

Spelling Self-Evaluation

This evaluation is designed to encourage collegiate discussion and reflection on current spelling practice within the school, and individual classrooms. It is a useful aid to identify action points on a termly basis, and review progress over the session.

EFFECTIVE SPELLING INSTRUCTION CHECKLIST

All of our teachers have been trained in phonics, regardless of which age/stage they work with.	
Everyone understands the role of the alphabetic code and phonics in relation to spelling and that the code is reversible and used for both reading (decoding) and spelling (encoding).	
We have a high quality phonics programme in place from P1/YR which also provides opportunities for teaching phonics and spelling (including phonemic awareness), vocabulary, fluency, comprehension and grammar.	
We teach the alphabetic code—the sounds/phonemes in our language and their corresponding letter/letters (spelling alternatives). We use alphabetic code charts or sound charts to support teaching and learning.	
We continue to teach phonics and the complex alphabetic code with spelling alternatives up to the end of P7/Y6 for spelling.	
Spelling words lists are logical e.g. <i>all of these words are spelled with the same code for the same sound</i> . They are not random or chosen from the curriculum. (vocabulary list!)	
The only strategy we teach children is phonics ‘all-the-way-through-the-word’ for reading and for spelling.	
Supportive hand routines are used e.g. oral segmenting to count the phonemes on fingers, then sound dashes are used to write the appropriate graphemes. Always check back by finger tracking/sounding & blending or reading.	
Children are encouraged to use the hand routine/sound dashes independently and are encouraged to ‘ say the sounds ’ as they form the letters in their spelling words.	
Spelling tasks are appropriate (start with a whole spoken word or picture) and avoid strategies that are wasteful of instruction time/focus on word shape/visual cues e.g. backwards spelling, Play-Doh, glitter bomb spelling etc.	
Spelling tasks focus on code-based activities with ample opportunities for retrieval practice (recalling and writing words) including spelling quizzes, dictation, self-dictation and a weekly spelling test (quiz). (See <i>Spelling Activities pdf</i>)	
A weekly spelling test (quiz) is used to strengthen recall of that week’s words plus words from the previous week/month/term. (spaced retrieval)	
As children’s phonic knowledge grows, it is no longer sufficient to be ‘phonetically plausible’. If they have been taught the code they must be supported to use it.	
Our classroom environment is supportive at all times and has clear spelling routines and resources in place. (Alphabetic Code Charts, dictionaries, Word Origin dictionaries, spelling word bank posters, complex code posters, root charts)	
When marking work, spelling is ‘always on the table’. Errors should be highlighted & corrected. (Ideally by the child.)	
Spelling is taught, ideally in an interactive, whole-class session wherever possible.	
Where appropriate, teaching draws on simple <i>morphology/etymology</i> such as root/base words, prefixes/suffixes, verb endings etc. and makes relationships between words clear.	
High-quality discussion about words, their meanings and spellings is a feature of our teaching in all subjects. We talk about & teach unusual spellings as they crop up in class/as required.	
We have shared the school’s approach to teaching spelling with parents—and give clear and explicit advice about how they can best support their child, including how to use phonics for spelling and (ideally) an alphabetic code chart.	
All of the above takes place within a rich literacy environment that instils an appreciation/love/curiosity of words and language as we learn to master the very complex and tricky English alphabetic code.	

Morphology is the study of words, how they are formed, & their relationship to other words in the same language. It analyses the structure of words & parts of words such as stems, root words, prefixes, & suffixes.

Etymology is the study of the history of words and where they originated from.