

# How we teach:

# Spelling and Vocabulary



## Rationale

- A confident grasp on spelling is a key skill to develop lifelong effective written communication. We strive to develop confident, independent spellers.
- Through a positive and interactive approach, we aspire to foster a love of language that enables pupils to feel confident when applying richer, more challenging vocabulary in their speech and writing.
- Spelling procedures and resources should be applied across all areas of learning and not just confined to English or discrete spelling sessions and all pupils should be immersed in a vocabulary rich environment.
- Through careful teaching and using specific strategies to develop spelling through its stages, we encourage children to investigate and overcome spelling problems, thus becoming more confident writers.
- Throughout their time at St Nicolas, children should develop a **Breadth** of vocabulary - developing the number of words they know; and a **Depth** of vocabulary – how well they know the words.

## Intent

- To create a school environment that allows children to develop the ability to learn spelling rules and independently apply them throughout the curriculum.
- To teach spellings systematically throughout the school, developing age appropriate strategies to support children and build confidence when apply spellings independently.
- To provide pupils with the skills and tools to proofread and edit their own work.
- To modelling good spelling practices and applying techniques throughout the curriculum.
- To encourage a love for language, promoting creativity and enabling a confidence to use more ambitious vocabulary.
- To provide equal opportunities for all pupils to achieve success in spelling.

## Implementation

- In Reception and KS1, spellings are included within the Rocket Phonics Scheme. This whole class approach to phonics develops an understanding of synthetic phonics that is then applied throughout all reading and writing.
- Segmenting for spelling is used to apply these skills when writing. This follows a progression of modelled oral segmenting, independent oral segmenting, modelled segmenting for spelling then independent segmenting for spelling.
- Spelling rules and key vocabulary linked to the national Curriculum are covered within the Rocket Phonics programme and are built into the focused daily planning. By Y2, all phonemes and graphemes have been covered and the sessions focus on National Curriculum spelling objectives and skills.
- All taught spellings are revisited and reviewed regularly developing pupils' understand of sound families and alternative graphemes.

- For further details on the use of Rocket Phonics see the **How we Teach Phonics** document.
- In KS2, teachers follow the **St Nicolas spelling and vocabulary pathway**. This document is an outline of the spelling rules and patterns pupils need to investigate and discuss over the course of a term. This document sets out all the objectives categories in the National Curriculum into years, terms and weeks.
- In KS2, children revisit a pattern throughout a week in a variety of lessons. At the beginning and end of each term, a short spelling assessment is administered to identify how well children can apply their knowledge of these spelling patterns.
- Children are supported by target words containing that week's spelling focus being explicitly taught, discussing the patterns or letters within them. Words are reviewed not only for their spellings but their meanings and are explored in context, often reflecting on word origins, language links or etymology.
- Explicit spelling sessions are taught on a daily basis, although the weekly language foci are displayed and applied throughout all possible lessons. These sessions are based on exploration and use a range of different activities to use, apply and understand the words the children are learning, allowing children to be exposed to words and language in different contexts. Activities may focus on the morphological, etymological or phonological features of the language children are studying.
- Whilst vocabulary is also taught **explicitly**, this is reinforced **implicitly** through language rich environments, access to word banks, resources and high quality texts and with all staff employing high expectations for the language they use when working with or talking to the children.
- We have a high focus on reading to reinforce vocabulary and familiarise children with a range of language, vocabulary and spellings. For further details on the use of Rocket Phonics see the **How we Teach Reading** document.
- At St Nicolas, we use a three-tiered framework for vocabulary (appendix 1). This system categorises words as either high frequency, sophisticated or low frequency. Whilst Tier 1 words are used on a daily basis, Tier 2 words extend vocabulary and Tier 3 embellish language with subject specific language.
- Vocabulary is explored in class through appropriate selection, explanation, Exploration and finally Consolidation. This may be done through a variety of activities embedded throughout the curriculum.

### Resources

- Throughout the school, all pupils have access to the **Rocket Phonics Sounds mats** to support writing.
- Much of each term's key Tier 3 vocabulary is available on their **knowledge mats** at the beginning of every term.
- Key pre and post spelling assessments are available to support teachers linked to the **St Nicolas spelling and vocabulary pathway**.

### Working with Parents

- We recognise that parents have an active part to play in all aspects of their children's learning. Parents are encouraged to help children to learn the relevant patterns or rules that children have been given.

- In KS2, the termly spelling pathways and key vocabulary is available to all families via the school website class pages. These resources are to support the application of skills within writing rather than the rote learning of spelling lists.
- Tier one word banks are available to support pupils with their written homework.
- Termly Tier three words and their definitions linked to the topic are shared with families at the start of each new term. These are also available on the school website class pages.

### **Entitlement for all**

- Whilst we aim to provide an approach to spelling which is accessible to all, some pupils require additional support, resources and learning to support their progress.
- Specific needs when targeting spellings are set out in individuals Pupil Profiles.
- For pupils in KS2 who require additional phonetic support with their spellings, further phonics support sessions will be provided targeted to gaps in their learning.
- All spelling teaching are incorporated in our universal offer embracing multisensory, in context teaching. Less able learners benefit from the opportunities for pre-teaching and to apply overlearning. A focus on vocabulary and the make-up of words is also embedded in all reading and writing and reflected in the oral experience when working across the school.

### **Monitoring Progress and Assessment;**

- We believe that the testing of random words in isolation that are not linked to any investigation has very little value and it is doubtful that all children will apply the new spellings in their work. Therefore, formative assessments of new learning may be achieved in many ways such as: giving a list of words to learn and spell (linked to the investigation); a dictated passage including target words or an extension of the investigation which can be completed at home.
- In KS1, there is a summative assessment review at the end of each six week teaching block. This provides an insight to teachers to monitor which pupils are at risk of not keeping up with the programme and require additional support.
- In KS2, summative assessment of spellings are undertaken at the end of every term and judged against a baseline assessment taken in the first week. These language assessment lists can be found in the **St Nicolas spelling and vocabulary pathway**. We will use the information gained to assessment general progress and to inform future planning.
- In Y2 and Y6, in preparation for the National End of Key-Stage Assessments, children use spelling tests to assess their learning. Children will be given opportunities to rehearse and become familiar with this style of summative assessment before the end of the year.

# Tiered Vocabulary

## Tier 1

**Tier 1** vocabulary consists of **high frequency words**, most commonly used in spoken language, which do not typically have multiple meanings.

In most cases, learners will have already acquired this basic level of language prior to starting school and they can continue to develop their tier 1 vocabulary on a day-to-day basis when communicating with their peers and teachers, in tandem with their formal learning.

**For example:** dog, walk, tired, big

## Tier 2

**Tier 2** vocabulary is also high in frequency but is more **complex, nuanced and academic** in nature.

Tier 2 vocabulary is not subject specific; it can have multiple meanings and requires a much higher degree of literacy for learners to comprehend. It is this level of language we should be introducing to stretch the vocabulary of the children.

**For example:** fantasy, trudge, fatigue, enormous

## Tier 3

**Tier 3** vocabulary is **low frequency, subject-specific language**, that is used only in reference to particular concepts, topics and processes.

Tier 3 language requires learners to possess a certain level of subject knowledge in order to understand the specific terminology in question. It is the language used by subject specialists when discussing their field, such as historians, artists, scientists, and engineers, and it is the specific vocabulary used in the classroom to teach these subjects.

**For example:** pyroclastic, integer, vibration, Anglo-Saxon