St Mary's C.E. Primary School, Islington

Whole School Spelling Policy (Reception – Year 6)

Vision

At St Mary's C.E. Primary School, we believe that becoming a confident speller is an essential part of becoming a successful writer. Accurate spelling enables pupils to communicate their ideas clearly and confidently, reducing the cognitive demands of transcription so they can focus on composition, vocabulary and authorial intent.

Our vision is to develop enthusiastic, independent and reflective spellers who understand how words work and can apply their knowledge confidently across the curriculum. Through our ambitious and inclusive curriculum, we ensure that every child develops the knowledge, skills and strategies needed to become fluent, accurate and resilient spellers.

Rationale

At St Mary's, spelling is taught through our English curriculum using **Literacy Tree**, supported by systematic phonics teaching in the Early Years and Key Stage 1. We recognise that successful spelling develops over time through explicit teaching, repeated practice and meaningful application within reading and writing.

Children learn to spell by developing secure knowledge of:

- phonics and grapheme-phoneme correspondences;
- spelling patterns and conventions;
- morphology (prefixes, suffixes and root words);
- etymology (word origins where appropriate);
- common exception words;
- high-frequency vocabulary;
- proofreading and editing strategies.

Spelling is not taught as isolated word lists alone. Instead, pupils are taught to understand spelling patterns, make connections between words and apply their learning within purposeful reading and writing.

Aims

At St Mary's we aim for every pupil to:

- develop secure phonological awareness and phonics knowledge;
- understand and apply age-related spelling rules and conventions;

- spell the common exception words for their year group;
- understand how prefixes, suffixes and root words affect spelling;
- use spelling strategies independently;
- proofread and edit their own writing effectively;
- apply accurate spelling consistently across the curriculum;
- develop confidence, resilience and independence as writers.

Curriculum Progression

Reception

Spelling begins through systematic phonics teaching and early mark-making.

Children develop:

- oral blending and segmenting;
- secure letter-sound correspondence;
- early phoneme-grapheme matching;
- writing simple words using their phonics knowledge;
- recognition of common tricky words;
- confidence applying phonics during independent writing.

Spelling is closely linked to daily phonics sessions and meaningful opportunities to write.

Year 1

Children continue to build upon their phonics knowledge by:

- applying taught graphemes in spelling;
- learning Year 1 common exception words;
- spelling simple words through segmenting;
- recognising common spelling patterns;
- applying spelling knowledge during independent writing.

Teaching remains closely linked to phonics while gradually introducing wider spelling conventions.

Year 2

Children move beyond phonics to develop understanding of:

- Year 2 spelling rules;
- suffixes and simple prefixes;
- contractions;
- apostrophes;

- common homophones;
- Year 2 common exception words.

Pupils begin to explain why words are spelt in particular ways.

Years 3 and 4

Teaching focuses on developing a deeper understanding of spelling through:

- prefixes and suffixes;
- word families;
- morphology;
- common spelling patterns;
- statutory word lists;
- proofreading and editing;
- spelling investigations.

Pupils increasingly justify spelling choices using their growing knowledge of language.

Years 5 and 6

Older pupils develop sophisticated spelling knowledge by exploring:

- complex prefixes and suffixes;
- morphology and etymology;
- word origins;
- technical vocabulary;
- statutory word lists;
- spelling across different curriculum subjects;
- independent editing and proofreading.

By the end of Year 6, pupils are expected to select and apply appropriate spelling strategies independently.

Teaching and Learning

At St Mary's, spelling is taught through the Literacy Tree approach, which integrates spelling within high-quality English teaching and rich, vocabulary-based texts.

Teachers provide explicit instruction in:

- spelling patterns;
- spelling rules;
- morphology and word structure;
- vocabulary development;
- proofreading techniques;
- application within authentic writing.

Lessons typically include:

1. Review of previous learning.
2. Explicit teaching of the new spelling focus.
3. Investigation and discussion of word patterns.
4. Guided practice.
5. Independent application.
6. Opportunities to apply spelling in writing.

Spelling is revisited regularly to strengthen long-term retention.

Application Across the Curriculum

Children are expected to apply their spelling knowledge in all areas of learning.

Teachers promote accurate spelling across the curriculum by:

- modelling correct spelling;
- encouraging proofreading;
- providing opportunities to edit and improve writing;
- reinforcing subject-specific vocabulary;
- celebrating improvements and achievements.

Inclusion and Adaptive Teaching

At St Mary's we believe all children can become successful spellers.

Teachers adapt spelling teaching to meet individual needs through high-quality adaptive teaching and the Graduated Approach (Assess, Plan, Do, Review).

Adaptations may include:

- pre-teaching vocabulary;
- visual supports;
- phonics revision;
- smaller teaching groups;
- precision teaching;
- overlearning of key vocabulary;
- multi-sensory approaches;
- additional adult support;
- targeted interventions;
- assistive technology where appropriate.

Children with SEND receive personalised support based on identified barriers to learning while maintaining high expectations and access to the same ambitious curriculum.

Assessment

Teachers assess spelling continuously through:

- classroom observations;
- independent writing;
- dictated sentences;
- spelling investigations;
- proofreading activities;
- statutory assessments where appropriate;
- analysis of children's written work.

Assessment is used to identify misconceptions, inform future teaching and ensure that support is appropriately targeted.

Feedback

Feedback focuses on helping pupils become independent spellers.

Teachers:

- identify spelling misconceptions;
- encourage children to correct and edit their own work;
- revisit common errors;
- celebrate improvements;
- reinforce strategies rather than simply providing answers.

Children are encouraged to use dictionaries, word mats, classroom displays and prior learning to support independent spelling.

Supporting Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are encouraged to support spelling development through:

- regular reading;
- practising statutory word lists where appropriate;
- discussing word meanings and patterns;
- encouraging children to apply spelling strategies during writing at home.

The school provides guidance and resources to help parents understand the progression of spelling across the primary years.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The implementation of this policy is monitored by the English Leader and Senior Leadership Team through:

- lesson visits;
- book scrutiny;
- pupil voice;
- assessment analysis;
- learning walks;
- planning scrutiny;
- staff discussions.

Leaders evaluate the impact of spelling teaching by considering pupils' progress, confidence and ability to apply spelling accurately within independent writing.

Conclusion

At St Mary's C.E. Primary School, we believe that effective spelling teaching develops confident, articulate and successful writers. Through our Literacy Tree curriculum, explicit teaching, rich literature, adaptive practice and high expectations, we equip every child with the knowledge, understanding and strategies needed to become fluent, accurate and independent spellers.