

Spelling at CJS

What are the expectations for spelling?

The new National Curriculum sets out key words that pupils should be able to spell at Year 2, Year 3/4 and Year 5/6. These lists will be covered in school and children will be expected to try and use them correctly in their writing. We will try to teach the words in small chunks, rather than learn the whole list at one time. The lists will be on the school website and will also be copied out to all parents. The new Curriculum is a clear step up and there will be many words from the appropriate list that present a real challenge to most pupils of that age group. Indeed, in the short term, it may seem that pupils are practising words that are expected for younger children, but this is nothing to worry about, as we are all implementing a new system and filling in the gaps that are bound to be evident.

How do we teach spelling in school?

We use a planning resource that has broken down the words into a termly and weekly focus. Weekly lessons will involve pupils working on the key words, while investigating spelling patterns and rules and using various strategies and activities to help them achieve success. While it is important to learn spellings, the main focus is to ensure that pupils use their spelling knowledge in their writing. Pupils will be encouraged to use the words of that week or term in their writing and show that they understand the meaning of the word by using it and linking the word with the correct grammatical use. Pupils are also expected to have a range of strategies to attempt the spelling of new words and will be taught groups of words that follow certain patterns. Pupils will be encouraged to build up their own lists of words that they find tricky and think about how they can break the word down and use their words skills to spell a word correctly. Pupils will regularly revise previous words, learn new words or patterns, practise spellings and apply the words to show they understand the meaning.

Initial Assessment

Children will be given an assessment of 20 words taken from the list of spellings. The assessment will be consistent across each year group. This will then inform teacher assessment and determine which group of weekly spellings to give each child.

How will we “test” spellings?

During each week, pupils will be given a list of words to learn. There will also be a spelling activity related to the list to help pupils learn the spelling and understand the meaning. Pupils will have an informal test to check their understanding. In Year 5 and 6 pupils will have spelling partners to test each other and undertake “peer assessment”. The teacher will monitor the outcomes of the test and then plan further spelling work as appropriate. In Year 3 and 4, school staff will oversee the assessment of spelling, with pupils in Year 4 being trained to be spelling partners later in the year.

How can parents support spelling at home?

Parents are welcome to support their child by practising and using the key Y3/4 or Y5/6 words at home, but please do not put too much pressure on your child. The weekly list of spellings given by the teacher will help tackle the list in smaller chunks. The weekly list will be between 5 and 15 words, depending on the age and ability of the child. Parents are reminded that pupils will be expected not only to spell the word correctly but also use the word in sentences to reflect the meaning. The spellings will be given to the child, recorded in the home/school diary, with a date when given and a date for completion. As these words evolve through the teaching during that week, they may be different for different classes and groups across the school. The weekly lists will therefore not be uploaded on to the website, but given to the child. Each class will ensure that all children have access to the spelling lists in the classroom. The lists of words will be taken from the Y2, Y3/4 or Y5/6 lists, with spelling lists also taken from other spelling resources. The teachers will match the relevant spelling list to the pattern/rule covered in lessons.