



## Houghton Conquest Lower School and Pre-School

# Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar Policy

### **Rationale**

At Houghton Conquest Lower School, our aim is to ensure that all pupils leave our school being able to communicate clearly and with confidence; attaining Literacy skills that will stay with them for life and impact positively on their life achievements and opportunities. Within this, the ability to spell with confidence and accuracy is an essential skill for communication, as is the acquisition of vital grammar and punctuation skills and understanding. We aim for a systematic and consistent teaching of phonics, spelling, grammar and punctuation throughout the school, as it is vital for developing children's knowledge, use and understanding of the English language.

### **Intent**

Our intent at Houghton Conquest Lower School is:

- To provide children with spelling strategies that can support their everyday writing.
- To provide children with the necessary experiences in order to develop their spelling skills.
- To equip children with a range of phonological options to be able to select appropriate spelling and common spelling patterns, through a variety of teaching strategies.
- To ensure that pupils have a secure grasp of grammar knowledge and can demonstrate a secure grasp of linguistic skills both orally and in written work.
- To ensure that pupils are able to react to punctuation when reading; and are able, in writing, to use punctuation devices correctly and consistently (according to age expectations).

### **The Role of the Teacher**

- To provide direct teaching and accurate explicit modelling of grammar and punctuation choices during guided and modelled writing.
- To provide resources and an environment which promotes a developing understanding of grammar and punctuation including a SPAG focussed display referring to their year group's specific requirements as exemplified by the National Curriculum in order to allow children to achieve and exceed.
- Within the planning of Literacy, the grammar or punctuation feature to be taught must be explicitly referred to.
- The teaching of correct grammatical terminology is vital to the children's understanding and use of the English language and as such all teachers must use the terminology set down in the National Curriculum grammar and punctuation appendices.
- Specific grammar, punctuation and spelling will be taught and then teachers will assess application in writing tasks.

## **Implementation**

### **Spelling**

Teachers plan and use resources from 'Spelling Shed' and follow the concise long-term plan which is set out within the programme.

#### **Teaching and learning:**

The teaching of phonics plays a vital role in children's ability to spell so great emphasis is placed on this from Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1. As children move through upper KS1 to KS2, the emphasis in the teaching objectives shifts from the teaching of phonics to teaching more focussed spelling strategies, conventions and rules to build upon children's established phonological knowledge. At Houghton Conquest, children are tested in key words at the beginning of the year, which link to spelling patterns and these are used to assess the attainment in spelling. These are used to monitor progression and inform interventions. Teachers analyse each child's spelling errors within the child's test to allocate each individual child with the correct spelling lists for the academic year.

All children in years 1-4 are taught the "Look, Say, Cover, Write and Check" method for learning spellings. Spellings are taught daily, in groups of similar sounds or letter strings and most commonly used words. Children will have the opportunity to access deep learning using a range of strategies, as listed below. Spelling is taught following the 'Single Word Spelling Test' scheme, 'Letters and Sounds' scheme and the National Curriculum (2014). Towards the end of each week, children will be assessed on their spellings using dictated sentences where children apply the word within a context.

**In Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1:** the teaching of phonics plays a key component to assisting children to learn to spell words correctly. At Houghton Conquest Lower School, phonics is taught explicitly following the 'Little Wandle Phonics' programme. These sessions are enhanced by multi-sensory teaching approaches. Pupils are taught each phase according to their age and ability. In Reception, children regularly practise and learn the key words and tricky words for their specific age, often working alongside their learning of systematic synthetic phonics. Gradually the children will start to apply their phonics knowledge to decode regular words and learn some common irregular words and apply these skills within blending and segmenting to spell.

**In Key Stage 2:** there is an emphasis on the recognition of letter strings, visual patterns and analogies, the application of spelling conventions, the use of a range of word resources and the morphology of words. Nevertheless, it is recognised that some pupils will need to consolidate their phonic knowledge and skills from Key Stage 1. An investigative approach is taken to the teaching of spelling. Building on the approaches introduced in Key Stage 1, there is an emphasis on developing confidence and independence. It is expected that pupils assume increased responsibility by identifying their own spelling errors, making reasoned choices about likely alternatives and using a range of resources (dictionaries and word banks) for making corrections.

#### **Spelling Strategies used:**

Below are a few ways in which spellings are implemented into activities that are used in our classroom. It has been found that children learn to spell better, quicker and more easily if they are given short but enjoyable activities daily. Some are more suited to particular year groups, but others can be used in every class from Reception to Year 4.

- Rhyme – if they can spell mouse, they should be able to spell house.
- Write the word with different coloured pens to break it into sections. This will help to teach the pupils to learn to spell in ‘chunks’ rather than ‘letter by letter’.
- Use different coloured post-its (one for each word). This will help pupils visualise the word when they are trying to recall it.
- Write the word in sand, finger paint etc. – helps form memory hooks.
- Use big paper and big felt pens – not always a jotter.
- Chant the syllables e.g. Wed-nes-day, emphasising the tricky bit. Use actions for each syllable.
- Draw a picture to help with a word e.g. big elephants can always understand small elephants = because.
- Make the word into a picture e.g. bed could be drawn to look like a bed.

### **Home Learning**

Children need regular spelling practise at home as well as at school. Spelling practice is included in Home Learning activities. In Reception, children are given tricky words to practice, these are sent home to read and play games with. In Key Stage 1 and 2, pupils take home weekly spellings; these are the words that pupils find particularly difficult, but also link to the common exception words outlined in the National Curriculum appendices for their current year group.

### **Grammar and Punctuation**

#### **Teaching and learning:**

Throughout school, grammar and punctuation are taught in every Literacy lesson, either as the focus of the lesson, or discretely as part of the writing process. At Houghton Conquest, teachers follow planning and use resources from ‘Spelling Shed’ and we believe that introducing children to new grammar and punctuation concepts should be taught in the context of their learning, in line with their unit of work; for example, children in year 1 will learn to report on the events of the Great Fire of London, introducing the past tense with the ‘-ed’ suffix, which is paramount for their learning to excel. In addition to these lessons, all other teaching and learning linked to Literacy will provide an opportunity to embed punctuation and grammar skills. SPAG-related starters should be used where appropriate, and through modelled writing, specific punctuation and grammar concepts should be taught.

In cross-curricular work, there is an expectation that grammar and punctuation skills will be demonstrated, and taught concepts applied precisely and accurately. The marking policy will be applied to ensure that correct punctuation and grammar are applied in all writing tasks across all subjects. Speaking and listening activities in all subjects enable pupils to practise correct grammar in the form of recounting stories and information and constructing sentences effectively. This in turn will impact on children’s ability to write using correct punctuation and grammar and is intended to develop the ‘writing voice’ of all children throughout school.

### **Progression in vocabulary, grammar and punctuation**

#### **Key Stage 1:**

The pupils begin in Year 1 to leave spaces between words, join words and clauses using 'and', begin to punctuate sentences using a capital letter and a full stop, question mark or exclamation mark, use a capital letter for names of people, places, the days of the week and the personal pronoun 'I'.

In Year 2, the pupils will develop using commas for lists and apostrophes for contracted forms and the possessive (singular). Pupils will also develop using sentences with different forms: statement, question, exclamation and command, use expanded noun phrases to describe and specify, use the present and past tenses correctly including the progressive form, use subordination (using when, if, that or because) and coordination (using or, and, or but).

Pupils will learn the grammar for Year 1 and Year 2 mentioned in English Appendix 2, along with some features of written standard English. The children also begin to use and understand the grammatical terminology in English Appendix 2 when discussing their writing.

### **Key Stage 2:**

Pupils will develop extending the range of sentences with more than one clause by using a wider range of conjunctions (including when, if, because and although), develop the use of the present perfect form of verbs in contrast to the past tense, choose nouns or pronouns appropriately for clarity and cohesion and to avoid repetition, use conjunctions, adverbs and prepositions to express time and cause, use fronted adverbials and learn the grammar for Year 3 and 4, as mentioned in English Appendix 2.

Pupils will also develop their use of grammatical and other features by using commas after fronted adverbials, by indicating possession by using the possessive apostrophe with plural nouns and use and punctuate direct speech. The children will also begin to use and understand the grammatical terminology in English Appendix 2 accurately and appropriately when discussing their writing and reading.

To find extended detail about spelling, grammar and punctuation that is taught throughout each year group, please refer to the English National Curriculum, particularly [English Appendix 1: Spelling](#) and the [English Appendix 2: Vocabulary, Grammar and Punctuation](#).

### **Impact**

The impact of our children is the children will improve their spelling, grammar and punctuation skills, which will in turn boost their effectiveness as a writer and a communicator.

### **Literacy Working Walls**

Unlike traditional working wall displays, working walls are interactive and can be used to record, visualise and assist learning. Our Literacy Working Walls exemplify the writing process in which children undertake, representing the spellings, grammar, punctuation and writing tools children need to access the writing genre. These walls are accessible and continuously added to as the writing develops, allowing the children to be surrounded with the correct terminology for their writing unit of work.

### **Roles and responsibilities**

It is the class teacher's responsibility to ensure that grammar and punctuation are taught consistently in their class according to the requirements of the National Curriculum. Its use

and effectiveness will be supported and monitored by the Literacy co-ordinator, on behalf of the Head and Governors.