



BANCHORY-DEVENICK SCHOOL
A Practice Statement for Spelling



Rationale

At Banchory-Devenick School we aim to promote a love of language. We want to encourage our learners to understand how words can influence thoughts and decisions. We believe that the teaching of spelling and spelling strategies goes hand in hand with reading and writing in enabling our pupils to communicate efficiently and effectively. If children can spell well, they are more likely to have the confidence to use a wider vocabulary within their own writing. As they progress through learning spelling patterns and specific words, we will teach them the tools to check and edit their own and others' work. Although spelling is a separate skill, it is vital that our learners embed it as part of the writing process. We believe that teaching reliable spelling strategies and embedding a knowledge of common, everyday and topical words will assist our learners in accessing the wider curriculum, and help them with practical life skills such as completing online forms, registering for services etc.

We recognise that the English language is complex and realise that the traditional method of memorising a list of words isn't as effective today as it once was. We prefer to adopt an explicit, active approach which is not dependent entirely on reading ability or memory and which sees spelling as a skill that can be learned. We do this by teaching awareness of the following:

- Phonological - the understanding of how letters and sounds relate (e.g. the letter 'c' can make the 'k' sound as in cat and the 's' sound and in cinema).
- Orthographical - the understanding of accepted ways of spelling including letter patterns, rules, generalisations (e.g. the plurals rule: change the 'y' to an 'i' and add 'es').
- Morphological - the understanding of the smallest meaningful parts of words, including prefixes and suffixes (e.g. pre (meaning before) helps with prewash, prepaid, preregister).
- Etymological - the understanding of where a word originates from, sometimes known as a stem or root word (e.g. tri - meaning 3, derived from Latin can aid understanding of triangle, tricycle, triceratops or even trisodium)!

Our aim is to provide children with a spelling toolbox which they can utilise when attempting to spell unfamiliar words, and, with a staggering estimation of around one million words in the English language, we see this method as being far more beneficial.

Assessment, Tracking & Moderation

Assessment of spelling is ongoing, both as a discrete subject and as part of the writing process. 'Fast Feedback' approaches are used during spelling sessions to encourage pupils to identify any inaccuracies so that they can fix them in a timely manner. From P4, children are taught the skills to self and peer assess spelling when editing their own written pieces.

Staff use both formative and summative assessment to further the children's learning. Pupil levels are informed by professional judgement, ongoing formative assessments/observations, dialogue and results from standardised assessments such as SNSA (Scottish National Standardised Assessments). Termly tracking meetings (November, February, June) are held to discuss and record pupil progress. In June, end of stage (P1, P4, P7) information is transferred onto the ACEL (Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels) database.

Teachers formally assess spelling as part of targeted writing assessments. In a piece of writing, it would not be expected that every word would be correct. Instead, judgements are made which take account of the sounds, patterns and rules which have been covered at the different stages and teachers also look for evidence of spelling strategies being adopted for unknown words. In some cases (e.g. a child with dyslexia) spelling may not be assessed. This would be noted onto the individual piece of assessed work and also on the tracking sheets. Resources such as Hornets, Toe-by-Toe and Nessy are used to support children with specific spelling or reading difficulties.

Guidelines for Teaching Spelling

Active approaches to the teaching of spelling are used throughout the school and include a mix of auditory, visual and kinaesthetic learning. A 3-year rolling programme has been introduced at First and Second levels, which give the children opportunities to learn, practise, consolidate and extend their knowledge and understanding of patterns and vocabulary.

Early Level

During Early Level, reading and spelling are closely linked, and the focus is to teach the sounds (graphemes) in a specified order to lay the foundation for reading and spelling success. Once the children recognise both the name and sound of each letter, a synthetic phonics approach is used to blend sounds together. A maximum of 4 sounds will be taught biweekly with one sound per day introduced in the first week. This allows time for consolidation on day 5. During the second week, the learning focuses on revising the letters and blends previously taught, and then applying this knowledge to reading simple words once enough sounds are known.

First Level

During First Level, learners will continue to extend their ability to blend sounds before moving onto learning about diagraphs (where 2 letters make 1 sound such as ph) and phonemes (where the same sound can be made in different ways). Again one sound will be taught biweekly to allow children time to consolidate their understanding of the pattern and short activities such as Rainbow Writing and Elkonin Boxes will be planned for on a daily basis. Children will also be given opportunities to apply the pattern in context (e.g. words/sentences).

Alongside words which can be created using phonics, a list of sight vocabulary (also referred to as Common or Tricky words) will be built up to enable simple sentence construction to begin. These words require committing to memory and children will be encouraged to practise them at home and at school.

Strategies for spelling unknown words will be taught explicitly, e.g. 'sounding out', chunking, using mnemonics etc. Children will have access to word banks for topic-related words, and will also have a personal dictionary to request words so that they can create their own bank of words which can be referred to again and again.

Second Level

During Second Level, the children's knowledge of spelling and spelling patterns is extended as the children apply their knowledge of phonics and phonemes to words of increasing length and maturity. Children will continue to be introduced to a new phoneme or spelling rule biweekly, but now they will be involved in creating word lists. These will be practised through practical activities and learning partner's will be used during plenary sessions to 'test' partner's progress. During term 3, children will link their learning of spelling to their learning on grammar, and will focus more on exploring spelling rules and rule breakers.

Homework

At both Early and First Levels (P1-P4), a grid of games and activities that children can use to practise spellings will be sent home. Sounds, common words and tricky words will be sent out on a weekly basis for children to practise and learn.

At Second Level (P5-P7), a spelling list, based on a particular pattern or rule, with a follow up activity will be sent home on a weekly basis.

Resources

- Song of Sounds
- North Lanarkshire Active Literacy
- Dictionaries (age appropriate)
- ACE dictionaries
- Word banks
- Environmental print
- Personal dictionaries (yellow)

Useful Websites

Wraparound Spelling List of Rules	https://highlandliteracy.files.wordpress.com/2018/11/spelling-rules.pdf
How to Spell - List of Rules	Spell tip 9 spell rules – How to Spell
Using Media to Support Spelling	phonics-resource.pdf (wordpress.com)
Activities to Support Active Spelling	https://highlandliteracy.files.wordpress.com/2013/02/supporting-spelling.pdf
Games to Support Active Spelling	https://highlandliteracy.files.wordpress.com/2013/02/spelling-games.pdf
Countdown Spelling	https://highlandliteracy.com/2016/04/20/countdown-word-building/
Phonological Awareness	Phonological Awareness HIGHLAND LITERACY

Appendixes

- Spelling Progression
- Word List - First Level (draft)
- Word List - Second Level (draft)
- First 100 Most Common Words (P2-P3)
- Second 100 Most Common Words (P4)
- Common Misspelt Words (P5-P7)

