

OUR APPROACH TO THE TEACHING OF SPELLING AND HANDWRITING

SPELLING AT WGPS

Every class focuses on the key skills involved in spelling and handwriting. We start in EYFS with the basic skills of phonetic awareness/ grapheme correspondence which is taught through daily phonics sessions based on the Read Write Inc scheme. Children are taught how to read and spell words using sounds (phonemes) and then the letters (graphemes) which represent these sounds.

In Y1 onwards, we introduce Spelling Shed which is used to support the sequencing and teaching of spelling in class and to encourage engagement at home. In KS1, the foundations are built upon with further practise and the use of alien words in phonics sessions test children's understanding of key phonemes and graphemes. These words are nonsense words which can be read but do not exist. Children use their reading skills hand-in-hand with spelling as these skills help to unlock the skills required to spell words. High frequency words are learnt first in KS1 and children are shown how to decode and break down words to assist them in reading unfamiliar words. Alongside this, spellings and spelling rules are taught weekly to support the understanding of the key words and spelling rules/ patterns.

In LKS2, children phonetic awareness is built upon through further development of reading for purpose and locating spelling patterns. As in KS1, spelling is taught weekly using the resources available on Spelling Shed, and knowledge of the rules and patterns is consolidated by embedding the weekly spelling list in daily English lessons to support children not only in their ability to spell, but also their understanding of meaning and ability to apply their knowledge. The HCAT Writing Curriculum identifies objectives related to spelling, bespoke for each year group, that are incorporated into writing lessons where appropriate.

In UKS2, children are expected to use the High Frequency Words and the Y3/4 spelling list words within their writing, spelled correctly, and errors are picked up through teacher marking, with an expectation that children practise the words they have misspelled to embed the correct spelling. Children will move on to the Y5/6 spelling rules and patterns in their spelling sessions, and writing sessions place a high priority on ambitious vocabulary and the correct spelling of this is modelled by teachers. Throughout school, reading is taught alongside spelling to support understanding of the contexts in which spellings are used.

Where children require targeted input or more support, small group interventions or personalised spelling lists are provided to bridge any gaps, particularly when children are moving from phonics to spellings patterns.

HANDWRITING AT WGPS

The process of handwriting starts at EYFS where they mark-make daily. Children are expected to be writing their names using a script suited to them. They are taught about appropriate pencil grip and shown how to move from grasping the pencil towards a pincer grip and then tripod grip. Pencil grips are used to assist children to become comfortable with this process.

Mark making is set up daily in class so children may access writing implements. Through play, children are given opportunities to develop their gross motor skills (e.g. shoulder pivot and core muscles) which will in turn allow them to develop their fine motor skills which leads to them having strong, dexterous hands. This hand strength will then enable them to then manipulate writing equipment and eventually master their tripod grip with a pencil.

From EYFS-Y6, we follow the handwriting scheme 'BetterHandwritten'. This is a tailored scheme to meet the needs of pupils at WGPS; handwriting and letter formation is assessed termly and key letters are then taught. Handwriting practice is daily, with children having the opportunity to practise letters and apply these in words and sentences.

In KS1, pupils are taught to begin to form printed letters with every one formed on the line. This enables them to then transition into fully cursive joined writing in years 2-6, while maintaining the accuracy of their print. By the end of Key Stage 1 children will be able to write legibly, using upper and lower case letters appropriately and correct spacing between words. These targets are reflected on our writing curriculum which is derived from the National Curriculum. Children must practise starting sentences and writing names using a capital letter; this is modelled by the teacher during literacy lessons.

In Y2-Y6, children are taught to develop a firm pencil grasp which allows for fluency when using handwriting in any subject. Cursive script is used and works alongside spelling lessons. This allows children, especially in KS2, to develop the flow and pattern in words and rarely spell them incorrectly.