‘Forgetting something really important.’
- ‘Remembering the poem because I struggle to remember things when I am nervous.’
- ‘I am least looking forward to doing the 4 minute speech as I'm scared I will forget what I'm saying even though I have a prompt.’
- ‘The extract because I worry I cannot use enough emotion and failing because I got hand-picked so I want to do it.’

These themes resurface in learners’ qualitative responses in the post-assessment questionnaires. Learners were still most likely to say that the element of personal choice or interest was the best part of the qualification for them, but they also now discussed the specific skills they improved during the qualification. Interestingly, learners were much more likely to reflect upon their experience working with and learning from their peers, showing that their interpersonal agency had improved. This correlates with the data provided by teachers, with 62% of learners improving in their ability to ‘Work well in a group, staying focused and collaborating with others’, and also highlights the development of ‘work-readiness’ and ‘character’.

***Post-assessment: What was the best part of doing the ESB International qualification?***

*Intrapersonal agency:* learners reflected on their own improved confidence, and how choosing their own topics aided this:

- ‘I think the best part of my ESB was my personal interest talk because I had a lot to talk about and felt quite confident!’
- ‘The speech as I got to talk about what I am most interested in which was much better than other speaking assessments.’
- ‘The Personal Interest Talk because it gave me a chance to express what I love and what I enjoy doing.’
- ‘Speaking in front of other people and my confidence and I am more confident in talking in front of more people.’
- ‘Pushing myself to speak in front of an audience.’
- ‘It helped me realise doing speeches in front of however many people isn't that bad if you plan what you're going to say and you rehearse.’
- ‘I learnt how to speak loudly for other people to hear me.’

---

<sup>47</sup> Grieve, R., Woodley, J., Hunt S. E. & McKay A. (2021). Student fears of oral presentations and public speaking in higher education: a qualitative survey. *Journal of Further and Higher Education* 45:9, 1281-1293

*Interpersonal agency:* learners reflected positively on their assessment experience, particularly with the assessors and their peers:

- 'The best part of doing the ESB was working with people that I do not usually work with.'
- 'Working as a team and seeing actually what other people are and can be and what yourself can be.'
- 'That you weren't put under pressure and the man was really nice.'
- 'I really liked listening to other people's speeches and seeing what they were talking about and how they presented their speech. You can learn a lot from your peers'.

*Temporal agency:* learners reflected on those things they had been worried about in pre-assessments and showed pride in their achievements. Learners felt they had met the goals they had set for their future selves:

- 'It feels nice delivering it successfully as the rehearsal paid off.'
- 'Feeling proud of myself for actually trying to do it.'
- 'The best part was the hard work paying off after we finished the exam.'
- 'You feel a sense of accomplishment.'
- 'Well I know it could give me a higher possibility of getting a job and just knowing that was good.'

These responses from learners corroborate the opinions given by their teachers, that learners took pride in their work and achievements, and that they valued the real-world experience and benefits afforded to them by completing the qualifications. Learners again show their 'character' development through their application of the knowledge gained during the qualifications, with learners 'believing you can achieve', 'being able to stick with the task in hand', and 'seeing a link between effort today and payback in the future.'

***Post-assessment: What part of doing the ESB International qualification could have been better?***

Finally, learners' responses to what could have been better showed an interesting shift in focus. Where learners were highly concerned in the pre-assessment phase about speaking in front of an audience, or their 'external fears', this was greatly reduced in the post-assessment questionnaire feedback. Instead, the main focus had shifted to elements of internal fear, or intrapersonal agency. The language used had also changed, with learners now reflecting in a much more constructive way about their own oracy knowledge and abilities. This could indicate that learners have not only gained skills and knowledge, but also the vocabulary to better articulate their own abilities and targets.

*Internal fear/element of intrapersonal agency: learners identified how they could have improved their performance, and how they could do better in the future:*

- 'I could have used a bit more facial expression/body language when reading my poem.'
- 'I think I could've done my main speech a bit better and longer. I also think I could have changed my tone a bit.'
- 'Could [have] rehearsed my poem a bit better because I had to look down quite a few times to fully remember the line or stanza.'
- 'Keeping eye contact with listeners.'

- 'Slow my pace of talking.'
- 'I think I should've been more confident on speaking and using facial expressions.'

*Organisational/assessment experience/element of contextual agency:* learners now expressed that aspects that could have been better were out of their control, such as time to prepare, length of assessments, and the physical layout of the rooms. Some learners commented that they could have been given more choice. As the ethos of ESB International qualifications are that learners should have freedom of choice over their own topics (within the framework of the specific qualification), this might indicate that centres could improve their delivery of the qualification to better allow for this freedom. This reinforces our conclusion that the freedom of choice offered to learners is important to them and helps them to exercise their own agency.

- 'Longer to practise, wider range of choice.'
- 'The only thing I would change would be to have more time to perform and more time to practise because me and my team were very worried by time.'
- 'The thing you stood the posters on was annoying to set up.'
- 'They could have [given] us more time.'
- 'I think the options could have been a bit more flexible.'

### 2.4.3 Qualification Results

Of the 1555 learners due to be assessed, 171 were absent. The remaining learners received results ranging from Unsuccessful through to Distinction.

#### Distribution of grades awarded:

	Unsuccessful (U)	Pass (P)	Good Pass (GP)	Merit (M)	Merit Plus (M+)	Distinction (D)
# Of Learners	2	146	365	543	179	134
% Of Learners	0%	11%	26%	39%	13%	10%

Figure 18

#### Final grades awarded:

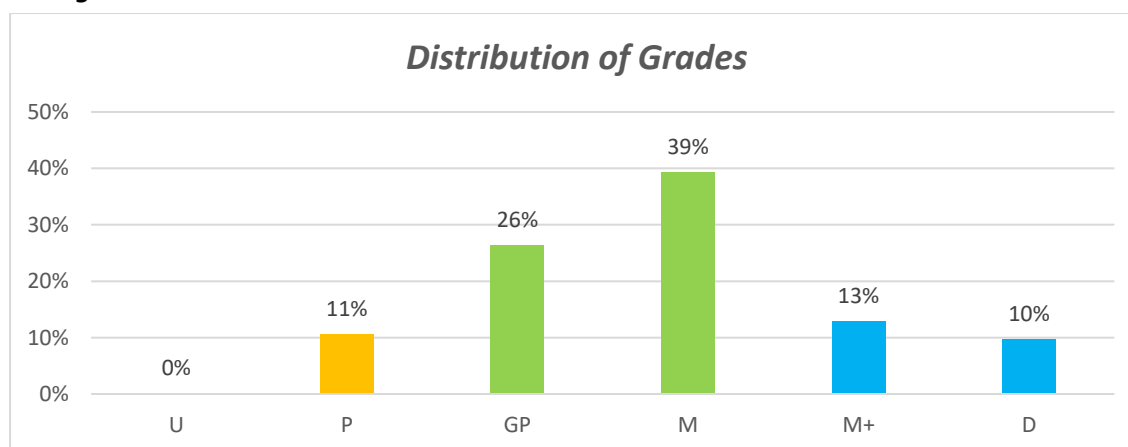


Figure 19

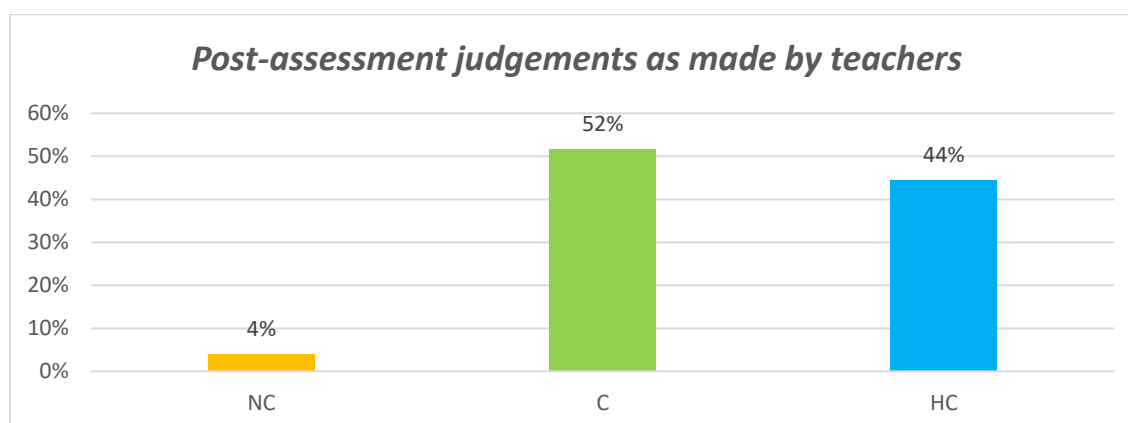


Figure 20

Data collected indicates that the teacher judgements given post-assessment were slightly more generous than the final grades given by ESB International assessors. Teachers assessed learners to be 'Not Competent' in 4% of instances, 'Competent' in 52% of instances, and 'Highly Competent' in 44% of instances, whilst a comparable 11% of learners received an overall 'Pass', 26% received 'Good Pass' and 'Merit' grades, and 23% received 'Distinction' grades.



## **2.5 Limitations, conclusions, and future directions**

ESB International is continuing to research the impact of externally assessed qualifications on the development of learners' oracy and personal development. The collection of learner data was hindered by attrition, with an average attrition rate of 13% across all centres, but as high as 30% in individual centres, which may have created attrition bias in learner data. The data collection tools are being refined and simplified, with the aim of capturing a more complete picture of teacher and learner voice.

This study has shown that external oracy assessment taken in peer groups can play a valuable part in developing young people's speaking and listening skills by creating communication-rich situations. In particular, preparing for and experiencing an ESB International qualification fosters learner agency, reduces public-speaking fears, and empowers young people to find their place in the world. The responses from both learners and teachers indicate that the overall experience of external assessment was positive for learners, with many stating their overall enjoyment and their surprise that the experience was less intimidating than they had imagined. In future data collection, we hope to capture more evidence in this regard, by asking learners what advice they would give to future learners taking ESB International qualifications.

The centres participating in this data collection exercise were all state schools who received a discount on assessment and administration fees through the Christabel Burniston Fund<sup>48</sup>. To qualify for this fund, centres must meet certain deprivation criteria. This investment made by schools, and the support given by the fund, has provided an opportunity for learners facing disadvantage to access opportunities that are more often accessed by independent schools<sup>49</sup>. The positive impact of preparation for and participation in ESB International externally assessed oracy qualifications as outlined in this report suggests that it can be an effective tool, contributing to narrowing the disadvantage gap.

ESB International welcomes interest from other schools that would like their learners to participate in these qualifications and in the further study of the impact of this learning through external assessment.

---

<sup>48</sup> English Speaking Board (International) Ltd. © The Christabel Burniston Fund. <https://esbuk.org/web/funding/the-christabel-burniston-fund/>

<sup>49</sup> Sibieta, L. (2021). The growing gap between state school spending and private school spending. <https://ifs.org.uk/articles/growing-gap-between-state-school-and-private-school-spending>

## References

APPG for Oracy (2021). Speak for Change.

[https://oracy.inparliament.uk/sites/oracy.inparliament.uk/files/2021-04/Oracy\\_APPG\\_FinalReport\\_28\\_04%20%284%29.pdf](https://oracy.inparliament.uk/sites/oracy.inparliament.uk/files/2021-04/Oracy_APPG_FinalReport_28_04%20%284%29.pdf)

APPG on Social Mobility and the Sutton Trust (2019). Closing the Regional Attainment Gap.

<https://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/APPG-2019.pdf>

Benyon, K., FFT education data lab (2022). The long(er)-term impact of long-term disadvantage at school. <https://ffteducationdatalab.org.uk/2023/01/the-longer-term-impact-of-long-term-disadvantage-at-school>

CBI (2019). Getting Young People 'Work-Ready'. [https://www.cbi.org.uk/media/2960/cbi\\_work-readiness.pdf](https://www.cbi.org.uk/media/2960/cbi_work-readiness.pdf)

CBI, Pearson Education and Skills Annual Report (2018). Educating for the Modern World.

<https://www.cbi.org.uk/media/1171/cbi-educating-for-the-modern-world.pdf>

Centre for Education and Youth (2021). Oracy after the pandemic: what Ofsted, teachers and young people think about oracy. <https://cfey.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/CfEY-and-University-of-Oxford-Oracy-after-the-pandemic-FINAL-slides-v2.pdf>

Crewe, M. (2021). Literature review on the impact of Covid-19 on families, and implications for the home learning environment. The National Literacy Trust.

[https://cdn.literacytrust.org.uk/media/documents/Literature\\_review\\_on\\_the\\_impact\\_of\\_COVID-19\\_on\\_families.pdf](https://cdn.literacytrust.org.uk/media/documents/Literature_review_on_the_impact_of_COVID-19_on_families.pdf)

EEF (2022). Impact of Covid-19-related school closures in Key Stage 1 on attainment and social skills of pupils in Year 2 and Year 3 in academic year 2021/2022.

[https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/documents/projects/Impact-of-school-closure-in-KS1-on-Y2-and-3-pupils\\_publication-update.pdf?v=1676551951](https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/documents/projects/Impact-of-school-closure-in-KS1-on-Y2-and-3-pupils_publication-update.pdf?v=1676551951)

English Speaking Board (International) Ltd. ® The Christabel Burniston Fund.

<https://esbuk.org/web/funding/the-christabel-burniston-fund/>

English Speaking Board (International) Ltd® Qualification specifications <https://esbuk.org/web/why-choose-our-assessments/speech-2/>.

GOV.UK (2019). English indices of deprivation 2019.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2019>

Grieve, R., Woodley, J., Hunt, S. E. and McKay, A. (2021). Student fears of oral presentations and public speaking in higher education: a qualitative survey. *Journal of Further and Higher Education* 45:9, 1281-1293.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/0309877X.2021.1948509>

I CAN (2021). Speaking Up for the Covid Generation. [speaking-up-for-the-covid-generation-i-can-report.pdf](https://www.speechandlanguage.org.uk/speaking-up-for-the-covid-generation-i-can-report.pdf) ([speechandlanguage.org.uk](https://www.speechandlanguage.org.uk))

Manyukhina, Y. and Wyse, D. (2019). Learner agency and the curriculum: a critical realist perspective. *The Curriculum Journal* 30:3, 223–243.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/09585176.2019.1599973>

OFSTED (2022). Education Inspection Framework.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-inspection-framework/education-inspection-framework#what-inspectors-will-consider-when-making-judgements>

Ravenscroft, T.M. (2020). Skills Builder Universal Framework of Essential Skills, London: Skills Builder Partnership. [www.skillsbuilder.org/framework](http://www.skillsbuilder.org/framework)

Siebeta, L. (2021). The growing gap between state school spending and private school spending.

<https://ifs.org.uk/articles/growing-gap-between-state-school-and-private-school-spending>

Unicef UK (2020). Children in lockdown: what coronavirus means for UK children.

[Unicef-UK-Children-In-Lockdown-Coronavirus-Impacts-Snapshot.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/uk/children-in-lockdown-coronavirus-impacts-snapshot)

## **Appendix**

### **i) Qualification Information – Primary Level**

#### *ESB Early Steps 1 – Speaking Together*

This qualification builds confidence in speaking and listening for Early Years children and it helps them reach communication and language goals as stated in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage for England. The qualification also supports the development of Early Years children in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The assessment is a participation award, divided into three group activities, and is teacher-led. The total assessment time for a group is approximately 15 minutes. The three activities are:

1. Hello and Goodbye: Greet the assessor together at the beginning, thank him/her for coming and say 'Goodbye' when you finish (3 minutes).
2. Join-in the Game: Join in a group action-rhyme or song led by your teacher, keeping together all the way through. Show the assessor how to join in too (5 minutes).
3. Join-in the Story: Listen to a story read by your teacher and join in with the sounds, repeated phrases, or chorus (8 minutes).

### *ESB Entry Level Award in Group Speaking (Entry 3)*

The ESB Entry-Level Award in Group Speaking (Entry 3) is targeted at learners between Year 2 and Year 5 and is designed to encourage an imaginative and enjoyable exploration of verse and prose in a group setting. Although there is a minimum requirement of six learners, there is no upper limit and ESB encourages whole group entries of different ages and abilities.

This is a group assessment. Each successful group receives one report form from the assessor, and one certificate per group of learners.

The assessment takes place in groups over approximately 18 minutes and consists of three sections:

1. **Speaking from memory:** Groups should begin by giving the title of their chosen poem, the poet's name, and a reason for their choice. They should then speak their poem, sharing the content with the assessor and group (7-8 minutes).
2. **Telling a story:** Groups should introduce their book by giving the title of the book and author and saying what makes the story interesting. They should then recite a section of their book from memory (7-8 minutes).
3. **Listening and Responding:** Learners should answer questions from the assessor.

### *ESB Pre-Entry Level Award in Speech*

The ESB Pre-Entry Level Award in Speech is for learners beginning their oracy journey and develops confidence in speaking, reading, listening and responding. The target learner group is Year 2 pupils. The four sections of the qualification are mapped to National Curriculum requirements in Spoken Language and Reading at Key Stages 1 and 2 and provide excellent opportunities for cross-curricular learning.

Preparation time for the assessment is approximately one term, but this can be planned flexibly to suit your learners. Assessments take place in groups, with a maximum number of 26 learners per day. Each learner is assessed individually and interacts with the group and the assessor.

The assessment is approximately 10 minutes, and consists of four sections:

1. **Talk – Something Special (40% of assessment):** Learners bring in and show listeners a favourite toy or item and tell them about it (2 minutes).
2. **Speaking by Heart (20%):** Learners begin by saying the title of their chosen poem and the poet's name. They should then recite their poem, sharing the content with the group and the assessor (1 minute).
3. **Reading Aloud (20%):** Learners begin by saying the title of their chosen book and the author's name. They should then read a prepared passage of approximately 100 words from this story (1 minute).
4. **Listening and Responding (20%):** Learners answer questions from the group and the assessor after their talk. They should also participate in a group discussion, joining in with comments and questions.

### *ESB Entry Level Award in Speech (Entry 1)*

The ESB Entry Level Award in Speech (Entry 1) is for learners beginning their oracy journey and develops confidence in speaking, reading, listening, and responding. The target learner group is Year 3 pupils. The four sections of the qualification are mapped to National Curriculum requirements in Spoken Language and Reading at Key Stages 1 and 2 and provide excellent opportunities for cross-curricular learning.

Preparation time for the assessment is approximately one term, but this can be planned flexibly to suit your learners. Assessments take place in groups, with a maximum number of 26 learners per day. Each learner is assessed individually and interacts with the group and the assessor.

The assessment is approximately 10 minutes, and consists of four sections:

1. **Talk – Show and Explain (40% of assessment):** Learners talk about an object, model or game and explain how it works or is used. They should bring in the item related to their talk and show it to the group and the assessor (2 minutes).
2. **Speaking by Heart (20%):** Learners begin by giving the title of their chosen poem, the poet's name, and saying why they like it. They should then recite their poem, sharing the content with the group and the assessor and (1 minute).
3. **Reading Aloud (20%):** Learners begin by introducing their chosen book and saying why they like it, before reading a prepared passage of approximately 100 – 150 words (2 minutes).
4. **Listening and Responding (20%):** Learners respond to questions from the group and the assessor. They should also participate in a group discussion, joining in with comments and questions.

### *ESB Entry Level Award in Speech (Entry 2)*

The ESB Entry Level Award in Speech (Entry 2) is for learners beginning their oracy journey and develops confidence in speaking, reading, listening, and responding. The target learner group is Year 4 pupils. The four sections of the qualification are mapped to National Curriculum requirements in Spoken Language and Reading at Key Stages 1 and 2 and provide excellent opportunities for cross-curricular learning.

Preparation time for the assessment is approximately one term, but this can be planned flexibly to suit your learners. Assessments take place in groups, with a maximum number of 24 learners per day. Each learner is assessed individually and interacts with the group and the assessor.

The assessment is approximately 11 minutes, and consists of four sections:

1. **Talk – Show and Explain (40% of assessment):** Learners talk about an object, model, picture or piece of equipment in some detail, explaining its importance. They should support their talk by using a relevant visual aid (3 minutes).
2. **Speaking by Heart (20%):** Learners begin by giving the title of their chosen poem, the poet's name, and a detailed reason for their choice. They should then recite their poem to the group and the assessor, sharing the content enthusiastically (2 minutes).
3. **Reading Aloud (20%):** Learners should prepare 4-5 pages (containing dialogue) of a book, from which the assessor will choose an extract to be read aloud. They must also introduce the book, stating which character they would like to talk to (2 minutes).
4. **Listening and Responding (20%):** Learners answer questions from the group and the assessor after any section. They should also participate in a group discussion, joining in with comments and questions.



### *ESB Entry Level Award in Speech (Entry 3)*

The ESB Entry Level Award in Speech (Entry 3) is for learners beginning their oracy journey and develops confidence in speaking, reading, listening, and responding. The target learner group is Year 5 pupils. The four sections of the qualification are mapped to National Curriculum requirements in Spoken Language and Reading at Key Stages 1 and 2 and provide excellent opportunities for cross-curricular learning.

Preparation time for the assessment is approximately one term, but this can be planned flexibly to suit your learners. Assessments take place in groups, with a maximum number of 22 learners per day. Each learner is assessed individually and interacts with the group and the assessor.

The assessment is approximately 12 minutes, and consists of four sections:

1. **Talk - Explaining How (40% of assessment):** Learners talk about something they have achieved, made, grown, or learned about. They should support their talk by using a relevant visual aid (3 minutes).
2. **Speaking by Heart (20%):** Learners begin by giving the title of their chosen poem or piece of drama, the author's name, and a detailed reason for their choice. They should then recite their poem or piece of drama, sharing the content with the group and the assessor (2 minutes).
3. **Reading Aloud (20%):** Learners should practise 6-12 pages (containing dialogue) of a book from which the assessor will choose an extract to be read aloud. They must also introduce the book, placing their chosen section within the wider context of the story (2 minutes).
4. **Listening and Responding (20%):** Learners answer questions from the group and the assessor after any section. They should also participate in a group discussion, joining in with comments and questions.

### *ESB Level 1 Award in Speech (Grade 1)*

The ESB Level 1 Award in Speech (Grade 1) develops learners' presentational skills and builds confidence in speaking, reading, listening and responding. The target learner group is Year 6 pupils. The four sections of the qualification are mapped to National Curriculum requirements in Spoken Language and Reading at Key Stages 1 and 2 and provide excellent opportunities for cross-curricular learning.

Preparation time for the assessment is approximately one term, but this can be planned flexibly to suit your learners. Assessments take place in groups, with a maximum number of 20 learners per day. Each learner is assessed individually and interacts with the group and the assessor.

The assessment is approximately 13 minutes, and consists of four sections:

1. **Talk – Free Choice (40% of assessment):** Learners present a topic of personal interest. They should support their talk using relevant visual/audio material (4 minutes).
2. **Speaking by Heart (20%):** Learners begin by introducing their choice of poem or piece of drama, explaining what it means to them. They then present their memorised choice, sharing the content with the group and the assessor (2 minutes).
3. **Reading Aloud (20%):** Learners should prepare 12-15 pages (containing dialogue) of a book, from which the assessor will choose an extract to be read aloud. They must also introduce the book, explaining its appeal (2 minutes).
4. **Listening and Responding (20%):** Learners respond to questions from the group and the assessor at any time. They should also participate in a group discussion, joining in with comments and questions.

### *ESB Level 1 Award in Debating*

The ESB Level 1 Award in Debating is targeted at learners between Year 6 and Year 8. Debating is an essential life skill and an aid to develop employability skills such as critical thinking, teamwork and leadership.

Our suite of Debating qualifications helps learners to build and deliver arguments, manage timing, and signpost and link work. All assessment is external, in your school at a time to suit you.

The assessment is takes place in groups of 3 or 4 (per team) over approximately 40 minutes. Teams prepare a debate on an agreed motion (own choice) and each member of the team has 4 minutes to build and deliver arguments that support or oppose the motion. Each member should also reply (rebut) or respond (point of information) to arguments from the other team.

Learners are assessed in the following four areas:

1. Content – the way in which a learner demonstrates evidence of research and understanding.
2. Style – the way in which a learner communicates, both verbally and non-verbally.
3. Structure – the way in which a learner structures their contribution to the debate (e.g., introductions, conclusions, linking etc.).
4. Listening and Responding - the way in which a learner listens and responds to developments in the debate (rebuttal, points of information, etc.).

## **ii) Qualification Information – Secondary Level**

### *ESB Level 1 Award in Group Speaking*

The ESB Level 1 Award in Group Speaking is targeted at learners between Year 5 and Year 9 and is designed to encourage an imaginative and enjoyable exploration of verse and prose in a group setting. Although there is a minimum requirement of six learners, there is no upper limit and ESB International encourages whole group entries of different ages and abilities.

The assessment takes place in groups over approximately 18 minutes and consists of three sections:

1. **Speaking from memory:** Groups begin by giving the title of their chosen poem, the poet's name, and a reason for their choice. They then speak their poem, sharing the content with the assessor and group (8-9 minutes).
2. **Telling a story:** Groups introduce their book by giving the title of the book and author and saying what makes the story interesting. They then recite a section of their book from memory (8-9 minutes).
3. **Listening and Responding:** Learners answer questions from the assessor.

### *ESB Level 1 Award in Using Oral Skills for Interviews*

The ESB Level 1 Award in Using Oral Skills for Interviews is targeted at learners between Year 6 and Year 8 and is designed to improve interview skills and build confidence for the interview process.

The assessment is approximately 18 minutes, and consists of four sections:

1. Personal Introduction (40% of assessment): Learners give information about themselves for a job or course, using visual aids (3-4 minutes).
2. Background preparation for interview (20%): Learners read a short extract from a job advertisement, or from information on a course, and then summarise the key points (3 minutes).
3. Interview (20%): Learners take part in an interview with the assessor, answering questions about the job or course for which they have applied. They also ask the assessor one or two questions about the job/course (3 minutes).
4. Listening and Responding (20%): Learners respond to questions from the assessor and group. They also participate in a group discussion, joining in with comments and questions.

### *ESB Level 1 Award in Speech (Grade 2) Speech to Connect*

The ESB Level 1 Award in Speech (Grade 2) Speech to Connect pathway builds learners' confidence in presentational skills and interpersonal communication. It is mapped to National Curriculum requirements in Spoken English, Reading and Writing at Key Stage 3 and provides excellent opportunities for cross-curricular learning.

The target learner group is Year 7 pupils. Preparation time for the assessment is approximately one term, but this can be planned flexibly to suit your learners. Assessments take place in groups, with a maximum number of 20 learners per assessor per day. Each learner is assessed individually and interacts with the group and the assessor.

The assessment is approximately 13 minutes, and consists of four sections:

1. Personal Interest Talk (40% of assessment): Learners deliver a talk with knowledge and enthusiasm on an activity or topic of personal interest. They should support their talk using relevant visual/audio material (4 minutes).
2. Speaking by Heart (20%): Learners begin by introducing their choice of poetry, spoken song lyric, prose, or drama. In doing so, they explain the reason(s) for their choice. They then present their memorised choice, sharing the content with the group and the assessor (2 minutes).
3. Reading to Listeners (20%): Learners should prepare 12-13 pages (containing dialogue) of a book, from which the assessor will choose an extract to be read aloud. They also introduce the book, placing their chosen section within the wider context of the story (2 minutes).
4. Listening, Responding and Exchanging Views (20%): Learners listen and respond to questions from the group and the assessor in relation to the first three activities. They should also actively contribute to the group discussion by asking questions and offering comments (5 minutes).

### *ESB Level 1 Award in Speech (Grade 2) Speech to Inform*

The ESB Level 1 Award in Speech (Grade 2) Speech to Inform pathway builds learners' confidence in presentational skills and interpersonal communication. It is mapped to National Curriculum requirements in Spoken English, Reading and Writing at Key Stage 3 and provides excellent opportunities for cross-curricular learning.

The target learner group is Year 7 pupils. Preparation time for the assessment is approximately one term, but this can be planned flexibly to suit your learners. Assessments take place in groups, with a maximum number of 20 learners per day. Each learner is assessed individually and interacts with the group and the assessor.

The assessment is approximately 13 minutes, and consists of four sections:

1. Curriculum Talk (40% of assessment): Learners deliver a talk with knowledge and enthusiasm on a curriculum topic in any subject. They should support their talk using relevant visual/audio material (4 minutes).
2. Present a News Story (20%): Learners adopt the role of a television reporter 'on the scene' and present a real news story, past or present (2 minutes).
3. Present an Argument (20%): Learners present an argument about a topical local, national or global issue and communicate it to the group and the assessor (2 minutes).
4. Listening, Responding and Exchanging Views (20%): Learners listen and respond to questions from the group and the assessor in relation to the first three activities. They should also actively contribute to the group discussion by asking questions and offering comments (5 minutes).

### *ESB Level 1 Award in Speech (Grade 2) Speech for Employability*

The ESB Level 1 Award in Speech (Grade 2) Speech for Employability pathway builds learners' confidence in interview and communication skills. It is mapped to National Curriculum requirements in Spoken English, Reading and Writing at Key Stage 3 and provides excellent opportunities to achieve Gatsby benchmarks through the content of talks, interviews, and role-play scenarios.

The target learner group is Year 7 pupils. Preparation time for the assessment is approximately one term, but this can be planned flexibly to suit your learners. Assessments take place in groups, with a maximum number of 20 learners per day per assessor. Each learner is assessed individually and interacts with the group and the assessor.

The assessment is approximately 13 minutes per learner, and consists of four sections:

1. **Employability Talk (40% of assessment):** Learners deliver a talk, with knowledge and enthusiasm about a famous or successful person in business or about a job or career that is of interest to them. They should support their talk using relevant visual/audio material (4 minutes).
2. **Take Part in an Interview (20% of assessment):** Learners take part in a friendly and supportive interview with the assessor based on their CV. Learners need to provide the assessor with a hard copy of their CV and should respond to questions positively (2 minutes).
3. **Prepare and Deliver a Pitch (20%):** Learners prepare a business pitch and deliver it. This could be for an existing or an invented product or service. They can use audio/visual material to support their pitch (2 minutes).
4. **Listening, Responding and Exchanging Views (20%):** Learners listen and respond to questions from the group and the assessor in relation to the first three activities. They should also actively contribute to the group discussion by asking questions and offering comments (5 minutes).



### *ESB Level 1 Award in Speech (Grade 3)*

The ESB Level 1 Award in Speech (Grade 3) develops learners' presentational skills and builds confidence in self-expression. The target learner group is Year 8 pupils. The four sections of the qualification are mapped to National Curriculum requirements in Spoken English, Reading and Writing at Key Stage 3 and provide excellent opportunities for cross-curricular learning.

Preparation time for the assessment is approximately one term, but this can be planned flexibly to suit your learners. Assessments take place in groups, with a maximum number of 20 learners per day per assessor. Each learner is assessed individually and interacts with the group and the assessor.

The assessment is approximately 13-14 minutes, and consists of four sections:

1. **Prepared Talk (40% of assessment):** Learners deliver a structured talk on any topic, with evidence of personal research/enquiry. They should support their talk using relevant visual/audio material (4 minutes).
2. **Speaking by Heart (20%):** Learners introduce their piece of poetry, drama or prose by outlining what factors determined their choice or explaining its context. They then present their memorised choice, sharing the content with the group and the assessor (2 minutes).
3. **Reading to Listeners (20%):** Learners should prepare 12-15 pages (containing dialogue) of a book, from which the assessor will choose an extract to be read aloud. They must also introduce the book, placing their chosen section of the book within the wider context of the story (2 minutes).
4. **Open Exchange of Ideas (20%):** Learners respond to questions from the group and the assessor at any time. They should also participate in a group discussion, joining in with comments and questions.

### *ESB Level 2 Certificate in Speech (Grade 4) Speech for Employability*

The ESB Level 2 Certificate in Speech (Grade 4) Speech for Employability pathway enhances learners' interview and communication skills. It is mapped to National Curriculum requirements in Spoken Language at Key Stages 3 and 4 and provides excellent opportunities to achieve Gatsby benchmarks through the content of talks, interviews and role-play scenarios.

The target learner groups are Years 9 and 10 students. Preparation time for the assessment is approximately one term, but this can be planned flexibly to suit your learners. Assessments take place in groups, with a maximum number of 18 learners per day per assessor. Each learner is assessed individually and interacts with the group and the assessor.

The assessment is approximately 15 minutes, and consists of four sections:

1. **Employability Talk (40% of assessment):** Learners research and deliver a talk on a job, career, course of study or make a business pitch. They should provide a CV and use it to explain their interest in career area. They should support their talk using relevant visual/audio material (4 minutes).
2. **Taking Part in an Interview (20%):** Learners take part in an interview with the assessor, based on their Section 1 talk and CV. Learners will need to provide the assessor with a hard copy of their CV, and should respond to questions formally and positively (2-3 minutes).
3. **Making a telephone call (20%):** Learners make a mock telephone call to a teacher/tutor based on a planned employability-related scenario. They choose one of five scenarios, which are made available in advance of the assessment. During the mock telephone call, learners will need to give, receive, and recall information (2-3 minutes).
4. **Listening, Responding and Exchanging Views (20%):** Learners listen, and respond, to questions from the group and the assessor in relation to the first three activities. They should also actively contribute to the group discussion by asking questions and offering comments (5 minutes).

### *ESB Level 3 Certificate in Speech (Grade 8)*

The ESB Level 3 Certificate in Speech (Grade 8) allows learners to demonstrate their oracy skills at an advanced level. The target learner group is Year 13 students. The four sections of the qualification provide excellent opportunities to support academic learning and enrichment.

Preparation time for the assessment is approximately one term, but this can be planned flexibly to suit your learners. Assessments take place in groups, with a maximum number of 12 learners per assessor per day. Each learner is assessed individually and interacts with the group and the assessor.

The assessment is approximately 25 minutes, and consists of four sections:

1. **Oral Presentation (40% of assessment):** Learners deliver a presentation on a researched subject of own choice using audio/visual material. In doing so, they use both quantitative and qualitative evidence, and present personal conclusions. They should support their talk with a digital presentation (5 minutes).
2. **Newspaper Review (20%):** Learners lead a discussion based on an article from a quality online or paper-based news source. They give an introductory summary, identify the style, bias and issues raised, and offer an opinion on those issues. They conclude by summarising the opinions of the group (10 minutes).
3. **Literary Recommendation (20%):** Learners provide a literary recommendation of a novel, biography, drama, poetry or public address. They then give a reading or deliver the piece/an extract from memory (4 minutes).
4. **Questions and Discussion (20%):** Learners respond to questions and feedback from the group and the assessor about any section. They should be prepared to contribute ideas and opinions to develop others' discussions.

**iii) Secondary learners making progress, remaining the same, or decreasing in competence**

	Uses Standard English confidently in a range of formal and informal contexts	Uses role, intonation, tone, volume, mood, silence, stillness, and action to add impact.	Speaks confidently, audibly, and fluently
<b>Total</b>	<b>1121</b>	<b>1121</b>	<b>1121</b>
Number improved	598	640	673
percent	53%	57%	60%
NC to C	174	213	211
	29%	33%	31%
C to HC	354	320	359
	59%	50%	53%
NC to HC	70	107	103
	12%	17%	15%
Number same	507	470	421
percent	45%	42%	38%
NC to NC	30	56	31
	6%	12%	7%
C to C	397	359	320
	78%	76%	76%
HC to HC	80	55	69
	16%	12%	16%
Number decreased	16	11	27
percent	1%	1%	2%
C to NC	3		9
	19%	0%	33%
HC to C	13	11	18
	81%	100%	67%

Figure 21

	Participates in formal debates and structured discussions, summarising and/or building on what has been said	Reads aloud audibly and fluently	Works well in a group, staying focused and collaborating with others
<b>Total</b>	<b>1121</b>	<b>729</b>	<b>729</b>
Number improved	635	416	450
percent	<b>57%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>62%</b>
NC to C	221	84	100
	<b>35%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>22%</b>
C to HC	301	260	174
	<b>47%</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>39%</b>
NC to HC	113	72	176
	<b>18%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>39%</b>
Number same	469	288	258
percent	42%	40%	35%
NC to NC	51	21	15
	<b>11%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>6%</b>
C to C	351	219	195
	<b>75%</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>76%</b>
HC to HC	67	47	48
	<b>14%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>19%</b>
Number decreased	17	25	21
percent	2%	3%	3%
C to NC	1	5	7
	<b>6%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>33%</b>
HC to C	16	20	14
	<b>94%</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>67%</b>

	Writes and speaks persuasively	Improvises, rehearses and performs play scripts / poetry	Effective research
<b>Total</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>480</b>	<b>261</b>
Number improved	136	242	143
percent	<b>52%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>55%</b>
NC to C	76	82	63
	<b>56%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>44%</b>
C to HC	56	101	79
	<b>41%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>55%</b>
NC to HC	4	59	1
	<b>3%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>1%</b>
Number same	125	218	117
percent	48%	45%	45%
NC to NC	6	28	9
	<b>5%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>8%</b>
C to C	113	162	98
	<b>90%</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>84%</b>
HC to HC	6	28	10
	<b>5%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>9%</b>
Number decreased	0	20	1
percent	0%	4%	0%
C to NC	0	6	
	<b>0%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>0%</b>
HC to C	0	14	1
	<b>0%</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>100%</b>

	Gives confident and developed responses when speaking 1:1 with an adult	Summarises and disseminates information accurately and confidently	Gives a short speech or presentation, expressing their ideas and keeping to the point
<b>Total</b>	<b>392</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>10</b>
Number improved	205	95	6
percent	<b>52%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>60%</b>
NC to C	87	49	1
	<b>42%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>17%</b>
C to HC	115	41	5
	<b>56%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>83%</b>
NC to HC	3	5	
	<b>1%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>0%</b>
Number same	186	92	4
percent	47%	49%	40%
NC to NC	14	11	
	<b>8%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>0%</b>
C to C	156	73	3
	<b>84%</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>75%</b>
HC to HC	15	8	1
	<b>8%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>25%</b>
Number decreased	1	0	0
percent	0%	0%	0%
C to NC	1		
	<b>100%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>
HC to C			
	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>

iv) **Teacher judgements at KS3, KS5, and for Employability Focus Assessments**

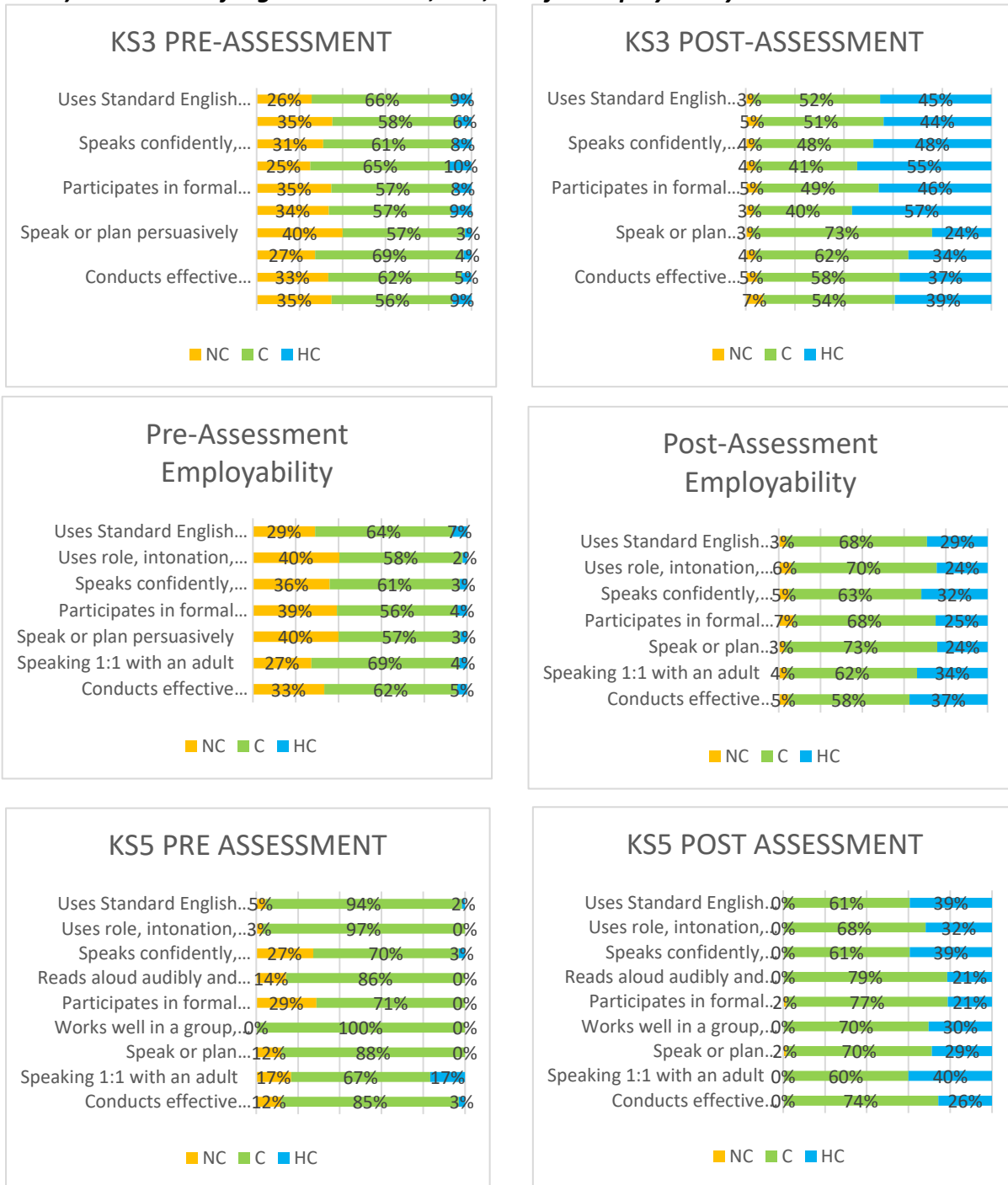


Figure 22



**English Speaking Board (International) Ltd**

9 Hattersley Court, Ormskirk

Lancashire L39 2AY

Tel: (+44) 01695 573439

Web: [www.esbuk.org](http://www.esbuk.org)

Email: [product@esbuk.org](mailto:product@esbuk.org)

©English Speaking Board (International) Ltd

ESB reserves the right to change products and services periodically. Every effort has been made to ensure that information contained in publications is fully accurate at the time of going to press, however, our latest versions of all publications / policies are to be found on our website

[www.esbuk.org](http://www.esbuk.org)

Registered in England Company No. 01269980

Registered as a Charity No. 272565