



GIGGLESWICK SCHOOL

Prep School Spelling Policy

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1 INTRODUCTION

'Spelling, along with handwriting, is part of transcription. The goal is to make sure pupils can spell accurately, so that it becomes automatic. Pupils who spell well are more confident about using advanced vocabulary than poorer spellers. This is because the latter feel they need to use words they can spell correctly. Further, spelling difficulties increase the cognitive load. Pupils who struggle with spelling write less, do so less fluently and produce lower-quality writing' (DFE, The Writing Framework, July 2025).

At the Prep School, opportunities should be taken in every subject area to promote a positive approach to spelling. When spelling becomes embedded, children are able to put more thought and creativity into the content of what is being written.

Every teacher must be aware of the importance of creating opportunities for pupils to improve their spelling. Parents should be aware of the school policy on spelling in order that they are able to assist their children at home. It is important that the school employs a common approach to the correction of spelling errors.

From the Pre-school uses a validated systematic synthetic phonics (SSP) programme, 'Read, Write, Inc.' which supports children to develop their spelling by ensuring that they learn to segment spoken words into their constituent phonemes. To encode (spell) words, children are first taught to identify the phonemes in spoken words. (This is also referred to as 'segmenting' spoken words.) Then they write the graphemes that represent each of the constituent phonemes (DFE, The Writing Framework, Section 3, July 2025).

2 AIM

At Giggleswick Preparatory School we aim to raise the profile of spelling and therefore raise the overall standard across the school. We understand that it is an important element of children's learning as it can:

- Ease communication and understanding
- Create a good impression and can improve career prospects
- Free the writer, enabling them to be more expressive
- Enable the reader to concentrate on the content of the written material

This policy is based on the following fundamental principles:

- Spelling is a key skill that can be taught and learned.
- Correct spelling is vital in any written work.
- Spelling problems can occur throughout the ability range.
- All pupils can improve their spelling as long as they are shown how and do not have a fixed view of themselves as poor spellers.
- Not all children learn spelling in the same way. The RWI scheme adopted may not suit and so alternative approaches/schemes may need to be explored to support children's retention of spelling rules and patterns.

From Year 3, spellings are taught in study skills sessions which take place three times a week and delivered by teaching staff and teaching assistants in groups based on ability using assessment data. Words based on those covered in these sessions are provided and tested on a weekly basis.



3 SPELLING STRATEGIES

3.1 RWI (Phonic) Strategies

Phonics (RWI)

In Reception Class and Year 1 the focus on learning words is based on daily phonics input given to the children which focuses on the 5 principles of Phonics Teaching. The school follows the RWI phonics scheme, which begins in Pre-school. When children are able, they will move on to the RWI Spelling Scheme (Year 2), which follows on from the Phonics taught.

The scheme builds as the year continues, and the pupils are able to retain more phonemes and graphemes.

Basic structure:

Whole class: Speed Sounds (set dependent)

Smaller groups – Teach letter formation, word reading, Fred Talk Games, Independent Play activity

As the year progresses reading in books will be introduced

Phonics is taught in high quality, multi-sensory small group phonic sessions, differentiated to their ability. Links will be made where possible to the whole class text being used in Literacy and sessions will be embedded in a language-rich curriculum.

3.2 RWI (Spelling) Online

Spelling (RWI online)

All pupils in Year 2-6 will follow the Read Write Inc Spelling scheme, where able.

Recent research indicates that children's ability to spell is dependent on their growing understanding of spoken and written word structure. The scheme focuses on teaching these word structures and spelling patterns, rather than sending lists of words home on a Monday to be tested on a Friday.

RWI Online, using a mixture of online learning videos with special characters, as well as stories, practice sheets, games and independent spelling challenge tasks. This approach immerses the children into spellings, rather than rote learning.

The Scheme is developed so that it supports the aims of the NC 2014 and the Writing Framework 2025:

- Spell new words correctly and have plenty of practice in spelling them...including exception words and homophones.
- Spell words as accurately as [possible using their phonic knowledge and other knowledge of spelling such as morphology and etymology.
- Are supported in understanding and applying the concepts of word structures
- Spell words that they have not yet been taught by using what they have learnt about how spelling in English works.



The RWI Spelling programme is divided into year groups and then into units. Each unit covers approximately one week of work made up of regular sessions.

The weekly session timetable for each unit follows the same pattern so that children become independent and spend more time focusing on the spelling rather than understanding the task.

Every week, new words that the children come across in their reading should be added to the class vocabulary wall.

There are special focus lessons throughout the program, as well as consolidation lessons, practise tests and focus sessions.

3.3 Non-Scheme Spellings

It is recognised that as the spelling scheme teaches the rules of spelling, there are development appropriate high frequency vocabulary as well as topic specific vocabulary that Form Teachers may identify as needing to be learned. These will be sent home weekly alongside the weekly spelling rule and examples, in the Home-School Contact Book (see Homework Policy).

4 MARKING AND ASSESSMENT

A consistent Whole School approach is required to the correction of spelling errors (see GPS Marking and Feedback Policy). Teachers look for many things when correcting pupils' work and spelling may not always be appropriate. If a teacher intends to include spelling as part of the criteria for the marking of a piece of work pupils should be made aware of this beforehand. Teachers should not correct every spelling error as this can have a negative effect on pupils' self-confidence. Errors are not corrected as a criticism but to show that words are not necessarily spelt the way the pupil thinks they are.

Marking strategies

- The extent of spelling correction should relate to the pupil's ability and the nature of the piece of work.
- In a very long piece of work the correction of spelling errors should be confined to one or two pages.
- Spelling mistakes should be underlined and **sp** written in the margin.
- For pupils with learning needs (identified in LaMPs), or for particularly difficult words, the teacher should provide the full correction.
- If the same error is repeated, correct it once only.
- Teachers should remind pupils regularly of the **Look, Cover, Write and Check** method of learning spellings.
- If a well-known spelling rule (e.g. **i** before **e** except after **c**) is frequently broken, the rule should be reinforced.
- An able pupil should have most of his/her mistakes corrected.
- Pupils with spelling difficulties should have High Frequency and Subject Essential words corrected.

Assessment will be continuous and will not only look for correct spelling during the teaching of spelling, but also for the consistency across pieces of written work. Self-Assessment is essential to support and encourage independence and so proof-reading and self editing is essential.

Standardised Spelling will be tested Termly using the GL NGST test as set out in the GPS Assessment, Recording and Reporting Policy.



The RWI Spelling scheme facilitates a half termly Spelling Challenge, which is team-based. Small groups of pupils (3-4) will work together to consolidate their knowledge of 50-100 words from the previous units. On the day of the Challenge, 30 of these will be called at random and the pupils will spell them. These will be peer marked, and the winning team (collated scores of the team) will be celebrated and may choose a treat for all of the class to benefit from.

5 ADDITIONAL SPELLING TECHNIQUES

Give pupils methods to help with the learning of words, such as:

- Sound out words, syllable by syllable (Phonics).
- See if the word fits a common spelling rule.
- Homophones (same sound, different spelling and meaning).
- Deliberately mispronounce words (Wed - NES - day).
- Look for root words and be aware of prefixes and suffixes (employ, employment, unemployment).
- Invent a mnemonic, e.g. **Big Elephants Can Always Understand Small Elephants**.
- Encourage pupils to experiment with spellings to see what looks correct.
- When learning words pupils may benefit from tracing them with their fingers as they say them aloud.

6 INTERVENTION AND SEND

It is essential that pupils who may need extra help with spelling be identified early. All new pupils are tested to ascertain which individuals have reading and/or spelling difficulties. The SENCo and Prep School Deputy Head can then determine the nature of the required support. It is possible for pupils not to be identified by tests and teachers should refer pupils to the Prep School Deputy Head if they suspect there may be a problem.

Early identification can maximise the likelihood of a positive response from the child and temporary difficulties can be overcome quickly. More serious problems can be addressed earlier with a greater chance of success.

Teachers should remember that spelling is not easy and that we are all learning to spell throughout our lives. For some children the process is extraordinarily difficult and writing and spelling are exhausting processes.

Although pupils will be placed in age-appropriate groupings, some pupils with SEND pupils may be placed in other groups to support their needs. This is also the case of some 'more able' with an identified strength in spellings.

When it is deemed that the KS2 spelling scheme is not suitable for particular pupils with SEND, the Prep School Deputy Head and assigned Teaching Assistant will organise spellings via the programme 'nessy' and uses their individual lesson to set/test weekly spellings. Pupils may also use the Spelling Scheme 'Spelling Mastery' as an intervention to support spelling, instead of the RWI spelling.