

MEADFURLONG MIDDLE SCHOOL

Spelling Policy

Updated May 2002

Meadfurlong Middle School believes that:

- The reason for teaching spelling is to increase pupil's confidence and independence as readers and writers, to increase their linguistic awareness and their communicative ability.
- It is essential to establish a positive environment – applauding and celebrating what pupils can do.
- Spelling will improve through focused teaching about words. Spelling is a thinking process not a rote learning task.
- It is important for staff to know how spelling develops and the stages they pass through from Pre-Phonological Spelling to Conventional Spelling. (Refer to First Steps) Spelling is a developmental process of learning to apply different strategies appropriately.
- All pupils should receive **systematic** teaching of phonic skills, knowledge and understanding (including onset/rhyme and analogy and syllabification), thus providing them with the essential key to the writing code and moving them along the path to becoming fluent readers. They should also have a growing bank of words they can spell (and read) automatically. This should be taught by the end of KS1, but if pupils are continuing to have problems or there are gaps in their phonic knowledge, this should be tackled in year 4 and through focused group work in other year groups.
- As pupils move through KS1 to KS2, the emphasis within the teaching objective shifts from the teaching of phonics for reading and writing to the more focused teaching of other spelling strategies to build upon the pupils established phonic knowledge. **These strategies include an ever increasing bank of words pupils can spell automatically, onset/rhyme and analogy, syllabification, word patterns, word structures/origins and links to meaning, conventions, rules, study, say, cover, write, check, dictionaries etc.**
- The teaching of phonics and spelling should be interactive, lively and pupils should be actively engaged with sounds in words, letter patterns, rules etc. They should be encouraged to generate and investigate words with a particular sound, pattern or rule – Find exceptions etc **Worksheets should be used sparingly.**
- It is acceptable to give pupils weekly differential spellings to learn and to be tested on, provided they relate to the current spelling focus within the class/group. At all times though, the emphasis should be on pupils explaining the strategies they used to help with their spellings, and the expectation that they should apply their skills to related words and to their own writing! Children should be taught to self-mark their spellings, underline errors and use an appropriate strategy, e.g. Study, Say, Cover, Write, Check to learn/relearn spellings. Unlearned spellings should be added to their wordbook/spelling log, perhaps with a selection of words that follow the same pattern, rule etc.
- It is essential that all pupils are provided with opportunities to apply their phonics and spelling knowledge in reading and writing, and indeed, they should be expected to do so to the best of their ability. However, when our pupils write, we want them to use the most

effective vocabulary in their composition, even if they think they can not spell their choice of words. Our policy is that they should not spend their time asking/queuing for the teacher or teaching assistant to write words in a word book, or looking up too many words in a dictionary. Instead, they should be taught to 'have a go' using known phonics and spelling strategies.

On completion of writing they should:

- Indicate by underlining or circling that they think their attempt is an error.
- Pupils should then attempt to proof-read and correct all or some of their spellings individually, with partner or teacher/teaching assistant using appropriate strategies, word-banks, wordbooks, dictionaries etc. They should not erase original errors.
- Periodically, the teacher should help individuals identify common errors in their spelling, by looking at about three pieces of writing, which should then become their personal spelling target.
- Learn to spell a selection of these words. They could be challenged to find a given number of words that e.g. have the same spelling pattern, rule etc. This should be completed in a word book/spelling log, and it may be more appropriate to arrange words according to pattern, rule rather than alphabetically.
- Periodically test each other or themselves on their particular words.

In Spelling we aim to:

- Teach phonics and Spelling using objectives described in the NLS and methods and activities set out in Progression in Phonics, Spelling Bank and selected activities from the phonics sections of ALS. If, and when other activities are used, it is essential that the principles, beliefs and methods described earlier are adhered to, thus ensuring a consistent approach.
- Teach Phonics and Spelling strategies to the whole class twice or three times a week and usually during the first 15 minutes of literacy hour.
- Provide planned opportunities for children to engage in-group activities/investigations etc and to applying their phonic spelling knowledge in their own writing, to proof reading and to writing accurately e.g. for display purposes.
- Provide a catch-up programme for appropriate Year 4 children, using ALS materials and for a set period of time. (Primarily, to take place during the time when the rest of the class is undertaking spelling work)
- Provide additional support for the small number of children in each year group whose phonic and spelling needs are below that being taught to the whole class. This should take place when the rest of the class is doing spelling work, so that they do not miss out on other aspects of literacy. (The Senco and Primary Support Team should assist the class teacher and teaching assistant).