

THIRSK COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Phonics and Spelling Policy

School Vision

To develop confident young people who enjoy learning and strive to achieve the best. Together we will provide each pupil with a safe and caring school community that promotes fairness, tolerance and respect.

SEE: Success - everyone, every day

INTRODUCTION

Spelling is an integral part of all language development and cannot easily be separated from the writing process. Whenever possible, skills are taught through a range of purposeful tasks and in meaningful contexts. The teaching of spelling follows the expectations specified in the National Curriculum 2014. 'Letters and Sounds' is used as the starting point for the teaching of phonics and spelling. The scheme of work for the teaching of spelling in KS2 is developed from 'Bellenden Primary Spelling Programme' together with the school's own scheme of work for the teaching of Common Exception Words (CEWs). 'Support for Spelling' and 'Spelling Bank' are additional resources which are used for reference by teachers when looking for words which follow rules, or words with common letter strings.

AIMS

All children should be taught:

- To listen carefully and discriminate sounds
- To discriminate sound patterns and rhythms and to count syllables
- To identify the phonemes (individual speech sounds) that make up each word
- To recognise the critical features of words e.g. shape, length
- To recognise common spelling patterns and words within words
- To use independent spelling strategies e.g. sounding out, recognising common letter strings, spelling by analogy etc. (all specified in Support for Spelling or Letters and Sounds)
- To use word banks and dictionaries
- To understand and use the spelling conventions and rules common to the English language (all specified in Support for Spelling and Letters and Sounds)

PHONICS

At Thirsk C. P. School we use the 'Letters and Sounds' programme, following a synthetic phonics approach. In the Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1, phonics is taught daily, with importance placed upon playing with words, sounds, rhythm and rhyme. The children are taught, phonemes, graphemes, common exception (tricky) words and spelling patterns. There is a balance of hearing, reading and spelling the phonemes they are being taught. Where this is necessary for any pupils in KS2, additional phonic teaching continues.

SPELLING STRATEGIES

We endeavour to teach spelling skills through a range of interesting activities with an investigative approach, and to develop pupils' interest in words and their origins. Studies show that children do not all learn to spell by one particular method, so we employ a variety of techniques to the teaching of spelling:

- Visual - this involves looking carefully at the word and trying to keep a picture in their mind.
- Auditory - this involves hearing the sounds in a word. Generally this is only a good technique for short words where it is easy to hear each and every sound correctly.
- Kinaesthetic - this involves movement of the hand. If a child has written a word often enough, perhaps in practice, their hand can take over and they instinctively write the letters in the word they need to spell.
- Analysis - looking for similarities, differences, word roots and patterns.
- Mnemonics
- Exact pronunciation (including silent letters): Wed - nes- day
- Read own spelling aloud to see if it sounds right e.g. fot as attempt for foot

- Use of phoneme frames
- Memory joggers - friend ends with end
- Does it look right? What would it look like if you saw it in your reading book?
- Break longer words into syllables and treat each syllable as a little word
- Little words in big words - there's 'a rat' in separate
- Use of rhyme and analogy (could/should/would)
- Use of prefixes and suffixes e.g. unfriendly

Emphasis is placed on ensuring that pupils' understanding of vocabulary is checked and clarified when learning any spelling. Pupils are taught to use alphabetic letter names when spelling words aloud as soon as they are secure in understanding and using both phonemes (letter sounds) and letter names. This enables them to discuss, for example, that 'school' has 4 sounds, but 6 letters. In addition, they are taught how to develop strategies for memorisation through practice.

MARKING

A marking and feedback policy is in effect throughout the school and should therefore be referred to alongside this section of this policy. The specific focus of a task should always be made clear to children and marked correspondingly. The marking of spellings needs to be done sensitively. If the specified focus of an activity was not to spell all words correctly then consideration is given to a few core spellings only, which pupils are directed to practise.

RESOURCES

All classes have access to a variety of dictionaries appropriate to the abilities of the children. Many classes have phoneme charts, long vowel displays and word-banks displayed in the classrooms which the children are taught to use as part of their phonics/spelling strategies.

THE ROLE OF PARENTS

Parents play a vital role in helping children learn spellings for homework. These spellings are differentiated, and are sent home weekly. There is no doubt that children who learn their spellings thoroughly find it easier to communicate in written form.

PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT

Teachers plan for the teaching of phonics and spelling half termly, based on the content of the curriculum, and their ongoing assessments and knowledge of pupils' skills. The spelling scheme provides the structure for this medium term planning. Children in FS and KS1 are assessed against the phonic phases and common exception words outlined in Letters and Sounds. Where necessary, pupils in KS2 who need to continue to work on phonic development are given additional support. The spelling progress of pupils in Y1-6 is monitored annually using the Single Word Spelling Test. This enables the spelling performance of the whole school as well as individuals to be monitored, and any priorities to be identified and addressed by the co-ordinator.

CROSS CURRICULAR THEMES

Spelling is not only developed through English lessons, but throughout the curriculum. Pupils are encouraged to use correct spellings at all times and to use classroom displays which support the spelling of words from other curriculum areas.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Children with special needs are identified through regular teacher assessment. They are then supported through the procedures detailed in the SEN policy.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

We regard the achievement of every group of pupils to be of equal importance. This is reflected in the curriculum we teach. We value and reward the achievements of all pupils equally. We have high expectations of behaviour for

every group in school. We aim to involve parents from every background and believe this is a significant benefit to the school.

Date of publication: June 2017

Date for Review: June 2019