



# Spelling Policy

## AIMS

We aim for all children to achieve the highest possible standards of spelling. We want children to spell well and to achieve satisfaction in this. We expect the vast majority of children to have a spelling age at least in line with their chronological age, and for all children to make the best possible progress, in line with their age and stage or beyond. Whilst we do not want a fear of incorrect spelling to undermine children's willingness and motivation to write using a broad range of ambitious vocabulary, we expect teachers to set clear expectations for children, so that all words previously taught are spelt correctly and children have a range of strategies to help them spell unknown words. We believe that early correct spelling is vital for spelling success, so that it is laid down in the motor memory and children do not have to unlearn and re-learn later.

This policy has been written taking into account the expectations of the National Curriculum 2014 and more recently the updated statutory framework for assessment of children in Years 2 and 6. This makes very clear the DfE's expectation that children will be able to spell accurately, which has implications for how spelling is taught, monitored and marked throughout the school. We share the belief that accurate spelling is important for school life and beyond.

## THE PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to ensure teachers 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, 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

- Research tells us that Spelling tests are not a good way to ensure spellings are learnt. It is essential that children apply spelling rules and patterns in to their writing rather than just rote learning spellings which are then forgotten the following week.
- Spelling is the application of visual memory. As teachers, we must strengthen pupils' visual memories before we can expect them to become successful learners. Some words can only be learnt by sight.
- Spelling must be taught in context – linked to the oral use of the word and the formation of the word as a whole (handwriting). 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. The motor skills associated with words shapes/handwriting are linked to memory.

- Successful learning of spelling takes place through a range of multisensory approaches. As teachers, we need to ensure that spelling is taught using a combination of methods.
- 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.

## **PLANNING AND TEACHING**

Each year group has a long term plan which maps out objectives taken directly from the National Curriculum. This includes a suggested list of words which link with the rule/pattern. The plans have been created by drawing from a range of sources. Spelling lessons should not rely on worksheets or copying out words and should a range of varied techniques.

At Year 7, key spelling objectives from KS2 will be revisited and extended where needed to support children and develop their ability to spell effectively. There will also be an expectation of children to apply their spelling knowledge when editing and proof-reading their written work in a thorough and independent way.

### **Spelling in the Timetable**

Spelling is not about handing out a list on Monday and testing on Friday. Often, using this approach does not embed spellings and is just a test of short-term memory. Also, children need to be taught how to spell and more importantly, the strategies which make a good speller. Just as we model in writing and reading, we must model how to think about spelling and strategies children can use when they don't know how to spell a word. Spelling sessions need to be short and snappy: an hour long spelling session is not as effective as four short fifteen minute sessions. It is good practice to make links across curriculum areas wherever possible, e.g. in reading lessons when looking at vocabulary and handwriting practise. Each class must include four 15-20 minute spelling sessions across the two-week timetable as a minimum. If there is a class where spelling is a significant issue and it is felt more time needs to be allocated to this area then this is at the class teacher's discretion.

### **Word Sorting and Investigations**

Spelling lessons at Witton aim to be investigative and challenge based. Not only copying out words over and over, not just filling gaps in sentences but really looking at words and the similarities/differences between them. Spelling sessions will engage children in spelling investigations and challenges in a collaborative way that encourages reasoning and hypothesising about meanings and word families. These work best when words are printed on cards so children can manipulate them and bring an active element. Investigations are not appropriate for every objective but there is an expectation that children will have opportunities to undertake this activity regularly.

### **Linked resources for further reading**

- 'Talk for Spelling' by Tony Martin.
- <https://wordstudyspelling.com/>
- Spelling Bank

## **ASSESSMENT**

Pupils' learning is assessed throughout the year in different ways. Children may not have a formal spelling test each week as this becomes a test of short term memory. Instead, teachers will use different methods to assess the children's spelling ability in order to support their learning moving forward. These activities include:

- Collaborative tests - working with peers to spell words
- Dictation
- Games and challenges
- Independent application in writing

There will be times when children will be tested on spellings in a more formal way to give a summative judgement of a child's spelling. We will also test children's spelling ages at the beginning and end of the year to assess progress and any gaps in learning.

## **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 bookmark/wall 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 success criteria 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. These words could be written correctly on the page for the child to see and then transfer to their individual spelling bookmark. See school 'Marking and Feedback' policy for further guidance.

## **APPLICATION OF SPELLING AND STRATEGIES**

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 proof-reading 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.
- Teaching and practising handwriting: learning and practising a fluent joined style will support the children's spelling development.
- Spelling Bookmarks: including commonly misspelt high frequency words on one side and blank on the other for children to add their own words which are corrected by the teacher.
- As children write, encourage them to underline in pencil any words that they don't think are spelt correctly or they don't know how to spell. They must do this as they write, not go back and do it after. Then, a strategy could be for children to work in pairs after writing is completed to look together at the underlined words and try to work out how to spell them correctly.
- Providing children with resources to support independence when spelling words. Before providing children with the word, encourage children to use strategies. This is not solely limited to dictionaries, as they can sometimes hinder children, but specific word mats containing vocabulary you know children will need and general word mats with high frequency/common exception words and prefix/suffixes. Children should use journals too, looking back to see if there is a word in there that is similar or using the rule.
- Encourage children to always have a go at spelling words themselves first, thinking carefully about how it might be spelt and model this with them.

Other learning strategies that will be taught to the children include:

- LSCWC (Look, say, cover, write, check)
- trace, copy and replicate (and then check)
- segmentation strategy
- drawing around the word to show the shape
- drawing an image around the word
- words without vowels and pyramid words.

We will encourage children to use these strategies at home when practising spellings to further consolidate knowledge.

## **PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

Class teachers may send home spelling activities as part of the homework and parents should support children with completing this as well as supporting with spelling in any written pieces of work. Class teachers will feedback to parents about their children's progress and attainment in spelling in written reports and parent's meetings along with ways they can further help their children. Class teachers should always be consulted with any specific concerns or issues and further support can be sought from the English Leader.

Helpful websites for parents include:

<https://childdevelopmentinfo.com/learning/tips-for-helping-kids-and-teens-with-homework-and-study-habits/spelling/>

<https://www.theschoolrun.com/teachers-tricks-make-spelling-easy>

## MONITORING AND EVALUATION

It is the responsibility of the English Leader to develop good spelling practice in school and assist staff in this area with the support of the Head teacher and senior leadership team. The English Leader will also monitor the impact of this policy and evaluate how it works in practice. This may be achieved through:

- Leading/organising staff meetings to give in-house Continuing Professional Development for staff, sharing new resources
- Talking to staff about spelling in their class, appropriateness of resources
- Talking to children about spelling – attitude and approach in all areas
- Book/work scrutiny to see spelling produced across all areas
- Book/work scrutiny to see the development and progression across the school from Reception to Year 6
- Lesson observations with a focus on spelling

## ASSOCIATED POLICIES

Marking and Feedback

This policy appears on the school website.

Prepared by:	Chloe Biddle	Responsibility of:	Head of English
Agreement Date:	17.05.2018	Review Date:	17.05.2020
This Policy was prepared giving due regard to the disabilities and/or special education needs, age, race, religion or belief, sex/sexual orientation, gender/gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity of the children and staff at Witton Middle School and its community.			

## VERSION CONTROL

Date	Version	Approved by	Title	Changes
13.02.2018	Draft			School responsibilities outlined