Spelling Out Progress

A Vision for Progression in Spelling
Implemented Spring 2012
Like reading, writing, handwriting and speaking and listening, spelling is given its own stage on which to perform at Nook Lane. No longer sitting in the shadows of weekly homework 'lists', our commitment to developing better spellers draws on best practice from research evidence and OfSTED guidance - with a Nook Lane twist! Our aim is to equip our pupils with the necessary means and skills to take ownership of their spelling progress; to drive forward their improvements with an emphasis on investigation and application. This document outlines our commitment to driving forward whole-school standards in spelling. It demonstrates our passion for providing pupils with the means to investigate rules and conventions for themselves, and to apply new learning across our enriched curriculum. We achieve this through guidance, support and challenge; in partnership with pupils and families through an innovative approach and with quality first teaching.
Building on Foundations from KS1

- First 200 KS1 words assessed & monitored from Y3 onwards
- Personalised support packages for targeted pupils based on AfL
- Booster Letters & Sounds (Phase2+) interventions from specialist TAs

Focus on Progression

- Progressive Rules & Conventions
- Whole Class Teaching - Explicit
- Working Walls & Writing Targets
- Links GR & Homework

AfL

- Emphasis on Application of Learning
- Building an Evidence-Base
- Correction Marking & Action
- Innovative Approach to the 'Test'

Ownership

- Pupil Investigation - Pro-Active
- Family Friendly
- Ethos of Shared Responsibility
- Staff to Personalise & Experiment

Quality First Teaching

- Dedicated Weekly Spelling Session
- Interactive, Innovative Approaches
- Promotion of Spelling Across Curriculum

Building Independence

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Setting the Scene for High Impact Teaching & Learning

With a focused plan for progression, our policy kicks in the day pupils arrive at Nook Lane. Working collaboratively with our KS1 feeder school, we’ve already identified spelling gaps amongst vulnerable groups in *Letters & Sounds*, with provisional Booster Groups already set up. Attention then turns to assessing and securing the foundations of KS1 spelling, with all pupils in Y3 being assessed on the writing of the first 200 KS1 Key Words (see Appendix). From this initial assessment, we identify common weaknesses and misconceptions which inform planning and spelling sessions during the first half-term. Areas of weakness are indentified, with personalised provision put in place in the form of individual spelling Zappers (see later section). The securing of these crucial building blocks are monitored through Y3 and further developed through Y4 as part of a lower-school 2 year commitment to securing the foundations and developing a springboard to make accelerated progress. Where pupils find spelling challenging, personalised provision will continue until a time where they can access a more rapidly progressive approach. By Autumn 2 all pupils are assessed, supporting resources are in place and Letters & Sounds booster sessions are up and running. Where appropriate, progress is further nurtured through our dedicated KS1 specialists in our Integrated Resource, as part of a considered two-way integration program. Our KS2 whole-school cycle can then kick in.

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**Building on Foundations from KS1**
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Setting the Scene for High Impact Teaching & Learning

End of KS1
Pupils attainment through Phases of Letters & Sounds tracked during KS1 (Stannington Infants). Data handed to Nook Lane SENCO as part of SEN transition hand-over.

Y3 Entry Point
Identified Letters & Sounds Boosters assessed at appropriate Phase. All other pupils assessed at correctly pitched level of first 200 KS1 words to inform Autumn 1 learning outcomes.

Autumn 1 Teaching Sequences Begin
Quality first teaching around identified word families, common misconceptions and identified areas of weakness.

Can learner demonstrate progress in Y3/4 convention/patterns outcomes?
Yes
No

Provisional Boosters Identified
Spelling Zappers produced
Teaching sequences planned
Access to wider whole-school approach to spelling development (Y3 Outcomes):
- Weekly spelling lesson
- Investigating conventions/patterns
- Guided Reading focus
- Homework tasks
- Working Spelling Wall
- Longer time-span to embed learning
- Variety of ways to demonstrate progress

Access to specialist teaching & support:
- Booster Letters & Sounds
- Personalised resources
- Homework tasks
- Working 'Sound' Wall
- ICT intervention programs
- Regular assessments
- Strong Teacher:TA communication
- Personalised homework structure
- Daily Zappers

Can learner demonstrate progress in Y3/4 convention/patterns outcomes?

Yes

No
Spelling out Progression

Always on the front foot, Nook Lane adapted progressive spelling conventions and patterns from the draft new National Curriculum for English KS1/KS2. Through staff consultation, an agreed collection of progressive spelling steps are in place for each year group - these include key Y2 elements for Y3 pupils, for example the use of apostrophes for singular possession and contractions. Our approach is comprehensive, rigorous but most importantly, responsive to the needs of our pupils and the direction of their learning. Our progressive whole-school spelling conventions can be viewed in the Appendix. Be aware though, that license is given to switch focus, re-visit or promote groups of learners to spelling patterns which may embed understanding or accelerate progress.

All schools will - or should! - have this in place. Where we feel we stand out, is in our commitment to teaching these conventions, promoting independence and facilitating learning. The following section outlines how this is achieved.

Focus on Progression

- Progressive Rules & Conventions
- Whole Class Teaching - Explicit
- Working Walls & Writing Targets
- Links GR & Homework
Becoming Better Spellers

Commitment to creating policy requires commitment to implementing it and impacting on children’s learning and standards of spelling in school. With progressive whole-school conventions - or personalised catch-up interventions - in place, we deliver on our promise to improving spelling by:

- Explicit whole-class teaching - a dedicated taught spelling session every week
- Working walls in all classrooms highlighting our current class and (if appropriate) *Letters & Sounds* spelling focus, with built examples of investigative work and good practice
- Spelling targets featuring within overall writing target menus, promoting its importance in developing the whole writer - no longer in the shadows!
- Dedicated guided reading, mental & oral starters and homework challenges
- Promotion of spelling and identifying of focus patterns across our enriched curriculum
- Raising the profile of sound groups with visual aids through school to destroy myth that only weaker spellers require such visual support
An Investment in Time – Longer Focus For Greater Impact

Why the rush? In our pursuit of outstanding progress, we give pupils an extended period of time to work on any given spelling convention, sound or pattern. Gone are the days of racing through weekly word lists in an attempt to chase down hundreds and hundreds of new words. In its place arrives a considered model of small teaching and learning sequences, introducing children to new learning and allowing them time to investigate, consolidate and apply new learning to independent work. Throughout a half term, our pupils will benefit from being introduced to no more than three spelling conventions. This should result in deeper, higher-level understanding with a higher likelihood for retention and application.

With greater emphasis placed on the application of learning and transferring of new skills (see final section), staff are encouraged to experiment with a range of approaches to introducing and developing new spelling learning. Lists can be used, but may be introductory starting points for independent investigation. They may or may not be differentiated, however they do have a progressive element to them.
With the freedom to make it their own, experiment and have fun, staff are encouraged to promote a sense of adventure and discovery amongst their pupils’ quest to become better spellers. We aim to instill a sense of shared responsibility through an investigative approach which is family friendly. Whether through innovative homework tasks, activities linked to other curriculum areas, games, videos, ICT or any other means, our children are encouraged - as they are in all areas of school - to take the lead, to be pro-active and to become more astutely aware of their own strengths and weaknesses as spellers. In partnership, we feel we stand a better chance of making a more lasting and dramatic impact on learning.

Become a Spelling Private-Eye
A Pupil-Led Approach
But what of assessment? Such a focused approach to the teaching of spelling requires equally comprehensive systems in place to allow pupils opportunities to demonstrate progress beyond a 'test'.

As with any other area of reading or writing, staff are aware that the application of learning best demonstrates pupil progress. We look for, identify and respond to evidence of spelling progress, whether becoming better readers or writers of learnt words, conventions or patterns. These include successes and corrections. Opportunities exist through guided reading and in each and every lesson taught. Children are given verbal and written feedback towards building a more secure evidence-base upon which they themselves, as well as staff, can make judgements on spelling progress beyond the spelling 'test'. They are clear about their next steps and are motivated to improve.

Where tests are carried out, staff are asked to be mindful of the time, impact and learning outcomes of each test, and whether more innovative, practical mini tests can better highlight progress.
“My spelling is wobbly. It’s good spelling but it wobbles and the letters get in the wrong places.” (Pooh Bear, A.A. Milne)