



Dear Parents/Carers,

RE: Spellings at St Vigor and St John School

At St Vigor and St John School, we would like to introduce our new spelling approach: Transforming the Teaching of Spelling by Jane Considine. The spellings are all in line with the National Curriculum.

Spellings are certainly tricky and the English language contains well over a million words and has been affected by some 1,300 years of history. As the National Curriculum reminds us, "Most people read words more accurately than they spell them." With this in mind, we shall be introducing a clear and systematic view for teaching spellings that will provide our children with life-long strategies. Spellings need to be taught logically to see the magic of words, the patterns and how words can help transform the quality of writing.

The underlying structure of the approach is based on the three zones of spelling, explored through patterns, remembering and recall of spellings.

Organisation of spellings

During **week one**, a block of 50 minutes will be created to facilitate an investigation and ways of writing the phonic sounds using letters known as graphemes. The nature of this is a 'slow' look at patterns and working to improve or disprove a hypothesis.

During **week two**, the same amount of time is split into 5 x 10 minute slots to experience pace and take a quicker look at spellings involving analysis of common errors, why these errors occur and what to do to ensure that the correct spelling embeds in their long-term memory – this approach will ensure all pupils from Year 3-Year 6 will have a systematic approach to spellings (Reception – Year 1 children will have daily phonics as before and Year 2 will begin the academic year with daily phonics sessions, moving to the new spelling scheme later on in the year).

Underpinning the new spellings, there will be no weekly spellings sent home as previously and the children will not be 'tested' on their spellings. However, they will focus on a set of 15 spellings in class over a period of two weeks. These are taken from the statutory spelling list for each year group and children will be working together to investigate these spellings.

In addition, children will be given 5 spellings, individually selected from your child's writing (ones which they have spelt incorrectly). These are called their 'Focus Five' words. Children will focus on these 5 words until they can spell them correctly in their independent writing. Words can be changed as the children require them and show they can use them accurately. We follow this procedure for selecting and practising spellings with the children:

Record it on your Focus Five grid

Identify the part you find tricky

Use it correctly in your work 3 times

Teacher identifies a new word/s to focus on

Children can practice remembering their Focus Five words at home with your support by identifying the tricky part of a word. There is no expectation to learn them by rote as often children remember them briefly for a test but do not apply the spelling in their writing. These spellings could take a few weeks to embed in a child's long-term memory and by demonstrating they can spell the word 3x in their writing, they are more likely to spell that word correctly in the future.

If you have any questions relating to our spelling programme, please let us know and we will do our best to answer any of your queries.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Sheppard