

St Just Primary School

Phonics and Spelling policy

February 2016



Rationale

We believe that phonics and spelling are intrinsically linked and should be taught as linked skills, one benefitting the other.

We believe that through the teaching of phonics and spelling, vital learning steps for all subjects are consolidated.

Aim

To create a whole school agreed strategy for the teaching of phonics and spelling with a view towards raising standards of literacy in all year groups for all children. For some children, poor progression has accumulated as children have moved through the school. Because of this, we have agreed to teach phonics and grammar to ability-related groups of children, disregarding age with the long term view that, by managing this at an early stage (year 1 and upwards) we will eradicate poor progression over time across the whole school.

In addition, class spellings are given and learned each week in order to keep all children in the cohort (and their parents) abreast of the required standard of spelling for their age.

Our overall long term aim, is that all children will be able to effectively access the phonics and spellings related to their age.

Resources

'Bug Club' is used as the main phonics teaching resource from EYFS.

'Schools Links' spellings are introduced while 'Bug Club' continues in tandem where applicable.

National Curriculum lists of spellings are introduced by class teachers to maintain an awareness of nationally expected standards.

'Letterjoin' – our newly introduced handwriting strategy - links and consolidates spellings and letter patterns with correctly orientated letter strings using a cursive script.

Implementation

Whole school phonics, spelling and grammar takes place Monday to Thursday from 9am to 9.30am. Class spelling is linked to literacy sessions.

EYFS

Phonics and spelling intrinsically linked using Bug Club to introduce initial sounds and then spelling patterns. Home word cards are sent home and a new challenge strategy based on gaining a 'ninja' wristband is about to be introduced.

From April onwards, the highest ability children will work with a year 1 group.

Year 1

Children from years 1 and 2 are included.

Three groups give ability focused teaching with Bug Club using phonic phases to differentiate.

Spelling homework is based on 6 words from the class spelling pattern plus one tricky word. The test is traditionally dictation based. These class spellings become differentiated from the mid-year point.

Year 2

Phonics groups are split 4 ways to give differentiation for phonics with spelling patterns linked. Children from years 1 and 2 are included.

'Schools Links' spellings are used to dictate class expectations and there is effective awareness of the new demands of the curriculum with assessment of writing giving assessment attention to higher order skills such as suffixes, prefixes etc.. Weekly spelling tests for the class reflect this higher demand with 8 to 10 random words being tested. Homework spellings are differentiated but remain linked to curriculum standards of expectation.

Year 3

Children from years 2,3 and 5 are included. Bug Club is used as the main teaching resource.

Schools links is used to dictate class spellings with the lowest ability in the class consolidating high frequency word spelling accuracy.

Class weekly tests take place. Learning incorporates root words and links to other cultures and languages.

Year 4

Children from years 4 and 5 are included.

Phonics is based on the 26 units and root words are emphasized in importance to consolidate learning and give strategies for future learning.

Group activities are differentiated.

Spelling tests are class organized with recognition of year 4 curriculum expectations.

Year 5

Solely year 5 group of age-related and above age-related children.

Phonic gaps as assessed from class teaching are consolidated and spellings are based on learning words in context.

The focus continues its move, for age-related expected attainers, towards grammar teaching in order to meet the higher demands of the national curriculum from 2015.

Year 6

Taught as a class but in differentiated groups, high order grammar strategies are taught and consolidated in order to meet nationally expected standards.

Test strategies are explicitly taught and practised. These are being constantly updated as draft papers come into circulation for the 2016 tests.

Agreed maxims

Phonetics is but one strategy in the grand cycle of learning to read and write accurately.

We implement and share other strategies such as word pattern recognition, rhyme, root words, cultural and language links, mnemonics, known traps, tricky words, lexicology, semantics etc.....

We are aware that teaching children in lower year groups could affect self-esteem negatively. Our teachers are experienced and professional and well able to ensure that all children understand the importance of learning at the most effective level. *Struggling away quietly year after year, knowing that you are not improving, is more damaging to self-esteem and often results in poor behavior and disruption to other learners.* With our policy above, we offer an alternative.

February 12th 2016

