



St Peter's C of E School Policy Statement on Spelling

Staff consultation:	October 2008
Curriculum committee:	October 2008
Ratified by governors:	November 2008
Review dates:	

This policy should be implemented within the context of the vision, aims and values of our Church School.

Introduction

This document is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for teaching and learning of spelling at St Peter's School. It was developed through a process of consultation with teaching staff. It was recommended for approval by the Governors' Curriculum Committee and ratified by the full Governing Body on the dates above.

What is spelling?

Spelling is a tool which aids freedom in writing, eases communication and simple courtesy towards the reader. Being able to spell correctly is an important skill which all children should be taught in a systematic and effective manner within the context of meaningful writing. Accurate spelling implies consideration for the reader and also recognises the deeply embedded notions about correctness which we hold as a society about spelling. We recognise that spelling is not the most important aspect of writing, however spelling can have a profound impact on a writer's self image.

Strategy for implementation

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the school's writing policy.

Entitlement and curriculum provision

Spelling is taught as part of a planned programme, mainly during the literacy lesson. It draws on the Primary Framework for Teaching to determine age appropriate expectations in respect of spelling. In addition handwriting lessons, shared and guided reading and writing sessions afford many opportunities for talking about spelling and revisiting and practising strategies. Spelling activities are often used during independent time. The teaching of spelling subject specific vocabulary occurs in all subjects and opportunities are made in these lessons to reinforce spelling work undertaken in the Literacy lesson.

Teaching and Learning

The teaching of spelling aims to develop pupils as independent spellers who take an active part in their own learning. This is through a multi-sensory approach incorporating the development of fine motor skills, auditory discrimination and visual perception. Pupils are taught the knowledge and skills that they need in order to become independent spellers. Central to our spelling philosophy is that we value children's attempts and promote independence through the use of 'Have a go'. At the back of children's literacy books is a pull out page which gives children the space to try and spell and record words that they are having difficulty spelling. Spelling accuracy is promoted by following the structured teaching sequence as identified in the Primary Strategy. Children should ensure

they learn and practise those words they frequently misspell and increase their spelling vocabulary by learning how to spell technical and subject specific words they encounter across the curriculum.

Continuity and Progression

Foundation Stage

In the foundation stage a multi-sensory approach is adopted. This is closely linked to the gross and fine motor work undertaken in line with our handwriting policy and the development of children's listening skills. Predominantly this is done through games, rhymes and activities across the curriculum. The focus of teaching is rhyme, rhythm and alliteration. Teaching models strategies for discriminating sounds for spelling and reading.

Children at our school follow the Letters and Sounds programme and early assessment identifies the level at which they enter the programme. At this stage in the writing process confidence and independence is the key skill and we understand that if pupils are to become confident writers then they should not be inhibited by a concern over spelling accuracy.

Key Stage 1

Phonics is taught daily in Key Stage 1 again using the Letters and Sounds programme. It is expected that most pupils will have completed the programme by the end of Year 2. The emphasis on spelling is on segmenting words into phonemes and matching this sound to the most likely letter or letters in the alphabet. Teachers are also supported in their teaching of spelling to this Key Stage by the Year 2 / 3 spelling programme.

As pupils become increasingly independent they are taught to identify their own misspellings and how to use a simple dictionary and word banks. The 'Look Say Cover Write Check' routine is established and children are encouraged to take risks in their spelling by using their Have a Go word page. Children should know what their responsibilities are in terms of spelling and when to seek adult assistance.

Key Stage 2

At Key Stage 2 there is an emphasis on the recognition of letter strings, visual patterns and analogies, the application of spelling conventions, the use of a range of word resources and the morphology of words. Nevertheless, it is recognised that some pupils will need to consolidate their phonic knowledge and skills from Key Stage 1.

Within the Literacy lesson there is a gradual shift from teaching at word level to teaching at sentence level. However, an expectation remains that there should be explicit teaching of spelling several times during the teaching sequences. Most teaching sequences start with one or two days devoted to spelling and word level work, this is then revisited and applied during the rest of the teaching sequence.

An investigative approach is taken to the teaching of spelling, which is supported by the activities contained in the Spelling Bank (DfEE). Teachers in Year 3 are supported through the use of the Year 2 / 3 spelling programme. The Primary strategy details the National Curriculum programme of teaching, but teachers will use their professional judgement in order to pitch the teaching at the appropriate developmental level.

Building on the approaches introduced in Key Stage 1, there is an emphasis on developing confidence and independence. It is expected that pupils assume increased responsibility by identifying their own spelling errors, making reasoned choices about likely alternatives and using a range of resources (including spellcheckers and a variety of dictionaries and word banks) for making corrections.

Inclusion

Where pupils have made limited progress in their ability to segment words for spelling, a targeted programme may be required. Usually, a teaching assistant is deployed to support pupils who are underachieving in their spelling.

Individual programmes for teaching and support are drawn up as appropriate by the teacher in consultation with the SEN co-ordinator and parents.

The learning environment

Teachers provide a rich and lively learning environment supported by well chosen word resources and interactive displays to enhance pupils' independence as spellers in Literacy and across the curriculum.

The role of parents and carers

The nursery/reception teacher, in particular, is responsible for communicating the school's policy about the place of spelling in the writing process.

At parents' meetings, formal and informal, teachers emphasise that it is important for parents not to confuse advancement in writing with spelling competence. This restricts development as a writer through unrealistic expectations and a misplaced emphasis on spelling. At a later stage parents are shown why it is inappropriate to correct every spelling error which a child has made.

Where appropriate, spelling investigations are carried out as homework activities, which, on occasions, are reinforced by learning at home those words which the pupils are likely to use in their own writing. From time to time, pupils learn words listed in their spelling journal.

Assessment and recording

Testing is used as a diagnostic tool and targets are set for pupils following a developmental model. Assessment is built into the medium-term plan against key learning objectives and is also carried out on a more informal basis as a part of daily teaching. There is a diagnostic dictation that is available for teachers to use. This helps to identify gaps or difficulties in learning and can be used to identify the letter strings or rules that needed further teaching.

Individual or group spelling targets are addressed during the guided part of the lesson when the teacher is able to respond to individual needs. Whenever possible spelling errors are tackled with pupils present. When teachers mark spelling they are expected to underline the incorrect section of the word and, if the child is unlikely to be able to ascertain the correct spelling, to write the correct spelling over the top so that the child is able to make a direct comparison. Teachers are expected to use their professional judgement as to the number of errors corrected in any single piece of writing and to be mindful of the developmental needs of pupils. Where appropriate, spelling targets are set and agreed with pupils; progress is monitored and the targets updated on a regular basis. Teachers give explicit feedback regarding the successful strategies used and knowledge employed.

Spelling tests are used from time to time but they are used sparingly and are not regarded as the main means by which spelling is taught.

Teachers pay particular attention to pupils with IEPs, which relate to spelling.

Review

This policy will be reviewed in line with the school's policy review programme. A schedule for the review of this, and all other policy documents is set out in the School Improvement Plan. The subject leader is responsible for reporting to the governors' curriculum committee about the quality of its implementation and its impact on standards. In the light of this, policy amendments may be made.

Signed.....
Chair of Governors

Date.....