



TIMU ACADEMY TRUST

Policy Document for: Spelling

Approved: November 2014

Due for Review: November 2017

This policy is a working document, which reflects the ethos and practice within the Federation in relation to the teaching of Spelling. It has been written with due regard to the requirements of the National Literacy Strategy schemes of work and the National Curriculum and it will be monitored and evaluated according to changes within these documents as and when they arise.

Fundamental Principles

We believe that spelling is an important aspect of writing but it **must not** be allowed to dominate our responses to children's writing. Very good efforts at writing can often be dismissed because of basic spelling errors and this can damage a child's perception of him or herself as a writer.

We believe that **a positive and interactive approach** to spelling will encourage children to recognise their achievements in spelling rather than allowing spelling to be associated simply with mistakes and corrections. Through careful teaching and using specific strategies to develop spelling through its stages, we can encourage children to investigate and overcome spelling problems, thus becoming more confident writers.

Aims

- To teach spelling systematically throughout the school, using the **DFES Spelling Bank for Key stage 2** and **Letters and Sounds** Six Phase Phonic Teaching Programme as a framework.
- To teach the Word element of the PNS effectively focusing on Phonological Awareness, Word Recognition, Graphic knowledge and Spelling knowledge.
- To encourage children to develop and learn **a personal bank** of frequently used words.
- To equip children with the **strategies** to tackle unknown words **independently** and sensibly, thus avoiding dependence upon the teacher.
- To make children aware of the Writing Process so that they can write fluently, confidently and independently, concentrating on Spelling when and where it is appropriate.

Roles and Responsibilities

The governing body should, in cooperation with the executive head teacher, determine the Federation's general policy and approach to spelling.

The Literacy subject leader should advise the Executive Headteacher, staff and Governors of the current and changing practice in spelling and keep them up to date with new initiatives put forward by the Government and LEA.

The Teaching Staff should in cooperation with the Executive Headteacher and Literacy leader, plan and deliver effective and investigative-style spelling lessons which reflect the policy.

The Inclusion Manager should, in cooperation with the Executive Headteacher, Literacy leader and teaching staff provide support and additional spelling resources for children with Special Educational Needs.

Practice

Developing Spelling

In order to be an efficient speller, a child needs to:

- Be able to segment words into component phonemes;
- Know which **graphemes** represent **the phonemes** in words;
- Be able to **distinguish visually** between words which are 'legitimately' spelled, e.g. wait, wate; (Does it look right?)
- Know the meanings of the **homophones**, e.g. been and bean, so that the correct spelling is used;
- Recall, e.g. by **mental image**, by memorising order of tricky letters, 'tricky' words
- Know **spelling conventions**, e.g., relating to double letters;
- Look for **similarities in the spellings of words** which are etymologically related, e.g., sign, signal

The Teaching of Spelling

The teaching of spelling **MUST** be planned and taught across all classes.

In order to guide children to becoming more confident spellers, **the teaching of spelling** is as **investigative** as possible. The lessons provide **visual, auditory and kinaesthetic** elements in which the children play a vital role in their own learning.

The progression of approaches which are used throughout the school is laid out in the new English Curriculum 2014

In KS1, daily activities follow the 'Letters and Sounds' framework and are taught initially as well as any other phonics and spellings detailed in the new English Curriculum 2014

In **KS2**, investigations are taken from **KS2 Spelling Bank book, Support for Spelling** and the **Grammar for Writing book**, from DFES. These books are used in order to meet the objectives in the Primary National Strategy together with those listed in the new English curriculum 2014. Guidelines are also given in the SPAG progression document yr 1 - 6

The **key words** used in the **teaching of spelling** are used from year to year to ensure continuity and aid children's understanding: **blend, segment, phonemes and graphemes** (are the more common key words).

The Classroom Environment

Each child has access to the **key words** that they may use in their writing. They may use **spelling logs** or have **laminated mats** of HFW on their tables.

The key words for Key Stage 1 are taken from the Letter and Sounds phases and first 100 key words and the new national curriculum lists

The key words for Key Stage 2 are taken from the NLS Year 4/5 words and the new national curriculum lists.

Spelling Routines in Key Stage 1 and 2

Spelling Logs

Each child is given a **personal Spelling Log** in which all spelling-related work is stored. This could include any spelling investigations completed in class, spelling homework, tests; spelling walls; spelling mats of the relevant keywords visual reminders of the Spelling Strategy Checklist; Proof-reading checklist; Look/Say/Cover/Write/Check sheets and other relevant material.

The Spelling Logs should be **given to the next class teacher at the beginning of each new academic year** as an annual record of the child's spelling work. Any further work in the new academic year will be added to it.

The Spelling Checklist

One of our aims is to make the children in KS1 and KS2 as **independent** as possible in their approach to spelling. It is agreed that a **queue of children** waiting for 'spellings' is both frustrating for child and teacher and a waste of valuable 'independent work' time.

In KS1, the teachers have the keywords displayed and the **children are encouraged to 'have a try' at an unknown word first**. The teacher then discusses the attempt referring to any relevant phonics teaching in order to remind the child.

The Proof-Reading System

Within the Literacy lesson, **proof-reading techniques are taught using 'Teacher Demonstration' and 'Shared Writing'** teaching methods. The children are made aware that checking their work for spelling mistakes is a vital and important part of the Writing Process. **Children** should have the ability to **proof-read work independently** and not waste time queuing up to have their writing checked. We also want to avoid the scenario where children become accustomed to teachers proof-reading their work and finding all the mistakes for them.

The **Proof-reading system is taught and referred to in all lessons** to ensure that the children can proof-read work independently in all lessons across the curriculum. In KS1 the Proof-Reading system needs to be adapted to suit the needs of the children.

Dictionary Use

There are a range of **dictionaries and thesauri** in each class which are differentiated in ability levels to suit the range of needs within the Literacy groups. As well as doing **investigations** using dictionaries and undertaking specific dictionary work, the children are also encouraged to have dictionaries in order to **research the meaning** of a unknown words.

Marking Writing.

From Year 2 upwards, children are more familiar with the Writing Process, which is displayed in most classrooms as a reminder. The children understand that the purpose of the **Thinking, Planning and Drafting stages of writing** is to bring cohesion and clarity to their thought processes and ideas. The **first drafts** of the writing should **not** be interrupted and troubled with lengthy searches for correct spellings. When the children move on to the **Proof-Reading stage**, however, the **time is given to checking** any unfamiliar or unsure words. These words will have already been **high-lighted within the writing** because children are **encouraged to put a line under any words** they feel may need investigating later.

As teachers, our initial responses to a child's piece of work particularly **at the Drafting stage** should be related to the **content (Composition and Effect)** and should concentrate on the positive aspects of the writing. Later on, **during the Proof-reading stage**, any words that the child should know can be high-lighted using the symbol **Sp** and written correctly for them to transfer on to their Spelling Walls or Logs.

Spelling and Assessment

Standardised Testing of Spelling.

In KS1 and KS2, children are tested every **January** and **June** using the **Schonell Spelling Age Test** to then the spelling age is entered on the school tracking system at half-year and on the end of year report to parents. Pupils are also tested in **December and April** on their ability to spell the **High Frequency words**. The **information** may be **useful when planning Spelling** work to inform the teacher **which group may need input** and which **group may need extension work**.

For children on the SEN register, information gathered from the spelling results is used to inform the **Inclusion Manager** and class teacher of the children who may need specific spelling targets on their IEPs.

In Year 2 and Year 6, children sit a spelling test as part of their National SATs tests. In addition to this, Year 3, 4 and 5, children sit a spelling test as part of the Optional SATs tests. The spelling test results forms part of the overall English level awarded.

Classroom Testing of Spelling.

It is agreed that the **testing of random words in isolation** which are not linked to any investigation **has very little value** and it is doubtful that all children will apply the new spellings in their work.

It is decided that we would test in the following way:

- After a spelling investigation, we will test the children's new learning and retention of knowledge. This may be achieved in many ways such as giving a list of words to learn and spell (linked to the investigation); **a dictated passage** including target words or an extension of the investigation which can be completed at home.
- The spelling test must always include a **Dictation piece** to ensure pupils are able to use the words in **context**, to practice and assess the spelling of **High Frequency words** appropriate to the class. The information gained from the test is useful as a class assessment of progress and to **inform future planning**.

Home Learning and Spelling

Children will have **spelling home learning** set. This homework will be **appropriate to their needs** and will be linked to the spelling investigations covered in the Literacy lessons. Children are also encouraged to learn **High Frequency words** appropriate to their level.

Documentation

Year Group objectives for the **teaching of spelling** can be found in the **Primary National Strategy, Support for Spelling** AND the new English curriculum 2014

Specific Phonics Teaching can be found in **Letters and Sounds** hand book.

In the booklet '**Developing Early Writing**' (Key stage 1) from DFES, Section 4 deals with developing Spelling.

Objectives and Ideas for Spelling Investigations can be found in **The Spelling Bank, Support for Spelling** (Yr 2–6) and **Grammar for Writing** book.

Please use the new English national curriculum for guidance

Special Educational Needs

For certain children, it may be relevant to follow a **more structured phonics and spelling scheme** in order to meet their specific learning needs. These children are sometimes withdrawn from lessons and are taught by Teaching Assistants who have the relevant experience of the teaching of phonics, spelling and reading successfully and through Sounds-Write, Reading Reflex, ALS etc.

The following stages may be followed:

1. A child learns a **new spelling pattern**, (this varies according to the stage but may be an initial consonant blend etc) the child then **investigates** words that contain the new spelling pattern.
2. The child then reads 20 words containing the new spelling pattern and is tested on the spelling of 10 out of 20 words.
3. The teacher then **dictates 5 sentences** which contain the key words investigated and these are checked.
4. If the child is successful, they move on to the **next spelling pattern**.