Spelling: Intent, implementation and impact

Intent
To ensure all children are provided with the skills they need to become competent spellers, whose knowledge builds year on year. Being a competent speller means being alert to spelling and drawing on phonics skills as well as exploring spelling patterns and word meanings to spell successfully. At Connor Downs Academy we understand that for many children, spelling needs to be *'taught not caught'*. Children should be able to apply these skills in their independent writing, for this is their ultimate purpose.

Implementation: Our approach

In Reception and Year 1, children develop their spelling skills through our systematic, synthetic phonics scheme, Little Wandle. Children practise during their daily phonics lesson, although this is enriched through free play activities, through sharing rich an engaging texts and interacting with adults. Parents and carers are supported to help their children through workshops. As part of the Little Wandle Scheme, children in Year 1 practise specific spellings each week, which are shared with families.

After children complete our synthetic phonics programme, they will work towards mastery of the year group objectives for spelling. In Year 2, children continue to have daily phonics lessons focusing on spelling strategies and the 100 common exception words.

In Key Stage 2, we use Spelling with Grammarsaurus, which maps out the spellings taught in each year group and offers a common approach for each unit and across year groups.

Through this scheme, in spelling lessons, students build on the firm foundations built whilst studying phonics in Reception and Key Stage 1. The scheme focuses on morphology, etymology, and orthography- this is in line with recent EEF research and the National Curriculum and recognises the importance of these to helping children to become strong spellers. Children develop a deep understanding of how words are built, how their structures relate to meaning, and how spelling patterns are influenced by word origins. Pupils explore the building blocks of words, so uncover the relationships between meaning and spelling. This knowledge empowers them to spell more accurately, recognise patterns across words, and apply their understanding to both familiar and unfamiliar vocabulary.

To ensure that children learn the necessary morphemes at the most appropriate time, the Spelling with Grammarsaurus scheme is aligned with specific writing text types and their corresponding grammar objectives. This gives pupils regular opportunities to practise newly introduced morphemes.

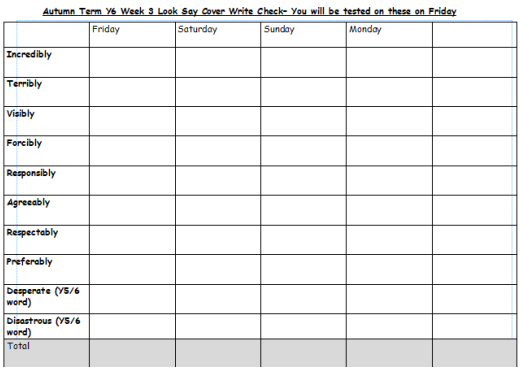
Teachers deliver a baseline assessment (Y2 or KS2). These assessments identify the children's knowledge of key grapheme–phoneme correspondences (GPCs) before starting the scheme.
Pupils then move on to the standard spelling objectives for their specific year group. All year groups start the programme with the same initial objectives in the Autumn term: Objective 1 – Consonants and Vowels, Objective 2 – Compound Words, and Objective 3 – Introduction to Morphology.

This approach ensures that Assessment for Learning underpins teaching, allowing instruction to be precisely targeted to pupils' needs. It also enables pupils who need support to be targeted for intervention groups where necessary, or for the class to revisit the Place Value objectives together if gaps are widespread. This flexible approach ensures that all pupils receive the appropriate level of support before progressing further through the scheme.

Pupils have three spelling sessions per week, each lasting 20–30 minutes. This frequency provides consistent opportunities for children to practise and consolidate their understanding of key spelling concepts. Good spelling skills are threaded through the school day in all foundation topics as well as in English.

As well following Grammarsaurus spelling programme, teachers use their formative assessment of pupils to revise previous years spelling patterns, learn technical vocabulary appropriate to class topics and practise high frequency words.

Children may use a Look, Say, Cover, Write, Check activity sheet.



Autumn Term Y6 Week 3 Look Say Cover Write Check- You will be tested on these on Friday

	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	
Incredibly					
Terribly					
Visibly					
Forcibly					
Responsibly					
Agreeably					
Respectably					
Preferably					
Desperate (Y5/6 word)					
Disastrous (Y5/6 word)					
Total					

Other engaging, multi-sensory games and activities make learning spellings memorable and meaningful.

- Children have opportunities to repeatedly read specific words and learn definitions.
- We teach strategies to good spelling, including over-pronouncing words in the way you spell them- 'wed-nes-day' and using mnemonics to remember spellings, such as 'necessary- never eat cress, eat salad sandwiches and remain young'.
- We draw attention to the tricky parts of words rather than simply considering if a word is spelled correctly- often these are the vowel sounds or include double consonants.
- We use dictation activities, spotting correct spellings, spelling a word as many times as possible in 30 seconds and using different media for mark making such as chalk on the playground, typing on a paper keyboard, air writing, scrabble tiles, pebbles or sand.
- During independent writing activities, children are encouraged to analyse their spellings. If they appear incorrect, they should notice this and made edits using word lists, dictionaries or help from a peer or teacher. In marking, incorrect spellings are noted with 'sp' in the margin. Children have an opportunity to practise these during their 'red response' time. Commonly misspelt words across a class may be picked up and practised together.
- Copies of statutory spellings are available in class for children to refer to.

Impact
Children have a baseline assessment task to enable the teacher to identify common areas where children make mistakes. These are then taught through the term, alongside the specific objectives for each year group. Low-stakes retrieval practise is used throughout the year. This includes revisiting previously taught spellings and high frequency words. The children are encouraged to see this as a chance to practise and improve so they become accurate speller who can recall correct spelling patterns/words in a timely manner during independent writing.