

Spelling Update

September 2019

What do good spellers do?

- They apply knowledge they have been taught when writing independently
- They use the resources available
- They refer to the learning environment
- They use personal strategies to help them work out a solution to words they don't know
- They have curiosity about language and words
- They take responsibility for their own learning

‘No Nonsense Spelling’

Refining our approach
in five simple steps

Step 1: Timetabling

- Year 2

Daily sessions

- KS2

5 x 15 minute sessions over a fortnight

Step 2: Approach

Teaching sequence for each spelling focus:

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

Step 2: Approach

There are three aspects to the 'No Nonsense' approach:

- Strategies at the point of writing
- Strategies after the writing is completed (proofreading)
- Strategies for learning words

N.B. These strategies are to be applied in *all* writing, not just discrete spelling sessions.

Spelling strategies at the point of writing

1. Segmenting words into phonemes (smallest unit of sound) and selecting the correct graphemes (letter/s representing a phoneme) (KS1)
2. Segmenting words into syllables (Year 1)
3. Visual strategies e.g. recognising common letter strings and checking whether word looks right (Year 1)
4. Building words from other words with similar patterns and meanings; applying knowledge of derivations e.g. medic > medical, medicine etc.

N.B. Word webs are a great way of recording these.

5. Spelling by analogy with other known words e.g. *light*, *fright* (Year 1)

6. Building words from morphemes* (the smallest units of meaning) e.g. un + usual + ly (prefix + root word + suffix); exploring morphemes within words (Yr 1)
7. Applying knowledge of spelling rules and exceptions (From Year 1+)

N.B. This should **not** be the first line of attack. Its role is limited and is the least powerful strategy in children's spelling.

6. Mnemonics (N.B. only a few words benefit from this)

* Bound morphemes need a prefix or suffix to become a word; unbound/free morphemes work as a word in their own right.

Spelling strategies after writing

Proofreading

- Limit the number of words to be looked at more closely
- Link to the words they are currently learning + tricky words i.e. not everything, rather the ones they should be equipped to have a go at
- Use of word-processing skills for children with specific learning needs e.g. spell checker

Strategies for learning words

Words to be learnt include:

- Common exception words/statutory word lists
- Personal words i.e. particular words they're getting wrong in their writing.

Children need to:

- be taught a range of strategies
- practise and use those strategies independently
- choose and evaluate strategies

Stop their brains bypassing spelling by directly addressing it, prompting them to think critically about it e.g. "Find me a word you know you've got right/wrong/you're unsure about."

Which spelling strategy is best for my child?

Explore them.

Children need to discover what works for them.

Homophones

- Homophones appear in the new curriculum from Year 2-6
- These should be explicitly taught
- The spelling of these words should be linked to their meaning. For example:
 - Fill in the missing word in a given sentence
 - Create words within pictures to help children understand their meaning: a visual representation of the word e.g. **hear** (ear pic); the spelling *one* written in the shape of the digit one
 - Match up pictures and words
 - Take photos of your child acting out the words
 - Use words in the context of poems, raps, songs etc.

Step 3: Homework

- Spelling homework will now be set fortnightly.
- Tasks will be varied so the children are inspired to engage with the spelling focus on a more exploratory level. Children may be challenged to: find words containing a particular phoneme/grapheme correspondence; explore all the derivations they can generate from a given root word; record the spelling strategy/ies they have decided to use for some given words in an innovative way; use their words in the context of sentences etc.
- Alongside the chosen exploratory/creative/critical thinking activity, the child will have five words* to learn.
* For Year 3-6, these will be taken from the statutory lists
- Homework set will be age-related as much as possible.
- The idea is to use the programme to build our own **bespoke spelling curriculum**. As such, homework (and class based sessions and resources) may well need to be adapted for certain individual/groups of children.

Step 4: Assessment

- Day to day assessment e.g. applying sessions
- Spelling tests

Although we will now be **devoting two weeks to each spelling focus**, words will still be tested - in **isolation** and **in the context of sentences** – on a **weekly basis**. The nature and content of these tests should be informed by the learning that week.

- Marking independent writing
- Error analysis

Step 5: A Spelling Culture

- Spelling should be a part of day to day learning:
 - Staff will ensure it is given a high profile so that is thought about, discussed and applied beyond discrete spelling sessions.
 - Staff will encourage and celebrate child-generated contributions – oral and written – and, where appropriate, use them to benefit all learners.
 - An area of your child's classroom will be devoted to spelling. This will be as child-generated and interactive as possible.
 - Every child has received a copy of the GPC (grapheme-phoneme correspondence) chart *and* a copy is on display in all classrooms and intervention spaces.