Bowhill Primary School
Spelling and Handwriting Policy

AIM: that through a range of teaching and learning strategies our children will be able to communicate meaning through a good basic knowledge of spelling conventions in a legible written form with ease, clarity and confidence.

The Importance Of Spelling And Handwriting To The Curriculum

At Bowhill Primary School we believe that spelling and handwriting are intrinsically linked. Therefore, in order to learn and practice spelling, children need to actively write. The motor-memory of the hand in accessing spelling patterns and letter strings is essential and so through a multi-sensory approach incorporating the development of fine motor skills, auditory discrimination and visual perception we establish routines and structures to enable our learners to become independent spellers and writers. It is important in an increasingly ‘word-processed world’, to recognise that there will continue to be a need for legible handwritten text.

Spelling is an integral part of the writing process. Pupils who spell with ease are able to concentrate on the content of their writing and make communication clear. While it is necessary to remember that spelling is not the most important aspect of writing, confidence in spelling often has a profound effect on the writer’s self-image. Accurate spelling implies consideration for the reader and also recognises the deeply embedded notions about correctness which we hold as a society about spelling.

Handwriting is a skill which needs to be taught explicitly. Since handwriting is essentially a movement skill, correct modelling of the agreed style by the teacher is very important; it is not sufficient to require pupils to simply copy models from a published scheme or worksheet. Consistency in the attitudes displayed, the methods employed and the models provided is the key to effective learning. Teaching strategies include a mixture of whole class, small group and individual teaching.

Strategy for implementation - Spelling

The role of the teacher is to:

- follow this school policy to help each child develop as a confident and independent speller;
- provide direct teaching and accurate modelling;
- provide resources and an environment which promotes good spelling;
- develop pupils as independent spellers who take an active part in their own learning;
- observe pupils, monitor progress and determine targets for development.
- report to parents on the progress of their child

Pupils are taught the knowledge and skills they need to become independent spellers through a planned programme following the requirements of the National Literacy Framework in conjunction with The National Primary Strategy document - ‘Support for Spelling’ Ref: 001712009DOM-EN and the Early Reading Project.

Structured handwriting lessons and shared and guided reading and writing sessions afford many opportunities for talking about spelling, practising and consolidating knowledge and understanding. Spelling strategies are explored through a range of age appropriate activities e.g.: whiteboards, Interactive White Boards, spelling lists, games, independent activities and group investigations.
Routines and structures are provided to enable pupils to apply what they learn about spelling independently.

We teach and consolidate the acquisition of spelling skills broadly in three ways. Firstly, by using a structured approach as outlined in the documents named above. Secondly, by ensuring that pupils learn and practise those words which they most frequently misspell as individuals, and thirdly, by increasing children’s spelling vocabulary by learning how to spell and use technical and subject specific words which occur across the curriculum.

**Foundation Stage**

The Early Reading Project is followed at this stage with a systematic emphasis on high quality phonics work which is embedded within a rich language experience. This focus teaches phonological skills – the ability to manipulate sounds in words without visual stimuli (auditory) and phonic skill ability to associate a sound with a letter or combination of letters (auditory / visual). This leads to early readers being able to synthesise and segment individual phonemes and thus aid the concept of spelling.

**Key Stage 1**

At this Key Stage the appropriate Literacy Strategy objectives are followed.

Year 1 – Continue Early Reading Project
Year 2 – appropriate spelling tests and continuation of Early Reading Project

**Key Stage 2**

At Key Stage 2 there is further 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 the phonic knowledge and skills from Key Stage 1.

Whilst there is a gradual shift from teaching at word level to teaching at sentence level, there is still regular explicit teaching of spelling in all year groups.

The teaching of spelling, is supported by the activities contained in the Spelling Bank (DfEE 1999), the National Literacy Strategy Activity Resource Sheets (DfEE 1998) and ‘Support For Spelling 2009). Primary English Folio 37 ‘Teaching Spelling at Key Stage 2’, is used as an additional point of reference. Teachers 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 will assume increased responsibility by identifying their own spelling errors through editing skills, making reasoned choices about likely alternatives and using a range of resources for making corrections including the effective use of dictionaries.

**Special Needs**

Where pupils have made limited progress in their ability to segment words for spelling, a targeted programme is required.

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

**Assessment and Recording (Spelling)**

Assessment is built into planning against key learning objectives (medium and high frequency word lists) through QCA tests, SATs and Early Reading Assessments. More informal assessments are carried out as a part of regular marking and teaching. Testing is used as a diagnostic tool and targets are set for pupils accordingly.

Individual or group spelling targets are addressed during the guided part of the literacy lesson when the teacher is able to respond to individual needs. 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 and parents; progress is monitored and the targets updated on a regular basis.

**Spelling Routines and Structures at Bowhill Primary**

**Foundation:** Routines are based on adult modelling whilst children use whiteboards to explore individual phonemes and digraphs.

Corrections of some high frequency words during conferencing of work with a child takes place, and two or three words are practised alongside a child’s work as appropriate.

**Key Stage 1:** as above. Workcards of high frequency words are available during independent work as a support.

Year 2 use differentiated spelling tests.

**Key Stage 2:**

According to the needs of the children, some or all of the following approaches will be promoted

- Look, Cover, Write, Check
- Mnemonics
- Medium/high frequency word lists
- Personal Spelling Logs
- Investigation Work
- Spell it Yourself/Dictionaries/Thesauruses available for every lesson
- Spelling objectives clearly indicated when appropriate
- Class constructed wordbanks/lists clearly displayed (for a variety of subjects)
- Starspell / computer programmes/ C.D Rom support materials
- Topic related vocabulary clearly displayed.

**Handwriting**

The Charles Cripps published handwriting programme is the basis for handwriting at our school, the fundamental principles of which are outlined below:

- **Capital letters will not join the main body of the word**;
- ‘b’ and ‘p’, and ‘s’ will join from the “tummy”;
- ‘h’ ‘t’ ‘k’ ‘l’ ‘t’ ‘m’ ‘n’ ‘q’ - will join diagonally from bottom of letter to the top of the next;
- ‘y’ ‘g’ and ‘j’ will not join;
- ‘f’ will join from the cross-bar;
- For ‘x’ see page 52 of 2a ‘Hand For Spelling’.

IWB resources including video are used to teach and consolidate the teaching of handwriting.

**Foundation Stage:**

Children will have access to a range of different pens and pencils with which to explore mark making.

Fine motor skills are developed through a wide range of activities e.g. painting, tracing in sand, tracing and threading, and the use of simple tools.

Formal letter formation during Foundation will be taught using Berol ‘Fine’ black pens. This enables the child to overwrite the letter guidance. Pencils are introduced when children are ready to move on from this stage. Pencil grips are available for children as necessary.

Letter formation is taught in families using Charles Cripps cursive handwriting scheme. Wide guidelines are introduced when appropriate.
Key Stage One:

Letter formation is taught in a variety of ways including letter families e.g. c,a,o,d,g,q to consolidate motor-memory.

Formal handwriting will continue with HB pencil; children will have access in other writing activities to a variety of pens, pencils etc.

Worksheets from a range of published materials can be adapted to provide enough practise space and acceptable sizing of letters.

Letter patterns from the scheme will also be taught using whiteboards and individually differentiated guide-lined sheets.

Single lines will be ruled when appropriate on the worksheets and ‘tramlines’ introduced for able full-time Foundation children. In Year 2 guidelines move on from tramlines to single lines.

The teaching of letter joins is closely linked to the progression followed in the Early Reading Project.

Key Stage 2 (Years 3 – 5)

In Year 3, 4 and 5 the pupils consolidate their use of the basic handwriting joins, ensuring consistency in size, proportion and spacing of letters. Handwriting speed, fluency and legibility are built up through practice. By Year 4 (or as appropriate for the individual), joined handwriting is encouraged unless other specific forms are required, e.g. printing on a map, a fast script for notes. All handwriting is produced in fibre-tipped black or blue pen, or if appropriate, fountain pen.

Year 6

Year 6 is used to consolidate learning for those pupils who have not yet achieved a fluent and legible joined script. Those who have, are encouraged to develop an individual style based on the principles of good handwriting taught in previous years. Experimentation with different styles is encouraged with the aim of increasing speed whilst maintaining legibility.

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 and to promote good handwriting.

The Role Of Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are introduced to the school’s spelling and handwriting policy through the school prospectus and website.

Parents are strongly encouraged to become actively involved in the practising and application of spellings as part of regular homework routines.

Conclusion

Through following the guidance in this Spelling and Handwriting Policy the staff at Bowhill Primary School endeavour to meet the aims as laid down at the outset of this policy document.