



St Hilda's C.E. Primary School

St Hilda's CE Primary School

Spelling Policy

2025-26

Intent

At St Hilda's CE Primary School, we equip our children with the fundamental skills to spell words accurately and confidently, enabling them to communicate effectively in writing. A secure understanding of spelling patterns, rules, and common phoneme-grapheme correspondences supports fluent transcription—freeing children to focus on composition, creativity, and clarity. We also develop strategies to help pupils learn and remember words independently. Ultimately, strong spelling skills enhance overall literacy, build confidence, and lay a foundation for future academic and professional success.

We aim to ensure that our approach to teaching spelling enables pupils to:

- Develop accurate spelling to support fluent transcription and effective written communication.
- Understand and apply spelling rules and patterns, including phonics, to decode and encode words.
- Build vocabulary by learning word meanings alongside correct spellings.
- Foster independent learning through strategies for tackling unfamiliar words.
- Strengthen overall literacy by reinforcing reading, writing, and spelling connections.
- Boost confidence in writing and communication through spelling mastery.
- Prepare for academic achievement and future success with strong, fluent writing skills.

Implementation

At St Hilda's, the effective implementation of spelling is supported by a structured and comprehensive approach that combines explicit teaching, multi-sensory strategies, and regular, purposeful practise. In the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and Key Stage 1, spelling is taught through the systematic use of the *Supersonic Phonic Friends* programme, which provides a strong foundation in phonics and early spelling skills. This high-quality scheme is fully aligned with the National Curriculum requirements for Years 1 and 2, ensuring consistency and progression from the earliest stages.

As pupils move into Key Stage 2, the teaching of spelling builds on this foundation through a focus on spelling rules, patterns, and strategies, alongside the explicit teaching of the statutory word lists outlined in the National Curriculum. Regular opportunities are provided to practise, apply, and revisit these spellings in a range of contexts, supporting long-term retention and confident use in written work.

Foundational Skills 	Phonics Instruction At St Hilda's we implement a strong phonics programme to teach children how to decode and encode words based on their sounds, forming the essential building blocks for spelling. Sound-Letter Correspondence We provide explicit teaching of the relationship between phonemes (sounds) and graphemes (letters), including common and alternative spellings to build accurate phoneme-grapheme knowledge.
Explicit Instruction and Practise 	Targeted Spelling Instruction We deliver structured lessons on specific spelling patterns, rules, and high-frequency exception words (commonly known as tricky words) to build systematic knowledge. "Look, Say, Cover, Write, Check" Technique Use this structured approach to help pupils internalise spelling through repetition, visualisation, and self-correction. Multi-Sensory Spelling Activities Engage multiple senses by incorporating tactile and visual methods such as word tracing, sand writing, magnetic letters, or writing with different textures and materials. Word Walls and Visual Aids Display high-frequency and topic-related words in the classroom to provide constant reinforcement and quick reference for pupils. Interactive Spelling Games Enhance engagement and retention through enjoyable activities like word searches, crosswords, bingo, or digital spelling games. Spelling Dictation Use regular dictation exercises to practise new vocabulary, reinforce correct spelling, and assess application of taught rules in context.
Extending Learning 	Exposure Through Reading At St Hilda's we promote daily reading to immerse children in varied vocabulary and expose them to consistent and irregular spelling patterns across texts. Vocabulary Enrichment Introduce new words in meaningful contexts, linking spelling with word meaning to deepen understanding and improve word recall. Proofreading and Editing Skills Teach pupils how to review and correct their own work, fostering independence and a sense of responsibility for accurate spelling. Spelling in Written Work Encourage children to apply correct spelling in all areas of writing, across subjects, to reinforce learning and support literacy development.

Our teaching sequence

At St Hilda's, spelling is taught through a consistent structured three-step process: review, teach, and practise/apply. Each session lasts approximately 20 minutes.

Spelling Practise



Review



Teach



Practise and Apply

In Reception, Years 1 and 2, spelling instruction is carefully aligned with phonics teaching, ensuring that children make strong connections between sounds and their written forms. This integrated approach reinforces both decoding and encoding skills, supporting early literacy development.

In Key Stage 2, dedicated spelling lessons take place three times a week, building on prior knowledge and supporting continued language development.

Spelling strategies

A mixture of the following strategies is used to teach spellings, allowing children to choose which strategies work best for them.

	Start by breaking the word down into syllables. For example, the word <i>rainforest</i> can be split into three syllables: <i>rain – for – est</i>. Next, clap out each syllable together, encouraging the children to blend the sounds as they go. Repeat the chant at least three times to help reinforce the pronunciation and rhythm.
	Place strong emphasis on helping children identify the individual phonemes in each word, as this is essential for accurate spelling and decoding. Encourage pupils to listen carefully to each sound and articulate them clearly before attempting to spell the word.
	Rhymes and mnemonics are effective tools for helping children remember tricky spellings. By turning difficult words into catchy phrases—such as “<i>Big Elephants Can Always Understand Small Elephants</i>” for <i>because</i>—they make spelling more memorable and engaging. This approach supports all learners, especially those with SEND or EAL, by providing fun and accessible strategies to reinforce correct spelling patterns.

	A prefix is added to the beginning of a root word to change its meaning. For example, adding <i>un-</i> to <i>happy</i> A suffix is added to the end of a root word to change its form or function, such as turning <i>help</i> into <i>helpful</i> or <i>run</i> into <i>running</i>. When adding prefixes, the root word usually stays the same. However, when adding suffixes, spelling rules may apply—for example, dropping the <i>e</i> in <i>make</i> to add <i>-ing</i> (making), or doubling the final consonant in <i>run</i> to form <i>running</i>. Understanding how to build words using prefixes and suffixes helps children expand their vocabulary and develop more accurate spelling.
	By linking each homophone to a distinct image or visual cue, children create a mental association between the spelling and its meaning. For example: "<i>Knight</i>" might be linked to a picture of armour, while "<i>night</i>" shows stars and a moon. Visualisation turns abstract spelling into something concrete and memorable.
	Ensure children clearly pronounce silent letters and letters within unusual letter groups when introducing new words, drawing attention to the difference between spoken sounds and written letters. Emphasizing these elements helps children recognise tricky spelling patterns and understand why certain letters are included, even if they are not heard.
	Highlighting tricky spellings in words is important because it draws children's attention to patterns, irregularities, or silent letters that may not be obvious. By focusing on these challenging sections, learners can better understand why a word is spelt in a certain way, reducing guesswork and common errors.

Supporting Inclusion

Building on the foundations of phonics, a clear and structured approach is in place to ensure all children receive targeted support. This promotes high-quality, inclusive teaching with an emphasis on keeping children on track, rather than requiring them to catch up later. Particular attention is given to pupils with SEND, those with English as an additional language (EAL), disadvantaged pupils, new arrivals, and those in the lowest 20%. The goal is to ensure every child has the opportunity to develop strong spelling skills and reach their full potential.

Targeted Spelling Interventions

We provide targeted support and structured interventions for pupils who find specific spelling patterns, rules, or high-frequency words challenging, ensuring they make sustained progress.

Celebration of Achievement

We actively recognise and celebrate pupils' progress and effort in spelling to motivate learners and boost their confidence. Each term, St Hilda's hosts a Spelling Bee competition for Phase 2 and Phase 3, where spelling champions are awarded for their achievement and perseverance.

Assessing the Impact of Spelling Instruction

At St Hilda's, we use a variety of methods to evaluate the effectiveness of spelling instruction, employing a combination of formative and summative assessment strategies.

- ☒ 1. Weekly/Regular Spelling Tests
 - Assess taught words, patterns, and statutory spellings.
 - Identify individual and class-wide areas of strength or need.
- ☒ 2. Dictation and Sentence Writing
 - Test application of spellings in context, not just isolated recall.
 - This develops listening, writing, and proofreading skills.
- ☒ 3. Independent Writing Samples
 - Review writing across subjects to see if correct spelling is consistently applied.
 - Monitor improvement over time.
- ☒ 4. English Books
 - Track daily practise, corrections, and learning strategies used by students.
- ☒ 5. Informal Observations
 - Note how confidently pupils use spelling strategies during writing tasks or when encountering new words.
- ☒ 6. Pupil Voice and Self-Assessment
 - Gather feedback on how confident and supported children feel in spelling.
 - Encourage reflection on progress and areas for improvement.
- ☒ 7. Progress Tracking and Data Analysis
 - Use termly NFER and SATs assessment data to inform planning, interventions, and teaching approaches.
 - Track cohorts, groups, and individuals to ensure progress over time.

High Frequency Words, Common Exception Words

Children regularly learn and are tested on high frequency words and common exception words to support their reading and writing fluency. These words are introduced in line with national expectations and revisited often to help embed them in long-term memory. Alongside this, children are encouraged to use dictionaries to check unfamiliar spellings, develop their independence, and build vocabulary. This approach helps to strengthen both spelling accuracy and word awareness across the curriculum.

Homework

Each week, a new set of spellings is sent home with the children to reinforce their learning. These spellings are carefully selected to align with the phonics or spelling patterns being taught in class. Children are encouraged to practise them regularly at home using a variety of strategies, such as look-cover-write-check, spelling games, and verbal repetition. The spellings are then reviewed and assessed the following week to monitor progress and support ongoing development in spelling accuracy and confidence.

Impact

Effective spelling instruction at St Hilda's has a broad and lasting impact on our children's literacy and overall academic development. It plays a vital role in helping us achieve our ambition for every child to become a confident communicator, an independent learner, and a successful writer. High-quality, consistent spelling teaching equips pupils with essential skills that support their ability to access the full curriculum, express themselves clearly, and develop a lifelong love of language and learning. Here are the key areas of impact:

- **Improved Written Communication**- Accurate spelling allows children to express their ideas clearly and confidently in writing.
- **Enhanced Reading Skills**- Understanding spelling patterns strengthens decoding skills and reading fluency.
- **Expanded Vocabulary**- Teaching spelling in context helps children learn the meanings, uses, and structure of new words.
- **Boosted Confidence and Independence**- Mastery of spelling builds self-assurance in writing tasks, encouraging children to write more freely and independently.
- **Long-Term Academic and Life Success** – Secure spelling skills enhance performance across the curriculum and equip children with essential tools for clear, effective communication throughout their education and in everyday life.

Appendix

A list of **mnemonics** commonly used for helping with spelling tricky and more difficult words:

- **Because** - big elephants can't always use small exits
or big elephants can't always understand small elephants
- **Could, would, should** - O U lucky duck
- **Said** - silly ants in dresses
- **Believe** - never believe a lie
- **Special** - the CIA has special agents
- **Laugh** - laugh and you get happy
- **Hear** - you hear with your ear
- **Together** - she runs to get her bus
- **Piece** - you have a piece of pie
- **Necessary** - *Never Eat Crisps, Eat Salad Sandwiches And Remain Young*

Further spelling rules (over the page)

NAME OF RULE OR PATTERN	DESCRIPTION OF RULE OR PATTERN		EXAMPLES
FLOSS Rule	When a one-syllable word ends with the /f/, /l/, /s/ or /z/ sound, double the final letter.		stuff, will, dress, fuzz Exceptions: bus, gas, pal, us, if, this
C/K Spelling Rule	When spelling /k/, use c before the vowels a, o, and u. Use k before the vowels e and i.		cat, cot, cup keep, kite
Final /k/ Rule	When a one-syllable short vowel word ends with /k/, use ck. Use k after a consonant or long vowel.		stick, duck milk, rake
The V Rule	English words do not end with plain v. When /v/ occurs at the end of a word, add a final silent e.		give, have, live
CH/TCH	When a one-syllable short vowel word ends with a short vowel and /ch/, spell it tch.		switch, latch Exceptions: much, such, rich, which
GE/DGE	When a one-syllable short vowel word ends with a short vowel and /j/, spell it dge.		bridge, badge
SILENT E RULES	1. Final silent e can make the vowel say its name. 2. Final silent e can soften the sound of c or g. 3. Final silent e gives a consonant-le syllable a printed vowel. 4. Final silent e can give a consonant a voice. 5. Final silent e can make it clear that a word is not plural. 6. Final silent e can keep a word from ending in v or u. 7. Final silent e can distinguish function from content words.		1. cake, gate 2. choice, change 3. bundle, riddle 4. breathe, soothe 5. house, goose 6. have, sue 7. or, ore
Doubling Rule	If a one-syllable word ends with a short vowel and single consonant, double the final consonant before adding a vowel suffix. Do not double when adding a consonant suffix.		sad + er = sadder sad + ly = sadly
Drop It Rule	Words ending with silent e drop the e before adding a vowel suffix. They keep the e when adding a consonant suffix.		hope + ed = hoped hope + ful = hopeful
Change It Rule	When a word ends with a consonant and y, change the y to i when adding a suffix that does not already begin with i.		tidy + er = tidier tidy + ing = tidying
Plurals	Add -es to words ending with s, ss, sh, ch, or x. Change f or fe to v and add -es.		bus + es = buses match + es = matches knife + es = knives
Prefix Rule	Never double a consonant when adding a prefix. If the prefix's final consonant and the root word's initial consonant are the same, keep them both.		mis + spell = misspell un + necessary = unnecessary
OI/OY Pattern	When spelling /oi/, oi is generally used at the beginning or middle of a syllable. Oy is generally used at the end.		oil boy
OU/OW Pattern	When spelling /ou/, ou is generally used at the beginning or middle of a syllable. Ow is generally used at the end.		pound cow
Consonant-le Doubling Rule	If a word ends with a short vowel and consonant-le, double the consonant.		bubble giggle