

St. Luke's C of E (Aided)
Primary School



SPELLING POLICY AND PROGRESSION
2026-29

Teaching, practising and applying spelling from FS2 to Year 6

Policy owner	P. Phillips/ English Lead
Approved by	Governing Body
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Review date	September 2029, or earlier if curriculum or statutory guidance changes

1. Statement of intent

At St. Luke's, spelling is an essential part of fluent and effective writing. Pupils need to spell with increasing accuracy and automaticity so that transcription does not place an unnecessary burden on working memory or prevent them from communicating increasingly complex ideas.

Our approach is cumulative. It begins with secure phonological awareness and phonics and develops through an increasing understanding of spelling patterns, orthography, morphology, word families and etymology. Pupils are taught to notice patterns, understand how words are constructed, make connections between related words, retrieve previously taught spelling knowledge and apply it accurately in independent writing.

We want pupils to become confident spellers who:

- draw upon secure phonics and grapheme-phoneme knowledge;
- recognise and apply spelling patterns and conventions;
- understand how words are constructed through roots, prefixes and suffixes;
- make connections between words, word families and meanings;
- retrieve previously taught spelling knowledge;
- proofread and identify errors increasingly independently;
- respond to spelling corrections and learn from them;
- apply accurate spelling across English and the wider curriculum.

Spelling is not confined to a weekly spelling lesson or test. It is explicitly taught, regularly rehearsed and retrieved, practised through daily dictation, applied within authentic writing, corrected purposefully and revisited where necessary.

2. The St. Luke's approach to spelling

TEACH → REHEARSE → RETRIEVE → APPLY → CORRECT → REVISIT

TEACH: Explicitly teach the spelling pattern, convention or word knowledge and connect it with prior learning.

REHEARSE: Give pupils repeated opportunities to practise, explain and manipulate the pattern or words.

RETRIEVE: Return cumulatively to previously taught spelling knowledge. Every English lesson begins with short dictation practice recorded in English books.

APPLY: Expect pupils to transfer taught spelling knowledge into independent writing in English and across the curriculum.

CORRECT: Identify appropriate errors and ensure pupils respond to spelling corrections where appropriate.

REVISIT: Use errors in dictation and independent writing to identify knowledge which needs further teaching, rehearsal or support.

3. Principles of spelling teaching

Spelling is cumulative

New spelling knowledge builds upon what pupils have previously learned. Teachers draw upon expectations from preceding year groups and revisit earlier content where it has not yet been secured. Phonic knowledge continues to underpin spelling beyond KS1, while morphology and etymology become increasingly important.

Spelling requires explicit teaching

Patterns and conventions are taught, modelled and investigated rather than pupils simply being given lists of words to memorise. Teaching draws attention to phonemes and graphemes, syllables, spelling patterns, root words, prefixes and suffixes, word families, morphology, etymology, homophones and exception words.

Rehearsal and retrieval matter

Pupils need repeated opportunities to retrieve previously taught spelling knowledge. Successful performance in one lesson is not taken to mean that knowledge has been secured. Previous learning is deliberately revisited through dictation, oral rehearsal, quick recall, word sorting, proofreading, spelling investigations and application within sentences.

Application matters

The purpose of spelling teaching is for pupils to spell increasingly accurately when they write. Assessment therefore considers application within independent writing as well as performance during discrete spelling activities.

Errors inform teaching

Spelling errors provide useful information about what pupils have and have not yet secured. Recurring errors inform subsequent teaching, retrieval, rehearsal or targeted support.

4. Teaching spelling in FS2 and Key Stage 1

Early spelling is closely connected to the systematic teaching of phonics through FFT Success for All. Pupils learn to segment spoken words into phonemes and represent these using appropriate graphemes. As their knowledge develops, they learn alternative representations, spelling conventions and common exception words.

Spelling is reinforced through reading, phonics, handwriting and writing so that pupils make explicit connections between hearing a sound, selecting a grapheme, forming it correctly and using it within a word or sentence.

Where pupils have not secured expected phonics knowledge, teaching responds to the identified gaps through appropriate keep-up or additional support.

5. Teaching spelling in Key Stage 2

In KS2, pupils continue to build upon their phonics knowledge while developing a more sophisticated understanding of how English spelling works. Teaching increasingly focuses on spelling patterns and conventions, prefixes and suffixes, root words and word families, morphology, etymology, homophones and commonly confused words, statutory words, dictionary use, proofreading and editing.

The school's agreed spelling programme supports the sequence of statutory content, but the scheme does not replace responsive teaching. Where assessment, dictation or pupils' writing identifies an insecure foundation, teachers revisit the relevant prior knowledge rather than simply continuing through a sequence regardless of pupil understanding.

6. Daily dictation and transcription

At St. Luke's, every English lesson begins with a short dictation activity. This is recorded in pupils' English books.

Daily dictation provides regular, cumulative practice of transcription and enables pupils to retrieve and apply previously taught knowledge. Dictated words, phrases and sentences are selected purposefully and may revisit:

- previously taught spelling patterns and conventions;
- phonics and grapheme-phoneme correspondence knowledge;

- common exception and statutory words;
- vocabulary relevant to current learning;
- punctuation and sentence conventions;
- handwriting and presentation expectations.

Dictation is primarily a practice and retrieval opportunity rather than a test of unfamiliar content. Teachers use pupils' responses to identify misconceptions and gaps which require further teaching or rehearsal.

HEAR → HOLD → SEGMENT / RETRIEVE → SPELL → TRANSCRIBE → CHECK

Where appropriate, pupils correct errors following dictation so that incorrect spellings are not repeatedly rehearsed. Evidence of daily dictation should be visible in pupils' English books.

7. Handwriting and spelling

Spelling and handwriting are closely connected aspects of transcription. Pupils practise spelling while maintaining the handwriting expectations appropriate to their year group. Teachers reinforce accurate letter formation, orientation, size, spacing and joins alongside spelling.

Handwriting practice should include meaningful opportunities to rehearse words, spelling patterns and sentences. The aim is for accurate spelling and fluent handwriting to become increasingly automatic, freeing pupils to concentrate on composition.

8. Marking, correction and response

Teachers maintain high expectations for spelling across all curriculum subjects. Previously taught and age-appropriate spelling errors should not routinely remain unaddressed.

Priority is given to:

- spelling patterns and words previously taught;
- common and high-frequency words;
- statutory words appropriate to the pupil's phase;
- recurring individual errors;
- important subject-specific and Tier 3 vocabulary;
- errors which indicate an underlying gap in phonics or spelling knowledge.

Teachers are not expected to correct every spelling error in every piece of writing. Correction should be proportionate and purposeful. Where a spelling is identified for correction, pupils should normally be expected to respond. This may involve correcting the word within their writing, practising the correct spelling or applying the relevant pattern again.

Repeated errors should lead to further teaching, rehearsal or retrieval rather than repeated correction alone.

9. Editing and proofreading

As pupils develop, they are explicitly taught to identify and correct spelling errors within their own writing. Teachers model how to:

- identify a word that may not be correct;
- segment and rehearse the word;
- draw upon known spelling patterns;
- identify the root word and consider prefixes and suffixes;
- make connections with related words and word families;

- use classroom resources and dictionaries appropriately;
- check, correct and then apply the spelling again.

Increasingly, pupils take responsibility for proofreading their own writing before relying upon an adult to identify errors.

10. Universal provision

Pupils are taught how to use resources independently to support spelling. Depending upon age and need, these may include:

- phonics resources and sound/phoneme mats;
- word mats and personal spelling resources;
- working walls and vocabulary displays, with clear definitions where appropriate;
- dictionaries and thesauruses;
- curriculum-specific vocabulary;
- taught strategies for breaking down unfamiliar words.

Resources should support independence rather than create dependence. Pupils should know where resources are, how to use them and when they no longer need them.

11. SEND, adaptation and Strong Foundations

Pupils do not always acquire spelling knowledge at the same rate. Where a pupil is struggling, teachers seek to identify the specific barrier rather than simply provide easier spellings.

Possible barriers may include insecure:

- phonological awareness or phoneme-grapheme correspondence;
- segmentation;
- orthographic knowledge;
- recall of common words;
- morphological understanding;
- working memory or retrieval;
- handwriting or transcription fluency.

Teaching and intervention respond to the identified barrier. A pupil in KS2 who has not secured an earlier spelling foundation receives explicit teaching and practice of that foundation while continuing, as far as possible, to access the ambitious vocabulary and curriculum content appropriate to their age.

Adaptation should enable access while continuing to develop independence.

12. Assessment

Assessment of spelling is ongoing and formative. Teachers draw upon daily dictation, explicit spelling teaching, retrieval activities, pupils' independent writing and writing across the wider curriculum to identify what has been secured and what requires further teaching.

Daily dictation provides an immediate check of pupils' ability to retrieve and transcribe previously taught knowledge. Teachers use recurring errors to identify class, group and individual gaps and respond through subsequent teaching, rehearsal or targeted support.

Isolated spelling assessments or tests may contribute to assessment but are not used alone to judge whether spelling knowledge has been secured. The strongest evidence of secure spelling is accurate retrieval and application within independent writing over time.

13. Monitoring and review

Implementation and impact are monitored through the school's established teaching and learning processes, including:

- scrutiny of pupils' work and Teaching & Learning Temperature Checks;
- learning walks where relevant;
- pupil voice;
- assessment information;
- case sampling;
- English subject leadership monitoring.

Monitoring considers not simply whether spelling activities have taken place, but whether pupils are remembering, applying and increasingly independently using what they have been taught.

PROGRESSION → RETRIEVAL → APPLICATION → CORRECTION → RESPONSE → INDEPENDENCE

This policy will be reviewed by September 2029, or sooner where curriculum, statutory guidance or school practice changes.

Appendix 1 - Whole-school spelling progression

The progression below should be read alongside the statutory National Curriculum spelling requirements and the school's agreed spelling sequence. Teachers remain responsive to prior attainment and identified gaps.

Year	New learning / emphasis	Knowledge to retrieve and secure	Daily dictation and application
FS2	Phonological awareness; oral blending and segmenting; taught GPCs through FFT Success for All; encoding words using taught sounds; appropriate common/tricky words; correct letter formation alongside encoding.	Previously taught GPCs; oral blending and segmenting; increasingly automatic recognition and formation of taught graphemes.	Regular oral and written application through phonics and early writing. Dictated words, phrases and simple sentences appropriate to the taught phonics sequence.
Year 1	Spell words using taught GPCs; common exception words; days of the week; plural/third-person -s and -es; prefix un-; -ing, -ed, -er and -est where the root is unchanged; statutory Year 1 patterns.	FS2 phonics; previously taught GPCs; segmenting; common words; correct letter formation.	Every English lesson begins with short dictation recorded in English books, applying taught GPCs, spelling patterns, common exception words and sentence punctuation.
Year 2	Alternative graphemes; Year 2 common exception words; homophones/near homophones; contractions; singular possessive apostrophe; suffixes including -ment, -ness, -ful, -less and -ly; statutory Year 2 patterns.	Year 1 GPCs, common exception words, suffixes/prefixes and previously taught patterns.	Daily cumulative dictation. Increasing expectation that taught spellings are retrieved accurately within sentences and independent writing.
Year 3	Transition from predominantly phonics-led spelling towards increasing understanding of word structure. Prefixes and suffixes; root words and word families; further homophones; dictionary use; systematic teaching of allocated Years 3/4 statutory patterns and words.	KS1 phonics where necessary; common exception words; contractions; apostrophes; previously taught suffixes, prefixes and spelling conventions.	Daily dictation retrieves current and previous learning. Taught patterns are expected increasingly within English and wider-curriculum writing.

Year	New learning / emphasis	Knowledge to retrieve and secure	Daily dictation and application
Year 4	Deepen and secure Years 3/4 content; further prefixes and suffixes; possessive apostrophes with plurals; homophones; word families; morphology; secure statutory Years 3/4 words.	Year 3 learning plus relevant KS1 knowledge. Previously taught Years 3/4 words and patterns are deliberately interleaved.	Daily cumulative dictation including earlier learning. Increasing independence in identifying and correcting spelling errors.
Year 5	Develop Years 5/6 patterns; increasingly complex prefixes and suffixes; silent letters; homophones and commonly confused words; morphology and etymology; systematic teaching of Years 5/6 statutory words; dictionary/thesaurus use.	Years 3/4 statutory words and patterns plus identified earlier gaps. Previously taught morphology and spelling conventions are deliberately retrieved.	Daily dictation includes current and previously taught content. Greater emphasis on automaticity and transfer into sustained writing across subjects.
Year 6	Consolidate and secure Years 5/6 patterns; complex word relationships; morphology and etymology; secure statutory Years 5/6 words; independently select strategies for unfamiliar words.	Cumulative retrieval from the primary spelling curriculum, responsive to class and individual need.	Daily cumulative dictation. Pupils increasingly proofread independently and maintain accurate spelling within sustained, increasingly sophisticated writing across the curriculum.

Appendix 2 - Year-by-year teaching emphasis

The following provides a practical year-by-year emphasis. It does not prevent teachers from revisiting earlier content where assessment identifies an insecure foundation.

Year 1

- Words containing each of the phonemes and graphemes taught through the school's SSP sequence.
- Common exception words and the days of the week.
- Plural nouns and third-person singular verbs using -s and -es.
- The prefix un-.
- Suffixes -ing, -ed, -er and -est where the root word remains unchanged.
- Simple dictated sentences which apply taught GPCs, exception words and punctuation.

Year 2

- Alternative spellings for phonemes and statutory Year 2 spelling patterns.
- Common exception words, homophones and near-homophones.
- Contractions and the singular possessive apostrophe.
- Suffixes including -ment, -ness, -ful, -less and -ly, alongside other statutory Year 2 suffix conventions.
- Daily dictation which cumulatively retrieves Year 1 and Year 2 knowledge.

Year 3

- Prefixes including un-, dis-, mis-, in-/im-/il-/ir-, re-, sub-, inter-, super-, anti- and auto- as appropriate within the agreed sequence.
- Suffixes and word endings allocated to Year 3 within the school's Years 3/4 sequence, including explicit attention to root words.
- Word families and the relationship between spelling and meaning.
- Further homophones and commonly misspelt words.
- Beginning systematic teaching and retrieval of the statutory Years 3/4 word list.
- Dictionary use and daily dictation applying current and previously taught content.

Year 4

- Retrieve and secure Year 3 prefixes, suffixes, word families and statutory words.

- Teach the remaining Years 3/4 spelling patterns and word endings within the agreed school sequence.
- Possessive apostrophes with regular and irregular plurals.
- Further homophones, morphology and word-family knowledge.
- Secure the statutory Years 3/4 word list through cumulative retrieval and application.
- Increasingly independent proofreading and correction within dictation and sustained writing.

Year 5

- Introduce the main Years 5/6 spelling patterns through the agreed sequence.
- Prefixes and suffixes including -ant/-ance/-ancy, -ent/-ence/-ency, -able/-ible and -ably/-ibly where they occur within the agreed sequence.
- Words containing silent letters and increasingly complex homophones.
- Morphology, etymology and word origins as tools for spelling.
- Begin systematic teaching and retrieval of the statutory Years 5/6 word list.
- Dictionary and thesaurus use, daily cumulative dictation and application across the curriculum.

Year 6

- Retrieve, deepen and secure the full Years 5/6 spelling content.
- Consolidate complex suffixes, silent-letter words, homophones and commonly confused words.
- Use morphology, etymology, root words and word relationships increasingly independently.
- Secure the statutory Years 5/6 word list through repeated retrieval and authentic application.
- Select appropriate strategies for unfamiliar words and proofread independently.
- Maintain accurate spelling within sustained writing across English and the wider curriculum.

Appendix 3 - What we expect to see

Area	Typical practice at St. Luke's
Explicit teaching	Spelling patterns, conventions and word knowledge are directly taught and connected to prior learning.
Daily dictation	Every English lesson begins with short dictation practice, recorded in English books.
Retrieval	Previously taught spelling knowledge is deliberately revisited rather than practised only in the week it is introduced.
Correction	Appropriate errors are identified; pupils respond to corrections; recurring errors inform further teaching.
Handwriting	Spelling and dictation reinforce agreed handwriting and presentation expectations.
Universal provision	Useful, legible spelling and vocabulary resources are available and pupils know how to access them independently.
Application	Taught spelling is expected within independent English writing and writing across the wider curriculum.
Adaptation	Support responds to the identified spelling barrier while maintaining access to ambitious curriculum content.
Independence	Scaffolds and prompts reduce as pupils become more secure; proofreading becomes increasingly independent.

Links with other policies and curriculum documents

Document	How it links
Teaching & Learning Policy	Sets out the school's approach to retrieval, rehearsal, responsive teaching, universal provision and feedback.
English Curriculum	Provides the wider context for transcription, composition, reading and spoken language.
Handwriting expectations	Supports fluent transcription, accurate letter formation and transfer into independent writing.
FFT Success for All	Provides the systematic phonics foundation for early spelling and continued support where phonics knowledge is insecure.
National Curriculum - English	Sets the statutory spelling requirements and word lists for Key Stages 1 and 2.

Date approved by the Governing Body: September 2026

Date to be reviewed: September 2029