

Great Crosby Catholic Primary School
“..that they may have life and have it to the full.” John 10:10

Spelling Policy.

The Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to support our pupils to become confident spellers by teaching them a range of strategies, rules and conventions systematically and explicitly. By becoming confident spellers, pupils will be able to focus on the skills of composition, sentence structure and precise word choice within their writing. It is important that all members of staff are fully aware of, and understand, the way in which spelling is taught, so that our approach is implemented consistently to ensure continuity and progression in children’s learning. Although guidelines for the teaching of spelling are outlined in this policy and the ‘Spelling Shed’ scheme, it is essential that these are adapted to meet the needs of individual pupils, taking into account the ways in which they learn best.

The Principles behind this Policy

1. Spelling tests are a good way to ensure spellings are learnt but it is essential that children apply these skills to their writing.
2. Spelling is the application of visual memory. As teachers, we must strengthen pupils’ visual memories before we can expect them to become successful learners.
3. Spelling must be taught in context – linked to the oral use of the word and the formation of the word as a whole (handwriting).
4. Accurate spelling and accurate letter formation go hand-in-hand. As teachers, we must ensure that letter orientation and direction is accurate so that children can concentrate on the order of the letters, rather than the formation of them.
5. Successful spelling takes place through a VAK (visual, aural and kinaesthetic) approach. As teachers, we need to ensure that spelling is taught using a combination of methods.
6. Successful spelling takes place when children have an opportunity to review and recall their learning. Teachers must provide opportunities to consolidate learning throughout each week.

Aims of this Policy

1. To explain the expected practices, to ensure that children become successful spellers who apply the principles underpinning word construction (phonemic, morphemic and etymological).
2. To provide a point of reference for teaching and support staff, for when they are planning the delivery of spelling skills/rules.
3. To ensure continuity in practices and progression in spelling skills.
4. To clarify the responsibilities of staff, parents and children.
5. To raise the profile of the teaching of spelling and to raise the overall standard of spelling across the school.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Staff

- To ensure that teachers plan for the teaching of spelling every week and that planning is shared with members of support staff, who are also responsible for delivering spelling programmes to targeted groups of children.
- To ensure that spellings are set at an appropriate level for the child and build on what they already know and can apply.
- To teach a range of approaches to learn spellings.
- To provide children with a range of strategies to help them become secure with spelling rules.
- To ensure children's spelling is assessed on a regular basis and that this is used to inform future planning.
- To ensure that everyone shares good practice, reviewing this on a regular basis, to ensure there is continuity.

The Pupils

- To use the strategies taught to them, to help secure spelling skills.
- To be able to identify the most effective methods to help them to learn and recall spelling rules.
- To practise, at home, the spelling rules which have been taught at school, to consolidate their learning in line with the homework policy.
- To transfer skills to their written work, correctly spelling words that have been learnt.

The Parents/Guardians

- To support their children in the learning of spelling.
- To be familiar with the strategies that the children are encouraged to use to help them to learn their spellings.

The Teaching of Spelling from Year 2 to Year 6

Transition of spelling from Year 1 to Year 2:

Children will have followed a programme of phonics teaching in Reception and Year 1. By the end of Year 1, the expectation is that most children will have met Year 1 NC expectations. The spelling objectives for Year 2 ensure that children have knowledge and understanding of objectives outlined in the Spelling Shed Scheme which reflects the NC. Spelling in Key Stage 2 will follow the Spelling Shed scheme. This outlines the objectives taught in each year group, each term. Spelling homework will be linked to word lists for each year group and provides an interactive way to practise and consolidate. Where lists are given to be tested, a whole year group will follow the same practice. If pupils require additional support, individual lists may be compiled to narrow gaps any in learning.

Within the teaching of spelling, there should be opportunities to:

- Revisit, explain, use
- Teach, model, define
- Practise, explore, investigate
- Apply, assess, reflect

Application of Spelling in Writing

Children's growing understanding of spelling rules is only valuable if they go on to apply it in their independent writing. Children should be able to spell an ever-increasing number of words accurately and to check and correct their work. This process is supported through:

- Shared writing: the teacher demonstrates how to apply spelling strategies while writing, and teaches proofreading skills.
- Guided and independent writing: the children apply what they have been taught. This is an opportunity to think about the whole writing process - composition as well as spelling, handwriting and punctuation.
- Marking the children's work: the teacher can assess their progress and ability to understand and apply what has been taught and then identify targets for further improvement. Spellings which a child is expected to know at their age, or topic based words, will be corrected where there is available space and marked SP. Children are not expected to write spellings out but a HAG may be used for investigative purposes to find others which correspond to a pattern.
- Teaching and practising handwriting: learning and practising a fluent joined style will support the children's spelling development.

Spelling Journals

In Years 2 to Year 6, all children will be given a spelling journal which will move with them throughout the school. This journal will remain in school and children will use it to record the particular spellings they need to focus on in their work. The spelling journal will be used in the following two main ways:

1. As part of the teaching of spelling. activities include the children identifying specific words that they need to continue to work on. These could be words exemplifying a particular pattern, or convention, of high-frequency words. These words are put into the children's spelling journals with tips on how to remember the spelling.
2. To record spellings arising from each child's independent writing: these words will be personalised to the individual child and will be those that frequently 'trip them up' as they are writing. These words can be identified as part of the proof-reading process and children can be involved in devising strategies for learning them and monitoring whether they spell these words correctly in subsequent pieces of writing. Children should have a manageable number of personalised spellings in their spelling journal at any one time and these should be reviewed each half term. Children should be taught to look for evidence of correct spellings in their independent writing and can then remove the word from the list once it has been consistently spelt correctly.

Using dictionaries

Children should be taught to use a dictionary to check their spellings. The repeated singing of an alphabet song at earlier phases should have familiarised them with alphabetical order. Their first dictionary practice should be with words starting with different letters but, once they are competent at this, they should learn how to look at

second and subsequent letters, as necessary. Children will sometimes require support with certain spelling patterns such as 'ph'. Use of a dictionary to discuss the origin and meaning of words should be modelled and encouraged by staff.

Links with handwriting

Developing a fluent and joined style is an important part of learning to spell and the teaching of spelling and handwriting should be closely linked. As children are taught how to join letters, they can begin practising letter strings and complete words, linked to the specific focus for teaching in the spelling unit.

Assessment and Monitoring

It is important that the assessment of children's spellings is meaningful for the child but also for the teacher when planning the teaching of spelling. Assessing spelling should not just be about identifying words that children spell correctly and incorrectly in a test, but consistently within their writing. It should be an opportunity to evaluate students' understanding of sounds and conventional spelling patterns. An awareness of the kinds of words that pupils find difficult, and the types of errors they make, is important when evaluating their spelling achievement and their understanding of language structures. For example, do they have a lack of phonetic knowledge, or are they confusing rules for spelling? Teachers should then use this assessment information to plan subsequent phonics/spelling sessions. Additionally, children should record correct spellings for mis-spelt words in their own spelling journal. This will enable them to revisit and practise words when writing, through multi-sensory approaches - for example: looking, saying, hearing and writing words. Self-assessment of pupils' own spellings is also essential as it encourages independence in learning and reflection on their writing. We should encourage children to proof-read and spot their own errors in written work, with reference to their spelling journals, spelling displays within the classroom, spelling strategy prompts and, when ready, dictionaries. (See marking section for more detail.)

SWST Single Word Spelling Test

This will be used at the beginning and end of the academic year as a diagnostic tool to identify gaps in children's spelling knowledge. It will inform planning for teachers and ensure that children are appropriately supported to make progress in spelling.

Marking of Work

Marking is integral to how we assess the children's writing. It should be purposeful, constructive and support the child by showing them how they can improve. It should also assist the teacher in planning the next crucial steps for learning. When focusing on spelling within writing, children should firstly be given the opportunity to write freely and be encouraged to use spelling strategies they know. This ensures that the child is still motivated to write and promotes independence when spelling.

However, at the proof-reading stage, time should be given for checking any words the child is unsure of or unfamiliar with. When writing, children are encouraged to highlight these words by underlining them so that they remember to revisit them later. They should then be encouraged to use their spelling journal and any other spelling strategy prompts that are available within the classroom environment. As teachers, our initial responses to a child's piece of work, particularly at the drafting stage, should be related to the learning objective and content (Composition and Effect). We should be concentrating on the positive aspects of the writing. During the proof-reading stage, the teacher should identify an appropriate but manageable selection of incorrect spellings which the individual child is expected to know. These words could be written correctly on the page with code 'SP' for the child to see and then transfer to their individual spelling journal.

Spelling lists

As part of assessment and monitoring, children may be given a spelling list to learn which will be linked to the spelling patterns and objectives they have been learning in spelling sessions. Spellings may also be linked to the high-frequency words or words from their spelling journal. The number of spellings they are given will be dependent on their year group and may be personalised to the individual child. Consistency in use of spelling lists will be found across a year group. Although we want pupils to be challenged, we don't want them to feel overwhelmed.

Spelling patterns

In some cases, instead of a list of spellings to be learnt, a spelling pattern with an example may be given, which will be tested the following week - for example, when to double a consonant when adding a suffix. hot + er = hotter, bag + ful = bagful

Definitions

Knowing the definitions of words that children are learning to spell is very important. When appropriate, this type of activity may be given as homework. For example, children might be asked to write a short definition next to each of their spellings on the worksheet provided.

Reviewed January 2023