



Bluecoat C of E Primary School, Great Torrington



Handwriting and Spelling Policy Sept 2013



Introduction

At Bluecoat School we believe that learning to spell correctly and write legibly and fluently are essential life skills. The English language is not always regular but is systematic and patterned. Learning to spell is a developmental process which involves developing an interest in words and exploring phonetics, roots, derivations, morphology, and spelling patterns. We recognise the teaching of spelling and handwriting to be mutually supportive. At Bluecoat School pupils will experience explicit, interactive teaching which will cover handwriting and spelling rules and patterns, investigate exceptions and anomalies, explore strategies for retaining and recalling prior knowledge, promote fluency and generate an interest in writing and language structure. Exercises, word lists and tests are not constructive approaches to acquiring handwriting or spelling skills for many pupils and should only ever be used in a limited context to reinforce the learning outlined above.

These principles will also be applied as pupils begin to communicate in writing in other languages.

What is the purpose of this policy?

This policy forms an appendix to Bluecoat C of E Primary School's Teaching and Learning Policy. The purpose of this policy is to set out agreed principles and practice relating to handwriting and spelling in our school. All staff working at Bluecoat C of E Primary School will be familiar with, and will adhere to, this policy.

Through implementation of this policy we will:

- establish consistent expectations with regard to the teaching of handwriting and spelling across our school
- outline how pupils will develop the skills necessary to become confident at spelling and acquire a fluent, legible handwriting style
- promote pupils' pride in becoming competent at spelling and developing a comfortable individual handwriting style

What will teachers do?

Teachers will:

- recognise that developing a neat, fluent handwriting script is important and requires a number of different skills
- become familiar with the bluecoat handwriting script and use it consistently when modeling writing to pupils
- encourage appropriate posture, positioning and pencil grip, paying particular regard to the needs of left-handed writers
- specifically teach, and consistently use, the language of spelling and handwriting e.g. ascenders, descenders, exit strokes, letter strings, chunking, proof reading, etc.

- routinely investigate the spelling of new words when they are introduced and explore links with known spelling patterns, regardless of the subject being taught
- observe and assess pupils' progress using outcomes to inform practice
- provide focused teaching of handwriting and spelling skills broadly following the handwriting journey outlined below:

EYFS: development of mark-making skills using a range of mark making tools
 promotion of comfortable posture and handwriting grip
 introduction of initial phonemes and correct letter formation – following the 'bluecoat script'
 introduction of joins when writing phonemes made up of more than one grapheme through exit strokes, in the context of 'chunking'
 exploration of the spelling of key words and strategies to remember them by – use of joins (through exit strokes) as appropriate

KS1: reinforcement of skills developed in EYFS including use of correct letter formation – following the 'bluecoat script'
 reinforcement of phonic knowledge and links to spelling
 introduction of spelling rules and conventions
 introduce consistent use of word-banks and dictionaries to support spelling
 introduction to the use of thesauruses

Lower KS2: reinforcement of skills developed in EYFS and KS1
 expectation that all handwriting will be joined
 introduction of pens as primary writing tool, linked to awarding of a 'pen license'
 expectation that all written work will be proof-read and spellings corrected, where appropriate
 expectation that dictionaries will be used to support spelling
 consistent exploration of word families, roots and spelling patterns

Upper KS2 reinforcement of expectations established in Lower Key Stage 2
 expectation of a proactive, independent approach to exploring new vocabulary
 expectation that personal errors will be personally investigated and corrected, as appropriate
 expectation of a proactive, independent approach to exploring spelling conventions, exceptions, derivations and morphology
 introduction of 'spell checkers' to support spelling, where appropriate
 expectation that thesauruses are used to support vocabulary choice, where appropriate

- provide regular purposeful opportunities for handwriting and spelling practice
- provide specific, constructive feedback on spelling and handwriting when marking pupils' work and build this into the learning cycle
- ensuring that pupil's routinely read through and review their work
- ensure that feedback is constructive and builds systematically on prior achievements, acknowledging successes as well as highlighting areas for improvement

- maintain high expectations for standards of presentation in pupils' writing

What will support staff do?

Support staff will:

- actively support teachers with the implementation of this policy
- ensure that they use correct spellings and the 'Bluecoat Handwriting Script' when modelling writing for pupils
- recognise that their role is not to provide correct spellings but to model strategies in order to equip pupils to spell words independently in the future
- ensure that they are aware of writing targets for individual pupils, including those with SEN and AGT Individual Education Plans
- take responsibility for following up on and reinforcing comments made by teaching staff

What will pupils do?

Pupils will:

- consistently apply learnt strategies, patterns and rules for spelling in their writing
- independently edit work for obvious spelling errors
- actively explore new vocabulary in a range of subjects
- take pride in the presentation of written work whilst ensuring that it conforms to agreed formats
- identify the process involved in the various stages of progression in a piece of written work - from a first draft copy to a final outcome

What can parents and carers do to help?

Parents and carers can:

- refer to the 'Bluecoat Script' when supporting pupils with their handwriting
- provide a range of opportunities for pupils to write for a purpose at home

- sound words out to support younger pupils with their spellings rather than using letter names
- encourage pupils to meet the expectations above when working on their homework

How will we monitor and evaluate the quality of spelling and handwriting in our school?

We will monitor the quality of spelling and handwriting through:

- including it as an on-going focus in observations
- undertaking regular work scrutiny sessions within key stages and as a whole school
- ensuring it is an integral element of subject focus weeks and pupil interviews
- incorporating regular opportunities for pupils to reflect on the quality of their spelling and handwriting in their learning journals