

Moorlands Junior School

Temple Road, Sale,
Cheshire, M33 2LP



Head Teacher: Miss A. M. Kelly

7th February 2018

Dear parents,

At our last round of parent's evenings a number of parents asked questions about the arrangements we now use for testing spelling in school. Please find below further information about the scheme, the rationale behind this and the methods of delivery.

A little bit of background as to why we chose this particular scheme. Working together with Templemoor our Senior Leadership teams researched products available to school and recommendations from other schools and jointly we decided to adopt the **No Nonsense Spelling** scheme.

The focus of the programme is on the teaching of spelling, which embraces knowledge of the usual spelling patterns and rules; but fundamental to the teaching is also the opportunity to promote the learning of spellings, including statutory word lists for each year group, common exceptions and spellings personal to each individual child.

When we decided on the programme, we were looking for a product that met certain criteria for us as schools.

1. Met the requirements of the 2014 National Curriculum
2. Had a clear progression through blocks of teaching units across the year
3. Comprehensively explained how to teach spelling effectively.

The No Nonsense Spelling programme is organised into as number of elements:

- The National Curriculum is split into strands and then broken down into termly overviews.
- These Termly overviews are mapped across weeks as a half term plan
- These plans follow a model of 5 spelling sessions across a two week time scale
- Each of these sessions has a pre-structured lesson with word lists and guidance on conventions

In order to assess individual pupil's understanding in the 'Apply' part of the sequence pupil's undertake a number of different assessment activities to identify if pupils have learnt the key concept taught. These activities may include:

- Testing – by teacher and peers
- Dictation
- Explaining
- Independent application in writing
- Frequent learning and testing of statutory and personal words.

We understand that this system of assessment is a big change from the traditional way that spellings have previously been tested. This is based on the fact that there is little evidence that the traditional practice of learning spellings (usually 10) at home and being tested on them, weekly in school, is effective in the long term. We find pupils often 'learn' for a test and have forgotten them a short while later. However, within the new National Curriculum, there is a high expectation that pupils will learn many increasingly complex words.

Within the programme, learning spellings is built into each six-week block. Within the sessions a range of strategies for learning spellings are introduced and practised. This enables pupils to choose the strategies they find most effective for learning different words.

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If you would like to continue to support your child at home there are still strategies that you could use. Here are some tips that might help:

Look, say, cover, write, check

This is probably the most common strategy used to learn spellings.

Look: first look at the whole word carefully and if there is one part of the word that is difficult, look at that part in more detail.

Say: say the word as you look at it, using different ways of pronouncing it if that will make it more memorable.

Cover: cover the word.

Write: write the word from memory, saying the word as you do so.

Check: Have you got it right? If yes, try writing it again and again! If not, start again – look, say, cover, write, check.

Trace, copy and replicate (and then check)

This is a similar learning process to 'look, say, cover, write, check' but is about developing automaticity and muscle memory.

Write the word out on a sheet of paper ensuring that it is spelt correctly and it is large enough to trace over.

Trace over the word and say it at the same time. Move next to the word you have just written and write it out as you say it. Turn the page over and write the word as you say it, and then check that you have spelt it correctly.

If this is easy, do the same process for two different words at the same time. Once you have written all your words this way and feel confident, miss out the tracing and copying or the tracing alone and just write the words.

Segmentation strategy

The splitting of a word into its constituent phonemes in the correct order to support spelling.

Quickwrite

Writing the words linked to the teaching focus with speed and fluency. The aim is to write as many words as possible within a time constraint.

Pupils can write words provided or generate their own examples. For example, in two minutes write as many words as possible with the /i:/ phoneme.

This can be turned into a variety of competitive games including working in teams and developing relay race approaches.

Drawing an image around the word

This strategy is all about making a word memorable. It links to meaning in order to try to make the spelling noticeable. You can't use this method as your main method of learning spellings, but it might work on those that are just a little more difficult to remember.

Words without vowels

This strategy is useful where the vowel choices are the challenge in the words. Write the words without the vowels and pupils have to choose the correct grapheme to put in the space. For example, for the word *field*: f ____ ld

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Pyramid words

This method of learning words forces you to think of each letter separately.

p
py
pyr
pyra
pyram
pyrami
pyramid

You can then reverse the process so that you end up with a diamond

Other strategies

Other methods can include:

- Rainbow writing. Using coloured pencils in different ways can help to make parts of words memorable. You could highlight the tricky parts of the word or write the tricky part in a different colour. You could also write each letter in a different colour, or write the word in red, then overlay in orange, yellow and so on.
 - Making up memorable 'silly sentences' containing the word
 - Saying the word in a funny way – for example, pronouncing the 'silent' letters in a word
- Clapping and counting to identify the syllables in a word.

We hope you find this information useful and thank you for your ongoing support.

Yours sincerely,

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