

# Teaching Spelling 6-11: designing effective learning in English and across the curriculum

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction: Teaching Spelling

This book is about the learning and teaching of spelling in the primary classroom. It brings together findings from a range of sources and proposes how to design a spelling curriculum in which children explore the requirements of the National Curriculum (DfE, 2013) and make good progress in spelling. It is likely to be of most use to teachers of pupils from Y2 to Y6 as the strategies presented most naturally fit the curriculum requirements for these year groups. It considers the skills children need to develop a sound understanding of spelling conventions and patterns, and how these can be presented to children in ways which encourage both active engagement and memorable learning.

Research, as well as classroom experience, indicates that a lack of competence in spelling can cause several problems to young writers. They may feel embarrassed or frustrated. This may lead them to write fewer words and create compositions of lower quality, which are limited to the words they know they can spell (Joshi *et al.*, 2009). Where children struggle to remember the spelling of words, they use up cognitive space and energy trying to recall these as best they can. Graham and Santangelo (2014) have observed that the more time and attention a pupil spends on any transcriptional skill, the greater the likelihood of interference with other aspects of the writing process.

*The National Curriculum* (DfE, 2013) and the subsequently published 2018/19 *Teacher Assessment Frameworks at the End of Key Stage 1* (STA, 2018a) and Key Stage 2 (STA, 2018b) have brought a renewed impetus for children to learn how to spell correctly. At the end of KS1, the 2018/19 *Teacher Assessment Frameworks at the End of Key Stage 1* (STA, 2018a) states that, to be awarded a ‘Working at Greater Depth’ judgement, children should be able to

*segment spoken words into phonemes and represent these by graphemes, spelling many of these words correctly and making phonically-plausible*

*attempts at others... spell many common exception words ... and spell most common exception words. (SRA, 2018a:7)*

The *2018/19 Teacher Assessment Frameworks at the End of Key Stage 2* (2018b) states that to be judged as 'Working at the Expected Standard' (or 'Greater Depth'), teachers must be confident that individual children meet all the statements of the preceding standard at which children are judged, children must

*spell correctly most words from the year 5 / year 6 spelling list and use a dictionary to check the spelling of uncommon or more ambitious vocabulary. (SRA, 2018b:5)*

This Minibook presents both theory and ideas for practice. After the initial consideration of relevant research findings about what children need to know about spelling and how to develop such knowledge (Chapters 2 and 3), attention is given to the principles behind the design of a spelling curriculum (Chapter 4). Pedagogical approaches are then suggested (Chapters 5 and 6) before consideration of strategies for assessment (Chapter 7).

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